

STOCKHOLM MON AMOUR

A Play

by

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ACT ONE

The audience enters the theatre and finds an open stage without a curtain. The stage represents a warehouse containing only four chairs and a cardboard box table. In the warehouse there are two doors: the main door on the left wall and a door on the background wall, which leads to a hideout the audience cannot see. The lights go down at the start of the show. In the darkness, an answering machine can be heard. Then, the voice of a young girl. It's NATALIA. She speaks quickly.

VOICE OF NATALIA

I did it, I did it, oh my God! That's it. It's over. I'm finished with Oscar. Yes! I didn't know how to do it and in the end I just said: "I'm through with you, man". And I left him there and walked out. That's it, I'm leaving tomorrow! I can't talk now. I still have to pack my suitcase. When I get there I'll call you and tell you everything, ok? I gotta go now. The train will take two or three days. Don't worry though, when I get there I'll call you. It was so easy! And to think I was afraid, petrified actually. I can't believe it! I'm so happy! I'm outta here. Hey...wait a sec. Did you hear what I said? It's like the song...what I just said about Oscar, it's just like the song. I said "At first I was afraid" and then I was petrified, "pet-ri-fied". Like in the song. It's a sign. I'm doing the right thing! I gotta go now. I'll call you, don't worry. Love you!

"I will survive" by Gloria Gaynor starts playing and the warehouse light turns on. TONI is seated in one of the chairs. He is dressed in a track suit and sports shoes. TONI seems to be concentrated on reading a newspaper. He is smoking a cigarette.

BEA appears through the hideout door. She is wearing formal clothes and a black ski mask which covers her whole face except her eyes. BEA removes the ski mask. She looks worried. She

approaches TONI and lowers the volume of the stereo on the cardboard box table. TONI, without looking at BEA, turns the volume up to the maximum. BEA lowers it again. TONI turns it up again. BEA quickly turns it off.

BEA

(Pointing to the newspaper)

Are we in it?

TONI

No.

BEA

What are they waiting for? I don't understand.

TONI

It'll come out. Don't worry.

BEA

When? Next year? Toni, I think something's gone wrong.

TONI

Maybe they're not interested.

BEA

Not interested in what?

TONI

Reporting the news.

BEA

Who?

TONI

How do I know? The people in charge of the newspapers. Maybe that's not what sells. At the end of the day newspapers are businesses.

BEA

Something's happened, it's not normal. We're supposed to meet at nine, right?

TONI

Yeah.

BEA

What time is it?

TONI

(Checking his watch)

Ten to. So, please, stop fidgeting and stay calm, ok?

BEA lights a cigarette and sits down.

BEA

She's not eating.

TONI

She'll eat when she's hungry.

BEA

She's our responsibility. What happens if she never gets hungry?

TONI

You want me to go down there?

BEA

Yeah, and *then* she'll eat.

TONI

It's easy. Old school pedagogy. I'll sit in front of her and I'll say: "Look, sweetheart, for every piece of food you don't eat, I'll cut off a finger of one of your family members and eat it". And then you'll see how she eats.

BEA

Are you crazy?

TONI

Jesus, Bea, it's a joke.

BEA

Yeah, I know. But only saying that to this girl, in her situation, could cause her a heart attack.

TONI

Then she'll have an excuse not to eat. Come on man, this girl is calmer than any of us. Haven't you seen? She's right at home.

BEA

I bet it's not cold in her house.

TONI

It's not cold here.

BEA

Yes it is, it was cold last night.

TONI

Ok, so it was a little "cold"...being a little uncomfortable isn't a bad thing, right? Actually, it's normal in these circumstances. She's not at a five star hotel...

BEA

(Thinking)

Maybe she doesn't want to eat so that we don't begin to think she's dependent on us. That's the syndrome... the syndrome...

TONI

The Stockholm Syndrome.

BEA

That's it.

TONI takes a flask out of his pocket, takes a long drink and then looks at BEA.

TONI

I don't believe it.

He returns to his newspaper.

BEA

(Nervously smoking)

Toni.

TONI

What?

BEA

She keeps saying the same thing.

TONI

What?

BEA

She keeps repeating the same thing: that we've made a mistake.

TONI

What do you want me to say? Don't listen to her.

BEA

But... she seems really sure.

TONI

And you believe her?

BEA

Well...

TONI

Don't be fooled. Don't expect her to tell the truth. Bea, sometimes you act so stupid. When a kid comes to your class and says that he forgot his homework, do you believe him?

(BEA doesn't answer)

He says he spent all afternoon doing it but, whoops, he left it at home. Do you believe him?

BEA

At first, yeah, you should believe him.

TONI

Even if he gives you a bullshit excuse like that...

BEA

Well, yeah. At first you have to believe him because if you don't, you won't build any trust with the kid. Maybe later you'll make him see the error of his ways but you've

got to be careful. Look, Toni, you can't say much about pedagogy because you gym teachers don't get the same education as us.

TONI

Jesus, that's fascinating. What the hell do they teach you in your degree? The magic formula?

BEA

For starters they teach us how to speak well. Without swear words.

TONI

(Teasing her)

"Without swear words". I talk how people talk in the real world, where those kids are going to be when they leave school. And look, I'll tell you something about excuses, because you study so much for your degree but nobody shows you shit about how things really work.

(He takes the flask out of his pocket and takes a drink)

There's a theory about excuses:

Nowadays, *at the dawn of the 21st century*, don't expect to hear a kid say he's late because his dad's alarm didn't go off, or that he hasn't studied because he was sick. These are ridiculous excuses that no one would believe. Look, those little bastards have perfected the technique. Their trick is this, this is how they think: "If you want a believable excuse, invent something big, a real whopper, and it'll slide". That's how they think. No more headaches or too much traffic, no. Now they come to you and say: "I can't do gym today because I went sky diving on Sunday from 2000 metres and the instructor had a problem with the parachute and we had to use the emergency chute and we fell in the middle of the sea and then we had to swim 8 hours in 2-metre-high waves in water at 4 degrees celsius." How are you going to argue with that? How could he have invented it with so many details? That's the key.

BEA

And you would believe it.

TONI

It's not a question of believing, it's that it's impossible to argue with.

BEA

But if a kid's alarm really didn't go off and that's why he's late, then what?

TONI

If a kid tells me he's late because the alarm didn't go off, I'll either think he's retarded for using such old-fashioned excuses or maybe he's really smart and he's improving on the theory of excuses.

BEA

Did you say retarded?

TONI

Well, not really retarded. I meant idiot.

BEA

Are you saying that retarded and idiot are the same thing for you?

TONI

No, I didn't say that.

BEA

Sure you did, you just said it.

A noise from outside can be heard. TONI tells BEA to be quiet.

TONI

Someone's coming. It was four knocks, right?

BEA

Four.

They hear four knocks. TONI exits through the main door. A few seconds later, he comes back with VICTOR.

TONI

(To BEA)

It's Victor.

VICTOR is wearing headphones. When he enters he takes them off, rolls them up and puts them in his hand bag. VICTOR'S face looks worried and tired, and it is noticeable in his movements and tone of voice.

VICTOR

(Not very convincing, dull)

Man, there was a landslide on the highway. It was incredible. A car was totally crushed. Firemen, ambulances... I had to make a big circle to get here. Am I really late?

BEA

For the meeting, no, because it's not quite 9 yet. For your job, yes, because you were supposed to be here at 8:30.

VICTOR

Fine, I'm going.

He removes a ski mask from his bag, leaves the bag next to the table and goes towards the hideout door.

BEA

I already tried.
(VICTOR stops. BEA adds:)
But she won't eat.

VICTOR
(He continues walking)
I'll go check it out.

BEA
I'm going with you.
(She stands up and walks towards VICTOR)
And she keeps saying that we've got the wrong person.

VICTOR
(He stops)
Don't pay attention to her. You take everything so seriously.
(BEA, bothered by the comment, sits down again. VICTOR turns to TONI)
Sandra's not here yet...
(TONI shakes his head)
She's coming at 9.
(TONI nods. BEA has started to go through VICTOR'S bag. He sees her)
What are you doing?

BEA
Do you have any cigarettes?

VICTOR
Bea, that's my bag. Don't be such a nosey parker!

BEA drops the bag. VICTOR puts on the ski mask and goes through the hideout door.

TONI
"Nosey parker"... Did you learn that at university?

BEA
(Bringing up the previous subject)
You'll see that it's true, that we've got the wrong person.

TONI
And here we go.

BEA
It's just the way that she says it, Toni. Something seems so authentic.

TONI
Have you read the information sheet, Bea?

BEA
Yes.

TONI
Let's see, get it out.

BEA

I don't have it.

TONI

You don't have it? You were supposed to bring it.

BEA

What do you mean?.

TONI

Sandra put it very clearly: "Bring the sheet".

BEA

Well, I didn't hear it.

TONI

Well, she said it.

BEA

No, she didn't.

TONI

Yeah, she said it.

(TONI takes his sheet out of his pocket.
It's wrinkled)

You'll see.

(He gives it to BEA).

What does it say about her?

BEA

What?

TONI

Read it. What does it say about her?

BEA

(Reading)

"Cristina Garrido. Daughter of David Garrido, director and owner of the development company *BGP...*"

TONI

No, no, down below, where it says "hobbies".

BEA

"Hobbies: she likes reading, going to the cinema and travelling. And most of all theatre. She's been acting in amateur groups since she was twelve years old..."

TONI

(Interrupting)

Okay.

(He stares at BEA)

Actress. Do you trust anyone who does theatre? They're odd balls... and they know how to lie.

TONI takes the flask out of his pocket and takes a long drink. BEA folds the paper and is about to

put it away. TONI, with an accusing look, asks for the sheet back. BEA gives it to him. TONI goes back to his newspaper. BEA stays seated, thinking.

TONI

(Without taking his eyes off the newspaper,
to BEA)

Weren't you going downstairs?

BEA

No.

TONI

Maybe he needs help.

BEA

You've already seen... he's got everything under control.

TONI

What's going on, Bea?

BEA

Nothing.

TONI

I thought you guys were doing well.

BEA

Yeah, we're fine. Him on one hand, and me on the other.
Fine.

TONI

Did you fight?

BEA

No, no. It's impossible to fight with Victor.

TONI

So, it didn't work...

BEA

What didn't work?

TONI

I mean, things have cooled off a bit.

BEA

We both know how he is. He's charming, nice, wonderful
but... he lives on "Planet Victor" and, apparently, it's
like one of those planets in The Little Prince where
there's only space for one person: him.

TONI

Yeah.

BEA

That's how he is. He's different.

TONI

So, that's it... nothing.

BEA

No. It's just that he's not ready to have a relationship right now. He says things are good just the way they are.

TONI

Right, of course... how is he going to have a relationship if he's always got those headphones on. What the hell is he listening to anyway? The other day I asked him: "What are you listening to, Victor?" And he answered: "Music". Well, no shit. I didn't think it was nature sounds.

BEA

He's always listening to the same song.

TONI

Oh, really?

BEA

Yeah.

TONI

What?

BEA

I don't know what it is.

TONI

Why? Is it a punishment or something?

BEA

No, he didn't tell me. I guess it's because he likes it.

TONI

Jesus.

BEA

It's really made an impact on him. He listens to it at all hours.

TONI

So he *is* a little bit weird...

BEA

Somebody gave it to him.

TONI

Somebody gave it to him? Who?

BEA

I don't know. And those headphones and that MP3 player that he's got now, too. You've seen it. He won't let anyone touch it. See, it's what I'm telling you. Victor's got his issues and you shouldn't try to understand him.

TONI

Jesus.

BEA

Leave him alone. He's happy like that.

TONI

Yeah, I can see that...

(He goes back to reading the paper. He
changes the subject)

Hey, did Sandra speak to Victor this morning?

BEA

I don't know.

TONI

Yeah, they were supposed to talk. That's what he told me.
I'm going to call him up here.

BEA

Why?

TONI

I want to know what the meeting is about.

BEA

He probably doesn't know.

TONI

Unless... do you wanna call him?

(He smiles maliciously)

*TONI gets up and goes towards the hideout door.
He stops at the threshold and screams*

TONI

Blue!

(He waits a few seconds and then repeats:)

Blue! Mr. Blue!

(He waits a little bit more and finally,
after nodding his head, he says:)

Come here!

TONI goes back to his chair and sits down.

BEA

What time is it, Toni?

TONI

It's time. It won't be long now.

*VICTOR appears in the hideout door. He's wearing
a ski mask.*

TONI

(Without turning around)

Victor, have you spoken with Sandra?

VICTOR

(Without removing the ski mask)
Yeah, she called me.

TONI

And did she tell you what the meeting was about?

VICTOR

No. She just told me the time, nothing else.

They hear four knocks.

VICTOR

I'll get it.

He leaves through the main door. A few seconds later he enters with SANDRA. SANDRA is dressed formally and holding a teacher's briefcase. Just after entering she sees the stereo on the table. She takes it and puts it far away from the table, dramatically, like a school teacher who has caught her students skipping class.

TONI puts away the newspaper. VICTOR sits down in one of the chairs.

SANDRA

Has anyone come?

TONI

Who's anyone?

SANDRA

Anyone that you guys don't know.

They look at each other.

EVERYONE

No.

SANDRA

(To VICTOR, referring to the ski mask)
Victor, when you're up here you don't have to wear that.

VICTOR removes the mask. He lights a cigarette and starts smoking like the rest.

SANDRA

Is anyone missing?

TONI

Alex...

BEA

...Which doesn't surprise me, considering you can't rely on him for anything.

SANDRA

Please, Bea, let's not start. He'll be here.

TONI

Come on, Sandra, tell us what the meeting's about.

SANDRA

We have to wait.

SANDRA sits in the only chair left, crosses her legs and waits.

TONI

Wait for what?

VICTOR

Alex might not show up.

TONI

What's the meeting about?

SANDRA

I don't know.

TONI

What do you mean, you don't know?

SANDRA

I mean I don't know.

TONI

For fuck's sake! You call us for a meeting and you don't know what you're going to talk about?

SANDRA

I called *you*, but I didn't *call* the meeting.

TONI

Oh, no? Then, who?

SANDRA

Just wait, he'll be here in a sec.

TONI

Jesus, what a mystery. Are we going to have to wait long?

SANDRA

It's already nine o'clock. He should be here any second.

BEA

Who?

TONI

(To BEA)

The person who *called* the meeting.

BEA

And what about Alex?

SANDRA

Alex will be here shortly.

BEA

Are we going to start without him?

TONI

Ugh, he's so cheeky.

SANDRA

He called me and said he was running a little behind.

TONI

Why?

SANDRA

Because he had to run an errand.

TONI

Oh, yeah? What kind of errand?

SANDRA

I don't know. He didn't say. Something important.

BEA

He plays football on Wednesdays.

TONI

Maybe he went to play football.

SANDRA

No.

TONI

What a cheek!

SANDRA

He didn't go to play football. End of discussion.

(She looks at everyone)

Do you have your information sheets?

VICTOR

Were we supposed to bring them?

TONI

(Simultaneously)

Yes.

BEA

She didn't say anything about that, right?

SANDRA

Yeah, I did.

TONI

Yeah, she did.

VICTOR

Well, I didn't hear it.

BEA

Me either.

SANDRA

Because you were talking while I said it. Here.

(She takes out some sheets from her
briefcase and hands them out)

I've made copies.

TONI

I would have made them go without. Screw 'em.

BEA

Shut up.

VICTOR

Are we going to have an exam or something?

SANDRA

If you do, it won't be me who gives it.

BEA

But, who's coming?

TONI

God damnit, tell us already.

BEA

It's so mysterious.

VICTOR

Come on Sandra.

TONI

Yeah, come on, he's gonna be here in a sec anyway... tell
us!

SANDRA

Fiiiiine. X is coming.

Their jaws drop.

BEA

Sorry?

SANDRA

X is coming.

VICTOR

Here?

BEA

Who?

SANDRA

Mr. X. He wants to tell us something.

TONI

Shit.

VICTOR

When?

SANDRA

He'll be here any second.

BEA

Who?

SANDRA

Mr. X.

VICTOR

The "big boss".

TONI

You can't be serious.

VICTOR

Mr. X.

TONI

His name's Martinez, right?

SANDRA

Toni, please!

BEA

His name's Martinez?

VICTOR

Who is he?

SANDRA

(furious)

Toni! Are you an idiot? His name's Mr. X! End of story. Not Martinez, not anything but Mr. X. If he told us his name was Mr. X, it's because his name is Mr. X and there's nothing else to know.

(TONI gets up and walks to the back wall, visibly bothered)

Toni, are you listening to me?

TONI

Yes.

SANDRA

(scolding them)

Well, let's see if we can start following the Decalogue strictly because this is serious. If we do things well, everything will end up fine, everyone will do their part and voila, finito, ciao. But if we start acting stupid - I'm telling you now - we're going to have problems, big ones.

(TONI goes back to his seat)

This isn't a game, you hear me? There's a lot of money at stake and we could end up in a bad position if things don't go as planned. So enough with the jokes.

(SANDRA asks EVERYONE)

What about the fox? Is she gagged?

VICTOR

No.

SANDRA

No?

VICTOR

No, she's eating.

SANDRA

And her mouth is uncovered?

BEA

How else do you expect her to eat?

SANDRA

(To VICTOR)

Go tie her up right now and cover her mouth. I don't want any slip-ups when Mr. X gets here.

VICTOR

(Standing up)

Ok.

VICTOR leaves his sheet on the table, puts on his ski mask, grabs the bag and leaves through the hideout door.

BEA

Sandra, she keeps saying it's not her.

SANDRA

Don't listen to her, it's normal.

TONI

But Bea saw a certain sparkle in her eyes that makes her think she's telling the truth.

BEA

(To TONI)

Shut up.

SANDRA

Toni, what did I say about joking?

TONI

It's not a joke. She's serious.

SANDRA

Can someone tell me what you're all doing smoking? What did I just say about the Decalogue?

TONI

It's fine.

SANDRA

What do you mean, it's fine?

BEA

We'll pick up the butts. Right, Toni?

TONI

Yes.

(He gets up to pick up cigarette butts off
the floor)

Only a few fell...

SANDRA

(Standing up)

All right, let's see. I didn't say not to smoke only
because the fifth rule of the Decalogue says not to smoke.
I said not to smoke because "not smoking" is the most
essential rule of surveillance. Did you read the
information I sent you?

TONI

Where?

SANDRA

Well.

(She explains)

You never smoke when you're watching a hostage because,
apart from the obvious DNA trace it leaves behind, by
night, a cigarette marks one's location; the burning ember
signals the exact center of the face, so a lookout man who
smokes becomes an easy target for someone who wants to
locate them from far away.

TONI

But here inside...

BEA

(Pointing to the light bulb)

And the light...

SANDRA

Rules are rules! If we said you can't smoke it's because
you can't smoke. Look, if you don't follow the rules in
front of Mr. X you'll have to answer to him.

A noise from the outside can be heard.

BEA

Someone's coming!

EVERYONE stands.

SANDRA

I'll turn off the lights!

SANDRA turns off the lights. In the dark, the tips of TONI and BEA'S cigarettes stand out.

SANDRA

The cigarettes!

The two embers glow for another moment and then disappear.

SANDRA

Four knocks.

A first knock can be heard. Then, a second. After, a third. But no fourth knock is heard.

TONI

Well, not letting him in.

Finally, the fourth knock is heard.

SANDRA

It's him.

The light comes back on. SANDRA leaves through the main door while BEA and TONI attempt to air out the room.

SANDRA comes in accompanied by a man, MR. X, who's dressed in an elegant black suit, similar to those of the characters of "Reservoir Dogs". He's carrying a motor scooter helmet in his hand. He looks serious.

MR. X

Sorry I'm late.

SANDRA

You're right on time.

MR. X

I would have liked to arrive earlier but I got held up. So, is this them?

(Referring to BEA and TONI)

Is everyone here?

SANDRA

Yes, sir. Well, one person is on his way. And there's another one there...

(pointing to the hideout door)

...with the fox.

SANDRA signals TONI to go get VICTOR. TONI gets up and goes towards the hideout door.

TONI

(Shouting)

Blue! Come up here!

(He goes back to his seat. To Mr. X:)
He's coming.

MR. X
Ok, let's sit down.

MR. X removes his gloves and carefully leaves them in a corner next to his helmet. Meanwhile, the others take a seat.

SANDRA
This is Mr. X, the one I told you about. Well, I didn't tell you about him. I mean that I told you there was a very important man in charge of all this and he's the one who gave me the job. So, this is him, Mr. X.

MR. X sits down in the chair formerly occupied by VICTOR.

MR. X
And you are...?

SANDRA
(Pointing to the hideout door)
The one down there is Mr. Blue, this is...
(pointing to BEA)

BEA
...Mr. Green.
(SANDRA points to TONI so that he can introduce himself but he doesn't remember his fake name)
...Mr. Brown.

SANDRA
And Mr. Red will be here shortly.

MR. X requests VICTOR'S presence with a gesture.

TONI
(Standing up)
Christ.
(He goes towards the hideout door and shouts again)
Blue! Do you mind coming up here!
(He nods his head. Then he comes back)
He says he's coming.

TONI sits down.

SANDRA
What's he up to?

TONI
Who knows? I think he said the fox was choking on something..

SANDRA

All right, let's get started, X, he'll be up in a jiffy.

SANDRA, BEA and TONI wait expectantly with the information sheet about "the fox" in their hands.

MR. X

(In a serious tone)

Ladies and gentlemen, there has been a mistake. The person that has been kidnapped is not the person who was supposed to be kidnapped.

SANDRA, BEA and TONI put away the information sheet.

BEA

(to TONI)

See?

SANDRA

(to MR. X)

What?

BEA

(to TONI)

"Theatre", "theatre"...

SANDRA

(to MR. X)

What happened?

MR. X

We don't know when the error occurred. But the fact is you took one person for another.

TONI

(To SANDRA)

I did what they told me to do.

MR. X

We're not pointing fingers...for the moment. The fact is that we don't know where the error happened. It could have been a change in the fox's route that day, or it could have been a mistake in the information that was obtained in terms of her itinerary... we don't know.

(To SANDRA, after staring for a moment at the hideout door)

Is he coming or not?

SANDRA

(To TONI)

What did he say?

TONI

That he's coming.

MR. X

(Taking the floor again)

We've got to think systematically at a time like this.

(He gets up and begins walking around the others)

I didn't get where I am today by thinking just any old way. This is the situation: One - you were supposed to capture a fox, keep her and free her once I had negotiated the ransom. That was the first deal. Two - there was a mistake and the fox that's in the cage is not the one that's supposed to be there. If this were a Sunday hunt, the identity of the fox wouldn't matter, but we're talking about something very different. We're only interested in one fox of all the foxes in the wood. So, three - the first thing we have to do is solve this problem. Only then - four - can we continue with the plan.

BEA has raised her hand. MR. X, visibly annoyed, stops and gives her the floor.

BEA

And what are we going to do with this fox?

MR. X

Lady, the opposite of systematic reasoning is hasty reasoning. Let me explain something.

(He continues)

Let's analyze the situation in which we find ourselves: One - as the Decalogue states, you, when dealing with the fox, have always hidden your face and used a false name, so that the fox doesn't know who you are or what you look like. Two - *this* fox was captured just three days ago. That means she's been in captivity for three days. And by the looks of it, this hasn't been enough time to cause alarm amongst her close family and friends. So - three - tonight you will leave the girl on the side of the road near a gas station. Four - you mustn't put the initial plan into action until the situation is confirmed to be calm. Meanwhile - four - you will separate for a while and continue your normal working lives. Is that clear?

SANDRA

But *this* fox will report the kidnapping...

MR. X

That would be unproductive on her part. She'll probably be so frightened when she gets out of here that she'll want to forget all about it and won't tell anyone.

TONI

(To BEA)

It's a sad day when you get kidnapped and freed for no ransom...

MR. X

...But suppose she reports the facts to the police, what evidence has she got?: One - nobody's asked for a ransom: that puts a hole through the kidnapping theory. Two - she hasn't been abused, she hasn't suffered any physical harm or sexual abuse, nothing, which discards the aggression

motive. Three - there are neither witnesses nor any other victims.

(BEA raises her hand. MR. X sees her, but this time he ignores her)

Conclusion: she will seem delusional. They will file her away for lack of evidence. So, you're going to remain quiet for a while, until everything has passed. When the time is right, you'll receive new orders and execute the plan again. What you've got to do now is...

(To SANDRA, interrupting his talk)

Mr. White, where's the car? I haven't seen it.

TONI

What car?

SANDRA

It'll be here shortly. It belongs to the person who's not here.

MR. X

But, how, didn't...?

SANDRA

No, no, don't worry. He'll be here soon. He can't be long now.

MR. X

(Taking the floor again)

As soon as the car gets here you will do the following: One - cover the fox's eyes. Two - take her out of the cage and put her in the trunk of the car. Three - go at least 40 kilometers away and - four - free her next to the road as soon as you see a gas station. You will only need two people to do this. The rest: One - clean the warehouse thoroughly, especially her cage. Two - put everything you find in a bag. And - three - give the bag to me to destroy. Is that clear? The goal is not to leave any trace behind.

(Pointing to the hideout door)

And what about him, is he coming?

BEA

(To herself, as she stands up)

What's he doing?

BEA puts on the ski mask and goes through the hideout door.

MR. X

Don't forget to exhaust the precautions. This is a simple task, but it must be executed with the utmost caution, no mistakes. If everyone follows all the steps that I've just said, there will be no problems. In less than one hour, the fox will have arrived home and there will be no trace of her presence in this warehouse. Most importantly: follow the Decalogue religiously. This will only be a delusion if the fox can't identify you.

BEA enters hurriedly wearing the ski mask. After her, VICTOR enters wearing no ski mask. Both stop. EVERYBODY looks at VICTOR, without a ski mask, with surprised looks.

MR. X

(Indignant, to SANDRA)
Who the hell is this?

SANDRA

This is Mr. Blue.

BEA returns to her seat discreetly and removes the ski mask.

MR. X

(To SANDRA, furious)
What's this idiot doing without a ski mask? Was he with the fox?

SANDRA nods. MR. X tries to hold back his anger. He approaches VICTOR, staring at him, furious. He stops himself just inches from VICTOR. VICTOR remains immobile, frightened.

MR. X

(Furious)
Do you think I'm an amateur!? That's a rhetorical question, don't answer it. Do you think I'm an amateur!?

VICTOR

(After a long and tense silence, not knowing what to say, he turns towards SANDRA)
Should I answer?

MR. X

Nooo!! Do you have any idea how much money is at stake!?

After another long and tense silence, VICTOR, uncertain if he should answer, turns towards SANDRA again.

MR. X

Do you know what you're risking!?

Long and tense silence during which VICTOR does not respond to MR. X or look at SANDRA.

MR. X

Sit down.

VICTOR sits down. MR. X reflects for a moment. The rest wait in silence and don't dare to say anything.

MR. X

(after a lot of thinking, to EVERYBODY)

I'm afraid the situation has changed. We must finish her.

BEA

Huh?

MR. X

We have to eliminate her.

SANDRA

Eliminate her.

TONI

Eliminate her?

MR. X

Kill her. We gotta kill her.

BEA

Yeah, sure, no problem. Are you crazy?

MR. X

Look lady, do you have another suggestion?

BEA

I'm sure there are other options.

MR. X

Can you think another way to reset this girl's memory so that she forgets this half-wit's face?

(Pointing to VICTOR)

SANDRA

Can't we just threaten her so she doesn't say anything?

MR. X

The first thing this girl will do - threatened or not - is report Mr. Blue to the police and when they catch him - something which I don't doubt - they'll catch all of us.

TONI

We could kill him.

(EVERYONE looks at TONI)

No, just kidding man. It's a joke.

MR. X

I'm not joking!

(To SANDRA)

Sandra, what kind of people are they?

SANDRA

Trustworthy people.

BEA

(Suprised that MR. X has said someone's name)

He said Sandra...

MR. X

Lady, what does it matter if we use Sandra's name if we're going to kill the girl anyway? For now, we'll continue to follow the rest of the catalogue rules.

TONI

He said catalogue.

MR. X

Decalogue! I said Decalogue!

(To SANDRA)

Is she gagged?

VICTOR

No, she was dry heaving a little. Dinner didn't sit too well, but she's okay now...

(Starting to get up)

Do you want me to...?

MR. X

Yes. Go down there immediately and gag her.

(VICTOR goes towards the hideout door)

But first take all of her valuables - bracelets, necklaces, rings, whatever she's got. Tie her hands and feet well and cover her mouth and eyes.

VICTOR

Ok.

VICTOR goes through the hideout door.

MR. X

Next step. Gotta kill her. Who's gonna do it?

MR. X takes a knife out of his pocket and opens it. EVERYONE is shocked by its cold, sharp blade. MR. X, impassive, goes to the table and stabs it with the knife. This produces a long pause. Nobody responds. MR. X stares at the others.

MR. X

As you will understand, I'm not going to do it.

MR. X gives them some time to respond but nobody answers. BEA, TONI and SANDRA'S faces reflect great worry. MR. X waits patiently. Nobody says anything.

MR. X

Look people, you've got to decide now because as soon as the car gets here we'll have to act fast.

Nobody says anything. MR. X waits for an answer. TONI, the most frightened of all, breaks the uncomfortable silence.

TONI

(almost whispering)

With a knife?

MR. X
Yes.

TONI
Does it have to be with a knife?

BEA
(Standing up, furious)
But, are we crazy or what? One thing is a kidnapping. "A clean operation", you said, Sandra. It seemed a little absurd, but I accepted. But, this... what the hell is this? This guy's crazy. I don't know about you guys but I'm outta here.

BEA heads towards the main door. Nobody follows her.

MR. X
Lady. If you open that door you're going to run the same risk as the girl.

BEA stops.

BEA
What's that supposed to mean?

MR. X
You seem like a reasonable person.
(He takes an information sheet from the table)
This requires systematic reasoning..
(taking the knife)
...And I'll tell you clearly: if we're going to kill this girl because she's had access to sensitive information and doesn't belong to the plan..
(touching the sheet with the knife)
...You..
(pointing to BEA with the knife)
Upon exiting this place, wouldn't belong to the plan either and would be carrying sensitive information with you. The syllogism is easy.
(He gently weighs the knife in his hand.)
Understand what I'm saying?

BEA
(To SANDRA)
Would he do it?

SANDRA
Bea, sit down.

BEA goes back to her seat and sits down.

MR. X
Who's going to kill her? Clearly, she won't do it.
(Referring to BEA)

MR. X sticks the knife in the table again, this time piercing the information sheet of the "fox".

TONI

Must it be with a knife? Jesus, it's just that it's so cruel.

MR. X

Lethal injection? Electric chair? Hanging?

TONI

I don't know, but a knife...

SANDRA

And what about a gun?

TONI

(To SANDRA)

Has he got a gun?

MR. X

Yes, but we're not going to use it.

SANDRA

It would be a lot easier.

MR. X

A gun leaves evidence. The bullet is the DNA of the weapon. It's just a matter of time before they identify it.

(Revealing his new idea)

We'll make it look like a robbery. There's no time to lose. Who's going to kill her?

TONI

But, it's just that with a knife...

MR. X

Would you mind shutting up!

(To SANDRA)

Honestly, what kind of riffraff are they?

SANDRA

They're trustworthy people, rest assured.

MR. X

What the hell do they do that they don't know anything?

SANDRA

They're my workmates.

MR. X

What?!

SANDRA

Workmates. And friends, too. So don't worry, you can trust them.

MR. X

(stunned)

Workmates!? I can't believe it. From school?

SANDRA

Yeah.

MR. X

(Furious)

You found school teachers to do a kidnapping?!?

SANDRA

(Standing up)

The important thing was that they could be trusted. And they can.

MR. X

No doubt about that!

SANDRA

We're losing control here. Let's not get nervous.

MR. X

So, you work together? In the same school?

SANDRA

Yes.

MR. X

People see you together?

TONI

Well, we teach different grades: Victor teaches 2nd, Bea, kindergarten, Sandra, 3rd and I'm the gym teacher so I'm a little all over the place.

MR. X

(Not listening to TONI)

My God!

TONI

Listen, don't think we're poofs because we work with kids. We can do the same things as everyone...

(BEA makes him shut up)

MR. X is beside himself. He is grunting, cursing, snorting. He is so angry that SANDRA doesn't dare say anything. BEA and TONI slouch in their seats. Finally, MR. X controls himself and tries to redirect his wrath. He focuses on his breathing and takes a few steps. He then stops. He breathes deeply and thinks for a moment. He looks at them.

MR. X

(faking composure)

The one with the car, when is he coming?

SANDRA

He should have been here already. He won't be long.

MR. X

We won't execute the fox until the car is here. I wouldn't want to kill the girl and have to drag the body later. Meanwhile, we're going to do something. Sandra knows you better than I. She will choose - because of course she's not going to do it - she will choose the person who will sacrifice the fox. I'm going to the next room to find a bag. As soon as I get back, I want to see the knife in one of your hands.

MR. X leaves through the main door.

SANDRA sits down, dejected.

TONI

A bag?

BEA

How did he get here?

SANDRA

By scooter. A big scooter.

TONI

We all came with scooters then. Alex is the only one with a car.

SANDRA

Yep.

BEA

(Referring to MR. X)

Doesn't he have a car?

SANDRA

He had an accident on Monday and totaled his car. He was fine though.

TONI

Too bad.

He takes the flask out of his pocket and takes a drink.

SANDRA

Alex is the only one with a car.

BEA

Couldn't Mr. X tell someone else to bring a car?

SANDRA

No. There's no one else involved in this. Just him and us.

BEA

Let's hope Alex doesn't come.

TONI

Now he's likely to come, the bastard.

BEA

Can't you call him and tell him not to come? You heard what the guy said. He won't kill her until Alex is here.

SANDRA

He doesn't carry his mobile. He's impossible to get in touch with.

BEA

Sandra, this guy's a psychopath. You're not going to let him do whatever he wants.

TONI

It's like straight out of a movie.

SANDRA

(Standing up)

I know... it's incredible. I'm just as surprised as you guys. Horrified. You don't know how much I regret getting you involved in this. I'm sorry. I thought it would be easy. And there was so much money at stake...

BEA

Nobody is blaming you.

SANDRA thinks.

SANDRA

But... this guy, apart from being a bit dry and not impressing you much, is someone who knows how to think in this type of situation. Better than us. Be objective for a moment. Try to forget about your feelings. Honestly, can you think of any options other than killing the girl?

BEA and TONI look for an answer. They think. The silence becomes tense when they realize there are no other solutions.

TONI

(Almost whispering)

No, but who's going to do it?

BEA

It's between two people: Toni and Victor.

SANDRA

(Putting her hands on her head)

God.

BEA

And if you refuse to choose?

SANDRA

Then he'll choose.

TONI

(To BEA, very serious)

Guess that puts you in the running again.

SANDRA

(with a lost look, desperate)

Oh my God! It seems as irresponsible on my part to choose one of you as it does to leave it up to him. How many times in your life, when two options present themselves, have you wished to have only one option? How many times have you wished for a single path, without forks, without fear of messing up?

(She turns around and sees TONI yawning)

Toni! How can you yawn at a time like this? Are you bored?

TONI

No.

BEA

No, don't mess with him.

SANDRA

I'm talking about life and death and when I look up, I see him yawning as if he didn't care about anything that's happening.

TONI

That's not true. I do care, it's just that...

BEA

He's not yawning because he's lazy, Sandra, it's for lack of oxygen.

TONI

Oh, is it?

BEA

Yeah. I read it in a science journal. It's when there's a lack of oxygen that people yawn. Kids yawn all the time in my class. You gotta open the window.

TONI

To throw the kid out.

BEA

Yeah, right.

SANDRA

(Standing up)

I'll be right back.

BEA

(To TONI, accusingly)

Look.

TONI

(To SANDRA)

Where are you going?

SANDRA

Over there, I'm going to talk to X.

SANDRA leaves through the main door.

TONI

Jesus. Alex, of all the times he's stood us up, you'll see he'll show up today.

BEA

He's unpredictable.

TONI

And if he comes, then what?

BEA

He could choose Victor.

TONI

Right. But if Sandra chooses me, then what? If I refuse to do it, you heard, that guy is capable of stabbing me in the head.

BEA thinks.

BEA

Ask Victor to do it.

TONI

What?

BEA

It's between you and Victor. Ask Victor if he'll do it. See what he says.

TONI

(Looking at BEA, surprised)

Bea...

BEA holds his glance, steadfastly. After a few seconds, TONI gets up and goes towards the hideout door.

TONI

Blue!

(He waits)

Could you come up here for a minute? I have to ask you something.

After he consents, he returns to his seat.

BEA

(Thinking)

What did Sandra want to talk to X about?

TONI

Bea, can't you see? She didn't go to talk to him. She was upset for what you said about yawning.

BEA

More like she's upset because you were yawning...

(Thinking)

No, she went to talk to X. That's what she said.

(To herself)

What did she want to say...?

TONI

(Turning towards the hideout door)

Christ.

TONI stands up and goes towards the door.

TONI

Blue!

(He waits a moment)

Ok, I'm coming down!

He is about to go through the door but suddenly stops. Apparently, VICTOR answered him. He goes back to BEA.

BEA

What did he say?

TONI

He's done, he's coming up.

TONI sits down.

BEA

What time is it, Toni?

TONI

(Looking at his watch)

Nine thirty.

BEA

(Thinking)

What time do the matches finish?

TONI

What matches?

BEA

Those matches that Alex plays in.

TONI

Oh, Alex's league... about nine o'clock...

BEA

It's late. Maybe he's not coming.

TONI

Or, likewise, he could be just about to arrive...

BEA

Maybe what Sandra said is true.

TONI

What's that?

BEA

About the errand. That Alex went to do an important errand...

TONI

Bea...

BEA

Well, maybe it's true.

TONI

Maybe it's true that Alex told her that, but it's impossible to know exactly what Alex is doing.

BEA

So, if it's not that, then what is Sandra talking to X about?

(Thinking)

TONI takes the flask out of his pocket and takes a drink while VICTOR comes back from the hideout. VICTOR realizes that SANDRA and X are not there.

VICTOR

Where are they?

TONI

Just over there.

VICTOR

Where? Outside?

TONI

No. Just over there, in the next room.

VICTOR

Are you sure they didn't go outside?

BEA

Yeah. They're here inside.

VICTOR

Are you sure?

BEA

Victor, they haven't even opened the door to the outside.

VICTOR

What are they doing?

BEA

How should I know?

VICTOR

Alex hasn't shown up yet?

BEA

Nope.

TONI

(in a serious tone)

Victor.

VICTOR

What?

TONI

(He gets up and goes towards VICTOR)

I don't think I'll be able to do it.

VICTOR

(Without a doubt)

I'm certain that I won't be able to do it.

BEA

(Turning to the main door)

Here they come.

MR. X and SANDRA enter. MR. X is carrying a body bag.

MR. X

(To VICTOR)

Is the fox ready?

VICTOR

Yes.

TONI

You got a body bag there?

MR. X

Listen, don't worry about what's kept inside this warehouse. Understand?

He unfolds the bag with SANDRA'S help, in front of the table.

BEA

You said it would look like a robbery.

MR. X

And it will. You wouldn't want the trunk to get blood stained while you move her, would you?

MR. X unfolds the bag on the floor and opens it. BEA, TONI and SANDRA watch, terrified.

MR. X

(He addresses EVERYBODY solemnly, upon
noticing their worried faces)
I want you to know, ladies and gentlemen, that we're not
going to do anything against the law. If given the
opportunity to escape...
(he stares at the hideout door as if he
could see through it)
...- Something that won't happen -, the person over there...
(he points to the hideout)
Wouldn't hesitate for a second to throw you all behind
bars. You know what it's like to go to jail? Going to jail
means leaving your houses to sleep in a bedroom with bars,
leaving your activities to do nothing, leaving the people
you love to be surrounded by delinquents, crazy people and
drug addicts. Going to jail means not living; in a word,
meeting death. That person...
(he points to the door again)
...Wants you dead. Just that: dead. Ladies and gentlemen, we
will not allow this. We have the right to defend
ourselves.

They hear a noise coming from outside.

BEA

(startled)
Someone's coming!

TONI

Turn off the lights.

BEA turns off the lights.

SANDRA

It's Alex.

TONI

Shit.

BEA

I guess he's coming from playing football.

MR. X

Whoever it is, they've already seen the light. Turn it
back on.

*The lights go on. Everybody waits in silence,
immobile. They hear a knock.*

TONI

One.

(They hear another knock)

Two.

(And a third)

Three...

(They hear a fourth knock)

And four.

(They hear a fifth knock)

MR. X

(Taking out the gun)
Everyone on the floor!

TONI

A gun!

MR. X, firm, aims the gun towards the main door. The rest, frightened, fall to the floor. The knocks have multiplied, as if to throw them off. SANDRA gets up.

SANDRA

(Going towards the door)
I'm sure it's Alex. He's coming from doing his errand.

She goes out through the main door. After a moment their voices can be heard.

ALEX'S VOICE

How many knocks was it again?

SANDRA'S VOICE

Four.

As soon as they hear ALEX'S voice, EVERYONE stands up relieved. ALEX and SANDRA enter. ALEX is wearing a dark track suit and football boots.

ALEX

(To SANDRA)
See, I overdid it. I realize. I knocked five times and then I wanted to delete one. How do you delete?
(He addresses the rest, a little worked up, while taking off his jacket)
Crazy, this is why I'm late: a Hare-Krishna parade.

Under his track suit jacket, he's wearing a football jersey.

SANDRA

Don't tell us.

ALEX sees MR. X pointing a gun at him. He puts his hands up, scared.

ALEX

Jeez!

SANDRA

(To MR. X)
This is Alex.

ALEX

(To SANDRA)
Who's that?

SANDRA

That's Mr. X.

ALEX

(Lowering his hands)

Oh, Martinez.

MR. X

What?!?

He aims at ALEX again ALEX puts his hands up again. EVERYONE is stunned.

SANDRA

No! No! Everyone calm down.

MR. X

Who is that?

SANDRA

He's from our group. It's Alex. He's Mr. Red. There's no reason to worry, calm down. He's got the car.

(To ALEX)

You have brought the car...

ALEX

Yes.

SANDRA

(To ALEX)

And this is Mr. X.

MR. X lowers his gun.

ALEX

Christ on a cross, you scared me.

He picks up his jacket from the floor.

VICTOR

(To MR. X)

Sir, I took her valuable things and covered her mouth and eyes but I haven't tied her up yet. I left the rope in my scooter. Can I go get it?

MR. X

All right. Hurry.

VICTOR

Be right back.

BEA

(To VICTOR)

Are you leaving?

VICTOR

(Stopping)

I'm going to get the rope.

BEA

Where are you going, Victor? You've got the rope in your bag.

VICTOR

No.

BEA

Yeah, I saw it before when you accused me of being a nosey parker.

VICTOR

Are you sure about that, Bea?

BEA and VICTOR stare at each other. They remain like this for a moment. Finally BEA resolves:

BEA

At least I thought so...

MR. X

(To BEA)

Lady, are you going to continue questioning everything that goes on in here - that's a rhetorical question, don't answer that.

(BEA doesn't answer. Addressing VICTOR:)

And you, I don't want to hear anything else. Are you going to hurry up so we can finish this?

VICTOR and BEA stare at each other again. After a few seconds, VICTOR turns towards MR. X.

VICTOR

Yeah.

VICTOR leaves through the main door.

ALEX

(To SANDRA)

Should we set her free now?

MR. X

The car is here.

(Solemnly)

The time has come. We can begin.

(To TONI)

You.

TONI

Me?

MR. X

Yes, you.

TONI looks at SANDRA and ALEX.

TONI

(To MR. X)

Why me?

MR. X
Go get the fox.

TONI
Why?

MR. X
Because we have to execute her. Haven't you gotten that through your thick skull yet?

ALEX
Execute her?

TONI
But I don't want to do it.

MR. X
Go get her.

TONI
But I really don't want to do it.

MR. X
What are you saying to me?

TONI
(Almost shouting)
That I won't do it.

MR. X
(to TONI, as if he were an idiot)
You're not going to do it! Sandra's going to do it.
(To SANDRA)
Haven't you already talked about this?

BEA and TONI look surprised. They look at SANDRA appreciative and relieved.

SANDRA
(Gesturing TONI to go forward)
Toni.

MR. X
Come on! Bring her up. We'll tie her up here.

TONI goes towards the hideout door. Before leaving, he stops.

TONI
Should I put on a ski mask?

MR. X
(While grabbing the knife)
Her eyes are covered - it's not necessary.

ALEX

(To SANDRA)

But, what does he mean "execute her"?

MR. X

Hurry. He's bringing the rope.

TONI goes through the hideout door. Everybody waits expectantly. A few seconds later, TONI comes running through the door.

TONI

Quick! Come see this!

BEA, ALEX, SANDRA and TONI pile up at the door and remain still, looking. MR. X arrives last. The others make way for him and he disappears through the door.

MR. X'S VOICE

(Surprised and indignant)

What the hell is this!?!?!?

Lights down. The second act continues without intermission.

ACT TWO

A curtain falls in front of the warehouse hiding it. In front of the curtain, at a different level, there is a small lit room. It's the hideout. We can see NATALIA sitting in the corner on some pillows. NATALIA is a young girl. She looks tired, both physically and emotionally, but she seems calm and serene. There is a plate of food and a plastic spoon next to her. VICTOR enters. He's wearing a ski mask.

VICTOR

They tell me you won't eat.

NATALIA

I'm not hungry.

VICTOR

It'll piss them off if you don't eat.

NATALIA

They'll get over it.

VICTOR

Give it here, I'll help you.

(He takes the plate of food. NATALIA could care less. She seems absent)

I'm surprised you're so calm.

VICTOR and NATALIA speak without looking at each other.

NATALIA

How did you expect me to be?

VICTOR

I don't know. If I were in your situation, I'd be desperate.

NATALIA

You know, there was a time when I was desperate - I mean when I was on the outside - and I took everything so seriously. But I was able to fix all that and now I'm good. Really good. If you guys would let me get out of here everything would be perfect.

(VICTOR doesn't respond)

You're not okay.

(VICTOR is thinking)
You're still worried.
(No answer)
Yesterday you were really chatty.

VICTOR
I made a mistake getting involved in all this.

NATALIA
I don't doubt it. And getting me involved was *another* mistake.
(VICTOR doesn't see the humor)
You were in a better mood yesterday. What's wrong?

VICTOR
It's not just that. It's... everything.

NATALIA
Why did you get yourself involved?

VICTOR
For the money. I wanted to see if I could earn enough and leave my job, just like the others.

NATALIA
And live off the earnings.

VICTOR
No, I wouldn't be able to do that. I would look for another job that I really liked, something that made me feel good. They're the ones who want to stop working. I don't know if that'll work out for them. It depends how much we get from this.

NATALIA
They'll keep working.

VICTOR
It's just not worth it.

NATALIA
Come on, man, cheer up. I'm worse off than you.

VICTOR
Jesus, you, cheering me up. Seems like you're the kidnapper and I'm the hostage. Upstairs they're saying that since you're so calm you must have the Stockholm Syndrome.

NATALIA
In such a short time?

VICTOR
You don't buy it. Do you know the original Stockholm case?

NATALIA
No.

VICTOR

Well, it was really quick. Some guys robbed a bank and they locked themselves up with some hostages. They were only there four days. But it was enough time for one of the girls to fall in love with one of the robbers. You've been here three days.

NATALIA

So, tomorrow I'm supposed to fall in love.

VICTOR

Unless you want to beat the record and do it today.

NATALIA

Tell the guy with the flask to come down here, we're destined to be together.

VICTOR

Destined...

NATALIA

Do you believe in destiny?

VICTOR

Hmm, to be honest, not really. But you do, right?

NATALIA

To a certain extent. Not like in the way that our lives are written in advance, but I do believe in signs.

VICTOR

In signs.

NATALIA

Yeah. I believe that my itinerary isn't written - yours either - but there are certain warnings, certain signs, that tell you what your path is. Of course, you've got to want to see them. Signs appear for everyone but most people just ignore them.

VICTOR

What are they?

NATALIA

I don't know. Sometimes they're really clear and you know right away. Other times they're right in front of you and you don't realize it because they go by unnoticed, like songs for example.

VICTOR

Like songs...

NATALIA

Yeah, like songs. I think there's a song for all authentic moments. Haven't you ever been to a place and, just when you start asking yourself if you should really be there, suddenly, a song comes on to confirm it? That's a sign. It

means that the moment is real, that you're on the right track.

VICTOR

You really believe that?

NATALIA

Yeah, it happens. The other day, for example, I was talking on the phone when I realized I was saying things right out of a song. That was a sign. The lyrics said the rest. I only had to follow it.

Suddenly, we hear TONI'S voice.

TONI'S VOICE

Blue!!

VICTOR

(Whispering)

What does he want?

TONI'S VOICE

Blue! Mr. Blue!!

NATALIA

(To VICTOR)

How original...

VICTOR

(To TONI)

Yeah!

TONI'S VOICE

Come here!

VICTOR

(To NATALIA)

Don't go away, I'll be right back.

VICTOR gets up and leaves the hideout. The curtain goes up and the warehouse can be seen again, but this time from the back. TONI and BEA are seated in chairs, smoking cigarettes.

VICTOR enters the warehouse.

TONI

(Without turning around)

Victor, have you spoken with Sandra?

VICTOR

Yeah, she called me.

TONI

And did she tell you what the meeting was about?

VICTOR

No. She just told me the time, nothing else.

They hear four knocks.

VICTOR

I'll get it.

He leaves through the main door. A few seconds later VICTOR and SANDRA enter. Just after entering, SANDRA sees the stereo on the table. She grabs it and takes it away from the table.

TONI puts the newspaper away. VICTOR sits down in one of the chairs.

SANDRA

Has anyone come?

TONI

Who's anyone?

SANDRA

Anyone that you guys don't know.

They look at each other.

EVERYONE

No.

SANDRA

(To VICTOR, referring to the ski mask)

Victor, when you're up here you don't have to wear that.

VICTOR removes the mask. He lights a cigarette and starts smoking, like the rest. For her part, NATALIA, in the hideout, has been staring at the plate of food. She decided to take the plate and, after a sad sigh, takes a bite.

SANDRA

(to the rest in the warehouse)

Is anyone missing?

TONI

Alex...

BEA

...Which doesn't surprise me, considering you can't rely on him for anything.

SANDRA

Please, Bea, let's not start. He'll be here.

TONI

Come on, Sandra, tell us what the meeting's about.

SANDRA

We have to wait.

SANDRA sits in the only chair left, crosses her legs and waits.

TONI

Wait for what?

VICTOR

Alex might not show up.

TONI

What's the meeting about?

SANDRA

I don't know.

TONI

What do you mean, you don't know?

SANDRA

I mean I don't know.

TONI

For fuck's sake! You call us for a meeting and you don't know what you're going to talk about?

SANDRA

I called *you*, but I didn't *call* the meeting.

TONI

Oh, no? Then who?

SANDRA

Just wait, he'll be here in a sec.

TONI

Jesus, what a mystery. Are we going to have to wait long?

SANDRA

It's already nine o'clock. He should be here any second.

BEA

Who?

TONI

(To BEA)

The person who *called* the meeting.

BEA

And what about Alex?

SANDRA

Alex will be here shortly.

BEA

Are we going to start without him?

TONI

Ugh, he's so cheeky.

SANDRA

He called me and said he was running a little behind.

TONI

Why?

SANDRA

Because he had to run an errand.

TONI

Oh, yeah? What kind of errand?

SANDRA

I don't know. He didn't say. Something important.

BEA

He plays football on Wednesdays.

TONI

Maybe he went to play football.

SANDRA

No.

TONI

What a cheek!

SANDRA

He didn't go to play football. End of discussion.

*Meanwhile, in the hideout, NATALIA has become
nauseous from the food and has stopped eating.
She has a look of disgust on her face.*

SANDRA

(to the rest)

Do you have your information sheets?

VICTOR

Were we supposed to bring them?

TONI

(Simultaneously)

Yes.

BEA

She didn't say anything about that, right?

SANDRA

Yeah, I did.

TONI

Yeah, she did.

VICTOR

Well, I didn't hear it.

BEA

Me either.

SANDRA

Because you were talking while I said it. Here.

(She takes out some sheets from her
briefcase and hands them out)

I've made copies.

TONI

I would have made them go without. Screw 'em.

BEA

Shut up.

VICTOR

Are we going to have an exam or something?

SANDRA

If you do, it won't be me who gives it.

BEA

But, who's coming?

TONI

God damnit, tell us already.

BEA

It's so mysterious.

VICTOR

Come on Sandra.

TONI

Yeah, come on, he's gonna be here in a sec anyway... tell
us!

SANDRA

Fiiiiine. X is coming.

Their jaws drop.

BEA

Sorry?

SANDRA

X is coming.

VICTOR

Here?

BEA

Who?

SANDRA

Mr X. He wants to tell us something.

TONI

Shit.

VICTOR

When?

SANDRA

He'll be here any second.

BEA

Who?

SANDRA

Mr. X.

VICTOR

The "big boss".

TONI

You can't be serious.

VICTOR

Mr. X.

TONI

His name's Martinez, right?

SANDRA

Toni, please!

BEA

His name's Martinez?

VICTOR

Who is he?

SANDRA

(furious)

Toni! Are you an idiot? His name's Mr X! End of story. Not Martinez, not anything but Mr. X. If he told us his name was Mr. X, it's because his name is Mr. X and there's nothing else to know.

(TONI has gotten up and gone to the front.

While SANDRA talks, TONI'S making

ridiculous faces that the audience can see)

Toni, are you listening to me?

TONI

Yes.

(He continues making faces)

NATALIA, for her part, has taken a handkerchief out of her pocket and is putting spoonfuls of food in it.

SANDRA

(scolding them)

Well, let's see if we can start following the Decalogue strictly because this is serious. If we do things well, everything will end up fine, everyone will do their part and voila, finito, ciao. But if we start acting stupid - I'm telling you now - we're going to have problems, big ones. This isn't a game, you hear me? There's a lot of money at stake and we could end up in a bad position if things don't go as planned. So enough with the jokes.

In the middle of the scolding, TONI, feeling caught, has stopped joking and gone back to his seat. BEA gives him a little smack upside the head. TONI retaliates by pinching her on her back. BEA gives him a smack upside the head again. TONI pinches her harder and a fight behind their backs has erupted that finishes when SANDRA says "So enough with the jokes". Once they are quiet, SANDRA asks:

SANDRA

What about the fox? Is she gagged?

VICTOR

No.

SANDRA

No?

VICTOR

No, she's eating.

SANDRA

And her mouth is uncovered?

BEA

How else do you expect her to eat?

SANDRA

(To VICTOR)

Go tie her up right now and cover her mouth. I don't want any slip-ups when Mr. X gets here.

VICTOR

(Standing up)

Ok.

VICTOR puts on his ski mask, grabs his bag and goes to the hideout.

BEA

Sandra, she keeps saying it's not her.

SANDRA

Don't listen to her, it's normal.

VICTOR leaves through the front and goes down to the hideout. The light in the warehouse dims lightly. The curtain, however, doesn't close this

time so everything that goes on in the warehouse can be seen. We can hear VICTOR and NATALIA'S conversation.

NATALIA

(hiding the handkerchief before VICTOR gets there)

What's wrong?

VICTOR

I don't know. Someone's coming. Something's happened.

NATALIA

Finally!

VICTOR

What?

NATALIA

Someone's realized that you've got the wrong person and they're coming to tell you.

VICTOR

I don't think so.

VICTOR takes the rope out of his bag.

NATALIA

What's that for?

VICTOR

I have to tie you up.

NATALIA

Why?

VICTOR

Because the man who's coming is important and they want you tied up.

NATALIA

So it means I'm definitely getting out of here.

VICTOR

Amazing. Are you always such an optimist?

NATALIA

I've got no reason not to be.

VICTOR

(pointing to the plate)

You could finish that.

NATALIA

I've already eaten enough.

VICTOR

You've got to finish it.

NATALIA

I'm not hungry.

VICTOR

(Taking the plate)

Give it here, you're going to cause problems.

NATALIA

Don't eat it. It's disgusting.

VICTOR

(Sitting down)

Better finish it.

(He takes the spoon.)

They'll be calling me soon.

VICTOR puts the spoon to his mouth.

NATALIA

Is it good?

Disgusted after tasting the food, VICTOR shakes his head.

VICTOR

Was it better yesterday?

NATALIA

Much better.

VICTOR

I made it myself.

NATALIA

You know how to cook?

VICTOR

Well...

NATALIA

Brilliant, I'll remember that. But I don't think you'll be seeing too much of me around here. As soon as you let me go, I'm taking a train somewhere and starting a new life.

VICTOR

Literally or figuratively?

Suddenly, the lights go off. NATALIA and VICTOR remain quiet. A few seconds later, the light comes back on. MR. X has arrived to the warehouse.

NATALIA

What's happening?

VICTOR

Somebody's here.

(Returning to the conversation)

So the thing about the train, were you speaking literally or figuratively?

NATALIA

Literally. I'll take a *train* at the *train* station and I'll *sit* in a *seat* and I'll go far away from here. I should have left Monday. I missed the train because of you guys. But anyway, there are more trains. Several leave weekly. I hope to leave soon.

VICTOR

Where do you want to go?

NATALIA

To the north of Europe. Sweden, Finland, Norway... it doesn't matter as long as it's a northern country.

VICTOR

Why the north?

NATALIA

To break up this monotony. I don't know... I've always had the feeling that things are more genuine in the north. Not like here. In places where it's cold and snowy, people have to be more authentic. Meaningless, stupid things are not acceptable. The place is uncomfortable so living has to be more real, more sincere. I want to know that, feel it. I want to leave here.

VICTOR

Are you going alone?

NATALIA

Yeah.

VICTOR

For a long time?

NATALIA

Forever. I don't have dates.

VICTOR

Will you be leaving anything behind?

NATALIA

Actually, not very much. My family, but we don't see each other very much. We love each other a lot but we rarely see each other. Some friends, yeah, but that's what the phone's for.

VICTOR

Packing light.

NATALIA

Packing light.

TONI has gotten closer to the hideout door.

TONI

Blue! Come up here!

VICTOR

(Without turning around)

I'll be right there!

TONI disappears.

NATALIA

(Continuing the conversation)

Actually, there is one thing that I'm leaving behind with a bit of a heavy heart.

VICTOR

What is it?

NATALIA

A boy.

VICTOR

A boy. You've got a boyfriend?

NATALIA

No, not anymore.

(She laughs)

He's staying. Another boy.

VICTOR

Why doesn't he go with you?

NATALIA

We don't actually know each other. I fell in love with his eyes. Well, actually the look in his eyes - to tell you the truth I don't remember what his eyes are like anymore - but I do remember that gaze. A sad gaze, tired, full of nostalgia, like someone whose life is slipping through their fingers and they know it.

VICTOR

Is a gaze really so important?

NATALIA

You can really know a person from their gaze. Isn't that why you guys won't let me see your faces?

VICTOR

Rule four of the Decalogue.

TONI calls VICTOR again.

TONI

Blue! Do you mind coming up here?

VICTOR

(To TONI, without turning around)

She choked a little, I'll be right up.

(TONI backs away. To NATALIA)

You're in love with a guy and you don't know each other...

NATALIA

Seems weird...

(Seeing that VICTOR doesn't understand, she explains to him)

I used to pick my cousin up from school last year. So, everyday, at the same time, I saw this person leave the school. He was always alone.

(Remembering with nostalgia)

He always left before the other teachers. Don't ask me what was so special about him...I wouldn't be able to tell you. There are things for which words don't exist.

(She sighs)

And, as I didn't have words, I never approached him for a chat.

VICTOR

(To NATALIA)

But you fell in love with him.

NATALIA

I... understood him. I went through the same thing. I felt the same way. I thought I could help him...

VICTOR

Why didn't you tell him?

NATALIA

Tell him what?

VICTOR

That. That you could help him.

NATALIA

(She thinks)

In my own way, I did. With a sign.

VICTOR

What sign?

NATALIA

You know, the thing I told you about before.

VICTOR

The thing about the songs?

NATALIA

Right.

VICTOR

He probably didn't realize.

NATALIA

Yeah, he realized. But I didn't say who it was from.

VICTOR

You might lose him.

NATALIA

I'll keep him in my memory. It'll be another coin to throw in my bank of memories. And when I want to think about him, I'll open the bank, take out the coin, look at it and...

VICTOR

...You'll get sad.

NATALIA

No, quite the opposite. I'll be happy. Because I'll remember him and how he made me feel. Sometimes you can feel just as good with the memory of a person as you can with the person.

VICTOR

Well...

NATALIA

Yeah, yeah. It's never a good idea to tell a person: "I'm much better without you than with you", but it's not exactly that. You're never better than when you're with someone, but when you're no longer with them you can still be happy for having been with them. Know what I mean?

VICTOR

(opening up to her)
I've had a similar feeling.

NATALIA

Really?

VICTOR

Yeah. Something really strange happened to me just a little while ago.

(He looks at her)
I'll tell you, but I don't usually talk about these things.

NATALIA

Go on.

VICTOR

(Opening up)
It was really weird. I left work - I was especially tired and sad that day - and when I went to get on my scooter, there was something on the seat.

NATALIA

(eager)
What?

VICTOR

The most beautiful gift anyone has ever given me. They left me an "unforgettable moment". It was an mp3 player and headphones.

NATALIA

(NATALIA acts surprised)

An mp3 player?

VICTOR

(Responding to NATALIA'S reaction)

Yeah. It surprised me at first too. But then I put on the headphones. I turned on the player. And a song started to play. You know when someone can guess your thoughts exactly?

(NATALIA nods. VICTOR continues, without looking at her)

When they reach your most inner thoughts? Well, that's what happened to me. It was a song I already knew. A song that I liked and had heard many times. But I had never understood it like I did in that moment. It seemed like the lyrics were written for me.

NATALIA

Sounds beautiful.

Strangely, NATALIA has straightened her shirt and smoothed her hair with her hand.

VICTOR

I can't stop thinking about it, about the person who did it. I'm living with the memory of someone - like you said - but someone...I don't know.

(He thinks for a moment. He asks NATALIA:)

Do you want me to read it to you? I've got it right here.

(NATALIA accepts. VICTOR takes a paper out of his pocket)

I always carry it with me. This is what it says:

"Oh, why you look so sad?

Tears are in your eyes

Come on and come to me now

Don't be ashamed to cry

Let me see you through

cause I've seen the dark side too

When the night falls on you

You don't know what to do

Nothing you confess

Could make me love you less

I'll stand by you

Won't let nobody hurt you

I'll stand by you."

And it goes on...

VICTOR puts the paper away.

NATALIA

It's beautiful.

VICTOR

It's the first person in my life who really understands me. *(He sighs)* And I don't know where they are.

NATALIA

(Shyly)

But, what if the person who gave you this did it simply because they liked the song, because it was a pretty song?

VICTOR

(Convinced)

No. When a person does something like this it's because they're trying to say something.

(He remembers something)

I've got it here, the mp3 player. You want to listen to it?

NATALIA

Sure.

VICTOR opens his bag and takes out the mp3 player. He untangles the headphones.

VICTOR

You have to put yourself in my shoes, the way I was that day. Imagine you're tired, you've finished work and at this point in life you happen to feel especially alone, isolated...

NATALIA

"Alone and isolated". That shouldn't be too difficult down here.

VICTOR

And then, you put on these headphones you've just found...

(VICTOR helps NATALIA put them on)

...And this is playing.

*VICTOR pushes the play button on the mp3 player and they hear the beginning of a song. It's **I'll Stand By You** by The Pretenders. Powerful piano chords fill the room. NATALIA listens attentively. VICTOR waits in silence. The first notes introduce a powerful voice that begins to sing along with the melody. Both listen with pleasure. At the end of the sixth line, "cause I've seen the dark side too", NATALIA pushes the pause button. The music stops. NATALIA takes off the headphones and, holding them in her hands, she looks at them nostalgically.*

NATALIA

They don't have the blue covers.

VICTOR

No, I lost one so I took off the...

VICTOR suddenly stops himself. NATALIA smiles. Neither says anything. VICTOR slowly begins to

look up. He looks shocked. He smiles. He looks at NATALIA. NATALIA smiles back. VICTOR wants to say something. NATALIA waits. VICTOR tries to speak but he can't. He doesn't have words. He doesn't know what to do. He thinks for a moment. Finally, he takes the headphones and, with a gentle gesture, he invites NATALIA to put them on again. NATALIA puts them on. VICTOR starts the music. The song begins to play again aloud. VICTOR looks at NATALIA. NATALIA looks at VICTOR. They slowly get closer to each other. They tilt their heads for a kiss. They close their eyes. Just when their lips are about to meet, VICTOR remembers that he's wearing the ski mask. He takes it off without hesitation. The song reaches the climax and VICTOR and NATALIA kiss.

At this exact moment, BEA enters the hideout and startles them. BEA is wearing a ski mask. VICTOR stops the music.

BEA

(Surprised, almost whispering)

Victor...

BEA does a half-turn and goes running back to the warehouse.

VICTOR

(To NATALIA, quickly standing up)

Shit. I'll be right back.

(He goes running after BEA)

Bea! Hey! Bea!

As soon as BEA and VICTOR set foot in the warehouse, both stop abruptly. The warehouse goes back to normal lighting. Everyone looks at VICTOR with surprised and incredulous faces, especially MR. X.

MR. X

(Indignant, to SANDRA)

Who the hell is this?

SANDRA

This is Mr. Blue.

BEA returns to her seat discreetly and removes the ski mask.

MR. X

(To SANDRA, furious)

What's this idiot doing without a ski mask? Was he with the fox?

SANDRA nods. MR. X tries to hold back his anger. He approaches VICTOR, staring at him, furious. He

stops himself just inches from VICTOR. VICTOR remains immobile, frightened.

MR. X

(Furious)

Do you think I'm an amateur!? That's a rhetorical question, don't answer it. Do you think I'm an amateur!?

VICTOR

(After a long and tense silence, not knowing what to say, he turns towards SANDRA)

Should I answer?

MR. X

Nooo!! Do you have any idea how much money is at stake!?

After another long and tense silence, VICTOR, uncertain if he should answer, turns towards SANDRA again.

MR. X

Do you know what you're risking!?

Long and tense silence during which VICTOR does not respond to MR. X or look at SANDRA.

MR. X

Sit down.

VICTOR sits down. MR. X reflects for a moment. The rest wait in silence and don't dare to say anything.

MR. X

(after a lot of thinking, to EVERYBODY)

I'm afraid the situation has changed. We must finish her.

BEA

Huh?

MR. X

We have to eliminate her.

SANDRA

Eliminate her.

TONI

Eliminate her?

MR. X

Kill her. We gotta kill her.

BEA

Yeah, sure, no problem. Are you crazy?

MR. X

Look lady, do you have another suggestion?

BEA

I'm sure there are other options.

MR. X

Can you think another way to reset this girl's memory so that she forgets this half-wit's face?

(Pointing to VICTOR)

SANDRA

Can't we just threaten her so she doesn't say anything?

MR. X

The first thing this girl will do - threatened or not - is report Mr. Blue to the police and when they catch him - something which I don't doubt - they'll catch all of us.

TONI

We could kill him.

(EVERYONE looks at TONI)

No, just kidding man. It's a joke.

MR. X

I'm not joking!

(To SANDRA)

Sandra, what kind of people are they?

SANDRA

Trustworthy people.

BEA

(Suprised that MR. X has said someone's name)

He said Sandra...

MR. X

Lady, what does it matter if we use Sandra's name if we're going to kill the girl anyway? For now, we'll continue to follow the rest of the catalogue rules.

TONI

He said catalogue.

MR. X

Decalogue! I said Decalogue!

(Infuriated, To SANDRA)

Is she gagged?

VICTOR

(Seeing the opportunity to go back down with NATALIA)

No, she was dry heaving a little. Dinner didn't sit too well, but she's okay now...

(Starting to get up)

Do you want me to...?

MR. X

Yes. Go down there immediately and gag her.

(VICTOR goes towards the hideout door)
But first take all of her valuables - bracelets,
necklaces, rings, whatever she's got. Tie her hands and
feet well and cover her mouth and eyes.

VICTOR
Ok.

*VICTOR leaves the warehouse through the front and
goes down to the hideout. Just like before, the
warehouse scene can be seen from the audience. We
can hear the conversation in the hideout.*

NATALIA
(Standing, nervous)
What's going on?

VICTOR
(Angry, furious with himself)
They want to kill you.

NATALIA
What?

VICTOR
It's my fault.

NATALIA
What are you saying?

VICTOR
Shit! I'm such an idiot! They know you've seen my face.
How stupid!

NATALIA
(To herself)
They also must know they've got the wrong person.

VICTOR
Jesus!

NATALIA
What now?

VICTOR
I don't know.

NATALIA
We have to do something.

VICTOR
They won't be able to do it. They're not criminals,
they're like me. They can't kill anyone. I'm going to talk
to them.

NATALIA
Wait.
(She stops him)

They *will* be able to do it.

VICTOR
No.

NATALIA
Even if they don't want to, they'll have to. They don't have a choice.
(She looks for a solution)
We have to escape... both of us.

VICTOR
No.

NATALIA
Yes, we have to escape.

VICTOR
I won't let them, whether they like it or not.

NATALIA
We have to get out of here. Things have changed. Listen to me: until just a little while ago, I was the danger. I was a kidnapping crime that could have sent all of you to jail. But you know it's not like that: I left home, I said goodbye with my bags packed on Monday; nobody was asking for me. For my part, there's no crime. They are the danger now. They want to commit a crime. They want to kill me. They are the jail. We have to stop it.

VICTOR
So for you, if there is no kidnapping, then this is all over. That's it? It's all okay?

NATALIA
No, it's not okay.

VICTOR
I'm going up to tell them there's been no kidnapping.

NATALIA
No.

VICTOR
They want to kill you because they think you're going to report them. So, tell them what you just told me. Tell them that you're not going to report them...

NATALIA
Victor, they're not going to believe me. They *can't* believe me. They won't run the risk of me going to the police station to report them, now that I've seen your faces.

VICTOR
They'll believe me. I'll tell them.

NATALIA

If you try to protect me, they'll kill you too. Please!
Put yourself in their shoes.

VICTOR

But they're not capable of doing it!

NATALIA

Yes they are! People will do anything in extreme situations.

VICTOR

(Thinking of a solution)

You escape. You have to escape.

NATALIA

If I escape, they'll know that you helped me. And you'll have to pay. You can't stay.

VICTOR

Shit!

NATALIA

The only option is that we both go together.

VICTOR

(Trying to reason)

Ok, ok. Suppose we escape. Then what?

NATALIA

We have to go far. We can't stay around here.

VICTOR

Where?

NATALIA

Far away.

VICTOR

For how long?

NATALIA

I don't know.

VICTOR

But I can't leave so easily. I have my life here, my job...

NATALIA

(In a subtle, reproachful tone)

Just a bit ago you were done with all this.

VICTOR

Yeah, but...

NATALIA

Are you scared?

(They look at each other. Both are thinking hard. Finally, NATALIA resolves:)

My red key.

VICTOR
What?

NATALIA
Have you got my red key? The one with 422 written on it.
It's the one you took from me the first day.

VICTOR takes his bag, looks inside and takes out the key.

VICTOR
Yeah, I've got it.

NATALIA
(Taking the key)
It's for my locker at the train station. I've got everything there: my suitcases, my identification, everything. Three days ago, when I wanted to leave, I was at the station and I left to take a walk to kill time; that was when you guys took me. Everything's in that locker. Everything I needed to take the trip. We can fix this. Do you have ID with you?

VICTOR
Yes.

NATALIA
So that's it. That's all you need. A train leaves at ten today. What time is it?

VICTOR
(He looks at his watch)
Nine thirty.

NATALIA
We must hurry. If we leave now, we'll get there on time.
(She sees VICTOR is pensive)
Victor, you're the guy who was watching life pass him by. Don't let it anymore. Go for it. Let's go out looking for it. There's still time.

VICTOR
(Giving in)
Where to?

NATALIA
I was going to head north. Sweden, Norway, Finland... doesn't matter.

VICTOR
And what about them?

NATALIA
Don't worry about them.

VICTOR

But...

NATALIA

Hey, why do you look so sad? If you help yourself - and you escape with me - you'll be helping them out. If we're not here, they won't be able to kill anyone.

(She realizes the coincidence)

"Why you look so sad..." Like the song! It's the lyrics to the song. *Our* song. There's no doubt. We have to get out of here.

VICTOR

Have you decided on a place?

NATALIA

The train goes to the north. When we get up there we can choose the city we like best: Oslo, Stockholm, Helsinki... wherever you want.

VICTOR

Let's go to Stockholm.

NATALIA

To Stockholm?

VICTOR

The Stockholm Syndrome.

(He looks at her)

It's a sign.

NATALIA

Okay.

VICTOR

What time did you say the train leaves?

NATALIA

At ten. Hurry. We have to leave now. How do we get out of here?

VICTOR

There's a way out. Come on!

Suddenly, TONI calls to VICTOR from the warehouse.

TONI

Blue!

NATALIA and VICTOR look at each other.

VICTOR

(After a short pause, without turning around)

Yeah!

TONI

Could you come up here for a minute? I have to ask you something.

VICTOR

I'm putting the gag on her. Wait a sec!

TONI goes back. VICTOR stays still. He remains like this, immobile, for a few moments. NATALIA looks at him, impatient. Finally VICTOR breaks the silence:

VICTOR

(To NATALIA, whispering)

This way.

(Pointing ahead)

The bars.

(He takes a key out of his pocket. HE shows it to NATALIA)

It opens from the outside. Here.

He gives her the key.

NATALIA

(Whispering)

Let's go.

VICTOR

(Whispering)

No, you go.

NATALIA

(Whispering)

Victor!

VICTOR

(Pointing to the warehouse, whispering)

You don't want them to follow us, do you?

TONI

Blue!

VICTOR doesn't answer.

VICTOR

(To NATALIA, whispering)

I have to stop them.

TONI

(after not hearing an answer from VICTOR)

Ok, I'm coming down.

VICTOR

(To TONI)

No! No! Don't come down! I'll come up. I'm coming now.

TONI goes back. For his part, VICTOR takes a multi-purpose knife out of his pocket. He opens it, gives it to NATALIA and tells her something

in her ear. NATALIA agrees. Next, VICTOR takes out a keychain with two keys.

VICTOR

(To NATALIA, whispering)

My scooter is parked right outside. It's red with...

NATALIA

(Whispering)

I know which one it is..

VICTOR

(Whispering, showing the two keys)

This is the key to the lock and this is the one to start it.

VICTOR gives the keys to NATALIA. NATALIA is ready to leave the hideout through the way out that VICTOR showed her but, suddenly, she stops and turns toward VICTOR.

NATALIA

Victor.

(VICTOR, already going back towards the warehouse, stops)

Are you coming?

VICTOR

(avoiding the question)

It's a bit dark, don't stop. At the end of the vent you'll see a light. Don't be scared to jump. At the end of the hallway you'll find an exit that goes directly to the parking lot.

NATALIA

Are you coming?

VICTOR doesn't respond. NATALIA stares at him. VICTOR goes towards NATALIA. He smiles at her and he kisses her.

VICTOR

Come on, hurry up.

(They separate. Before returning to the warehouse, VICTOR stops. He turns towards NATALIA and says:)

Hey. I don't know your name.

NATALIA

(Turning back towards VICTOR)

No. Do you want to know it?

(She smiles)

We'll have time. Remember to ask me later.

NATALIA leaves the hideout and goes past the seats in the front of the theatre. VICTOR returns to the warehouse.

VICTOR
(upon seeing that SANDRA and MR. X are missing)
Where are they?

TONI
Just over there.

VICTOR
Where? Outside?

TONI
No. Just over there, in the next room.

VICTOR
Are you sure they didn't go outside?

BEA
Yeah. They're here inside.

VICTOR
Are you sure?

BEA
Victor, they haven't even opened the door to the outside.

VICTOR
What are they doing?

BEA
How should I know?

VICTOR
Alex hasn't shown up yet?

BEA
Nope.

TONI
(in a serious tone)
Victor.

VICTOR
What?

TONI
(He gets up and goes towards VICTOR)
I don't think I'll be able to do it.

VICTOR
(Without a doubt)
I'm *certain* that I won't be able to do it.

BEA
(Turning towards the door)
Here they come.

MR. X and SANDRA enter. MR. X is carrying a body bag.

MR. X

(To VICTOR)

Is the fox ready?

VICTOR

Yes.

TONI

You got a body bag there?

MR. X

Listen, don't worry about what's kept inside this warehouse. Understand?

He unfolds the bag with SANDRA'S help.

BEA

You said it would look like a robbery.

MR. X

And it will. You wouldn't want the trunk to get blood stained while you move her, would you?

MR. X unfolds the bag onto the floor. BEA, TONI and SANDRA watch, terrified.

MR. X

(He addresses EVERYONE solemnly, upon noticing their worried faces)

I want you to know, ladies and gentlemen, that we're not going to do anything against the law. If given the opportunity to escape...

(he stares at the hideout door as if he could see through it)

...- Something that won't happen - the person over there...

(he points to the hideout)

...Wouldn't hesitate for a second to throw you all behind bars. You know what it's like to go to jail? Going to jail means leaving your houses to sleep in a bedroom with bars, leaving your activities to do nothing, leaving the people you love to be surrounded by delinquents, crazy people and drug addicts. Going to jail means not living; in a word, meeting death. That person...

(he points to the hideout again)

...Wants you dead. Just that: dead. Ladies and gentlemen, we will not allow this. We have the right to defend ourselves.

They hear a noise coming from outside.

BEA

(Startled)

Someone's coming!

TONI

Turn off the lights.

BEA turns off the lights.

SANDRA

It's Alex.

TONI

Shit.

BEA

I guess he's coming from playing football...

MR. X

Whoever it is, they've already seen the light. Turn it back on.

They turn on the light. Everyone waits in silence, not moving. They hear a knock.

TONI

One.

(They hear another knock)

Two.

(And a third.)

Three.

(They hear a fourth knock)

And four.

They hear a fifth knock.

MR. X

(Taking out the gun)

Everyone on the floor!

TONI

A gun!

MR. X, firm, aims the gun towards the main door. The rest, frightened, fall to the floor. The knocks have multiplied, as if to throw them off. SANDRA gets up.

SANDRA

(Going towards the door)

I'm sure it's Alex. He's coming from doing his errand.

She goes out through the main door. After a moment their voices can be heard:

ALEX'S VOICE

How many knocks was it again?

SANDRA'S VOICE

Four.

As soon as they hear ALEX'S voice, EVERYONE stands up relieved. ALEX and SANDRA enter. ALEX is wearing a dark track suit and football boots.

ALEX

(To SANDRA)

See, I overdid it. I realize. I knocked five times and then I wanted to delete one. How do you delete?

(He addresses the rest, a little worked up, while taking off his jacket)

Crazy, this is why I'm late: a Hare-Krishna parade.

Under his track suit jacket, he's wearing a football jersey.

SANDRA

Don't tell us.

ALEX sees MR. X pointing a gun at him. He puts his hands up, scared.

ALEX

Jeez!

SANDRA

(To MR. X)

This is Alex.

ALEX

(To SANDRA)

Who's that?

SANDRA

That's Mr. X.

ALEX

(Lowering his hands)

Oh, Martinez.

MR. X

What?!?

He aims at ALEX again ALEX puts his hands up again. EVERYONE is stunned.

SANDRA

No! No! Everyone calm down.

MR. X

Who is that?

SANDRA

He's from our group. It's Alex. He's Mr. Red. There's no reason to worry, calm down. He's got the car.

(To ALEX)

You have brought the car...

ALEX

Yes.

SANDRA

(To ALEX)

And this is Mr. X.

MR. X lowers his gun.

ALEX

Christ on a cross, you scared me.

He picks up his jacket from the floor.

VICTOR

(To MR. X)

Sir, I took her valuable things and covered her mouth and eyes but I haven't tied her up yet. I left the rope in my scooter. Can I go get it?

MR. X

All right. Hurry.

VICTOR

Be right back.

BEA

(To VICTOR)

Are you leaving?

VICTOR

(Stopping)

I'm going to get the rope.

BEA

Where are you going, Victor? You've got the rope in your bag.

VICTOR

No.

BEA

Yeah, I saw it before when you accused me of being a *nosey parker*.

VICTOR

Are you sure about that, Bea?

BEA and VICTOR stare at each other. They remain like this for a moment. Finally BEA resolves:

BEA

At least I thought so...

MR. X

(To BEA)

Lady, are you going to continue questioning everything that goes on in here - that's a rhetorical question, don't answer that.

(BEA doesn't answer. Addressing VICTOR:)
And you, I don't want to hear anything else. Are you going to hurry up so we can finish this?

VICTOR and BEA stare at each other again. After a few seconds, VICTOR turns towards MR. X.

VICTOR
Yeah.

VICTOR leaves through the main door.

ALEX
(To SANDRA)
Should we set her free now?

MR. X
The car is here.
(Solemnly)
The time has come. We can begin.
(To TONI)
You.

TONI
Me?

MR. X
Yes, you.

TONI looks at SANDRA and ALEX.

TONI
(To MR. X)
Why me?

MR. X
Go get the fox.

TONI
Why?

MR. X
Because we have to execute her. Haven't you gotten that through your thick skull yet?

ALEX
Execute her?

TONI
But I don't want to do it.

MR. X
Go get her.

TONI
But I really don't want to do it.

MR. X

What are you saying to me?

TONI

(Almost shouting)

That I won't do it.

MR. X

(to TONI, as if he were an idiot)

You're not going to do it! Sandra's going to do it.

(To SANDRA)

Haven't you already talked about this?

BEA and TONI look surprised. They look at SANDRA appreciative and relieved.

SANDRA

(Gesturing TONI to go forward)

Toni.

MR. X

Come on! Bring her up. We'll tie her up here.

TONI goes towards the hideout door. Before leaving, he stops.

TONI

Should I put on a ski mask?

MR. X

(While grabbing the knife)

Her eyes are covered - it's not necessary.

ALEX

(To SANDRA)

But, what does he mean "execute her"?

MR. X

Hurry. He's bringing the rope.

TONI goes through the hideout door. Everybody waits expectantly. A few seconds later, TONI comes running through the door.

TONI

Quick! Come see this!

BEA, ALEX, SANDRA and TONI pile up at the door and remain still, looking. MR. X arrives last. The others make way for him and he disappears through the door. He enters the hideout. He sees that it's empty. He turns towards the others and after a few seconds of unease, he blows up.

MR. X'S VOICE

(Surprised and indignant)

What the hell is this!!!

Nobody says anything. They looked surprised. EVERYONE looks at the same thing. After a few seconds which seem like an eternity, ALEX, who sees that no one is saying anything, states the obvious:

ALEX

A window.

MR. X

What the hell is a window doing open in the fox's room?

BEA

It's a vent.

TONI

Maybe it was so she didn't yawn.

BEA elbows TONI.

MR. X

How did she open the bars?

BEA

Got me.

TONI

I didn't open it.

SANDRA

She couldn't have forced it open. It's impossible.

TONI

Victor's the last one who came down here.

ALEX

Victor.

BEA

Victor.

SANDRA

Victor.

MR. X

Shit!

(To SANDRA)

Sandra! Go outside!

SANDRA goes running through the main door of the warehouse. MR. X goes upstairs with the others. Everyone spreads out around the warehouse.

No one dares to say anything. EVERYONE wanders around nervously. After a few seconds, SANDRA comes back.

SANDRA

His scooter is gone. They've left.

MR. X

(running to the door)

Quick! We have to follow them! They can't be far!

SANDRA

(Stopping him)

Don't run.

(SANDRA shows him the open pocket knife)

They popped the tires.

It's the knife that VICTOR gave to NATALIA.

MR. X

What?

SANDRA

Everyone's tires.

TONI

Jesus.

BEA

Take that.

ALEX

My car, too?

TONI

Victor always went down alone...

(Pointing to the hideout)

...I didn't know anything... I always went with a ski mask and I never...

BEA

(Simultaneously, to TONI)

Nobody's saying you helped her, Toni... Nobody's insinuating that you had anything whatsoever to do with anything, okay? Calm down, you've got to....

ALEX

(Simultaneously, getting involved in TONI and BEA'S conversation)

All four tires! What a disaster! Do you know how much it costs to change all four tires? A fortune!

All three are talking at the same time. Nothing can be understood. MR. X blows up.

MR. X

Silence!!!!

EVERYONE shuts up.

MR. X

Sit down.

EVERYONE takes a seat. MR. X remains standing. He looks worried. EVERYONE waits. Nobody says anything. MR. X starts talking to himself while wandering around the warehouse.

MR. X

(thinking, tired)

Listen up people. From this moment on you will do the following: One - you're going to leave your scooters parked where they are and you're going to walk home - I don't care how far away you live - you're not going to call anyone to pick you up, you hear me? And don't worry about your scooters. There will be time to come pick them up. Two - as soon as you arrive to your houses you're going to give any excuse - a meeting, a dinner... to whomever you have to and you're going to get in bed like any other day. And three - tomorrow. When your alarm clock rings, you'll go to work like any other day. Is that loud and clear?

SANDRA

And then what?

MR. X

Then nothing.

TONI

Nothing?

MR. X

We'll wait.

BEA

We'll wait for what?

MR. X

We'll hope that they don't say anything... and we'll continue hoping they don't say anything.

SANDRA

Until when?

MR. X

I don't know.

(He stops)

I don't know...

(He looks at his watch)

Goodbye. That's all. Don't all leave at once.

(While gathering his things, to SANDRA)

Sandra, on Sunday...

SANDRA

Yeah.

MR. X

We'll talk.

(To the others)

Is everything clear? Good night.

He disappears through the main door.

ALEX

(As soon as MR. X has left)
Will someone please tell me what happened?

SANDRA

Alex...

ALEX

No, Jesus!
(He gets up)
I come here for a meeting and I find this. And on top of that they've popped my tires...

SANDRA

Alex!
(She gets up)
You arrived...
(she looks at her watch)
...Forty minutes late! You've got no reason to complain.

ALEX

Yeah, but it's just that...

SANDRA

No, no! Don't tell me anything. It's okay. I'll spell it out for you: if you had held up your end of the deal, like everyone else, maybe things would have been different. So shut up and stop complaining.

ALEX

But...

SANDRA

I said shut up!

ALEX shuts up, thinks and finally gives in.

ALEX

Well, then, we've got to return on foot...

SANDRA

You heard him. Start leaving. We have to leave separately.

ALEX

Okay.
(He grabs his jacket)
Well, then, I'm outta here.
(He goes towards the main door)
Bye.

EVERYONE says goodbye. He leaves.

TONI, meanwhile, has gone down to the hideout and discovered VICTOR'S bag. He has taken it.

TONI

(Returning)
Here's Victor's bag.

SANDRA

He forgot it...

TONI

(Looking inside the bag)
There's only some rope..
(he takes out the rope)
...And some headphones...
(he takes out the headphones)
Guess he doesn't need them.

He throws them back in the bag.

SANDRA

(looking at VICTOR'S pocket knife, which
she's had in her hands since she came
through the door)
He would never be apart from this knife...

BEA

(She takes the knife from SANDRA. She looks
at it)
I don't think we'll be seeing him again.

SANDRA

He'll sure be missed.

TONI

Sandra.
(He takes VICTOR'S knife from BEA. He lifts
it up and looks at it)
Before... For what it's worth...
(he closes the knife)
Thanks.

SANDRA

(Changing the subject)
You've got mine tomorrow at ten. Gym.

She grabs her briefcase.

TONI

Tomorrow... Thursday... Third grade. Yep.

SANDRA

They'll be a little bit late. I'm giving them a test.

TONI

Okay.

SANDRA

(going towards the exit)
But don't excuse them if they're more than fifteen minutes
late.

TONI

Right.

SANDRA

See you tomorrow. Don't forget to lock up. Bye.

TONI AND BEA

Bye.

SANDRA goes out the door.

*TONI and BEA are left, one next to the other.
TONI takes out his flask and takes a drink.*

BEA

Will you join me? I was supposed to go back with Victor...

TONI

You knew he was going to leave.

BEA

What?

TONI

When Victor left to get the rope, you knew he was leaving.
You knew that he already had the rope in his bag.

*BEA doesn't answer. She takes TONI'S flask and, a
bit unnaturally, takes a drink.*

BEA

I don't want to walk through these dark streets alone at
this time of night. Will you come with me.

She offers TONI his flask.

*TONI takes the flask, but BEA doesn't let it go,
so both are holding the flask.*

TONI

You could be kidnapped.

*(He smiles and pulls the flask towards
himself along with BEA)*

I don't know where this Doctor X lives but you and I have
quite a hike ahead of us ...

They start to leave.

BEA

(Pointing to the light switch)

Should I turn it off?

TONI

We'll turn it off from outside.

(Recovering his natural grace)

And tomorrow to work. If I get some sleep, it'll be a
piece of cake. Remember the theory of excuses? If I

explain what happened tonight, I've got the perfect excuse...

(Remembering he's carrying the knife)
Shit, I've still got the knife...

They leave. Immediately an answering machine can be heard. It's NATALIA'S voice.

NATALIA'S VOICE

Hey, it's me! We haven't arrived yet, we just got on the train..."We", yes.

(Her voice smiles)

I've been tied up for a few days. I'll explain everything.

VICTOR'S VOICE

(To NATALIA, from a distance)

Natalia!

NATALIA'S VOICE

(To VICTOR)

Yeah?

VICTOR'S VOICE

(To NATALIA, from a distance)

Natalia!

NATALIA'S VOICE

(To VICTOR)

What is it, Victor?

VICTOR'S VOICE

(To NATALIA, from a distance)

What a coincidence. Have you heard? Listen to what song they're playing... listen...

NATALIA'S VOICE

(To the telephone, again)

All right, Mom, I gotta go. I'll explain everything soon. Love you.

*The lights slowly turn off during the phone conversation. The song is "I'll Stand By You".
Darkness. End.*

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