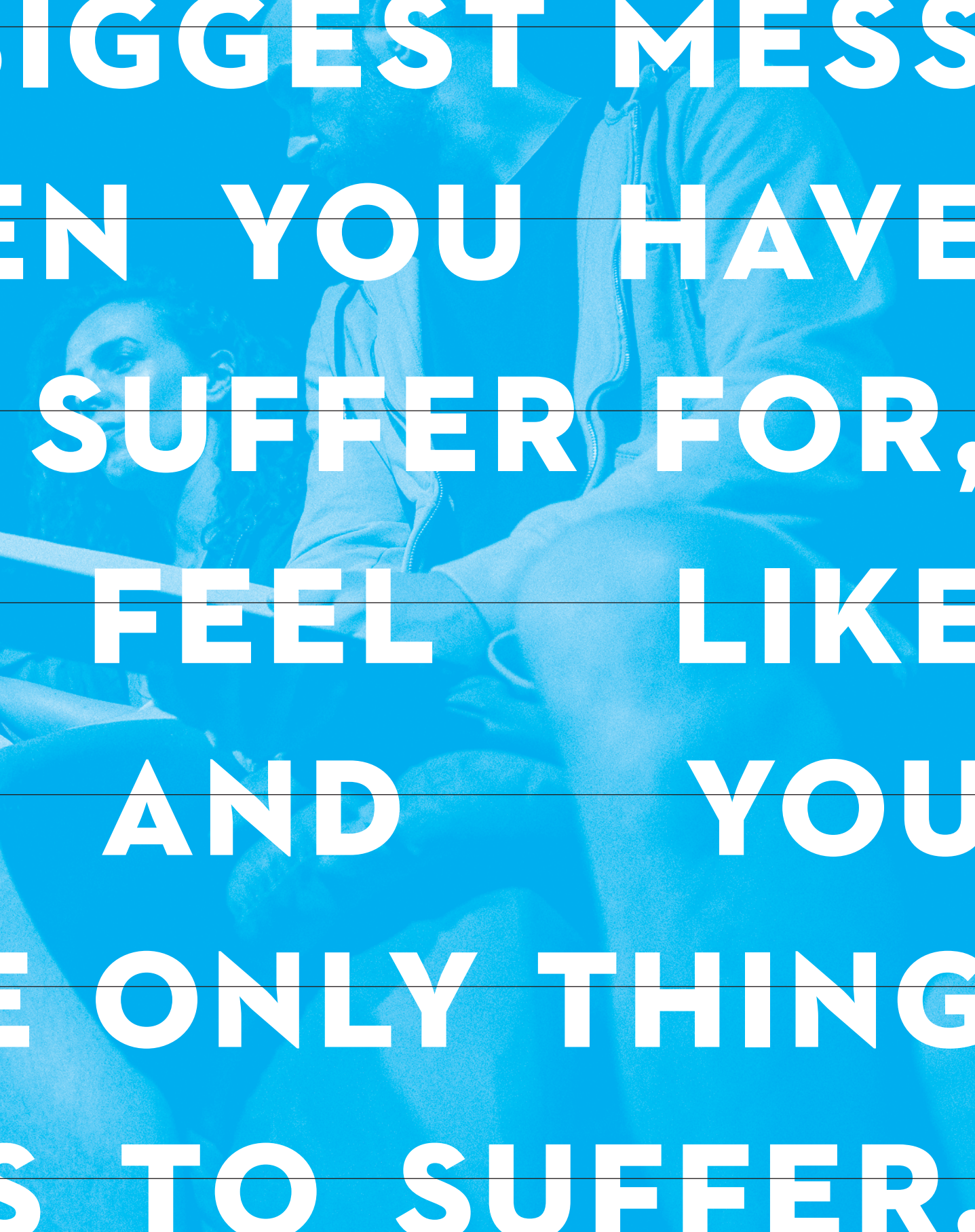


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**LARGEST MESSAGE
WHEN YOU HAVE
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FEEL LIKE
AND YOU
THE ONLY THING
IS TO SUFFER.**

LUCIJA KLARIĆ

(ZAGREB, 1994)



Lucija Klarić holds an MA degree in Dramaturgy from the Academy of Dramatic Art in Zagreb. In addition, she was twice an Erasmus intern in the UK, working with Royal Exchange, Manchester and Bush Theatre in London. Her original plays have been read at the Academy of Dramatic Art, at Young Section Days of the Croatian Association of Dramatic Artists and the *óglumicatražiautora* initiative. An Odysee programme resident for 2021 and a winner of the Mali Marulić First Prize for *Elidino galaktičko putovanje*, developed at La Chartreuse, Velleneuve-lez-Avignon. She writes screenplays for children's serials, works as a playwright and dramaturge on the independent theatre scene, teaches drama workshops, writes reviews and is a huge fan of video games so in her work she pursues the interdisciplinary field bordering on gaming, drama and theatre.

35 SQUARE METRES OR NEVERLAND

TRANSLATORS

Ivana Ostojčić,
Domagoj Čavrak

CHARACTERS

MALE TENANT 1 – ŽUTI

(32 and a half, but he says he is 27)

FEMALE TENANT 2 – IVA

MALE TENANT 3 – SINIŠA

FEMALE TENANT 4 – BELLA

MALE TENANT 5 – ANTON

PARENTS SET – MOM + DAD,

recycled for all the Tenants

SUPPORTING CHARACTERS

FACEBOOK, DAILY NEWS, TV NOISE IN THE BACKGROUND, INSTAGRAM – THE SURROUNDING WORLD, appearing with asterisks (*) – subject to changes as the world around us is in constant change and news (the make-your-own-pizza principle).

SYNOPSIS

When the government of an unnamed state on the margins of Europe activates the social housing measure for people younger than 33, five unknown tenants from 1 to 5 end up in the same living space, in only 35 square metres. The five characters gradually reveal their faces and we learn their names: Žuti, Iva, Siniša, Bella and Anton. We are introduced to their social profiles while they, cramped in only 35 square metres, become part of a story about a generation which doesn't know what to do with either themselves or the future of the planet, and on paper they should.

1. PRELIMINARY CALCULATION

Numbers drying on the clothes line. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5.

Music for audience welcome, pleasant and neutral, lounge.

SIREN SOUND!

In 3, 2, 1... Without even knowing why, the tenants feel invited to stand in a line underneath their numbers – from Tenant 1 to Tenant 5.

They are standing at the start line, waiting to hear a sound in low start, not talking to one another, but rushing all the time, in one place.

MALE TENANT 3 The average height of a man... Counting out pituitary gland diseases and NBA players, 160-185 cm. Depending on the gender. The Residential Building Act standardises the height of a residential unit to 2.5 metres. Which means that, regardless of one's striving to elevate oneself, the man is not tall. Even if you're selling at attic apartment, the low ceilings don't necessarily make its price... low.

FEMALE TENANT 2 In line with the hierarchy

of needs, besides food and water, shelter is quite low. Ergo, it is a necessity and should be assumed as such, just like drinking water.

MALE TENANT 3 According to Maslow's hierarchy of needs physiological needs such as excretion come first. The next step is safety... which includes property, but doesn't define it as an 'apartment' or a 'house'.

MALE TENANT 1 In America it's totally cool to live in a car or a trailer. It's like, you're a nomad, you're free, everything is mobile and so are you.

MALE TENANT 5 You mean, you live like a Gy... a Roma.

MALE TENANT 2 You didn't fucking just say that.

MALE TENANT 1 When you give it a though, in fact, why would someone today want to drop the anchor and become rooted in one place? Man, you have the world at your fingertips, and you to build a what?, a little house of a few dozen square metres?

MALE TENANT 3 The Earth's area is 510 million square metres. 71 per cent is water. Evolution-wise we're no closer to gills and fins than we were a million years ago. Over 50% of that area is used for food, 33% are deserts, 24% mountains. Meaning, 37 million square metres for mankind. 7.7 billion people so... 0.00481 square metres

of the Earth per man. Without high-rise. Ding. A winning number pops out somewhere.

MALE TENANT 5 Work is proportionate to force and is multiplied by path – therefore, you force yourself, you do something and you get somewhere. That’s how it’s supposed to be by the laws of physics. Because everything in life needs to be earned, and the more you work, the farther you should get, right?

FEMALE TENANT 2 This is all culturally conditioned, we’ve been convinced we should, right!, we want this space, and we didn’t even deign to focus on the essential: what is this living space anyway?

FEMALE TENANT 4 Fine, you’re born and you get a body and now you’re somehow materialised in this world and fuck, what-cha gonna do, you simply occupy a space from the beginning.

*Bang. The race pistol fires.
The tenants run around the stage and take space.*

*They push for it, blend with it, solidarize then grow upwards one on top of the other, they stand still, collide, gather...
Chaos persists. Someone can turn on the stroboscope.*

Then one of them shouts: STOP!

And the scene stops. Work light turns on.

FEMALE TENANT 4 I think we should try something else.

MALE TENANT 5 I’m fucking tired. Too much work.

Male Tenant 3 has an idea. He starts walking along the edges and corners of the room in big steps and counting.

MALE TENANT 3 and the number of square metres is – 35!

There is chalk in his pocket. He pulls it out.

He approaches all the tenants and draws a square for each of them to stand in. Tenant 1 tries to step out of the square, but Tenant 3 immediately stops him. He also draws one square for himself.

MALE TENANT 3 We all begin in a square. Because you exist as matter bla bla bla... You can’t help it but to disintegrate. What more do you need?

MALE TENANT 5 You need a place to lie down.

Male Tenant 5 lies down so Tenant 3 outlines him in chalk.

MALE TENANT 3 Fine, so, 6–8 hours you occupy at least one more square since you’re lying. Next?

MALE TENANT 1 You need to relieve it someplace.

MALE TENANT 3 Excretion, the bottom of the pyramid... goes to the corner to draw a quadrant... Every intelligent animal knows you do that away from other things.

FEMALE TENANT 2 What about washing your hands? Washing yourself? What does Maslow say about hygiene?

Male Tenant 3 comes to Female Tenant 2. He suggests she should spread her arms and legs wide, she is confused. He draws a large rectangle around her.

MALE TENANT 3 This is the average size of a bathtub you can squeeze in, let’s say. What else?

FEMALE TENANT 4 Food?

MALE TENANT 3 Hm, does food really need to have a space of its own?

MALE TENANT 5 You’re fucking kidding me, even pigs in the pigsty have that feed thing.

Male Tenant 3 draws another square next to his square.

He looks around so...

MALE TENANT 3 When you take a look at it, realistically, a man doesn’t need much.

He starts running around unmarked surfaces careful not to cross the line.

FEMALE TENANT 5 Be careful not to step on the line!

MALE TENANT 3 There is plenty of space, for anything you want.

Male Tenant 3 jumps into his square. For a while everyone is still. Silent. They don’t move, they don’t occupy space.

FEMALE TENANT 2 What about our things?

... and everyone turns to her.

MALE TENANT 3 What do you mean – things?

...so Female Tenant 2 looks at all the others.

FEMALE TENANT 2 If someone starts to convince me now that things are just a by-product of a materialist world view and capitalist economy, I already have a counterargument: – – – who here possesses only one pair of underpants?

No one raises their hand.

Female Tenant 2 proudly steps out of her square, takes the chalk from Male Tenant 3 and draws a 'closet' on the floor.

FEMALE TENANT 2 There. Let's not exaggerate, one closet can be deemed a 'necessity'. Fine, maybe another small one by its side. For the shoes. We're not animals, after all.

She draws another small square for the shoes.

MALE TENANT 1 If we go down that road, you need to have a place for your crew. At least an old couch. What the purpose of shitting and sleeping if no one is around? You can bury me straight away, that makes only two squares of worry.

Male Tenant 1 takes the chalk and draws a hang-out zone.

MALE TENANT 5 That was easy, but what about health? That must be on that Malovlyich pyramid as well. You need to have a plant for oxygen. And you need to have some space to work out.

He takes the chalk to circle a plant and define a workout area.

FEMALE TENANT 4 Guys, this is pathetic, where are our souls? How many square metres does your spirit take? To accept the fact that you don't have a place to work, to be creative... Pardon my French, but fuck that shit.

Female Tenant 4 then takes the chalk and draws a nice big studio across half the stage.

MALE TENANT 3 But the excretion corner is over there. It's not really convenient -

Female Tenant 4 goes, erases it and squeezes it someplace else. There is no more room left.

FEMALE TENANT 2 Fine, say whatever you want, but I can't help myself... I'm really troubled by the fact that we don't have a washing machine here.

And she quickly takes the chalk and makes a square for the washing machine. She writes it out: W-A-S-H-E-R.

MALE TENANT 1 Wait, I want a fridge for the beer.

So he draws a fridge.

MALE TENANT 5 You know what, I'm long-legged and I like a good sleep.

Male Tenant 5 expands the sleeping area, but penetrates the studio.

FEMALE TENANT 4 You crossed the line, see? Sleeping where you work is not good. I read that somewhere.

MALE TENANT 1 I also think we need a bigger kitchen. I couldn't cook a thing here.

Everyone nods when Male Tenant 1 expands the food area.

FEMALE TENANT 2 Watch out, you just stepped inside the bathtub.

Male Tenant 1 moves a bit to the other side so...

MALE TENANT 5 No, not here, there's a yoga mat here.

He starts to move backwards and almost bumps into Male Tenant 3.

MALE TENANT 1 Sorry, man.

FEMALE TENANT 2 Look, there's a place there, just the size for...

All of a sudden, shouting, everyone except Male Tenant 3 yells their ideas: for a bookshelf, for a dog's house, for a PlayStation, for a garden, for mushroom growing, for meditation, then Female Tenant 2 spontaneously bursts out: FOR A BABY!

Everyone stands still.

FEMALE TENANT 2 Oops... I mean: For a cat! For a goldfish! For a hamster! FOR A BIRD CAGE!

The arguing continues.

At the same time Male Tenant 3 like a Gaul counting steps goes to the edge of the stage.

He looks to the audience. Counts them. He looks behind, then again at the stage... All until he says:

MALE TENANT 3 People, know what? It seems there's just too many of us.

The other stop. They approach him. Everybody is looking straight.

Light change.

7. HOW MANY TENANTS DOES IT TAKE TO CHANGE A LIGHT BULB?

A light bulb is out. The tenants play in the dark.

Male Tenant 1 jumps onto the couch to be closer to the burnt-out bulb. He touches it, burns himself and gets an idea.

MALE TENANT 1 When I was little, I told my Mom that when I grow up I won't be old because no one likes to talk to old people. Then my Mom told me I was naughty and shouldn't be saying such things, and I asked her why then she always tells grandpa, when she calls him, that he shouldn't be bothering his GP or the lady in the grocery store. She said that one day we will all be old and that I should go and watch a cartoon, and I thought about why Ash Ketchum from the Pokémon is always the same age and he can do this and I can't.

Male Tenant 5 presses the switch as if to make sure that it is only the burnt-out bulb.

ANTON Nothing.
IVA Maybe it's the fuse?

Male Tenant 3 turns on his lighter and waves it in the air as if he were at a rock concert.

MALE TENANT 3 When I was five, my grandma told me I was big enough to pray to God. She said I didn't have to say all the prayers – both Our Father, and Hail Mary, and Apostles' Creed, but that I should at least pray to my guardian angel before sleep because we all have our guardian

angels watching over us. Then once outside a church I saw a one-legged man with black scattered teeth, sitting on a piece of cardboard with an empty yoghurt cup which had inside less coins than my piggy bank. He kept repeating "God bless". I asked my grandmother – where is his angel?, and she gave him a coin and said he was watching and taking care of him. I no longer prayed to fall asleep faster. I didn't know what I'd be when I grow up, but I was mad at my grandmother who always said I'd be the president.

Male Tenant 1 opens the fridge, there is light inside.

ŽUTI Wait, if the fuse is out, then the fridge can't work, right?

Female Tenant 4 scours the apartment with her hone flashlight. She is looking for something.

BELLA Do we have any candles to light?
ŽUTI Well done. A good idea. A bit of atmosphere.
SINIŠA The power is not out. It's just a burnt-out light bulb.

Male Tenant 3 wants to remove the bulb.

IVA Careful! You can be electrocuted? (to Anton) Is the switch on the right side? It should be facing downwards.

Male Tenant 5 rolls his eyes, although no one sees that because there is so little light.

ANTON That's not important... – Is it?

Male Tenant 3 bravely removes the problematic light bulb.

Female Tenant 2 takes it and looks into it like a crystal ball.

FEMALE TENANT 2 When I was little, we lived in an apartment right across Tomislav's. He was five years older and didn't mind if we played with Barbie dolls, and for my birthday everyone always gave me Barbie dolls. The real ones. My Mom and Dad didn't like us to play at Tomislav's place because it 'smelled of damp' and they had their old grandmother living with them who thought everything was too loud. Tomislav once said he hoped his grandmother would die soon because he was angry that she was the only one who had her own room, and they didn't. Then Tomislav's Dad died. I tried to cry over Tomislav's Dad, but I couldn't. Tomislav didn't cry either so I was glad not to be the only person not crying. When I told Tomislav I liked him in five years' time, he said I was like a sister to him and then I cried all day. I used to imagine making clothes for Barbie dolls when I grow up.

ŽUTI What now?

SINIŠA We need another bulb.

ANTON (to Bella) Did you find something?

BELLA No, I was looking for candles. But we don't have that either.

Female Tenant 2 is making a grocery list in the dark.

IVA So, we need: ...a light bulb, candles, even better – scented candles, oat milk for the coffee, what else?

ŽUTI A screwdriver?

Male Tenant 5 rolls his eyes, but this is barely visible since there is no light.

ANTON We don't need a screwdriver to change the light bulb... – Right?

Female Tenant 4 places her cell phone underneath her chin, like she is telling a camping horror story.

FEMALE TENANT 4 I wasn't even that little when I ate mud in the garden. My Mom let me eat mud because she thought it was good for immunity. Later she said nothing because she wanted me to stop doing it 'at my own pace', although I was no longer building immunity. I didn't even like mud and I don't know what I was eating it after all. I was in hospital only once, but not because of the mud, but because I had my tonsils removed. There was a boy in the room with me who was 18 and I thought he was a giant. He was expecting heart surgery. They put me to sleep in a cot although I was already six and almost couldn't fit inside. The nurse yelled at me in the evening because I wouldn't sleep, and I closed my eyes firmly and fell asleep straight away. The giant told me not to worry, because after tonsil surgery you can go home soon. When Mom and Dad came to pick me up, I wouldn't go, even though they told me that without the tonsils I could eat tons of ice cream. The giant wasn't in the room. Then the nurse came and said I had to go home so I got out of the cot. I always wanted to be a pirate when I grew up.

Male Tenant 3 shoves his nose in the light bulb tube.

ŽUTI What, broken?

IVA Broken? No, I can't believe this, this is beyond human level where they placed us –

SINIŠA No, I'm just looking to see what kind of bulb we need.

BELLA Wait, there is more than one kind of bulb?

ŽUTI Well yes, don't you remember they passed that law that now we all have to

have those with UV radiation so that we could all get cancer?

BELLA That can't be true, you're kidding?

SINIŠA In fact, those bulbs are now getting off the market.

BELLA That means we're already radiated?!

Male Tenant 5 puts his jacket over his head to play a monster.

MALE TENANT 5 When I was little, everyone told me my name was Ante like my grandpa, even though I'm really Anton. I said that to everyone, but no one listened to me. My grandpa went fishing every morning, but I didn't like going with him because he had coarse and rugged hands and the smell of freshly caught fish made me sick in the stomach. Most of all I hated my grandpa munching at his breakfast and slurping coffee. When I once vomited into the sea, my grandpa said I wasn't a man, although I already knew I was because men had weenies, and girls had fannies. I was in a fight with Josip who lived just around the corner when he called me a pussy 'cause I didn't like playing football. I gave Josip a bloody nose, and my grandpa then slapped me; it hurt even more because of his coarse hands. No one ever called me a pussy again. I had a dream I'd be a shark when I grew up so I could eat all the fish from the sea and chew Josip's ball in pieces.

Male Tenant 5 starts chasing all other Tenants around the apartment who hide and scream like children.

As they run around and giggle:

MALE TENANT 3 When I'm big, no one will need angels because everyone will have all their legs and teeth and houses to sleep inside.

FEMALE TENANT 4 And my Dad said that on Tuesday morning they arrested the man who killed as many as five homeless people on the streets of New York and Washington.

MALE TENANT 5 And when I'm big, no one will ever say anything bad to anyone and everyone will be good to each other. And no one will fight. – Or go to war!

MALE TENANT 1 My Mom told me that as many as thirty people a month die from explosive remains in Syria.

FEMALE TENANT 4 When I'm big, everybody will have somebody to look after them and take care that they don't eat too much mud, and broccoli will taste like chocolate.

FEMALE TENANT 2 When I'm big... I'll be living in a world where no one is ever sad because everybody always gets what they want. – And little boys don't pull little girls by the hair.

MALE TENANT 5 My Dad says in Afghanistan they sell little children and body parts because they have nothing to eat. And that their ec-eclα-economy is collapsing.

MALE TENANT 1 Eh well, I, one day when I'm big, everybody will always be children and play all day. And no one will have wrinkles and be old because they'll be without a care in the world. And I couldn't care less what Mom says!

Female Tenant 2 trips and falls down.

The game is immediately over. Female Tenant 2 refrains from crying like a baby.

ANTON We can't live like this, this isn't normal. We have to do something about this light bulb.

9. WARRIOR 2

The couch is pushed deep and squeezed with all the things in the background.

A space is cleared in the front for Iva and Bella to do yoga. They are alone in the apartment. They practice with a video.

IVA (in a downward-facing dog pose): You have no idea how much I needed this.

BELLA (in chaturanga): You, like, do this every day? – Like, when you watch a video it looks like some kind of stretching, and in fact it's... a killer.

Bella's arms are shaking – she is somehow managing it, but barely.

IVA Normally yes, but since I'm here, I don't have much chance.... Or room. I no longer go to yoga studios so time can pass without doing anything. Which is bad. (exhale then...) – You don't know how happy I am that the others are gone.

BELLA Why?

IVA I'll be honest with you: I can no longer stand this male energy. Smelly socks on the couch, dirty glasses and sticky table from beer and coffee.

BELLA (glances at the couch): Sorry, those are my socks.

IVA A-aha. Sorry, don't get me wrong, I'm not a prude or anything. That was our grandmothers' thing. It's more that they – and I don't mean to nurture stereotypes, but – they simply don't understand things. For starters, let's just say that no one ever designed torture shoes for men.

BELLA Aha. Fine, but that's not what I meant.

IVA What did you mean?

BELLA I meant why don't you go practice in a studio? When there's no room here.

IVA (incredibly calmly although she is moving): Oh that. First of all, it's expensive.

BELLA Yes, right, yes, yes –

IVA (continues): But it's not even a matter of money... I started doing yoga on my own, with YouTube and I started because I needed a way to... channel my negative energy. Relax. Then I went to a studio because I meant – fine, if I want to take it a step up, I need professional guidance. I needed an external eye to see where I am compared to others.

BELLA (panting): And?

IVA Then it became relevant who can put their leg over their head or stand on a hair, and when I realised I was the only one who didn't match her legging with her mat, I gave up.

BELLA OK, why do you care?

IVA What do you mean?

BELLA Why do you give a shit, you wear mismatched leggings and mat and you have your own thing.

Bella stretches on her stomach like a stranded whale.

BELLA Sorry, this is too hard for me.

IVA (planking): I understand your point, but really, you don't know how stifling this can become – literally. All of a sudden they're all around you as if you're disabled all because you can't make a headstand. "Don't be afraid, I'll hold your legs."

Iva glances at her belly hanging in downward-facing dog.

IVA Look at how neglected myself, look at this.

BELLA Don't know what I'm looking at.

IVA (in warrior pose): – That's definitely a stand that makes things easier, what you call "do your own thing", but we don't live in a society where this is possible.

BELLA (still dead on the floor): Why not?

IVA I'll give you an example. Now, first of all, bear in mind when I'm telling you this that this is my third university study, and not elementary school where we compete whom the teacher will ask first.

BELLA Um, in elementary school I always used to hide from the teacher and pray not to be asked anything, but fine.

IVA Yes, well so did I, if I wasn't one hundred per cent sure I knew the answer. I'm just saying, I'm not naively mesmerised with the word 'seminar' and when someone calls you 'a smart colleague'.

BELLA I hear you, yeah... (she has no idea what Iva is talking about) Well yes, this is your what, third degree?

IVA Yes. And yes, people asked me "what are you going to do with a third college degree", but I afforded myself Fashion Design because I wanted to express my creative side, be the change in the industry contaminated with fast fashion, non-ecological practices and uniformity of femininity.

BELLA Yeah, that's fucking awesome... Wait, really, didn't you have enough of this?

Iva for a moment loses balance in the tree pose.

IVA What? What do you mean? Studying? I don't know. No. I like to be at the source of knowledge. In a structure.

BELLA An eternal student.

IVA Fine, well, simply... Why not if you can? Maybe this socially-subsidised education wasn't the best, but the price-quality ratio is not bad. So why not gather as many skills as you can for the future?

BELLA The future as in grown-up life, job, career, all that?

IVA Yeah, that...

Iva exhales, relaxes her head and arms to the floor. Bella barely gets up from the floor. She continues to follow Iva.

BELLA So, what, how are things at this Fashion Design?

IVA Fine. I'll be writing my final paper soon.

BELLA You happy?

IVA Don't know. Yes. And no. Didn't even blink and it's over --

Iva stretches:

-- That's what I'm trying to tell you. You're always on a scale of sorts. When I proposed my mentor a sustainable cotton collection, he subtly informed me that there is a Lara, almost a decade younger, who has already launched her brand of handmade clothes made of old ragged fishnets, delivered all over Europe, plus with a minimum carbon footprint, on which she's writing her thesis.

BELLA Oh, wow.

IVA Yeah, exactly, wow. To office consultations she brings her own quinoa and broad beans salads in beeswax wraps, while I live on a budget and stuff myself with cherry strudels because it's the only thing on non-animal origin in the bakery and slowly but consistently build this orbit around my belly.

Iva once again desperately glances at her saggy skin. She has to refrain herself from ripping it off.

BELLA OK then, why all the stress, is the strudel at least good?

Iva lies on her back. Blows out.

IVA Don't know, it's not bad.

Bella happily joins her, they rock like babies hugging their knees - yes, it's a yoga pose.

IVA All I wanted to say is, every original thought is not original, and once you think you got the hang of it, you realise someone already has it at home as a pet.

BELLA Sorry, I don't know what to say.

IVA Nothing. It doesn't matter.

Iva decided to try to make a headstand before the end. Before lying down and playing dead.

BELLA Wait, let me try it too... So, what, elbows on the floor and legs up?

Iva squeezes out a "mhm". She can't pull up her legs, but Bella can.

IVA I can't believe this... ..

BELLA What are you saying?

IVA Nothing, nothing. Look, my finger nail broke.

Bella is back to sitting position.

BELLA Ouch, I was just about to say they're so so great. Let me see, maybe we can save it?

IVA No.

Iva lies down to corpse pose. Bella lies down next to her. A strange silence until the end of the video. Namaste.

10. TOMORROW IS (NOT) ANOTHER DAY

*The owner's son said for the Daily that they "had bad experiences with homosexuals from Hungary, who had orgies at the hotel and left a big mess, after which they made a decision not to admit homosexuals anymore".

Male Tenant 5 is getting ready for a serious job interview - he irons his suit, puts it on, painstakingly ties his tie, puts a good aftershave on...

He turns on some winner music, there is a beat - bambambam.

Tenant chorus:

MALE TENANT 1 Tomorrow... I'll see how to start a company in Sweden.

FEMALE TENANT 2 Tomorrow... I'm starting to learn Chinese. This is the future.

FEMALE TENANT 4 Tomorrow... I'm looking at places in Berlin. It's the place to be.

MALE TENANT 3 Tomorrow... I'm calling a dealer.

S2 Tomorrow... I'm deleting my Tinder. One-night-stand is primitive distraction.

S1 Tomorrow... I'm writing a script for that brutal film I thought of when I was having a beer.

S4 Tomorrow... I'm making a portfolio and applying for a residency. I have time till midnight.

S3 Tomorrow... I'm closing my bank account. What can they do to me?

Male Tenant 5 is ready - he'll kick ass at this job interview and tomorrow is the first day of the rest of his life. He snorts another line of coke and goes out.

Fast forward.

Someone brings a pizza box. Someone forgets to water a plant. Someone brought an unnecessary piece of furniture on the stage.

Anton comes back, enraged.

Siniša is on the couch. He is composing a new song on his ukulele. Behind the couch, on the floor, Žuti is taking a nap – we'll realise that only later.

Anton walks in, almost trips over Žuti (although no one knows it's Žuti yet). He swears. He arrives to the table on the left. Takes a pizza box and throws it somewhere. Takes another one and tries to break it over his knee. The cardboard doesn't break.

He throws himself on the couch next to Siniša. Siniša is done composing and takes a joint out of his ukulele bag.

He lights a smoke.

He looks at Anton. Offers him a smoke. Anton inhales. They smoke weed.

ANTON This is strong.

SINIŠA Mhm.

Silence for a while.

ANTON (inhales): This motherfucking world.

SINIŠA Yup.

Anton unties his tie.

ANTON Fuck them all –

SINIŠA Yup.

ANTON Is it my fault you couldn't get out of the closet 30 years ago –

SINIŠA Fuck.

ANTON Plus you have kids in the meantime. What, to have someone to embarrass in 20 years' time when you flip out and you come to realise you can't get it up looking at your wife's tits? –

SINIŠA Tits are not for everyone.

ANTON Then what, then I lose a job, the best possible fucking chance, me!, for pouring drinks, for pocket money, to young idiots he paid for sex?

SINIŠA Jesus, such a pile of corporate shit.

ANTON I wish you could see his eyes open wide when I entered the room. He remembers alright... He wanted to get in my pants too, but I told him I'm not into daddies. How was I supposed to know that the guy works as a court interpreter to the hottest lawyers in town. I wish I knew, I'd have that brandy alright.

SINIŠA Whatcha gonna do, still no time travel.

ANTON How could I not put two and two together. I'M SUCH AN IDIOT!

Žuti wakes up.

ŽUTI Man, what's fuss?

SINIŠA The court interpreter is a closeted gay and Anton didn't get internship.

ŽUTI I don't get it?

ANTON Come on, turn your brains on.

Žuti is looking at Anton for a while, trying to understand.

ŽUTI I still don't get it.

Žuti continues to solve the crossword puzzle in his head while getting into focus after his afternoon nap.

ANTON I was the best candidate. My CV is impeccable, I have more references and recommendations than others can imagine.

SINIŠA I know.

ANTON You don't know a thing. If you're so smart, do you know who got the job then?

SINIŠA No.

ANTON The main judge's nephew.

SINIŠA Oh well, then you didn't really stand a chance.

ANTON If I had given him what he had wanted back then, there's no blood thicker than –

SINIŠA Want the last smoke?

Anton inhales the last smoke and coughs.

SINIŠA Take it easy, it's just work. It's like getting mad at playing 'Ludo'.

ANTON You sound like my mother.

SINIŠA I don't know what your Mom's like, but this is pure system oppression. You've been brainwashed to think you need to have a 'big job'. And the only way to 'feel good' about yourself is to toil for the rotten system.

ANTON And, please, what do you suggest? I should lounge until I starve to death? At the end of each month we had to scour our piggy banks for bread. Our bank accounts were always in red. I wouldn't dream of it.

SINIŠA Being in red definitely not. You're again unnecessarily giving money to the magnates.

Siniša rolls another joint.

ŽUTI Hey man, would you bring me another Royal Cheese menu after your shift?

ANTON So working for McDonalds is fine? That's not corporate shit?

SINIŠA McDonalds is better than Big Pharma.

Anton all of a sudden bursts into laughter – the joint got to his head.

ANTON You're crazy. Besides, what would BigPharma hire you for, to make sandwiches in the canteen?

ŽUTI (*looks at Siniša*): Yes, sandwiches. They'd allow Siniša to mix all kinds of stuff.

Anton has several question marks above his head.

SINIŠA (*ignores Žuti*): I don't see a problem, everything's clear about McDonalds. You know you'll work for a minimum wage and people are at least aware that they're buying shit. No one claims McDonalds is healthy, you can say the same about meds, and we know what they promise.

ANTON I'm not one of those idiots who think headache is cured by meditation, not Aspirin.

SINIŠA Okay.

ANTON And I'd defend a pharmaceutical giant in court, wouldn't even scratch my head if it was good for me.

SINIŠA Why?

ANTON What do you mean why? Because with their money I could buy a two-bedroom apartment in cash and go on vacation in the Bahamas.

SINIŠA What do you need all that for? That's just material nonsense.

ANTON So it's better I live here, right?

ŽUTI What's wrong with here?

Žuti also wants a smoke, but no one perceives him.

SINIŠA I have to go to work.

Siniša puts it out. He goes out.

ANTON Maybe McDonalds has a corporate position, ha? Maybe you could send a job application. They're a foreign company, they like to employ all kinds of people, maybe they wouldn't mind.

ŽUTI (*realises only now*): Man! You're a fa... gay!

Anton bursts into laughter.

12. RED ALERT

Sounds of ambulance and the police. Something is going on in the street, but the stage-apartment doesn't have a window.

Bella, Žuti and Siniša are in the apartment.

ŽUTI They're not just passing by. It's somewhere close.

BELLA What happened?

SINIŠA Some kind of accident. (*and he shrugs*)

BELLA I'll Google it.

They wait for Bella to do a Google search.

BELLA It says nothing.

ŽUTI Man, I think they're like here. A block away.

Žuti is looking for a way to see through the walls – without success.

BELLA Wanna go out? See what happened?

No one moves.

SINIŠA Probably a car accident.

ŽUTI Right! The other day, I was walking from Lijevi after the beer, wasn't even that late, and I was crossing the street and this guy – wroom – like this (*indicates the closeness*), we came this close, he almost ran over me. Man, I saw my entire life in a flash.

BELLA Horror. What did you do?

ŽUTI Nothing, came here and took a nap.

Another emergency service.

SINIŠA It's the fourth. Weee-weee. Firefighters.

Siniša plays some tones on his ukulele.

BELLA You think it's a fire?

SINIŠA Does it really matter? Like we could do anything about it.

Anton enters.

ANTON Oh the chaos, guys.

BELLA What's going on?

ANTON Don't know, there are some cars, looks like a car crash. It's so crowded, people came flying like seagulls, I just wanted to get away from the mass...

BELLA Was it something like really terrible or just a little fender bender?

ANTON I can't tell, the traffic is jammed, can't see a thing, and I wouldn't dream of going into this rabble and press my nose against the window. I have plenty of my own stuff to worry about.

ŽUTI (*to Bella*): Check it out on the internet now, maybe someone sent them a pic for 500 kuna.

Bella finds nothing.

Iva enters. She gives everyone a wave and stays silent. All eyes on her.

IVA What?

BELLA Didn't you see what's going on outside?

IVA Oh that. I passed down the street, I saw the ambulance take someone. It was a pile-up.

BELLA Was the person conscious or?

IVA I really don't know. I think I saw their eyes open. – And maybe not. I didn't want to look at it too much, I don't have the stomach for it.

ŽUTI That means nothing – if they can look or not. My friend had a concussion, we walked him to the hospital on foot and at the end of the day he had to have an urgent surgery. They had to open his skull.

BELLA Man, this gives me the creeps.

IVA Wait, you had a car accident?

ŽUTI No, we got drunk and my friend fell over a park bench. He bet he could jump over it. He lost big time.

IVA But he's fine now, right?

ŽUTI He is, he just can't look at the light a long time, Christmas lights, that sort of stuff.

Bella is the only one to open her eyes wide.

Siniša plays a few chord arrhythmically on his ukulele.

Still panic sounds from the street, but no one pays any attention to it – Anton lit a cigarette. Žuti is laughing at the internet, and Iva accidentally got caught in a cobweb and is not trying to shake it off.

Bella is standing in the middle of the room. She is thinking about going outside to see, maybe even to help?, takes her jacket, opens the door and ... stays by the door.

She turns around on her heel and slams the door.

She sits next to Siniša who is casually 'playing'.

All of a sudden...

ANTON Guys, have you seen this email from the Ministry?

Everyone is checking their phones. They got the mail.

In accordance with Art. 30 of the Law on Socially Subsidised Youth Independence, the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy of the Republic of _____ made the following decision:

NOTICE
on the second cycle of state incentives for subsidised youth housing

We would like to inform all young people of the Republic of _____ and current beneficiaries of subsidised housing measures that the following tender has been approved in the Parliament to encourage the independence of young people in terms of housing.

On this occasion, we inform all current and future beneficiaries of the measures that, with the aim of common good and the possibility of approving more requests, it is possible to restructure the current division of state housing and additional system load so that all our young people have the opportunity to live independently.

Beneficiaries who have reached the age of 33 from the first to the opening of

the second tender, can send a special request to the Ministry proving the continuing inability to independently provide housing in order to exceptionally extend their stay in subsidized housing for 3 months.

Everybody is stunned.

Žuti looks at his watch. He's not feeling alright. He goes to the fridge. Drinks an entire beer in one take.

BELLA Ant, can they do this?

ANTON I don't know, I can't find this Law online.

IVA What does this mean, they can restructure us out in the street?

ANTON No, we're protected unless...

IVA You don't turn 33 tomorrow, that part I understand.

Žuti goes for another beer. No more left. He starts pacing around the apartment madly, keeping quiet.

BELLA But they can relocate us to other places, right?

ANTON In theory... Yes. But it doesn't seem likely –

IVA Perfect, great –

SINIŠA even better, we could get –

ANTON most probably, a new tenant.

Curtain?

13. CUTTING THE EXCESS

Žuti is sleeping on the couch. The only one in the apartment / on the stage.

Iva and Anton are watching him snore blissfully.

IVA I think we overcomplicated the matter. We just need to grab him – you by the arms, me by the legs, gently take him out the door and put him down, he won't even know it. And when he wakes up, he'll see he's in the street, shrug and face the music.

ANTON Oh cut it out. You don't always have to be do decent and rational. We shouldn't underestimate the enemy here. It's like having cockroaches in the apartment, you won't solve anything if you just hit them with a slipper, you need to put poison in every pore they can crawl out of, to avoid...
IVA Fine, but what are we going to tell others?

ANTON Very simple: The next one who eats the last slice of pizza without permission... signed his own death sentence.

Iva is uncomfortable. She ate the last slice of pizza last week.

IVA But what are we going to tell his parents? What if his Mom comes to see if he's alive, what he's got, and we just open the door and then... what? Shit, man, it makes me sick juts thinking about this. Shit, great, now I'm also swearing.

ANTON Then next time she should give birth to someone who's not a stupid piece of shit who can't even brush the toilet after taking a dump.

IVA My stomach churns –

ANTON You're damn right! Me too when I remember how it smells after this guy taking a dump after a night of cheap wine. And

then he doesn't even clean up afterwards, you wouldn't feel sick after this piece of shit –

Anton screams the last words into Žuti's ear. Žuti just snores and munches, he feels really fine.

Siniša joins in. All this while he was listening to music in the corner so he wasn't particularly important for the scene. Now he is going to the bathroom and is about to pass between Iva and Žuti.

A moment of silence. Toilet flushing. Siniša returns and put his headphones back on.

Iva and Anton continue to whisper just in case.

ANTON Shit... I though you at least had some balls.

IVA What's your point?

ANTON Very simple. If others can't count, I though at least you, all so smart and with ten degrees under your belt, could.

IVA What, you're scared I don't know $2 + 2 = 4$?

ANTON No, I'm scared you don't understand that if you have 2 apples and want to be fair, you can only divide them into 4 equal parts. And if you have the 5th mouth to feed, then everyone's hungry and the worst of all – you won't be able to divide it right. All the parts will be unequal.

Žuti farts. Loudly. It stinks. It stinks so bad that they need to close their noses. Yes, Iva and Anton continue to talk with their noses closed.

IVA OK, you got me, I'm in.

ANTON Where's the pillow?

Unless we realised by now, now we're certain that Iva was holding a pillow behind her back all along.

ANTON I'll hold him still, you just press the pillow over his nose.

IVA Why should I do all the dirty work?

ANTON Really? You wanna stand by his feet?

He mimics to make it clear to us how Žuti's feet smell.

IVA Fine, you're right, yes, let's go –

Suddenly...

SINIŠA Did you know the level of cortisol in wolves raises when a pack member dies? It's literally the only situation when they're willing to take even a loner wolf into their company.

Iva freezes, the pillow is still behind her back.

ANTON What are you talking?

SINIŠA I'm listening to a podcast on behaviour of a pack. Clearly, packs exist to keep control over a territory, but I like this romantic idea about crying wolves. Predators mourning a friend. Auuuuuuu!

Siniša cries like a wolf. For a moment it seems like the howling will wake Žuti up. But then Siniša stops.

ANTON He's next.

IVA Wait, you didn't find this poetic?

ANTON What? As far as I heard, everything revolves around territory. You take it and then you defend it. Well, this morning I found this guy casually slurping coffee from my thermos flask, like it was his and it wasn't... He thinks he can piss on my

turf and I won't smell him, but he doesn't have a clue -

Yes, Anton would like to strangle him with his bare hands.

IVA What if we just called the police?

ANTON "Hello, police, yes, we have a small place and this guy's shit, can you come urgently?"

IVA Can we call his Mom?

ANTON I'm not sure. If only she'd raised him, he wouldn't have been such a rotten piece of shit.

Iva becomes nervous. She is looking at Žuti, she knows he is a piece of shit, but she doesn't know what to do with it.

IVA Shit, there, a piece of shit -

ANTON Yeah, that's right, he's a piece of shit. Come on. Knock yourself out. Just remember what he was telling you the other day, right here on this couch -

An instant eruption in Iva.

IVA Fuck you, you stupid piece of shit! You can't bring a girl down to get her. That's not a seduction technique, that's an idiot technique! AAAAAA!

Iva squishes Žuti with a pillow. Anton is cheering. Siniša pays no attention - maybe he can't hear them, maybe he just doesn't care.

Iva puts her heart and soul into this task, but nothing seems to happen: Žuti is still blissfully sleeping when she removes the pillow off his face.

IVA ...Is he dead?

Anton checks his breathing.

ANTON He's breathing... What did I tell you? A cockroach.

IVA Perhaps this pillow thing doesn't work?

Bella is here too. She appears behind Iva's back.

BELLA Hey guys, what are you doing?

Iva screams, frightened.

BELLA Sooooo-rryyyy, why so jumpy?

ANTON Where did you come from?

BELLA I fell asleep in the bathtub. I only now woke up.

IVA Didn't Siniša just a second ago...?

BELLA Yeah, yeah... gets close to Iva... and I took a peek. It's this big... she points to enviable centimetres... You had a point alright.

Iva nudges Bella to be quiet.

BELLA I'm starving, is there any pizza left?

ANTON NO, THERE'S FUCKING NOTHING LEFT BECAUSE THIS DRUNK PIECE OF SHIT ALWAYS EMPTIES THE FRIDGE WHEN HE'S HUNGOVER AND NEVER BUYS A SINGLE DAMN THING!

Anton jumps onto the couch and tries to smother Žuti with a pillow.

Finally, Žuti wakes up and fight. Everybody is watching what's going on. In fact, Siniša still has his headphones on, so it's not clear if he is paying any attention.

ŽUTI Man, what's gotten into you?

Anton cools off immediately. He gets off the couch like a gentleman and pulls himself together.

ANTON No, you know what? I know better than this. Even Štefa from the job service typing her counselling report with one finger knows that. You clear?!

He walks to the door elegantly. He slowly pushes the doorknob, wants to open the door, but shit - the door is jammed.

He tries to calmly shake it, once, twice, but the third time he pushes it with his leg, the fourth he is banging. The door doesn't open.

BELLA Hey, it's fine, we'll order another pizza.

A moment of silence then...

IVA Can we order a veggie?

**Researchers estimate that according to Earth's current population and previous pandemics we can expect 3.3 million deaths from zoonoses every year in the future.*

14. SATURDAY AFTERNOON: TOO LATE FOR COFFEE, TOO EARLY FOR BEER

Siniša walks into the apartment, throws himself headlong onto the couch.

All the other tenants are occupied by their screens. No one even noticed Siniša came back from his shift.

This is evident since he is still wearing his McDonalds uniform on.

Anton starts to shake his laptop and suddenly:

ANTON Go... yourself, you old piece of... laptop. Can't die on me now. Duh!

IVA Could you keep it down? Other people are trying to work here too.

ANTON I can't! I can't because this piece of junk deleted my entire cover letter.

ŽUTI Why the fuss, old man? Your second version can only be better than your first one.

ANTON "Why the fuss?" Of course, there is no fuss if you're sitting on your ass all day. Not everyone had the privilege of doing nothing, you know.

ŽUTI Eh, while I was sitting on my ass, my BitCoin did the work for me and grew 3.5%.

Žuti shows him his screen in green.

ANTON Congrats, you earned exactly...

Suddenly:

BELLA Shhhh!

ANTON What's the matter with you?

BELLA Can't you see? Siniša is asleep. Could you keep your voice down?

Iva in the meantime put her headphones on and is walking around the place reading from her laptop:

IVA What is often missing in the ecological critique of fast fashion is the social imbalance of harmful environmental impacts which is a constituent part of the fast fashion production chain...

Bella sneaks on her carefully behind her back and taps her on the shoulder. Iva jumps for fear like a character from Tom & Jerry.

Non-verbally they communicate they have to be 'vevy vevy quiet' because Siniša is asleep.

The mood around the place changes.

The place becomes Siniša's nightmare, and the tenants characters from his repressed traumas.

Only Siniša is Siniša in his dream.

ŽUTI You call this ice-cream, man?

SINIŠA Pardon?

Žuti shoves a plastic cup under Siniša's nose.

ŽUTI What? You call this ice-cream? All melted down.

SINIŠA It's normal, towards the end it mel -

ŽUTI You're calling me a liar? Look, old man, I paid for ice-cream, I want ice-cream, not - like - milk. Do I look stupid to you?

SINIŠA No, Sir.

ŽUTI Look, maybe I didn't go to college, but I'm smart, man. Dude, this is not ice-cream, this is spit.

SINIŠA I can only give you from the same machine as before -

ŽUTI The fuck are you waiting? You pay and then some school dropouts wanna swindle you.

Žuti shoves the cup in his plexus. Siniša is breathless.

Next scene.

BELLA Wait, this is not your student job?

SINIŠA No.

BELLA You're on a break to make a little money?

SINIŠA No.

BELLA Looking for another job?

SINIŠA No.

BELLA I don't get it. You didn't go to college?

SINIŠA I did.

BELLA And you work here?

SINIŠA Yes.

BELLA Geez, man, I though these are just clickbait stories... So sorry. That's why I took up pharmacy. To make sure I have a job once I graduate.

Next scene. With a lot of screaming children:

IVA Lovro, what do you want? - OK, one Fanta. One vanilla shake. That's with hamburgers.

SINIŠA That's not on the menu.

IVA The gentleman says no shake. You can't have a Coke and a shake. Dora, stop acting out in public. - And there's no way you can charge her that instead of Coke?

SINIŠA No.

IVA There, did you hear this, Dora? Dora! You can't call the gentleman stupid. Apologise right now.

SINIŠA It's okay.

IVA Okay, okay... So, for Luka one hamburger, no pickles. Lovro, since when don't you like pickles? OK, two burgers, no pickles. Are you writing this down?

SINIŠA I can remember, thank you.

IVA Oh, I forgot to ask. - Kids, wait, soon you'll get everything. Take it easy! - Did you put away the cake?

SINIŠA The cake?

IVA Yes, we said we don't want your cake, my husband will bring ours.

SINIŠA But, madam, no... We can't -

IVA Jesus Christ, you didn't put away the cake!

SINIŠA But the cake's included in your pri...

IVA There's no need to explain to me what I'm paying for. I want my kid to have his own Spiderman cake, and now you're telling me this isn't happening. Do you know the tears we'll see, huh? Will you be the one to put out the fire, huh? - Dora, please, I already told you, the gentleman won't

give you shake. Yeah, the gentleman is a bit stupid. We won't be coming here again. Oh please, stop whining, of course you'll go to McDonalds again. Yes, but not here with the evil gentleman.

Cut.

Anton approaches Siniša who is scrubbing the floor around the urinal, with a name tag and a shift manager title.

ANTON Are you going to lock then? Don't forget the disabled restroom. Make sure you flush and check the bowl, you know they always clog it with condoms.

SINIŠA No problem.

ANTON Thank you, Siniša.

...he's about to leave, but then he stops, turns and smiles.

ANTON O-kay, I should probably wait for the branch manager tomorrow to tell you this, but I'm overexcited.

SINIŠA What's the matter?

ANTON I have great news.

SINIŠA Yes?

ANTON The branch manager and I agreed that you're the only employee we can always rely on and -

SINIŠA And?

ANTON Since we found out you have a university degree, it was clear we simply had to promote you. Congratulations, Siniša, you became the first deputy shift manager!

SINIŠA No.

ANTON What do you mean - no?

SINIŠA I'm declining your offer. No.

ANTON Siniša, I'm sorry, but I have to insist, a responsible and educated person like you can't...

SINIŠA No. No. No, thank you.

ANTON Siniša, I beg you to reconsider -

SINIŠA Leave me alone! NO! What's not clear? I don't want to! NO!

Siniša hits the floor with the wet mop. Drops of dirty water splash.

Static.

Iva and Žuti are figures from the Parliament. Two-dimensional. In a TV set.

ŽUTI According to our findings, over 2000 opted for our package of measures -

IVA And how do you explain the fact that the residential unit pool is growing, but the stats still show overcrowded homes on the rise?

ŽUTI Please, madam MP, what exactly did your party do for the young people in this country?

IVA You didn't allow me to finish, sir. Your government is letting this bubble inflate until it bursts... Real estate prices are growing unfounded, and you squeeze people to live like sardines and speak about some kind of benefits -

Blackout.

Siniša's Mom and Dad appear from the abyss in a cloud of smoke.

MOM I don't know what exactly do you want, son.

DAD Please, stop embarrassing us and pull yourself together.

MOM Or we'll have to -

DAD we'll have to insist -

MOM That you give up on your inheritance.

The final episode before Siniša wakes up sweaty and delirious. Iva is over him.

IVA Siniša. Hey, Siniša! Are you OK?

Siniša says nothing. Everybody is looking at him.

17. THE PARTY OR EVERYTHING'S A F***ING MESS

**It started at 8pm, with shooting on Seitstettengasse. Several armed terrorists performed the attack. The attacks occurred on six locations. One person died, several are injured, including one police officer. One attacker was killed by the police.*

Bella is alone. She arranged a circle of expensive liquor bottles around her, like for an exorcist seance. Alcohol attracts other tenants like moths to a flame.

Bella spins a bottle, and if the cork doesn't face her, she arranges it to face her. The first part of the evening began, drowning sorrow in alcohol.

BELLA Truth or dare, Bella? / Truth. Only truth to you. / There, I'm a fucking mess. I don't have a particular reason why I feel like that. That's the biggest mess of all. When you have nothing to suffer for, and you feel like suffering and you suffer... The only thing you know is to suffer.

Glances at Bella, more or less interested.

ANTON The truth is that I didn't fall asleep without alcohol or a pill since I was 16.

IVA No, the truth is that I don't know how to feel happiness or pleasure.

ŽUTI No, watch this, the truth is that I was once so depressed 'cause my girlfriend dumped me that I needed a stomach pump.

BELLA The truth is, guys, that I sometimes can't breathe out of panic that tomorrow is a new day.

SINIŠA The truth is that I don't have the energy to walk out of this door.

ANTON That's nothing, the worst thing is getting out of here, getting on a bus and feeling anxiety over what happened last night.

BELLA Even worse is rolling on the bed, sweaty and fantasising about getting a call and finding out something weird like – someone you love is now braindead and you'll finally have a good reason to whine.

IVA No, even worse is to have no emotional capability for any kind of intense sensation because you're dead inside.

ŽUTI The worst is when everyone is a mess, and you have no idea what they're talking about because you really don't let such things get to you. – People, we need more alcohol.

**XXX adds something to their story: This is a biosafe, pharmaceutically guided agenda that will enslave humanity and launch us all into a dystopian nightmare where apocalyptic forces of ignorance and greed will guide our lives and destroy our children.*

The second half of the evening. When you're the drunkest and the most talkative.

In the meantime the bottles are almost empty and the contestants are ready for...

ŽUTI Good evening and welcome to tonight's edition of JEO-PAR-DY!

Studio applause?

ŽUTI With us tonight we have not three but four amazing contestants – Iva, Siniša, Anton and Bella. A round of applause for them.

They applaud themselves.

ŽUTI Let's give a brief introduction of our daring candidates.

A close-up of Iva, then onwards. Iva waves.

ŽUTI With us in the studio tonight is Iva, a young intellectual with two degrees under the belt and the third on the way. She loves whatever smart women love, so Iva spends her time watching European films and studying vegan cookbooks. Iva's favourite hobby is second-hand bargain hunting, and she relaxes with cat videos hoping she'll find the time to "be a Mom to a furball girl!". Next to Iva is Siniša. Although quiet, Siniša is a favourite among his friends who appreciate his musical abilities (or better yet, inabilities). *(forced) Hahaha.* Siniša currently works for the fast-food industry and makes songs for YouTube, but all this can change tomorrow because Siniša is a *magna cum laude* graduate in molecular biology. Isn't that right, Siniša?

Everyone turns to Siniša in disbelief. No one had a clue. Iva is trying to cover her sweaty forehead, then says:

IVA Wow, congrats.

SINIŠA On what? I didn't graduate now.

ANTON What are you waiting for, dude?

Anton pats him hard on the back, but Siniša doesn't react.

BELLA *(more the herself):* I really thought he was a bit of a lowlife, like Žuti, but would you look at this.

Siniša ignores everything and Žuti soon takes over the situation.

ŽUTI We have with us Anton as well, an ambitious graduate law student, every mother would love to have him as a son-in-law, but she can't.

Anton COUGHS.

ŽUTI A former Student Body president, a showstopper, like fruitful discussions and indoor plants. One day he'd like to have his own garden and a robot to clean his house. And last but not least tonight's contestant, the youngest among us, Bella! Bella graduated from the School of Applied Arts and since her father gave her her first camera at the age of 13, she does photography and cinematography. Bella's passion is Asian cuisine, although she can't cook herself, her online and offline friends and, of course, video games. A round of applause for our contestants!

They applaud themselves.

ŽUTI Let's present tonight's categories! Especially for you, GLOBAL DISASTERS, POWDER KEG, APOCALYPSE NOW, LOCAL TRAGEDIES and GENERAL CHAOS. Iva, which category do you choose?

Iva thinks.

IVA I'm choosing... POW DER KEG!

ŽUTI For 300 – Iva, the Third World War breaks out thanks to one event.

The clock is ticking. All the time.

IVA What is Israeli-Iranian War and oil standstill on the global market?

ŽUTI Correct! Siniša, your category?

SINIŠA General chaos, for 200.

ŽUTI World famine.

SINIŠA What is temperature growth and lack of water supplies?

ŽUTI Correct, Siniša. But we'd also accept simply - climate change.

IVA Just a sec, but climate change cannot be the answer to everything.

ŽUTI Maybe it can, maybe it can't. Anton, you're next.

ANTON Local tragedies, for 200.

ŽUTI Corruption which devoured and entire economic powerhouse and drowned it in garbage?

ANTON What is India?

ŽUTI Well done, bravo Anton. Bella, you ready?

BELLA Mhm. Apocalypse now, for 300.

ŽUTI The world ceases to exist in half a year's time, and the cause doesn't come from outer space?

BELLA What is a deadly virus and the global market?

ŽUTI Studio and control room, do we accept this? Well done, Bella, this is correct.

IVA How about Global disasters?

ŽUTI Disastrous protests all over the world.

IVA What is artificial intelligence replacing labour?

ŽUTI That's right. Siniša?

SINIŠA Apocalypse now.

ŽUTI People lose control over technology they used to 'improve the world'?

SINIŠA What is bioengineering?

ŽUTI Seems that tonight we're perfect.

ANTON And how could we not be when the bell tolls all the time.

Silence. For as long as it can last.

**The famous Russian molecular biologist Alexander Sasha Kagansky was found dead in St Petersburg, says M1. Kagansky (45), closely connected with the University of Edinburgh and famous for his efforts in the fight against cancer, on Saturday fell of the 14th floor of a residential building, claim British and Russian media. He was in his underwear and had a stab wound on his body.*

Third part of the evening - when we all love each other, no matter what.

Someone broke the plant pot, soil is scattered on the floor. One bottle is rolling on the floor and no one picks it up. Bella, Anton and Žuti lie like sardines, one next to the other and stare at the ceiling as if they're looking at stars. At the other end, a metre or two away, Iva managed to be alone with Siniša who is not letting the ukulele.

BELLA The feeling of helplessness, I think it never ends.

ANTON People think that if you put a suit on, you like become something. Which is good. Like you're Superman, your costume's on and everything is great.

ŽUTI OK people, don't worry, we're young.

ANTON You're right. We should go to that after party. Where's my phone?

BELLA Well yeah, what are the chances that the end of the world will come?

ANTON Big, but who cares.

IVA (to Siniša's ear while he's poking at the ukulele): You know, I never felt the need to limit myself. Male, female, monogamy, institutions, these are all useless barriers. Right?

BELLA This, this makes life worth living. These great moments when you stare at the ceiling and you realise you're insignificant and you couldn't care less. Art, that's

the only thing that makes sense. - GOD NO!

ŽUTI What? What happened?

BELLA Shit, I forgot the flash batteries again. And I really wanted to snap a picture of you under the stars. While we're here. Now.

ŽUTI Guys, people are the best thing in the world.

ANTON Yeah, totally, we wouldn't have a single thing if it weren't for mankind.

BELLA I mean, we all try, like, separate paper and plastic waste, take care of life.

ŽUTI Come one, it's not that bad, look how technologically advanced we are, we'll manage.

IVA (still whispering): I have a confession to make, but you can't tell others, okay? I like them all more or less, but I have a feeling you and I really understand each other. We're intellectually on the same level.

BELLA I got it, I don't feel like going anywhere. I'm really OK in this corner of the universe.

ANTON Where would you even go?

BELLA I don't know, everybody's going somewhere.

ŽUTI You guys are fucking awesome to me. A good crew and what more do you need? Besides beer.

BELLA I'm just scared -

ANTON I know what you're gonna say.

BELLA Come on, what?

ANTON That someone will wreck this for us.

IVA (a bit closer to Siniša who keeps ignoring her): I'm not into superficial stuff like looks or stupid stuff like money. I'm really turned on by someone's intellectual capabilities. That turns me on right away.

ŽUTI No one can wreck anything for you unless you allow them to. Willpower, that's the only thing that matters.

ANTON Mhm, and when the state sends you an official letter, and the bank blocks your account, then you also use willpower, right?

BELLA I'm chronically scared of new stuff.

ANTON I browsed through this law and there is no limit. They can do what they please.

ŽUTI (*doesn't know if he is certain or not*): Relax, old man, no one is going to be checking on this.

ANTON Wanna bet, this is almost their election campaign.

BELLA I checked on the news just now, by accident, and watch this – an explosion in Beirut.

They watch the video, shocked. At least for a second.

IVA If you're worried that we're here, in the same apartment, this doesn't need to limit you. I'm not one of those typical girls who'd want to tie you down because of one night together. Fine, maybe we click, but we don't need to worry about that, tonight we could just love each other a bit.

ANTON Does it say anything about the open call?

BELLA No.

ŽUTI (*comforting himself*): They're not even gonna publish it, who's going to apply in the summer? We all know what we do in the summer. Booze and chicks.

BELLA Guys, I'm scared.

ŽUTI Nothing to be scared of, we're here.

Žuti would love to get to Bella, but Anton is in his way.

ANTON That's all I need, for someone to swoop in and wreck it all. Just when I stopped caring about Žuti's feet. They can take me out of here over my dead body.

BELLA We'll stick together.

ŽUTI I'm telling you, you worry too much –

BELLA Look, if it happens, just so you know, I really love you.

IVA (*Siniša finally turns to her, but he's almost not blinking*): You know, I find it sooo sexy that you're so... private. Makes me feel so safe when I'm around you. To that end, I too can be really discreet. Take this.

Iva discreetly puts her panties in Siniša's lap.

IVA I have everything planned. I'll go to the bathroom again, we'll tell everyone I have a stomach-ache and you'll go in there with me to give me a hand... Then I'll do whatever you want. Just so you know, the back door's an option too.

Iva winks at Siniša. She gently bites his ear. He looks at her. She gets up and goes to the bathroom.

SINIŠA Iva, I think you forgot something. You'll need it after you relieve yourself.

He wants to give her the panties back, but Iva did not hear any of it. Siniša continues to play the ukulele.

BELLA No, really, I'm having such a fucking awesome time with you guys. I could have gone three times by now, but somehow here I feel... I don't know, safe.

ANTON Where the hell? Where the hell could we possibly go even if we wanted to?

ŽUTI True, dude, we're like really at home here. Just the number of dirty underwear changes, which is also kind of routine.

ANTON Apart from the craziness when you open the door, that's always surprising.

While they're star-gazing, Siniša composed a song. He's ready for recording, he turns his phone camera on, angry Iva just stormed behind him.

Iva spent all this time in the bathroom alone. She got out crying and angry, but no one noticed that.

Iva packs her suitcase while the others slowly close their eyes.

18. BREAKFAST, THE MOST IMPORTANT MEAL IN A DAY

**Squeezing through the beginning of the century, with an avocado toast in their hands, the millennials have demonstrated that the grieving theories are true. During the recession, half of the graduates wasn't able to find work, the formal unemployment rate among the millennials was 20 to 30 per cent. High unemployment rate, low wages and stagnation in profit followed them throughout the decade. The big Pew study established that millennials with a degree and a full-time job earned until 2018 as much as the Generation X earned in 2001. But millennials without university degree and education were poorer than their Generation X counterparts or Baby Boomers.*

Iva's stuff is currently no longer in the apartment – she travelled to Italy on an Erasmus exchange. The apartment nevertheless seems equally claustrophobic, although there is a person missing.

The apartment is muddy because no one cleaned up the scattered soil. The laundry basket is full.

Žuti is asleep behind the couch – we can't see or know that yet.

Siniša is gone, he is probably working his shift. Bella is sitting in a one-piece,

fluffy pyjama on the couch. She is eating ice-cream out of a box. She is surrounded by piles of 'food'.

Anton is coming out of the bathroom. He's wearing a pyjama to. He sits on the couch next to Bella. Together they literally gorge on food.

ANTON What day is it today?

BELLA No idea, Tuesday?

ANTON Shit, I was supposed to have that job interview today.

BELLA When is it?

ANTON Quarter past three.

BELLA It's one now, you can still make it.

ANTON I don't feel like it.

Anton takes out a small bag with white powder out of his pants. He sprinkles it over a spoonful of Nutella, licks it and gives some to Bella.

BELLA I really think you should go.

ANTON I'll write to Štefa from the employment service that I couldn't go today for health reasons. No need to panic.

BELLA Not that. You should go to get a job.

ANTON Oh, right? Like every other I got?

BELLA Okay, but you never know.

ANTON But I do know. Been camping at the employment service ever since I moved to this apartment and where did it take me?

BELLA I don't get it, your resume is...

ANTON Yeah, impeccable. But what good is that when there are almost no jobs. I can work outside my profession, but why did I study then? I could have worked the seasons since my armpit hairs started to grow and earn pocket money until I became bald, but I didn't. No, I said to myself, I'll go study, aim to buy a suite, not wash dirty linen in one.

Bella wants to say something, but Anton is on a roll.

ANTON And I did my fair share of studying, I did fuck around, but I never fucked up my grades. But what good is that when all they're interested in is if you have connections, political ambition or if you'll sell out like a whore. Ever been to a job interview?

BELLA (*shyly*): M-m.

ANTON Then you don't know what kind of hell that is. Hell my ass, it's even worse because in hell you can scream, and here you have to keep smiling. How do you handle stress? Do you see yourself as a team player or a solo player? How many languages do you speak? One? Are you ready for lifelong learning? How would you explain to my five-year-old nephew what a court process is?

BELLA They asked you all that?

ANTON And then when you say you'd rattle on fellow lawyer to your boss, they don't like that, and the fact that they'd like to send you to a liver exam and poke around your childhood traumas to employ you full time, they don't see a problem in that. Any more Cheetos?

Bella gives a Cheeto to Anton who throws it into a Nutella jar and continues to eat this specialty with a spoon.

ANTON You know what, best if I find an old hag living alone, someone who's no particularly good so not even her distant relatives wanna take care of her, but also not that bad that I'd flip out with her. And do whatever it takes, even the stuff no one talks about.

BELLA Yuck.

ANTON I give her a wash, pluck out her moustache, the thick beard hairs... I go get her spinach from the greenmarket, read her

the latest gossip from Story magazine with coffee because her prescription glasses and her eyes no longer match... I wouldn't even try to put her out of her misery, I'd serve my thing so no one can take me to court when I inherit her house and savings. And I'm independent for life.

BELLA You're crazy. Maybe I could help you somehow?

ANTON And how could you help me? You can do my job interviews instead of me, but you seem to not handle stress particularly well.

Anton demonstrates the junk food empire in front of them.

BELLA That's something else. I realised my creative blockages are best sold by grieving whatever needs to be grieved over.

ANTON Mhm. O-K.

BELLA But, seriously, I can help you. I can get you a recommendation, maybe even a real interview.

ANTON (*finds it funny*): I'm all ears.

BELLA It's not funny, you idiot. What do you think my Facebook last name is my real one?

ANTON And it's not?

BELLA No, my name is... *and Bella utters a 'famous' last name.*

ANTON GET-THE-FUCK-OUTA-HERE!

Anton almost drops the Nutella jar on the floor.

BELLA Keep your voice down, someone will hear you.

ANTON What are you doing here then, you freaking nutcase?

BELLA Look, it's more the name than anything else, my folks are not that loaded.

ANTON Idiots, it should have been clear to us all when you came with that MacBook. Which other starving artists orders food

through Wolt? I mean, I knew, I could smell money, but I didn't expect this...

BELLA Ant?

ANTON Speak up, Bellitos, I'm listening.

BELLA First of all, sorry to be the one to tell you this, but you love money much more than me. And second of all, I don't want to succeed in life because of my last name, but I can at least do something for others, right? Like, for you! And it wouldn't be cheating, because you'd still have to take the interview and your resume is –

ANTON impeccable.

BELLA You have to promise me one thing –

ANTON I can't tell anyone who you are?

BELLA Please.

Anton 'muses', but we all know pretty well what he'll decide. The official handshake is interrupted by a SUDDEN frightening appearance of Žuti's hand on the couch.

Anton and Bella scream.

BELLA What the –

ANTON Fuck

ŽUTI Why didn't you wake me up?

BELLA We didn't know you were here!

ŽUTI Motherf... My phone's dead.

BELLA Fine, don't panic, sit with us, there are donuts. With Linolada!

ŽUTI What time is it?

BELLA Almost two.

ŽUTI What, I slept all day?

ANTON Wouldn't be the first or the last time, right?

ŽUTI No, you two don't get it. I slept over my entire shift.

BELLA Your buddies are still in Lijevo, don't worry.

ŽUTI My job! I slept over my job!

ANTON You have a job?

Bella and Anton look at each other, confused, then they burst into laughter.

BELLA Man, if Žuti has a job, then we urgently need to get you that deal, Ant.

Bella and Anton are watching Žuti running around the place in panic and putting haphazard clothes on. Žuti storms out of the apartment.

Bella and Anton laugh at Žuti for a while, but then the laughter starts to grow into big depression.

ANTON Turn on your Instagram, let's go laugh at other people's life fails.

Bella immediately says yes. They scroll.

After the first scroll they already found Iva's photos from Italy.

BELLA io amo la bella italia e il suo sotto voce cantando a me. imparo cosi tanto sulla moda e sulla vita. #inamore #viaggtoredelmondo #ispirazione. Now she even speaks Italian? What else?

ANTON Oh no, my dear Bellitos, this is the best possible example of fake-it-till-you-make-it.

BELLA But the sunset is beautiful at... La Pelosa, you have to admit that.

ANTON Look at her, she's already tanned.

BELLA Hey, Ant?

ANTON Hm?

BELLA What if we're now actually scrolling through pictures of new tenants? And we, like, give them a little heart for their photo.

ANTON If such an option existed, I'd give them a broken heart.

BELLA Wow, look at this photo from a refugee camp in Greece. Terrible.

ANTON God, look at how people live...

BELLA A heart, definitely.

And so, Anton and Bella are staring at the picture.

20. THE REVOLUTION WILL NOT BE TELEvised

Bella took over the apartment-stage with banners... they're full of slogans from Bella's posters.

It's not exactly clear what she means by them, but they rhyme. All but the last.

GOVERNMENT GO AWAY,
FACADES ARE HERE TO STAY
BIGGER AREAS FOR OUR HYSTERIAS
STOP YOUR RACE, WE NEED A PLACE
TO RIGHTS I VOW, I'M NOT A COW
(P.S. MEAT IS MURDER)
AWAY WITH THE CURTAIN,
A HOME SHOULD BE CERTAIN
A DOOR KEY OATH IS KEY TO GROWTH
I DIDN'T WASH MYSELF TO SHRINK!

Žuti is also here, taking care of the poster aesthetic and painting little triangles in 'A's.

ŽUTI I had no fucking idea you're such a poet.

Bella is on a roll, quoting her heart out...

BELLA We should all get out. Yes – all of us – and – and – enough already! Simply, enough! They can't do it to all of us if we're all out in the streets.

ŽUTI I'm not sure, it doesn't seem that bad –
BELLA No, you see – that's it, you're brainwashed... You think this is normal because you don't know any better. That's that

Stuttgart... Sorry, I mean -- Stockholm syndrome.

ŽUTI I don't think I have that.

Siniša comes out of the bathroom, toilet flushes are heard. He was there with the ukulele.

SINIŠA I support you, Bella.

BELLA Really? Will you come?

SINIŠA No.

ŽUTI Why not, dude? It's gonna be a great party.

SINIŠA No. Sorry, Bella, it's against my beliefs.

BELLA What? You wanna say this is humane, this is how a country is allowed to treat its working-age, fertile generation? Like, like... chickens on an egg farm?!

SINIŠA Did I say something?

BELLA Well yes -- there! - you just said it! No one's ever said anything. That's the problem!

Iva was in the corner the whole time, trying to focus, make some room among Bella's posters, but...

...suddenly it hits her neuralgic spot so she starts to trample over Bella's posters. She wants to avoid them, but she can't and she won't.

IVA And what, you think one protest is gonna solve everything? Someone will wave their magic wand and the universe will expand and every rock will have its place under the sun?

SINIŠA In fact, the universe is constantly expanding -

IVA These are political struggles over the long run, not *ad hoc*.

BELLA But what? Maybe I should write like a super smart essay, that's like so fuckin' constructive?

IVA As constructive as taking photos of empty bottles on the street.

ŽUTI Meow!

Anton arrives just at the right moment with the mail. It came down the ropes.

ANTON Guys, this is shit, you won't believe this -

ŽUTI Geeez, you give me the creeps, speak up -- ???

ANTON Our water bill went up. No more special rate. They sent us the official letter from the Agency with a bill.

ŽUTI What about internet?

ANTON What about internet? What are you talking about?

ŽUTI Is it the same rate or it went up? Dude, I can't fall asleep without YouTube -

ANTON Idiot, your internet is paid by Siniša's draining the fries from the deep fryer, not the State.

SINIŠA Internet doesn't take my whole salary, we can afford water too.

Anton silently and expressively shows Siniša the bill.

SINIŠA Aha.

A few moments of silence...

IVA OK, what's going on?

SINIŠA Nothing, we'll have to organise a shower schedule.

ANTON It's out of the question!

Iva checks out the bill...

... "FUCKME!" facial expression.

IVA That has to be a mistake. We'll call the Agency. We'll call the water company - this is crazy, who spends all that water?

Bella is suspiciously silent, doodling all the while on her papers.

ŽUTI I don't, I don't take a shower every day.

ANTON Žuti --- --- eek.

ŽUTI What? That's not good for the skin.

IVA They can't do this to us. This is really inhumane.

ŽUTI That's what Bella said too. Right, Bella?

...everyone turns their eyes to Bella.

Only Siniša is glancing around the place.

Bella coughs.

BELLA Yeah, hm -- mhmhhm-that's right! That's right!

Anton only just now realised he has nowhere to stand in the apartment from all the banners.

ANTON What kind of trash is this?

IVA Bella is organising a protest.

ANTON Over water?

BELLA Over everything! And not just me. We're not the only ones - this is bigger than us.

ANTON Good luck with that.

IVA That's what I said.

BELLA You're not coming?

ANTON Will it pay our water bill?

BELLA Maybe - I don't know - we have to do something -

ANTON Yes, WE HAVE TO pay our water bill. Where are this morning's cookies, you little pigs?

...yes, he's ignoring her.

A change of atmosphere in the apartment which becomes Bella's stage. She shouts her slogans at the audience.

GOVERNMENT GO AWAY,
FACADES ARE HERE TO STAY
BIGGER AREAS FOR OUR HYSTERIAS
STOP YOUR RACE, WE NEED A PLACE
TO RIGHTS I VOW, I'M NOT A COW
(P.S. MEAT IS MURDER)

AWAY WITH THE CURTAIN,
A HOME SHOULD BE CERTAIN
A DOOR KEY OATH IS KEY TO GROWTH
I DIDN'T WASH MYSELF TO SHRINK!

All of a sudden she is very small in this world.

Cut.

We're at the apartment again... everyone is somewhere here.

Bella turned her back on them.

IVA The police officially counted between one and five hundred protesters.

SINIŠA That's very accurate.

ŽUTI That's really a lot! I once went to my cousin's wedding with like 200 people and that was really crowded. The guy earned like ten thousand euros.

IVA Yes. That's why the article is on the regional news. Because it's a 'crowd'.

ŽUTI I told you to go --

IVA And why didn't you?

ŽUTI I fell asleep. Fuck.

Anton arrives with the mail at the right time. Down the ropes.

ANTON They're off the hook.

SINIŠA Makes sense.

IVA Who?

ANTON The water company notified us that they received our request for the change of beneficiary...

IVA Ha? What does that mean?

Žuti in the meantime got a screenshot text from a friend. It can also appear as an onstage picture.

ŽUTI Geez, have you seen this?

A collage of two Bellas.

One is a picture from an opening night, a premiere, a petit-bourgeois reception in a neo baroque building where Bella, 'decently dressed' stands squeezed between her parents.

The other is a picture of Bella in a hippie 2.0 aka hipster parade, marching down the street while even the police are yawning at how insignificant they are.

IVA (browsing the text): The granddaughter of a famous... hhmhmm... daughter of an entrepreneur and a professor... hhmhmm... caught at yesterday's space protest. Her grandfather is suspected of... hm-mm... We learn exclusively that... m--mmm... she is the future inheritor of at least three apartments in the city centre.

ŽUTI Geez, she's some kind of jet setter? --- What is she doing with us?

IVA I knew it! I could feel it in my stomach... It's typical establishment behaviour. To them the entire life is just one big rollercoaster.

ANTON Oh cut the crap. I didn't know they had that much money -

IVA What didn't you 'know'?

ANTON Nothing -- nothing.

IVA I'll report her. Yup, right now, I'm going to write an email.

SINIŠA I think this is commendable.

ŽUTI What, the thing with her grandfather?

SINIŠA Her being with us. Just imagine it - she actually chose this.

IVA You can't jump on the wagon where you don't belong. Plus, watch this! To protest!

She doesn't even know what hegemony is, and she wants to make revolutions. It's not fair! NOT FAIR! FUCKING NOT FAIR!

The dart hit Iva's neuralgic spot.

ŽUTI OK, I mean, it would be like cool if we had more room here to invite someone over... to be able to invite some friends...

ANTON Well, look, I like her, but it would be fair to get out if you can get out.

ŽUTI We could fucking fit a bigger fridge!

IVA SIMPLY - NOT - FAIR!

Bella turns to them - she's suddenly in the apartment.

BELLA Guys, I have a confession to make -

Silence. Palpable tension.

BELLA I am the one who boosted our water bill. I'm really sorry -- I feel so stupid, but when I'm stressed out then I like to fill the tub to the brim and lie down inside. It helps me to clear this - weeeee - chaos. And it was a shitty month and I overdid it - sorry...

Everyone is silent.

BELLA I really hope you can forgive me? There, I swear on my flash I'll find a way to cover that bill, OK? You guys don't worry about it! Huh, what say you? Still friends?

Everyone is still silent. The scene ends in a typical theatrical manner.

22. A VIRAL HIT

Siniša is relaxing with his laptop after a hard day at work. Žuti tried to clean the place up, but he's not skilled in cleaning so the apartment probably looks even worse. Besides, his underpants and socks are hanging all over the ropes because he just washed them.

ŽUTI I gave everything a little thought and I realised I'm actually over it.

**Facebook is liquidating Irish holding companies that it used to transfer billions in profits to avoid paying taxes in the US, the UK and hundreds of other countries. Facebook companies around the world have paid an Irish holding company to use Facebook's intellectual property. Facebook International Holdings I Unlimited recorded a revenue of \$ 30 trillion in 2018, more than half the revenue of Facebook's global profit of \$ 56 million.*

ŽUTI No, I'm serious. It's not that I'm singing a different tune - I'm really happy I lost that job. It was a blind alley on my road to success. See, I'm not into working for others. Build someone else's brand. I'd be working there, get hooked on my salary and bam, before I knew it, I'd forget everything I planned. So I kind of chickened out a bit because I thought I'd end up in the street or even worse, to have to pay for rent. I thought, now that the Ministry announces that open call for subsidies it's all over so I applied. But what's the deal? If you wanna start a real business, your own business, you need to be ready to take chances. Experience doesn't matter that much, you don't have to be an expert in the business you're running - you can sell

tractors, without knowing how to drive one. The most important thing is to have a vision. Somehow real estate seems like the thing now, there's always someone needing a room, an apartment, a roof over their heads - maybe that's the market I could try to jump in. You know best how you shouldn't allow this system to hold you down, to shackle you and enslave your mind.

Žuti finally notices Siniša turned on a song at some point. The song he recorded himself.

A minute of silence for Siniša's two-chord song about a toilet brush and chewing gums stuck in public transportation.

ŽUTI What's that, dude?

Siniša shows him the video. It has 323,698 views on YouTube.

ŽUTI 300+ thousand views? Sinito, you're a true viral hit!

Fade out with Siniša's ukulele song and the overexcited approval "fucking brilliant, fucking brilliant" coming from Žuti.

23. SUNDAY - THE DAY OF THE LORD

**A Photoshop wizard shared two photos of herself: one that hasn't been edited and where she has only a pinch of make-up and the other where this relatively normal-looking teenager has been drastically transformed into an extremely skinny copy of Angelina Jolie. Although digital tricks were used in the photo, the committed double admitted to having*

nose surgery, lip fillers and liposuction. Tabar weighed only 39 kilos when this photographic feat was made. Unfortunately, Tabar's online activities were the subject of a lawsuit for corruption of young people and disrespect of the Islamic Republic, which was initiated against her.

'A Sunday rest', i.e., all the tenants are either lying down or sitting and their gaze is directed at a screen of sorts. Suddenly, from the right, Iva walks in, the only one who hadn't been in the apartment.

IVA EVERYBODY OUT!

ANTON The hell is wrong with you, Iva?

IVA I SAID - OOOUUUUUT!

The tenants realise they haven't got much choice, so they start walking to the door. Iva grabs Bella by the shirt and pulls her inside.

IVA Except you, Bella. I need you.

Bella is confused, but doesn't defy her.

ŽUTI Someone's in PMS.

SINIŠA Žuti, please, be quiet.

ANTON I'll throw her out, the state won't even need to come get her.

Everybody is out except Bella and Iva. Iva takes out a pregnancy test.

BELLA What's that?

IVA What do you mean "what's that"?

Bella reads what the box says.

BELLA Geez! You're not...?

IVA I don't know. Maybe. I hope not. I'm almost a week late.

BELLA It's usually on time?

IVA Yes. I don't know. I know I'm stupid and irresponsible, but I sort of keep track of that.

BELLA What do you mean 'sort of'?

IVA I'm definitely late.

BELLA Shit.

IVA I fucking don't know what to do. Bella, I can't do this alone. It's too stressful. Are you okay with being here? You're really the only one in this place I can share this with...

BELLA Sure, of course.

IVA OK, that's fine. I think with all this testosterone around I wouldn't be able to pee a single drop now.

BELLA All clear.

IVA OK, inhale-exhale. You can do it, Iva. Besides, it's better to know than not to know.

BELLA And whatever you decide to do, we're there for you.

IVA This just fucking raised the pressure, please don't say that to me. No, Iva, for starters, there is a chance that the test is negative. And even if it's not, there are plenty of options today.

BELLA And it's your right to choose.

IVA Of course it is! Of-course-it-is. Okay, I'm ready.

BELLA What's it gonna be, you want me to go out to, or stay in the room?

IVA I'll do it here, can you just turn your back on me for a second?

BELLA Mhm.

Iva is getting ready to pee on the test, but she can't.

IVA Can you make a rustling noise, like 'sssh-hhhh'? It's easier for me if I have a sound.

BELLA Shhhhh, sssshhhuuuuusshhh. You done?

Iva lets go a stream on the test. She buttons up her trousers and takes the test to the table. Bella and Iva hunch over the table.

BELLA What now?

IVA Nothing, if it's positive, a plus will appear, if it's negative, a minus. You never had a... false alarm?

BELLA No. To be brutally honest, I don't know when it was the last time that I -

IVA You're a better person than me.

BELLA What, who's the guy who dishonoured you?

IVA Valdemar, an Erasmus guy.

BELLA Valdemar, sounds like a sexy Viking.

IVA Almost. Second generation Vikings. His parents are in fact from Nigeria, but he was born in Europe. They gave him a local name to show that they've assimilated. He's kind, he studies cultural diplomacy. He's always kidding that they took him as a token student because his university chronically lacks darker skin tone people...

BELLA That would make a good movie.

IVA What?

BELLA To give birth here to a boy or a girl whose grandparents are from Nigeria. A small dunk!

IVA You're stupid. No, you don't understand, I can't do this. Have a child now. There, there, I'd rather slave in an abandoned mine in Britain for the rest of my life.

BELLA Slave... *(and bursts into laughter)*

IVA No, it's not funny, I'm completely unprepared for this situation. There are too many things I want to do for myself in life, and once you have a kid - it's over. No more self-improvement with such an important job as raising a child. I'm not even mentally mature enough to take another amorphous creature and shape it.

BELLA How old are you exactly?

IVA The fuck's wrong with you, are you possessed by my Mom's spirit? I'm 29, but that's completely irrelevant 'cause I - apart from not being ready to devote all my energy to raising a mammal - don't see a reason why anyone would bring kids into this world.

BELLA I just thought, there are worse and more incompetent people who have kids.

IVA That's the problem, people think their gene pool is key, and the Earth is overpopulated. If we're not the generation suffocating for a lack of oxygen, then our children are definitely the ones to get microchipped if they want their consciousness to survive.

BELLA You can't know that. Maybe your child will save the humanity with a super invention that will restore the ozone layer.

IVA Maybe. But you know what? I know they won't. And you know why? Know why?

A grand silence and then...

Because that's what kids who are loved by their Moms do. And I don't know how to love. I'm not even sure this child exists, and I already hate it.

Iva starts to stretch the skin on her stomach...

BELLA You don't hate it...

IVA Yes, I hate it! Because it will search to find whatever's wrong with me so that one day it can cry at therapy sessions. I hate it, because one day if it gets out of my body, I won't be able to love it, like I don't -

And while Iva is retelling a dystopian story from her mind, Bella saw that...

BELLA Iva... It's negative.

IVA Well, yes, it is - everything is dark inside me, Bella. No bright spot for humanity here - true, it's negative.

BELLA No, I mean, your test is negative.

Iva jumps, suddenly leaves the pool of panic and self-pity.

IVA Thank God.

BELLA What, you promised to become religious if you get out of this danger? – It might not be a bad thing, Iva. Wouldn't be the first time that one has found comfort in God.

Bella tries to give Iva a hug, but Iva doesn't want that.

IVA No, I don't know why I said that. If God had wanted to help me with anything, he could have done that a long time ago.

Žuti barges in.

ŽUTI Sorry, I can't take it anymore, I'll pee in my pants.

*LOGISTICS CHALLENGE

The vaccine is secured by police officers armed with machine guns: "It's a matter of national security." It is also a lot of money, which attracts criminal groups.

24. THIS IS SINIŠA SPEAKING

Siniša is alone in the apartment and on the stage with a ukulele in his hands. He is terrorising us by playing his YouTube hit which has managed to reach as many as 400.000 views over a glitch in the matrix.

The song became a hit because it's that bad.

At the same time, buzz-buzz, Siniša gets messages from others that interrupt the song:

*"Don't be a p*ssy, come for a drink."*

"Party pooper, what are you doing alone in the apartment after all?"

"You're not gonna believe what just happened. Žuti got kicked in the balls by a boomer."

"Sorry, Žuti forced me to write this. He says the woman is not that old and she just punched him in the groin because he ducked."

"Yeah right. He cried for 15 minutes because she just punched him in the groin, go figure."

Notification: Watch the Government session LIVE: Presentation of the new Real Estate Tax Law and Socially Subsidised Housing Law. Opposition: bigger taxation won't create more room for young people.

Buzz-buzz, the texts still arrive, but Siniša no longer reads them.

After a few moments, he gets up. He turns down the music and turn his phone camera on. He directs it to himself and starts to make a video of himself as an Instagram story.

SINIŠA Wanna make a quick calculation? If a person earns an average monthly income, only to cover essential needs they need to spend around two thirds of their salary. Speaking about essential needs, we can agree that those are food, water and living space, right?

Although it's not prescribed and it manages to be flexibly small, a certain area is necessary to make a living space. For the market to give it a blessing and say: this is now an apartment worth so and so.

In order to own this fantastic thing called an apartment, this smallest possible area where you can urinate, wash hands and make a sandwich afterwards, without promising your left kidney to a bank, you'd have to work without food and sleep on the street next to your office for nine whole years. Next to your office because, of course, you can't afford transportation. That's the only way to gather the so and so amount of money without the help of a bank.

If you live on the street and have nowhere to live, you in fact shouldn't even have a job because in order to get a job first you need to have an address.

If you don't have a job, you can't even make money for a place to live. Or for food. And if you eat, it is scientifically proven that, at some point, slowly but definitely – you will die.

Of course, people don't like being hungry. Or in the street. For the safety of a roof above your head and a full stomach, an average person lives with a minus.

Truly absurd, right? You live off the money you don't have, you never had and, most probably, you never will be able to possess. Hence the minus.

And the banks? The banks give us their blessing. They make a bet that you, as an average user of their services, never will have enough money. If they lose this bet, what's the worst thing that can happen? They'll

simply get their money back. With a plus.

If you don't accept this bet... You're an outlaw. People jump over your body in the street and swear 'cause you're in their way. Because you take the space which is not yours, but everyone's, and everyone's means theirs.

No, no... It's not sad. It's not even unfair. It's the way it is. It's a one big daily nothing.

Two days ago I launched this video. In it I sing and play this song...

We listen to Siniša's viral hit for the last time.

Today it officially reached 400.000 views.

Today is the day I will kill myself.

I started playing because I knew I was tone deaf. I started doing this because I knew I couldn't make any money out of it. Because nothing breeds nothing.

You should do what you're good at. What you'll be paid for. So you can eat and not freeze to death as a vagrant in the streets. The other option is to do whatever people don't want to do and are willing to pay you to do it instead of them: unclog traps, you pick garbage, build houses without scaffolding, pack their online orders...

But if you want meaning, you need to do what you're good at, and what someone would pay. If you want some place under the sun with a *meaning*, then it's not enough to do something, you should do something *meaningful*. Why would this world just give you a place, for what?

Siniša reads comments out loud:

Jazzilla20: "This dude's so bad that he's good."

Chillexxx3: "Man, this guy is a genre in himself. And the genre is a disaster."

Gaby: "Cathartic cringe. Can't stop listening. This is too good."

Ping. Notification - someone wrote a new comment. Siniša checks, but doesn't read.

I realised that the only thing I can do is... kill myself.

My last wish is that someone publishes my death online. I know you like that.

***Office of the Croatian representative:**
By rejecting the claim the court did not conclude that that Croatia was responsible for the death of the little girl Madina.

Like, share and subscribe.

Siniša snaps his fingers and a rope comes down beside him from above. He pulls it, tests it to see if it's strong enough. He starts to make a knot around his head. It's not as easy as it seems.

He is finally ready. He climbs a chair. He is trying to balance holding his phone and putting the rope around his neck. He is pulling it as tight as possible. He is trying to keep the phone in his hand the best he can. He takes his last breath and...

BAM!

The four other tenants barge in like Kramers - Anton, Žuti, Bella and Iva, giggling and swaying. They see Siniša with the rope on the chair. A few moments of disgusting silence and then...

ŽUTI Dude, I had no idea people did that over here... That they're into erotic suffocating. That's really hardcore.

Everybody looks at Žuti now. Silent, silent... And then they burst into laughter. Siniša takes the rope off his neck, puts the chair away, takes the ukulele and his phone and walks out of the stage.

BELLA Fuck... I wonder what you others do when you're alone here.

Everybody laughs, drunk and silly.

25. CHAMBER DRAMA 5 / HAPPY BIRTHDAY

Little piles of swept dust, a full laundry basket, two types of garbage by the door... A cleaning action is in progress and all the tenants are involved. Nobody yet knows what to expect after that.

Žuti is taking a break, he opens a beer and sits on the couch. He is looking at his phone because he's expecting a video call from Mom and Dad when finally...

MOM Son, can you hear me?

DAD Can he see us? Move this camera away.

ŽUTI I'm here, I can hear you.

MOM But can you see us?

Mom and Dad wave to the camera like lunatics and the call freezes.

ŽUTI I can see you, but I think your connection is bad, it keeps breaking –.

DAD What did you say, son?

ŽUTI It's bad –

MOM HAPPY BIRTHDAY, SON!

Mom and Dad start singing *HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO YOU!*

Žuti listens to this snappy version of the happy birthday song catching internet all over the place to keep the call going.

ŽUTI Thank you!

MOM I hope you're not angry for being a little late –

DAD We arrived on the island yesterday –

MOM We barely had any signal.

DAD And we were knackered. If only you could hear your Mom snoring...

MOM You know what, I thought this jetlag was noting, but it's no picnic, I can tell you.

ŽUTI Dude, you're in the same time zone.

DAD Did you have a good time yesterday? Bought your friends a drink?

ŽUTI No, I didn't celebrate.

MOM Sorry, son, we didn't hear you, it's breaking.

DAD Grandpa said he wants to put some money on your account for your birthday. Did he get hold of you?

ŽUTI Yes.

MOM Did he say yes? I didn't hear him.

DAD I think he was nodding.

MOM Or was it just image breaking?

DAD Listen, son.

ŽUTI I'm here, I hear you.

DAD We're off now. Tell grandpa you're fine.

ŽUTI We heard –

MOM We're off to the beach. You should see the perfect weather over here...

ŽUTI Great, have fun.

DAD Okay, son, have a good one.

MOM Say hi to your friends.

DAD Happy birthday again.

MOM Happyyyyy biiiiirth –

Bang. The connection broke. The only thing left is a frozen image of Mom and Dad waving to the cell phone screen.

Even if they weren't eavesdropping, the other tenants heard everything given the loudness of the conversation (like yelling from the Himalayas to the Urals). And they couldn't help but interrupt their 'spring cleaning'.

**Venice activates flood prevention system: "Monday is the moment of truth"*

BELLA Žuti?

ŽUTI Do tell?

IVA Why didn't you tell us it was your birthday?

ŽUTI It's not. It was like a week ago.

Everyone is perplexed, they have no idea what to say.

BELLA Are you sure?

IVA We're sorry.

SINIŠA Žuti, you're the last person who would keep quiet about something like this. When I think about it... the last person who would keep quiet about anything.

ANTON Or miss a chance to get hammered.

IVA Sorry, we didn't know –

BELLA Yeah, it's not like we forgot or anything (*Bella covers her mouth – she wasn't supposed to say this, oops*).

SINIŠA Why didn't you tell us?

ŽUTI OK, what is this, an intervention?

BELLA Žuti? Are you OK?

ŽUTI My name is Karlo.

IVA Seriously? I'd never tell. There was a Karlo in my class in school and he never –

Iva realises it's not the time for this story when she sees Karlo's expression.

IVA Forget it.

Bella sits on the couch by Žuti.

BELLA I can totally hear you. I spent my last birthday shooting fireworks alone in a video game.

SINIŠA I don't know why you, otherwise as indestructible as a cockroach, distanced yourself over... a birthday? Why do you even bother with this pastry holiday.

ANTON I think it will be better if you just celebrate it. Pull lit off like a band aid.

IVA (*grows very serious*): Leave him alone, I understand you want to stop counting your age at some point, I categorically claim this as the oldest among us.

ŽUTI You're not the oldest.

BELLA Yes, I've been feeling for three years like I'm in my sixties.

ŽUTI No, officially, Iva is not the oldest.

A big confession ahead...

ŽUTI My thirtieth birthday was drowned in plum brandy ages ago.

BELLA Wait, what does that mean?

ŽUTI People, yesterday I turned... Thirty-three.

ANTON Jesus, it's the Jesus age.

This confession remains suspended in the air creating a dead silence. All until Siniša bursts into laughter.

SINIŠA We're all quiet as if you have six nipples and come from the planet Z.

BELLA I don't get it.



I PHOTO BY KATARINA ZLATEC

IVA Just a second, if you turned thirty-two yesterday -

ŽUTI That means I can officially say good-bye to this apartment.

Silence.

SINIŠA You have a place to stay?

Žuti nods away as in "no". "Not really."

ANTON Can we write a petition to the Ministry? I can help you. Maybe.

ŽUTI What good will it do? It's only temporary.

BELLA We should celebrate. This might be our last chance. If you agree, Žuti?

Žuti is silent.

IVA I have an idea. Žuti, what was the last number you were happy to celebrate?

ŽUTI (thinks then says...): 25?

ANTON Happy 25th birthday, KARLO!

ŽUTI Thanks, but you can call me Žuti. Everyone calls me that.

Everybody sings happy birthday to Žuti. Melancholia fills the apartment, the typical melancholia of yet another trip around the Sun. And again, no one cleaned the place up properly.

I EDITOR'S NOTE: SCENES FROM THE PLAY
SELECTED BY ITS AUTHOR LUCIJA KLARIĆ