

THE TEST

Milena Depolo

CHARCTERS:

MAJA, 13 years old, a popular girl, dyes her hair, wears make-up, smokes, takes sedatives, had many boyfriends, but is a lesbian nowadays, since that's in, her greatest wish is to star in an advert.

DJORDJE, 12 years old (started school early), doted on, the best student in the class, and the class president (against his wish), his greatest wish is to...he doesn't have one, he just listens to his parents and knows that way he'll remain the best

TAMARA, 13 years old, shy, Maja's groupie and girlfriend (although she secretly fancies Uroš), her parents are divorced, her greatest wish is that her parents make up and go on a sea-side holiday together.

UROŠ, 14 years old (he failed fifth grade), doesn't like anyone (except Tamara a little bit), listens to Nirvana and his greatest wish is to be Kurt Cobain.

MAJA'S MUM, an actress in her prime, she's just missing one thing, and that is parts.

DJORDJE'S MUM, a wonderful mother.

DJORDJE'S DAD, a wonderful dad.

TAMARA'S MUM, she's missing her husband.

TAMARA'S DAD, he likes Tamara, but he has another daughter and another one on the way (even though he was careful).

UROŠ'S MUM, an alcoholic, she can hardly wait to lead her kids onto the right path, which in her language means that she can't wait for them to leave home, miserable, she's had enough of morning fights.

THE FRENCH TEACHER, wants to get married and go to the Cote d'Azur, students - no way!

Monday

MAJA:

Monday...represent a sad end of the weekend for the lazy among us and a happy beginning for the industrious ones. I'm definitely among the latter group. Since I spent Saturday and Sunday with my family, talking and socialising with mum and dad, the time has come for me to go back to work. That is not difficult for me as I genuinely like school. We doesn't just learn the subjects set by the curriculum, but also good behaviour, ethics, compassion and other human values. Beside the teachers, my friends, whom I love very much, play a role in it. We respect one another and there are never any problems among us. The only times we forget our friendship for moment are those in which we have to show we have taken time and learned the set lessons. But, that's all because of the healthy competitiveness we're also taught in school. And what can I say? I'm a lucky child because I have two homes and two families. One is my flat of sixty square meters and my parents, and the other is my school, my teachers and friends. I love my school. I love Mondays!

Scene 1

Bye, Bye, Advert!

Maja's bathroom. Maja enters with an eye-mask on. A cigarette is hanging from her mouth. She sits down to pee, still smoking, the eye-mask is still on. Maja's mum enters, also wearing an eye-mask. She stops in front of the mirror and takes the mask off.

MAJA'S MUM:

You're a great beauty. You glow. No. That could also mean "you're boring". You're radiant. Yes, you radiate and entice. Getting more beautiful. You're like wine...like Louis XIV. Opulent, shining, elegant, valuable. You're...

MAJA:

An idiot!

MAJA'S MUM:

You silly goat!

MAJA:

You're boring me!

MAJA'S MUM:

Do you, Maja, know who you're talking to?

MAJA:

To my ma.

MAJA'S MUM:

Didn't mean that.

MAJA:

What then?

MAJA'S MUM:

The other thing. You know.

MAJA:

I won't say it.

MAJA'S MUM:

Then I will. You're talking to a woman over forty years of age whose wrinkles are negligible. And the ones she has, only add to her sex appeal. Who doesn't have orange peel skin. Whose breasts defy gravity. To a woman whose fiery red hair hasn't yet been visited by a single grey strand. Whose olive green eyes shine like pearls. Whose lips are sensual and whose voice is velvety. And she's over forty.

MAJA:

You're right. Give me some money!

MAJA'S MUM:
I won't.

MAJA:
Where's dad, then?

MAJA'S MUM:
I don't know.

MAJA:
You look wonderful, mommy.

MAJA'S MUM:
Ok. How much do you need?

MAJA:
Don't know...I only know that, when I grow up, I want to be just like you.

MAJA'S MUM:
Take everything from my wallet.

MAJA:
Pretty mommy, did you speak to that nice director man about me being in the advert?

MAJA'S MUM:

You'll be in an advert.

Maja (cheerfully):
Mommy!

MAJA'S MUM:
If...

MAJA:
If?

MAJA'S MUM:
You get an A in your next test.

MAJA:
But, mum!

MAJA'S MUM:
No buts. That's such a restricting word! You're beautiful, but...You're a good actress,
but...But, but, but!!!!

MAJA:
It will be a French test!

MAJA'S MUM:
And?

MAJA:
You know my tutor hates me!

MAJA'S MUM:
So?

MAJA:
She's the French teacher.

MAJA'S MUM:
Bye, bye advert!

MAJA:
I hate you!

MAJA'S MUM (in a strict voice):
Definitely - bye, bye advert!

MAJA:
I don't hate you...Mommy, of course I don't hate you, but why are those stupid grades so important now?

MAJA'S MUM:
Maja. I'm sick of you being pasty white, looking sick. I've told you to use sun beds regularly. I'm sick of you asking where's dad, when you know well enough we're in a free marriage. I'm also sick of you asking what a free marriage is when you can see from our example. And, finally, I'm sick of various people asking me whether you've improved on that F. I want an A!

MAJA:
Mum, please!

MAJA'S MUM:
I've said my bit.

MAJA:
You're great.

MAJA'S MUM:
Said it!

MAJA:
You're cute!

MAJA'S MUM:
Said! It!

MAJA:
Slender!

MAJA'S MUM:
S-a-i-d it!

MAJA:
You're so sexy, mommy...

MAJA'S MUM:
An A!

MAJA:
You glow!

MAJA'S MUM:
That could mean I'm boring.

MAJA:
That's what I mean.

MAJA'S MUM:
Bye, bye advert!

MAJA:
You radiate!

MAJA'S MUM:
It won't help you, dear, mum knows it all. I want an A!

MAJA:
Mum!

MAJA'S MUM:
An A! Or...

Pause

MAJA:
Bye, bye advert!

Scene 2

Life Is Not a Fairytale

The classroom. There are three desks on the stage. The first is occupied by Maja and Tamara, the second by Uroš, and the third by Djordje. They are facing the back of the stage, so that the audience can be seen as the remainder of the class.

Uroš (singing):
Hello, hello, hello, how low? (x3)
Hello, hello, hello!
With the lights out, it's less dangerous
Here we are now, entertain us
I feel stupid and contagious

Here we are now, entertain us
A mulatto
An albino
A mosquito
My libido

MAJA:
As if he knows what libido means. What is he singing?

TAMARA:
Nirvana. It's an ancient band. Let him be, he's crazy.

DJORDJE (rummaging through his bag frantically):
It's not here...

MAJA (deridingly):
Tamara, look!

TAMARA (copies Maja's tone of voice):
What's not there?

DJORDJE:
Nothing! I can't! I can't do the test!

MAJA (provoking him on purpose):
Run away! Get out before she comes in.

DJORDJE:
I'll have to!

He runs out of the classroom. Maja and Tamara look at each other. They can't believe that Djordje (Djordje for God's sake) will skive off the test.

TAMARA:

Should we dodge the test as well?

MAJA:

I can't. This one is important. If I manage to get an A, I'll be in an advert. See if she's coming.

Tamara gets up unquestionably and stands by the door to look out for the teacher. Maja is writing notes on the desk.

MAJA:

J'ai, tu as, il a. Nous avons, vous avez, ils ont.

TAMARA (running):

She's coming!

She runs to her desk and sits down. The teacher comes in. She starts giving out sheets of paper (she gives them to the first row as well to show that they are the remainder of the class).

FRENCH TEACHER:

Don't get up. Sit. Don't ask me to cancel the test. There's no chance of that happening. Don't ask me any questions. Each group has questions on two sheets of paper, and they are typed, so that you don't have the excuse of not being able to read my handwriting. Don't ask me when the results will be ready. They'll be ready on Thursday. I'll repeat: Thursday. Don't ask to go to the bathroom. You can hold it. Don't tell me you're feeling sick. You'll be lying. Don't hand in the test before the end of the lesson. Those who finish early should remain seated and quiet. Don't copy other people's work. I'll catch you. Don't move and don't breathe. Write!

MAJA (to Tamara):

I only got one sheet.

TAMARA:

Tell her...

MAJA:

Miss?

FRENCH TEACHER:

One grade down.

MAJA:

But...

FRENCH TEACHER:

Two grades down!

MAJA:

I only got one sheet...

FRENCH TEACHER:

Three grades down!

MAJA:
But that's a D.

FRENCH TEACHER:
You're wrong, That's an F. You can leave if you wish.

MAJA:
But, you said we couldn't...

FRENCH TEACHER:
I'm going to start on your conduct grades. You already have a B, now it's a C. Get out.

MAJA (spitefully folds her arms and sits down):
I won't!

FRENCH TEACHER:
A D!

TAMARA (fearfully, more for her own sake, just so Maja wouldn't say she hadn't taken her side later):
You really did say.

FRENCH TEACHER:
Pardon?

TAMARA (now she has to repeat it, she's already involved):
You really did say.

FRENCH TEACHER:
One grade down.

MAJA:
You can't lower her grade because of me!

FRENCH TEACHER:
But, honey, I can.

MAJA:
This test is important to me. If I get an A, I'll be in an advert.

FRENCH TEACHER:
A hot-line advert? Continuing in your mother's footsteps...

MAJA:
My mother is an actress! Give me that sheet of paper, I want to do the test, I want to be in an advert.

FRENCH TEACHER:

I want, I want, I want...I want all sorts of things, but I can't have them. I want to be in San Trope, Nice or Cannes, to have men court me in melodious French. That's why I studied it after all, or do you think I did it to waste my life, and, don't mind me saying, my beauty on you!

MAJA:

But...

FRENCH TEACHER:

But, life's not a fairy tale. It simply isn't. And, by the way, thank you for entertaining us, we've come to the end of the lesson, and, therefore, to the end of the time allotted for the test. Hand in your work!

The French teacher is collecting the tests energetically.

TAMARA:

Just one more sentence, please!

The French teacher grabs her papers and walks towards the exit. She stops by the door.

FRENCH TEACHER:

Life is not a fairy tale!

Scene 3

Mummy's Actress

Maja and Maja's mum are at home. Maja is doing sit-ups, her mum is holding her feet. Maja talks as she sits up, her mum as she goes down.

MAJA'S MUM:
We said breathing was important!

MAJA:
A hundred times.

MAJA'S MUM:
I'll say it two hundred times, it is the most important thing.

MAJA:
Breathing.

MAJA'S MUM:
What else is important?

MAJA:
Diet.

MAJA'S MUM:
What's the daily calorie limit?

MAJA:
One thousand.

MAJA'S MUM:
And?

MAJA:
Slimming pills.

MAJA'S MUM:
And?

MAJA:
Smoking.

MAJA'S MUM:
Why should a woman smoke?

MAJA:
To forget about food.

MAJA'S MUM:
Why else?

MAJA:
To look sexy.

MAJA'S MUM:
When?

MAJA:
When she's wearing red lipstick.

MAJA'S MUM:
When can she break her diet?

MAJA:
In two situations.

MAJA'S MUM:
The first?

MAJA:
When she's at a fancy dinner with fancy people.

MAJA'S MUM:
The second?

MAJA:
When a man is feeding her while making love.

MAJA'S MUM:
You've done your five hundred. It's my turn now.

They change places. Mum speaks as she goes up, Maja as she goes down.

MAJA:
Socialising rules for women over forty.

MAJA'S MUM:
From the top?

MAJA:
No.

MAJA'S MUM:
Why?

MAJA:
So you don't learn them off by heart!

MAJA'S MUM:
Shoot!

MAJA:
I socialise with fat people...

MAJA'S MUM:
...To look slimmer.

MAJA:
I socialise with men...

MAJA'S MUM:
...To look more feminine.

MAJA:
I socialise with sad people...

MAJA'S MUM:
...To look happier.

MAJA:
I socialise with ugly people...

MAJA'S MUM:
...To look more beautiful.

MAJA:
I socialise with older people...

MAJA'S MUM:
...To look younger.

MAJA:
I socialise with stupid people...

MAJA'S MUM:
...To seem smarter.

MAJA:
But always with the rich ones...

MAJA'S MUM:
...To get the drinks.

They finish exercising. They're stretching.

MAJA'S MUM:
How did the test go?

MAJA (lying, but she sounds confident - she's a good liar):
I think I'll be in the advert.

MAJA'S MUM:
Mummy's actress!

Scene 4

And the Oscar Goes to...

Maja and Tamara are in Maja's room. We find them talking, as is to be expected, about the infamous French test.

TAMARA:
How I hate that French teacher!

MAJA:
Well, so do I.

TAMARA:
Did you tell your mum?

MAJA:
Are you crazy?

TAMARA:
How come she didn't catch on? My mum always notices when I'm nervous.

MAJA:
I've told you to take Valium. Everything's great and you don't think about food.

They both take a Valium.

MAJA:
See, I've already forgotten about school. And, you know what I figured out? We should become lesbians.

TAMARA:
Why?

MAJA:
Because it's in.

TAMARA:
But, I'm already in love.

MAJA:
A-ha...who with?

TAMARA:
The chemistry teacher.

MAJA:
But he's old!

TAMARA:
Well, that's in. That's what you told me.

MAJA:
That's true. But this is more intriguing.

TAMARA (placatingly):
How do you mean?

MAJA:
Do you think I'm beautiful?

TAMARA:
I do.

MAJA:
See, you fancy me. And I fancy you. We only need to kiss, and that's it.

TAMARA:
Now?

MAJA:
When else?

TAMARA (placatingly, of course):
OK.

They shut their eyes. Still, they both hesitate, even Maja, even if it's in.

MAJA:
Ok, open your eyes. We can do it later.

TAMARA:
Right, even if we are lesbians, who says we have to kiss. That's so immature, anyway.

MAJA (happy that Tamara has found an excuse):
Yes! Let's do that thing.

TAMARA:
Again?

MAJA:
Yes.

TAMARA (placatingly, obviously):
Come on.

She gets up. Takes an envelope. Behaves as if she's at an Oscar ceremony. Ceremony music (off)

TAMARA:

And we can see the faces of our divas nominated for the Academy Award. One more applause for Winona, Anjelina, Rene, Gwyneth and Maja.

Maja smiles insincerely.

TAMARA:

I know you're all tense. I know you all have a favourite. So do I. And I'm trembling with anticipation. That's why I'll open this envelope which conceals the name of just one of our stars. And the Oscar goes to...

Maja signals her to say it.

TAMARA:

Maja!

Maja approaches her, waving to the imagined audience, Tamara congratulates her and hands over a teddy-bear in place of the golden statue. Maja wipes her tears.

MAJA:

I cannot believe it, really, cannot believe it. I want to thank everyone, the whole team, especially James who discovered me while I was shopping for milk in a supermarket, and also Ben, Mat, Tom, Brad, Leo, Johnny, Colin, Ashton and Orlando who were so wonderful to me. It is really incredible when something like this happens, and especially when, only yesterday, you were thousands of miles from all this glamour. You see, I grew up in a volatile country, in even more volatile circumstances... You know, I grew up without a mother. Dad tried, but no one could replace the absent woman who's so important in each of our lives. Without mother's love, warmth, gentleness and care, I thought that I hadn't a chance. But, this opportunity arose and I'll use it to send my love to my mum again, since I know that she's been watching me and leading me from up above, through all these years.

Pause. Maja places her hand on her heart and looks up.

MAJA:

Mum, I love you.

Tuesday

DJORDJE:

Tuesday

Tuesday is a truly wonderful day.

It always finds me laughing.

Monday - an old man passes by,

And the virtuous Tuesday approaches.

It's a really lively day,

No decency at all, if you didn't know.

Instead of giving way to Wednesday – a cute day,

It just rushes towards Friday.

I really love it for what it is,

It draws out frequent smiles.

That's why, on Tuesdays, I never stay in bed,

It's a day for victories instead.

He bows.

Scene 1

The Little Brainy Mouse

Djordje's bathroom. Djordje goes in, wearing a neat pair of stripy pyjamas. Brushes his teeth. Djordje's mother and father approach. They lean on the bathroom door, embracing each other. They watch their only child diligently brushing his teeth. Once he's finished with the teeth, Djordje starts washing his hands.

DJORDJE'S MUM AND DAD (together):

Before and after meals

You should wash your hands

Don't let your mother remind you.

Dirty hands

Pollute the food

So that illness

Enters the body.

Once they finish the poem they even applaud. Themselves, because they recited the poem so beautifully, and Djordje for successfully washing his hands. It's no mean feat, after all.

DJORDJE'S MUM:

And now - breakfast!

DJORDJE:

Hooray! What's on the menu?

DJORDJE'S DAD:

Orange juice, buttered toast, ham and eggs, fruit salad and a large glass of orange juice.

DJORDJE'S MUM:

Silly, you've already said that.

They all laugh at Djordje's Dad's silliness.

DJORDJE:

Maybe dad wants me to drink two glasses of juice!

They all laugh at Djordje's joke.

DJORDJE'S MUM:

How did our little brainy mouse do in his French test?

DJORDJE'S DAD (good-naturedly corrects her):

Mummy, brainy mousey's a big boy!

DJORDJE'S MUM:

Mousey, you know your mum'd kill herself if you got a B!

DJORDJE'S DAD:
And for a lower grade your dad would kill you!

They all laugh. Djordje a little weakly.

DJORDJE'S MUM:
Why is the brainy mousey not laughing?

DJORDJE:
Mum, I forgot to take the brainy mousey yesterday. I didn't take him to school!

DJORDJE'S MUM:
Daddy, did you hear this?

DJORDJE'S DAD:
How could that happen?

DJORDJE:
I don't know. I only know I will never, ever forget him again.

Mum brings the brainy mouse - a funny looking toy-mouse they all think brings good luck to Djordje. Mum kisses the brainy mouse. She gives it to Djordje.

DJORDJE'S MUM:
Do you know how mummy suffered when she gave birth to you?

DJORDJE:
I know.

DJORDJE'S MUM:
Do you know that mummy was thinking of you when she bought the brainy mousey?

DJORDJE:
I know.

DJORDJE'S MUM:
You know how we told you he was your talisman, and never to go anywhere without him?

DJORDJE:
Yes...

DJORDJE'S DAD:
You promise you'll never forget him again?

DJORDJE:
I promise.

DJORDJE'S DAD:
Under any circumstances?

DJORDJE:
Under any circumstances.

DJORDJE'S DAD:
It didn't influence the test results, did it?

DJORDJE'S MUM:
You know mummy would kill herself...

Pause

DJORDJE (lying, a little less confidently than Maja):
It didn't.

Scene 2

It's a Short Step from Valium to Heroin

Classroom. The French Teacher, Maja, Uros, Djordje, Tamara.

FRENCH TEACHER:

You know why we are gathered here.

MAJA:

No, we don't.

FRENCH TEACHER:

Well, ask your friend Djordje, the class Prefect.

MAJA:

Isn't Tamara voted for the Class Prefect?

TAMARA:

Yes, I was. Djordje is the Hygienist.

FRENCH TEACHER:

Oh well you see, Djordje wished to advance in his career. That's why he has taken some steps forward. And – he managed. Djordje?

DJODJE:

Yes?

FRENCH TEACHER:

Expose the problem to them. Why are they here?

DJORDJE:

But, you promised they won't find out that I...

FRENCH TEACHER:

Oh well, Djordje darling, I know that you are holding your ground about what you said.

DJODJE:

I am.

FRENCH TEACHER:

Well? Go ahead, boy, tell them!

Pause. Djordje is preparing himself. He knows what goes next.

DJORDJE:

You are on Valium.

MAJA:
You are dead!

Pause again. They all look at each other. The French Teacher is happy.

FRENCH TEACHER:
Finally. Yes. So, I know that you are on Valium. That's why we gathered here to discuss that. So, listen now. Drugs are bad, ok? Everyone of us has some problems, but drugs are not the solution.

DJORDJE:
They simply push away the problem.

FRENCH TEACHER:
You are do right, Prefect! The solution is further and further. You will probably say: Valium isn't drugs. And I reply to you: But, I will tell you, Valium leads to pot, pot to ecstasy, ecstasy to cocaine. One day you will run short on cash for cocaine, and you will reach for the cheaper solution – heroine. And heroine is the first on list of the hardest addictions to quit.

DJORDJE:
There are more addics who die, than those who get clean.

FRENCH TEACHER:
Therefore, Valium is a certain path to death. Did we understand this lesson? Can we all go home?

MAJA:
We understood. Valium equals death!

TAMARA:
We will never touch it again.

UROS:
Who cares? I will only live for another twelve years and two hundred and forty seven days, anyway.

FRENCH TEACHER:
Oh, shut up! Ah, life is nor a fairy tale. How I wish I was in St Tropez or anywhere on the Cote D'Azure, drinking wine and nibbling Brie or Camembert and enjoying enjoying the melodiousness of the French language.. So long, my little junkies!

DJORDJE:
I'm nor a junkie!

FRENCH TEACHER:
And that is exactly why YOU are responsible for those who are. Drugs are bad. It is a short step from Valium to heroine.

DJORDJE:
Don't worry.

She leaves. Short after her, Maja, Tamara and Uros also leave.

DJORDJE:

Wait! You are not dismissed!

Maja and Tamara laugh. They go out with Uros (who doesn't laugh).

DJORDJE:

Wait, I am the responsible one! Wait! Give me your home numbers so I can reach you any time!

Scene 3

Without an arm

Classroom. Djordje is by himself. He is packing his schoolbag. His Little Brainy Mouse and a sheet of paper are on the desk. He takes the mouse and tries to rip his arm. He is trying hard but with no result. Maja, Tamara and Uros enter the classroom. Djordje quickly puts the mouse genius in his schoolbag.

MAJA:

What are you doing here Prefect?

DJORDJE:

I'm packing my books... I reported you for your own good.

MAJA:

We know. We're not angry with you.

DJORDJE:

Please, stop taking that!

MAJA: (with irony)

We will. Don't you worry.

TAMARA gives the paper to MAJA.

TAMARA:

Look what he's got here.

MAJA:

Read it out loud.

TAMAR:

Firstly. Chemistry. Jovanovic presented himself as Aleksandar Sopic. The teacher didn't notice a thing. When he threw him out he registered him as Aleksandar Sopic. Secondly. Art. Maja and Tamara did not attend the class. They probably linked it with the lunch break. And thirdly. Buy mom and dad's anniversary present.

MAJA:

Interesting. And how long have your parents been married for?

Djordje keeps quiet. He is looking at her. Suddenly he gets his mouse out of the bag.

DJORDJE:

This is the Brainy Little Mouse. They got him for me. Look at how cute he is.

MAJA (to Uros):

Take that from him.

Uros takes the mouse.

MAJA:

This mouse means a lot to you?

DJORDJE:

He's of uppermost importance to me.

MAJA:

And, could we play with him a little?

DJORDJE (indifferently):

Better don't. My mom and dad said I should be the only one playing with him. He brings me luck. If anything were to happen to him, mom and dad would kill me.

MAJA (to Tamara and Uros):

Do you think he would he still bring him luck if he lost an arm?

Uros immediately starts ripping its arm. Djordje calmly sits on a chair until the end of the scene.

TAMARA:

Don't!

Uros immediately stops pulling its arm.

MAJA:

What is it, you feel sorry for it?

TAMARA:

Well, I do!

Uros is looking at them, unsure whether he should go on.

MAJA:

Pull it!

Uros pulls once more and rips the arm off.

TAMARA:

No!

Maja takes the mouse genius from Uros and gives it back to Djordje, together with the ripped arm.

MAJA:

Come on, leave.

Djordje packs the mouse and his arm and calmly leaves.

MAJA (to Tamara):
What's up with you?

TAMARA:
Nothing.

MAJA:
Listen, I'm leaving, and you can call me when you chill out a bit.

She leaves too. Tamara sits at a desk. She's not up for anything. Uros approaches her, squats beside her and kisses her. She jumps as if bitten. She is not saying anything. Uros looks at her a little longer and then leaves too. Tamara stays by herself.

Scene 4

It's not a shame to not have friends

Djordje is at home. With his mom and dad. Mom is holding the Brainy Little Mouse.

DJORDJE'S DAD:

Mommy, take some needle and thread and fix the Brainy Little mouse.

DJORDJE'S MOM:

Those little villains! Although, I get why they did it!

DJORDJE'S DAD:

What do you mean by that, mommy?

DJORDJE'S MOM:

The Brainy Little Mouse is his source of strength – just like Samson's hair. They wished to destroy competition. Don't you see?

DJORDJE:

But mom, they did not do it on purpose, we were throwing it around and all of a sudden the arm ripped. Those are my friends...

Mom brings needle and thread.

DJORDJE'S DAD:

Do you hear, mommy? Weren't we clear regarding hanging out with that little scum?

DJORDJE:

I can't help that they want to be friends with me. They are not so bad...

DJORDJE'S DAD:

They will destroy you!

DJORDJE'S MOM:

Daddy, it's ok. Little mouse, there is no need to lie. There, your nose has grown already. Those little villains bullied you.

DJORDJE:

But they didn't!

DJORDJE'S MOM:

There, there, cry it out. Tears are not shameful. All that sorrow will leave with them.

DJORDJE:

I am not sad!

DJORDJE'S MOM:
Cry it out, I know you are!

DJORDJE'S DAD:
My little one, it's not shameful to not have friends. The greatest mind of our era grew up friendless. And then...

DJORDJE'S MOM:
You too will conquer the whole world, our little bee!

DJORDJE'S DAD:
Therefore do not burden your head with unnecessary sorrow. Cry it out; you will then be ready for new victories!

DJORDJE'S MOM:
And mom and dad will deal with them.

DJORDJE:
We are friends!

DJORDJE'S MOM:
My little mouse, enough with identifying yourself with the aggressor! They attacked you, scared you, and made you vulnerable, so what. What goes around comes around, three times stronger.

DJORDJE'S DAD:
Six times!

Djordje's mom sewed the mouse's arm back on. She hands him over to Djordje.

DJORDJE'S MOM:
Mommy strengthened it, now nothing can happen to it.

DJORDJE'S DAD:
And even if something did happen, we would know they did it. And then we will show them...

DJORDJE'S MOM:
And you cry it out now, it's not a shameful to not have friends.

Wednesday

TAMARA:

Wednesday is also known as “hump day” because it right in the middle of the week. It’s not bad, the first half’s gone, we have a half left. Now it depends on how the week started. If it started well, it’s not bad if it’s long. If it started badly, you want it to be over as soon as possible. I don’t know. One should be brave and persevere in any case. But, I still like Wednesdays. It reminds me of my life principle – one should always take the middle road. Be neither ugly nor beautiful, neither skinny nor fat, neither smart nor stupid. If you take the middle road, you lessen your problems. That’s what I’d recommend to everyone – don’t stick out, and go for it!

Scene 1

How Do Lesbians Dress?

Tamara's bathroom. She's looking in the mirror and is not happy. She sticks fingers down her throat trying to vomit. She lifts her t-shirt, pinches herself and all she catches is a bit of skin. Nevertheless, she thinks it's fat. Tries vomiting again. Her mother enters.

TAMARA:
Can't you knock?

TAMARA'S MUM:
I thought you were in your room practicing solfege.

TAMARA:
Well, I'm not.

TAMARA'S MUM:
What am I interrupting?

TAMARA:
Nothing. What do you want?

TAMARA'S MUM:
Nothing. Just to remind you of solfege.

TAMARA:
Ok. Leave.

She leaves. Then comes back.

TAMARA'S MUM:
When will you practice?

TAMARA:
That's all you care about!

TAMARA'S MUM:
Dad asked.

TAMARA:
He called?

TAMARA'S MUM:
Yes.

TAMARA:
What did he say?

TAMARA'S MUM:

Nothing. You're sister's sick, they're taking her for penicillin injections.

TAMARA:

She's not my sister!

TAMARA'S MUM:

Dad wants you to call her that.

TAMARA:

I don't care! She's just a stupid brat I don't want to know about!

TAMARA'S MUM:

You share the same father.

TAMARA:

If he is her father. That witch says so, but she's been with everyone.

TAMARA'S MUM (knows that what Tamara is saying is not nice, but she doesn't want to correct her, it gives her a warm feeling, and, anyway, she prefers someone else saying it, since she thinks the same):

Dad would like you to continue with your music. He never did finish his music education, and would like you to do it.

TAMARA:

Why doesn't that little brat do it?

TAMARA'S MUM:

And he wanted to know how the test went.

TAMARA:

Why should he care!

TAMARA'S MUM:

He's asking because of that book he got you. He wants to know whether it helped.

TAMARA:

It didn't!

TAMARA'S MUM:

He'd like you to get an A.

TAMARA:

He can fuck off!

TAMARA'S MUM (well, she'll have to warn her about this one):

Tamara!

TAMARA:

I don't care!

TAMARA'S MUM:
He might call you more often if you got an A.

TAMARA:
Really?

TAMARA'S MUM:
Certainly. You know how much he cares about it. He may takes out for a lunch on Sunday to celebrate.

TAMARA:
Really?

TAMARA'S MUM:
Yes.

TAMARA:
Well, call him then.

TAMARA'S MUM:
So, it'll be an A?

TAMARA (lying, her mother doesn't even notice, as long as she's told what she wants to hear):
Yes.

TAMARA'S MUM:
Great. Where would you like to go?

TAMARA:
It'd be better if you cooked and he came here, I'll tidy up my room. Do you think he'd come?

TAMARA'S MUM:
If it's an A.

She gives her a kiss and leaves.

TAMARA:
Mum?

Mum comes back.

TAMARA:
How do lesbians dress?

Scene 2

Honesty and Tolerance

Classroom. Three desks on the stage...The children are waiting for the French teacher. Maja turns around to face a boy "sitting" at the desk behind Tamara and herself.

MAJA:

Jovanović, don't grope.

TAMARA:

It's no use groping her, she's a lesbian.

MAJA:

So what, you are one too.

The teacher walks in. Energetically as always. Swaying as always. The skirt is short, as always. Everything is as it always is, apart from what's about to happen. If they'd known that, Tamara and Maya would have skived off, but they hadn't.

FRENCH TEACHER:

Don't get up. Remain seated. Don't ask me about the test results. I told you they'll be in on Thursday. Don't waste your, and my, time. Listen to me carefully. There'll be no French lesson today. Don't rejoice. Keep quiet. We'll dedicate this lesson to something more important. To love. We all feel love, don't we? We know what it is? Uroš, who do you love?

UROŠ:

Nirvana.

FRENCH TEACHER:

See, Uroš loves Nirvana. Djordje?

DJORDJE:

Mum and dad.

FRENCH TEACHER:

That's yet another kind of love. We won't go into whether you're normal or not. We also have love towards nature, school, fun, friends, I won't go on, there are many. But, one important type of love we should never neglect is?

DJORDJE:

Towards mother and father!

FRENCH TEACHER:

Keep quiet. That's father's love towards mother. Or mother's towards father. And as the third option we have love of mother towards mother. Of father towards father. That is love towards the same sex. Many think it pathological, an illness, but we, we're open to all. Your friends Maja and Tamara will tell you more about it. Maja, come here.

Maja goes to the front.

FRENCH TEACHER:
Hae you ever had a boyfriend.

Maja doesn't say anything

FRENCH TEACHER:
Did you kiss?

Maja doesn't say anything

FRENCH TEACHER:
Did you sleep with him?

Maja doesn't say anything

FRENCH TEACHER:
Ok, I know you did. The doctor told me what you asked during the check up. But, since you're not talkative, we'll have a chat with your friend Tamara.

Tamara goes to the front. She knows what to expect.

FRENCH TEACHER:
Maybe it would've been better to have called you Maja's girlfriend. Would it have been correct to have called you Maja's girlfriend?

TAMARA:
No.

FRENCH TEACHER:
Good, I see the cat did not get your tongue.

TAMARA:
It didn't.

FRENCH TEACHER:
And why are you lying to me?

TAMARA:
I'm not.

FRENCH TEACHER:
Why are you lying? I saw you walking down corridors and holding hands.

TAMARA:
As friends.

FRENCH TEACHER:

And I also heard you telling people you were lesbians.

TAMARA:

It's a joke.

FRENCH TEACHER:

Why are you lying to me? I'm not judging you. What's more, I approve. What's more, I want to teach your class friends to be more tolerant. There's nothing terrible about two women loving one another. You know, dear? I'm not judging. Don't be afraid. Admit that you're girlfriends.

Pause. Tamara believes her.

TAMARA:

We're girlfriends.

FRENCH TEACHER:

See, children. It's not hard to tell the truth. Especially when you believe firmly in what you're saying, and especially in what you feel. You love Maja, don't you?

TAMARA:

I love her.

FRENCH TEACHER:

I appreciate honesty. I appreciate it very much. Children, we learnt two things in this lesson. Honesty and tolerance. Without honesty and tolerance we can't survive. Tamara, dear, shall we continue this conversation, honey. See that it's not scary. Are you more relaxed now?

TAMARA:

I am.

FRENCH TEACHER:

You'll be honest?

TAMARA:

Yes.

FRENCH TEACHER:

Answer the following question then. I'm sure the entire class would love to know. Have you two girls slept together?

TAMARA:

What do you mean?

FRENCH TEACHER:

Slept together in a bed?

TAMARA:

Hundreds of times. Ever since fourth grade.

FRENCH TEACHER (to the class):
Don't laugh! Keep quiet! Tamara, I mean sex.
Tamara is shocked.

TAMARA:
That...No...

FRENCH TEACHER:
You must have kissed then.

Tamara is silent. Poor thing, she only just realised French teacher's evil motive.

FRENCH TEACHER:
Now you're refusing to talk as well. You don't seem to understand how important this conversation is for the entire class. Isn't it so, children? Maybe you should do a demonstration for us. Tamara, kiss Maja. On the mouth! Make it last ten seconds. We'll all count.

The two of them are still.

FRENCH TEACHER:
If you don't obey me, I'll take it to be the ultimate disregard for authority. And you know how that's punished. With an official warning, at least.

They turn to face each other.

FRENCH TEACHER:
Come on.

They come a step closer to each other.

FRENCH TEACHER:
Two – three - go!

Tamara runs out of the classroom.

FRENCH TEACHER:
How are we to understand this? Maja, why are you standing there? Go after her, console her! That's what girlfriends do. (She cannot hold it, she's laughing at her own joke)

Maja slowly, step by step, leaves the classroom.

FRENCH TEACHER (to the class):
Good. We've learnt two important lessons today. They are...Djordje?

DJORDJE:
Honesty and tolerance.

Scene 3

No Feelings

Uroš and Tamara are in front of the Pharmacy.

UROŠ:
Give me one.

TAMARA:
You've got your own.

UROŠ:
Well, mine are different.

TAMARA:
Than you give me one of yours.

They exchange.

TAMARA:
How did you get yours without the prescription?

UROŠ:
She know me.

Tamara gives him one of her pills, what else can she do. It seems to be the rule among those taking Valium. She doesn't know, but she thinks she should respect them. They both swallow one.

UROŠ:
I didn't know you were on Valium.

TAMARA:
The teacher got on my nerves. And it stops me from thinking about food, it's great.

UROŠ:
You're not fat.

Pause

UROŠ:
Can I kiss you again?

TAMARA:
No!

UROŠ:

Why?
I can't.

UROŠ:
But, you let me last week.

TAMARA:
Things are different now.

UROŠ:
Why?

TAMARA:
I'm a lesbian. If you even know what it means.

UROŠ:
I do.

TAMARA:
What do you want then?

UROŠ:
You didn't want to kiss Maja. You're lying.

TAMARA:
We're not lying. We just didn't want to do it in front of everyone.

UROŠ:
Just once, please. I'll only live for another twelve years and two hundred and forty six days.
Grant me my wish.

TAMARA:
Why me?

UROŠ:
You look like Courtney Love.

TAMARA:
So what?

UROŠ:
She means a lot to me.

TAMARA:
But, I don't feel anything towards you. I don't feel anything towards men.

UROŠ:
Ok.

He turns to leave. But it's still not all the same to Tamara.

TAMARA:
Hey!

Uroš returns.

TAMARA:
No feelings though, I can kiss you that way.

She kisses him like a shy girl of thirteen kisses an introverted boy of fourteen.

Scene 4

A Happy Family

Tamara enters her flat. She finds her mum – and dad! Of course. Maybe they decided to make up. Maybe her father found out that the brat he'd been calling her sister wasn't his after all! It must be it. The day's been horrible enough. Something good should happen now. She runs to them, kisses them both.

TAMARA:
Hello mommy, hello daddy.

TAMARA'S DAD:
Where's my big daughter?

TAMARA:
Here I am.

TAMARA'S MUM:
How was school?

TAMARA (lying, again):
Great.

TAMARA'S DAD:
What did you do?

TAMARA:
We had art, music, maths, French and geography. We missed English, she's sick. It was great, I love school!

TAMARA'S DAD:
Is there a boy for dad to interrogate?

TAMARA:
No, daddy. I'm still too young.

TAMARA'S MUM:
I told you. They're still not at that stage.

TAMARA:
Have you come for lunch?

TAMARA'S DAD:
No.

TAMARA:

Why did you come then?

TAMARA'S DAD:

To talk to your mother.

Tamara cannot hide her joy. She knows what they talked about. He realised he'd made a mistake, he begged her to come back, she accepted because she still loves him, and that's it! They'll be a happy family again!

TAMARA'S MUM:

Dad and I talked.

TAMARA'S DAD:

Something important happened.

TAMARA'S MUM:

Something that'll make you happy as well.

TAMARA'S DAD:

Something wonderful.

TAMARA'S MUM:

Something that'll change all of our lives.

Now she's absolutely certain. They've made up.

TAMARA:

I know what it is.

TAMARA'S DAD (confused, as if caught in the act):

You know? How? Somebody told you?

TAMARA:

No. I've been expecting it all these years.

TAMARA'S DAD (a little unhappy about the news he's supposed to give):

Unbelievable! I did not expect it at all, and now it's happened. All we have to do now is to let go and enjoy as much as possible.

TAMARA:

I'm ecstatic! It's all I ever wanted!

TAMARA'S MUM (surprised):

I didn't think you'd be happy. That's why we've been preparing you so much.

This doesn't feel right. She's not as certain anymore, but there's still hope. Who knows, maybe they think she has too much work at school, so a shock like this, no matter how pleasant, would throw her off her tracks.

TAMARA:

You've made up, haven't you?

TAMARA'S DAD:

No. You'll get a new baby sister!

TAMARA'S MUM:

How do you know it'll be a sister?

TAMARA'S DAD (forgets his big daughter for a second):

Lady's men have daughters.

TAMARA'S MUM (also forgetting):

Really?

Pause. Tamara cannot believe it. During their little quarrel she realised what they were on about.

TAMARA:

Wait!

Taken by surprise, the parents turn to her. They suddenly realise there's someone else in the room apart from them, their betrayed emotions and unfinished quarrels.

TAMARA'S DAD:

Yes, dear?

TAMARA:

Why do you think that the birth of another little monster would make me happy. And why will it change my life?

Pause.

TAMARA'S MUM (gleefully):

Your dad'll explain that.

Pause. It's not easy for dad.

TAMARA'S DAD:

The baby will be born in July.

TAMARA:

So?

TAMARA'S DAD (sighs):

Dad won't be able to take you on holiday, as promised.

Pause. Tamara is on the verge of tears. Dad would like to make things better.

TAMARA'S DAD:

But, I'll take you the year after next...both you and your sisters.

Thursday

UROŠ:

I don't care which day it is. I think nobody should. Each day is good enough for great deeds. Of course, the "great deed" doesn't have to be important for humankind. It's enough to do something for yourself or for someone you care about. Or even, and why not, for your neighbour, or a granny, weighted by heavy grocery bags, struggling to cross the street. It's perfectly fine. And I'll say it again, it's really not important which day it is for such a deed. It could be a Monday, or Tuesday, or Wednesday, or Thursday or Friday. Or, of course, the weekend. There's no school on weekends, so there's a lot more time for good deeds of that sort. Deeds we children are capable of. In any case, it's Thursday. I'm prepared to make the best of it.

Scene 1

Little Bastards

Uroš's bathroom. He's in front of the mirror looking at himself. His brother is banging on the door. He wants in, needing the bathroom.

UROŠ'S BROTHER:
Come on!

UROŠ:
Leave me be!

UROŠ'S BROTHER:
I'll be late for work.

UROŠ:
I don't care!

UROŠ'S BROTHER:
You won't have anything to eat then!

UROŠ:
I don't have to eat. I'll live for another twelve years and two hundred forty five days anyway.

UROŠ'S BROTHER:
You obsessed fool. Even if you die the same age Curt did, it still doesn't make you him.

UROŠ:
At least we'll have something in common.

UROŠ'S BROTHER:
Get out. I'm late for work.

UROŠ:
I won't.

UROŠ'S BROTHER:
Get out.

UROŠ:
I won't.

UROŠ'S BROTHER:
Ok.

Pause. Uroš's brother has obviously found a solution.

UROŠ'S BROTHER (taking a Nirvana tape):
Then forget "In Utero".

Uroš runs out of the bathroom. He wasn't expecting this. And it's his favourite tape.

UROŠ:
Here's the bathroom. Hand over "In Utero"!

UROŠ'S BROTHER:
Well...

UROŠ:
Give it!

UROŠ'S BROTHER:
Why should I?

UROŠ:
I've got out of the bathroom.

UROŠ'S BROTHER:
Too late. The stakes are higher now.

UROŠ:
That one's my favourite.

UROŠ'S BROTHER:
I know. I'm your brother. I taught you everything about Nirvana. It's my favourite too. It's obvious it would be your favourite.

UROŠ:
Give it!

UROŠ'S BROTHER:
What for? You'll only live for another...

UROŠ:
Give it. I saved the money for it!

UROŠ'S BROTHER:
Out of the pocket money I gave you.

UROŠ:
I'll kill you!

He throws himself at his brother. The brother stops him. He's older and, therefore, stronger. And might is right.

UROŠ'S BROTHER:
I'll give it back. Under one condition.

UROŠ:
What is it?

UROŠ'S BROTHER:
Nothing major. I'll give back your precious tape if...Let's see...

UROŠ:
Spit it out!

UROŠ'S BROTHER:
If your next grade is not an F.

Pause.

UROŠ:
I'll kill you!

He attacks again. He's so furious now that his brother, despite the superior strength, doesn't manage to stop the attack. A morning scuffle. In the midst of it the Mother walks in, a little tipsy, not much, just the early morning drink. She cannot react to anything quickly enough because of the drink and sedatives. Which doesn't stop her words hurting, said in that drawn out, quiet, sleepy tone.

UROŠ'S MUM:
What's going on? Kids? Are you playing?

UROŠ:
He took my tape!

UROŠ'S MUM::
He's your brother. You have to share everything you own with him.

UROŠ:
He's blackmailing me!

UROŠ'S MUM::
That's not nice. Give your brother the tape.

UROŠ'S BROTHER:
I won't.

UROŠ'S MUM::
Ok.

She walks out. Probably to get another drink.

UROŠ:

Mum!

UROŠ'S MUM:
Leave me alone.

UROŠ:
Tell him!

UROŠ'S MUM: turns around slowly. The words she often falls back on are about to come, and, now matter how often she says them, they still hurt.

UROŠ'S MUM:
Why don't you ask your father?

UROŠ:
Daddy's not here.

UROŠ'S MUM:
That was exactly my point.

She walks out slowly to do what she set out to do. But, before she refills her glass, she has something else to say to her boys.

UROŠ'S MUM:
You're little bastards, just like him.

She leaves. Then she remembers something else.

UROŠ'S MUM:
When are you going to leave this house?

Scene 2

Corrections and the Date

The classroom. The children are waiting for the French teacher. She finally walks in, in the same manner as always. The pupils are obviously nervous, because some of their dreams and hopes depend on the grades. Our heroes, under the circumstances, already know the outcome will not be favourable. The teacher is handing out sheets of paper (again to the members of the audience as well, and then to the pupils in the first row.)

FRENCH TEACHER:

Don't get up. Sit. Don't ask questions. I checked them twice. Everyone got what they deserved. Don't bother me. Write – corrections and the date, and so on. Maja, as we agreed – an F. Bye, bye, advert. Tamara, a B. Everything's correct, but... Your big moth, you know. However, tell your father the book had helped. I need not say more. Djordje. Yours is an interesting case. You didn't do the test, but you attended the other lessons. How should I understand that? Here's a little F, the first one for our straight A pupil. Your mum will kill herself, I know... But, the facts are such. And, in the end, an interesting case. Our Uroš. Uroš, what do you think your grade is?

UROŠ:

I don't know.

FRENCH TEACHER:

What do you usually get?

UROŠ:

An F.

FRENCH TEACHER:

This time you got an E.

UROŠ:

An E?

FRENCH TEACHER:

I can see that surprises you. It surprised me, too. That's why I went over it twice. I counted enough points for and E both times.

UROŠ:

An E?

FRENCH TEACHER:

You seem very confused. Did you copy of someone?

UROŠ:

I didn't.

FRENCH TEACHER:

A quick question. Translate: I want to get married and live in Cote d'Azure.

UROŠ:
Well...Je...

FRENCH TEACHER:
Yes?

UROŠ:
I can't think.

FRENCH TEACHER:
That's what I thought. At least you're used to this: sit, an F.

UROŠ:
But...

FRENCH TEACHER:
I thought it unusual. I admit. That someone so stupid should suddenly shine and get an E. but, I didn't let myself be fooled by that first impression. You've cleared that up now.

UROŠ:
I got confused.

FRENCH TEACHER:
And imagine it was a question of live and death. Would you have got confused? Oh, yes. It's not all that important to you. You're only going to live for another...How long?

UROŠ:
Twelve years and two hundred and forty five days.

FRENCH TEACHER:
I always forget. How careless of me. You showed us how much you know. You got an F.

Uroš runs out of the classroom.

FRENCH TEACHER:
And an uncertified absence.

Pause. She's looking at them. Djordje puts his hand up.

DJORDJE:
Miss?

FRENCH TEACHER:
No questions. Write. Corrections and the date.

Scene 3

Jimjams

In front of Uroš's front door. His school bag is on his back. He's obviously returning from school. He rings the bell several times. He's almost giving up on anyone opening the door. Finally, his mother appears, looking suspicious, more drunk now, obviously, it's already past noon. More so, it's the evening, and she's had enough time for everything.

UROŠ'S MUM:

What are you doing here?

UROŠ:

Well, school's over.

UROŠ'S MUM::

Already?

UROŠ:

It's the evening already. I've come to get some sleep.

UROŠ'S MUM::

Well, it's inconvenient...

UROŠ:

Why?

UROŠ'S MUM::

I have a guest. It's inconvenient having you home.

UROŠ:

It's my home too.

UROŠ'S MUM::

Depends how you see it. You haven't invested anything into it.

UROŠ:

Let me in!

UROŠ'S MUM::

It's really inconvenient.

UROŠ:

I'll keep my eyes shut.

UROŠ'S MUM::

It's inconvenient, sorry. How many times do I have to say it?

UROŠ:

Let me, at least, leave my bag here.

UROŠ'S MUM::

Give it to me, I'll take it to your room.

UROŠ (trying to play her game):

That's inconvenient.

UROŠ'S MUM: (she older, more experienced, ready to answer back):
I'll keep my eyes shut.

UROŠ:

But, I have nowhere to sleep.

UROŠ'S MUM::

Go to your girlfriend's.

UROŠ:

I don't have a girlfriend.

UROŠ'S MUM::

How come your brother has one?

UROŠ:

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

UROŠ'S MUM::

That's really sad. You have a liberal mother who's letting you sleep over at your girlfriend's at fourteen, and you don't have one. What have I done wrong...

UROŠ:

Mum, please!

UROŠ'S MUM::

You must have a male friend.

UROŠ:

I'm your son!

UROŠ'S MUM::

Or a female friend?

UROŠ:

No.

UROŠ'S MUM::

Oh, good, for a second I thought you were one of those...Those who only have girls for friends. And when they grow up want to be with boys.

UROŠ:

I'm not, don't worry.

UROŠ'S MUM::

That's good. I have to go now. My friend's been waiting for me. For a long time.

She's just about to go. She half closes the door. Uroš stops her.

UROŠ:

Mum!

UROŠ'S MUM::

Yes, you're right. I'm being careless.

Pause. Uroš steps forward, but his mother stops him again.

UROŠ'S MUM::

You've nothing to sleep in. I'll bring you your jimjams.

She disappears into the flat. Uroš is waiting. She hasn't appeared yet. She's probably forgotten all about him and his jimjams.

Scene 4

The Kiss

Tamara's room. Tamara, Maja and Uroš are in it.

TAMARA:

You don't have an aunt?

UROŠ:

I have no one.

MAJA:

And why do you think you can stay over at her place?

Uroš is not answering.

TAMARA:

Let him be. Can't you see he's got no one.

MAJA:

It's probably his own fault. I'm surrounded by friends.

TAMARA:

He can get us some Valium.

MAJA (gleefully getting two packets out of her pocket):

We don't need it.

UROŠ:

Please, I've nowhere to go.

TAMARA:

I'll ask my mum.

MAJA:

Since when are you running a charity?

TAMARA:

I'm not, I just feel sorry for him.

MAJA:

Do you think he'd help you?

UROŠ:

I would! She only needs to ask.

Pause. Maja realises something.

MAJA:
Oh, did somebody fall in love?

UROŠ:
I didn't. She only looks like Courtney Love.

MAJA:
She doesn't.

UROŠ:
Spitting image.

MAJA (to Tamara):
Has he bothered you before? I can get the entire eight grade onto him.
Pause.

UROŠ:
Not surprising, when you've been with all of them.

MAJA:
Look who's talking. You've never been with anyone!

TAMARA:
Don't.

MAJA:
I will. Uroš, have you ever kissed a girl?

Pause. Tamara is shaking his head at him.

UROŠ (he has to, he's really, really hurt, he can't keep quiet):
I have.

MAJA:
A poster, right?

UROŠ:
No.

MAJA:
Ok. Since you're so experienced, tell us who have you kissed?

Pause. Tamara sees there's no use in begging.

UROŠ:
Tamara.

Maja is very, seriously surprised. Tamara slaps Uroš. He's surprised. He wasn't expecting it. He's touching his stinging cheek.

MAJA:
Is it true?

TAMARA:
It isn't!

MAJA:
See? You didn't just lie, you were stupid enough to lie about a person present in the room.
And you're cheeky enough to take over my territory.

UROŠ (still touching his cheek):
I'm not lying.

TAMARA:
Get out! Go back to your dead singer, he's your best friend anyway!

UROŠ:
He killed himself.

TAMARA:
Feel free to kill yourself too!

UROŠ:
Not now. In...

TAMARA:
Oh, stop it and leave!

UROŠ:
Please...

TAMARA:
Go!

Uroš leaves the room slowly. Tamara and Maja are quiet. Neither knows what to say, not even Maja.

TAMARA (yawning finally):
I'm tired, I have to sleep.

MAJA (can't wait for an excuse to leave):
Ok, I'll be off then, see you tomorrow.

TAMARA:
Aha...

MAJA:
I may be able to get you into my advert...

TAMARA:

Great.

MAJA:

Bye.

TAMARA:

Bye.

She leaves the room. Tamara stands there for a while, then she can't take it anymore and starts crying.

Friday

MAJA, TAMARA, DJORDJE, UROŠ (singing together):

School is so fine,
Full of friends and sprite
It's like the home of mine
Pity it's not open all night.
Not being there is such a strain
It gives my soul a lot of pain.
Then I'm missing my pack
With whom I share a snack.
And I'm missing the girl full of fun
Whom I would give to no one.

Scene I

The Plan

The school yard. Uroš is sitting in his corner. Tamara and Maja approach him.

MAJA:
You have a Valium?

Uroš doesn't respond.

TAMARA:
Sorry about yesterday. I told her it was without feeling.

MAJA:
That's in. No feelings.

TAMARA:
Did you find a place to sleep?

UROŠ:
I slept in my room. In my bed. Under my blanket.

TAMARA:
How come?

UROŠ (proud of being able to do something well, even if it's breaking and entering):
I picked the lock. My brother taught me.

TAMARA:
And your mum?

UROŠ:
She didn't hear anything. She was asleep. As was her friend.

MAJA:
My mum has friends too.

Now there's an understanding between them. A partnership. Uroš gives her a Valium.

MAJA:
One doesn't do it for me.

UROŠ (gives her another one):
How come you don't have any?

MAJA:
My gran found me out. You know, I was stealing of her.

TAMARA:
What about me?

Uroš gives her one as well. Djordje, who's been hiding behind the wall, turns up.

DJORDJE (to everyone's surprise):
I want one as well.

This time no one laughs, even though he did something totally unexpected. Uroš gives him a pill without comment.

DJORDJE:
One won't kill me, will it?

MAJA:
You'd need a lot to kill yourself. Just swallow it.

DJORDJE:
My mum will kill herself.

TAMARA:
Why?

DJORDJE:
Because of the test.

MAJA:
She won't. And even if she did, it wouldn't be that bad. If my mum were to kill herself, I'd be in any advert I wanted.

TAMARA:
If my mum were to kill herself, my dad would take me on holiday...Without that idiot and her kids.

UROŠ:
If my mum were to kill herself, I'd have a place to sleep.

Pause.

DJORDJE:
I love my mum. And I don't want her to be unhappy. I'd give everything for that F to disappear.

MAJA:
Me too.

Pause.

MAJA:

And it could. And not just that F, but the entire register. Uroš, you can pick locks?

UROŠ:

I told you.

MAJA:

Any lock?

UROŠ:

Probably most locks.

Pause. Maja's being mysterious. The rest are looking at her with interest.

MAJA:

I have a plan.

Scene 3

Realisation

Night time. The Staff Room. The first one to enter is Maja, followed by Tamara, Uroš and Djordje. They have the little brainy mouse with them. They're all being very careful, and they're quite scared, but each one is trying not to show it. They have everything they need with them. Petrol and matches.

DJORDJE:
I'm scared. What if someone comes.

MAJA:
Who would come?

TAMARA:
They all can't wait to leave.

UROŠ:
And it's Friday today. The weekend. There's no chance of anyone being here.

DJORDJE:
Hope you're right.

MAJA:
You can leave if you're scared.

DJORDJE (squeezing the little brainy mouse):
I'm not scared.

Maja's the boss. It's obvious from her attitude.

MAJA:
Come on! Tamara, find the register.

Tamara approaches the shelf containing registers. She takes their one out. She finds the pages with their grades. Now she's not all that certain.

TAMARA:
We'll burn all the As as well.

MAJA:
You'll get them again. This is important.

UROŠ:
Why did we come here?

TAMARA:
I'm still not sure.

MAJA:

Think about it. We've been blackmailed with grades for long enough. We're grown ups. We can do whatever we want.

UROŠ:

I paid for that tape myself.

MAJA:

The advert's waiting for me, and the lunch with your dad is waiting for you.

TAMARA:

Maybe he won't turn up.

MAJA:

He will. Especially after this. He'll be worried about you. Fire at the school, after all...He'll take you on holiday as well.

TAMARA:

Well, yes...

DJORDJE:

I have an F and an uncertified. Where's the petrol?

He takes the canister from Uroš with a lot of determination. Well, a lot of determination for him. Someone who's not a boss. He places the little brainy mouse on the desk. He pours petrol over the register. The funny thing is, he only pours a few drops.

MAJA:

More! Pour it all out!

Djordje obeys (the boss).

MAJA:

Set it on fire.

Uroš lights the match ceremoniously. He looks at it burning briefly, and then throws it at the register. The flame spreads. The four of them are very excited. Despite their determination, they didn't think they could do something like this. But they can.

MAJA:

Let's go now. It's burning well now.

They leave the Staff Room.

Scene 4

Everything Went Well

The street. A little distance from the school. The children are in a door way. They're hiding. They're sharing Valiums.

DJORDJE:
Give me more.

UROŠ:
You already got three. This one is a 12.

DJORDJE:
Two more.

MAJA (motherly, she even pats his head):
Give him. He's excited.

Uroš gives him two more. Djordje swallows them.

MAJA:
Everything went well.

TAMARA:
You're sure they won't find out it was us?

MAJA:
Of course. There's no way.

UROŠ:
They think we're kids.

Pause. Djordje remembers something. And he's already a little dazed.

DJORDJE:
The little brainy mouse!

MAJA:
What?

DJORDJE:
I have to go back to the Staff Room. I forgot something.

TAMARA:
You can't go back. It has spread by now...

DJORDJE:

You don't understand. I have to. Have to.

TAMARA:
You may not.

DJORDJE:
I have to. It's important.

MAJA:
What's so important?

DJORDJE (he's embarrassed about having a toy, especially one called little brainy mouse):
Nothing.

UROŠ:
Calm down then.

DJORDJE:
Without it none of this makes any sense.

TAMARA:
Is it that important?

DJORDJE:
Yes. You go. I'll be quick.

TAMARA:
Ok.

Djordje goes towards the school. He stumbles (five pills).

TAMARA:
Are you all right?

DJORDJE:
Fine.

He leaves.

EPILOGUE

The Following Monday

The only scene

Mommy, You're So Beautiful

Maja's in the bathroom. She's wearing an eye mask. Her mother's wearing one as well.

MAJA'S MUM:

Beautiful. Clever. Successful. Shiny. Firm. (And over forty.) Charismatic. Naturally they're jealous...

MAJA:

Get out.

MAJA'S MUM:

You get out. The bathroom is mine.

MAJA:

I'll call dad.

MAJA'S MUM:

And I'll only laugh at you.

MAJA:

Let me ask you.

MAJA'S MUM:

The answer is no.

MAJA:

Mommy...

MAJA'S MUM:

No.

MAJA:

You don't even know what it is I want.

MAJA'S MUM:

It doesn't matter.

MAJA:

Mommy, I want to ask you how come you're so beautiful.

MAJA'S MUM:

Oh...It's all about the will. The will to be beautiful.

MAJA:

I want to be as beautiful as you, mommy.

MAJA'S MUM:

You may well be, if you're good.

MAJA:

Hurray! And, you know, I want to be an actress, just like you. That film's being filmed...

MAJA'S MUM:

I know.

MAJA:

They are looking for a girl to play the daughter.

MAJA'S MUM:

Honey, mommy'll sort it out for you.

MAJA:

Mommy!!

MAJA'S MUM:

If...

MAJA:

If?

MAJA'S MUM:

If you get an A in maths.

MAJA:

Mom...

Pause.

MAJA'S MUM:

Bye, bye film!

The following Tuesday

The only scene

Io non parlo italiano ancora, e troppo presto

Tamara's room. She's sitting with an Italian textbook. She's trying hard. She's revising. Her mother is standing over her.

TAMARA:
Io parlare.

TAMARA'S MUM:
Parlo. You're useless.

TAMARA:
I didn't even want to learn stupid Italian.

TAMARA'S MUM:
A person's worth is valued in the number of languages they speak.

TAMARA:
I wanted Spanish!

TAMARA'S MUM:
They're similar.

TAMARA:
I wanted Spanish!

TAMARA'S MUM:
Your father bought you the book. He enrolled you on the course. You should talk to him about it!

TAMARA:
And I will!

TAMARA'S MUM:
But I think he'll be disappointed.

TAMARA:
So what!

TAMARA'S MUM:
Your sister's doing really well in the beginner's course.

TAMARA:
She's not my sister.

TAMARA'S MUM:
Daddy would love you to called her that.

TAMARA:
I don't love her.

TAMARA'S MUM:
I'm sure daddy's planning to take you to Italy.

TAMARA:
Really?

TAMARA'S MUM:
Why else would he have enrolled you on the Italian course?

TAMARA (believes her, she'll never stop believing):
Well, yes...

TAMARA'S MUM:
So, let us continue now.

TAMARA:
Ok.

Pause.

TAMARA:
Can I ask you a question?

TAMARA'S MUM:
Go on.

Pause.

TAMARA:
How do nymphomaniacs dress?

The Following Wednesday

The only scene

Two of his for one of mine

Uroš's room. He's crossing off two days on his calendar. His brother enters.

UROŠ'S BROTHER:
So, you're still insane?

UROŠ:
I'm not. I just don't see beyond it.

UROŠ'S BROTHER:
You'll never be Curt. What have you done to be like him?

UROŠ:
He was on Ritalin as a child.

UROŠ'S BROTHER:
So?

UROŠ:
I'm on Valium.

UROŠ'S BROTHER:
Wow...Have you ever sung anything? Written anything? Or have you Courtney Love?
Who's your Courtney Love? Are you in love?

UROŠ:
No.

UROŠ'S BROTHER:
What makes you similar to him then?

UROŠ:
Death.

Pause. Uroš's brother cannot believe his persistence.

UROŠ'S BROTHER:
So, how long have you got?

UROŠ:
Exactly six years and hundred and twenty days.

UROŠ'S BROTHER:
You must have miscalculated.

UROŠ:
I haven't. His two days for one of mine.

The Following Thursday

The only scene

Where is Djordje?

Djordje's bathroom. The light is on. The only thing missing is Djordje coming in, followed by his happy and proud parents. The light is on for a long time. But, Djordje is not coming. He did not manage to pull the little brainy mouse out of the fire.

The End