

INNOCENT IN A MADHOUSE

By Sanja Kovacevic

"THE ESCAPE" (Episode 1)

EXT. STREET IN FRONT OF A MONASTERY SCHOOL - ZAGREB. DAY.

Zagreb in Croatia, 1894. In front of the MONASTERY OF THE SISTERS OF CHARITY OF ST. VINCENT DE PAUL, on the steps, stand female STUDENTS (aged 12-17) in school uniforms. MARIA JURIC (16) is among those who are tiptoeing to get a better view of the spectacle.

From the building of the MUSIC INSTITUTE on the opposite side of the street, a huge flag of the AUSTRO-HUNGARIAN MONARCHY is lowered from the windows. A dozen POLICEMEN are patrolling the street, crowded with people.

The street is crowded with people. Fashionably dressed LADIES and GENTLEMEN are waiting for the protocol to allow them to enter the Institute, while commoners gathered behind them, clapping and cheering for MILKA TRNINA (26), world-famous opera singer, who greets them with waving as she enters the building.

Everyone is clapping and cheering for MILKA TRNINA (26), world-famous opera singer, who greets them with waves and blowing kisses as she enters the Institute.

LADY 1

Milka, welcome home!

LADY 2

Milka, we love you!

The students scream like groupies when Milka turns around and blows them a kiss. The ABBESS and TEACHER NUNS standing on the side roll their eyes but do not react.

Maria has spotted something in the crowd that grabs her attention.

STUDENT 1

She looked at me! The best Tosca
in the world waved at ME, did you
see it?!

But, the student realises that Maria is gone.

Maria pushes through the crowd, fixated on the MAN WITH A NEWSPAPER, more specifically on his folded newspapers in the pocket of his coat.

While Milka greets the excited citizens and enters the Institute, KHUEN-HEDERVARY (36) and KHUEN'S WIFE (30) get out of a carriage in front of the entrance. They are accompanied by two pairs of BAN'S PERSONAL GUARDS in red livery. The Guard makes announcement, loudly:

GUARD

Count Károly Khuen-Héderváry Belásy
de Hédervár, the viceroy of the
Kingdom of Croatia! And his wife,
Duchess Teleki de Szék.

Khuen greets the gathering, who applaud sporadically.

Maria manages to push through to the Man with Newspaper and looks at it closely: it's OBZOR, the first letters are clearly visible. She smiles cunningly and move closer to the Man.

Suddenly, out of nowhere, a large PIG runs down the street at an astonishing speed, straight towards the viceroy. Surprised, Khuen stumbles and almost falls. The guards, with quick reflexes, save him from embarrassment of falling down, but laughter can still be heard from the crowd.

A YOUNG MAN (18) in shabby clothes runs after the pig.

YOUNG MAN

Andjoo! Andjo, come back!

It is only now that Maria realizes that she has found herself in the front row next to the street.

Two POLICE OFFICERS grab the young man, who is greatly frightened, and he points at a pig that has escaped into the building of the Institute.

YOUNG MAN (CONT'D)

Let me catch her! She ran away
from me on the cattle market!
(calling after the
pig)
Andjelica!

Hedervary's face frowns at the word.

Maria looks at him, stern and cold, and his gaze lingers on her. His brow furrows slightly - he recognizes her.

Hedervary enters the building and, as he passes, nods briefly at the police officer.

The police officer strikes the young man on the head with the butt of his gun as hard as he can. The crowd falls silent silent, and a few ladies scream. The schoolgirls cover their mouths with their hands so as not to scream.

Maria is shocked as she watches the two police officers hastily drag the young man, with a bloody head and half-unconscious, to a black carriage parked at the bottom of the street.

CITIZEN 1

Did he really name his pig after
the viceroy's mother?

CITIZEN 2

Yeah, shameful!

MAN WITH NEWSPAPERS

What is, the fact they beat up the innocent man or that we kept silent about it?

The Man with a Newspaper turns and walks away at a brisk pace, leaving the citizens murmure in disapproval.

Maria watches him go, with a muted smile of admiration.

INT. MONASTERY SCHOOL - DORMITORY. NIGHT.

Through the open doors of the dormitory, on which stands a TEACHER-NUN, enough light seeps in to reveal a row of closely spaced beds on which the students sleep. Except, of course, they are not sleeping.

As soon as the Nun closes the door, a candle is lit in the darkness of the room, then another and a third. The candles come together and reach the bed where Maria has already spread out the stolen newspaper: OBZOR.

Several students crowd around Maria, who reads from it.

MARIA

So, it's true, he did kick him!

The caricature in the paper shows a man with a Croatian red and white chequerboard on his cap kicking the butt of a mustached man with a fancy hat that resembles HEDERVARY.

MARIA (CONT'D)

Don't you get it? Maybe he'll finally leave the country!

IVANCICA

God forbid! He's so handsome!

The students giggle at chubby IVANCICA (15), but Maria is irritated for not being taken seriously about the politics.

IVANCICA (CONT'D)

(confidentially)

I felt a sort of tickling when I saw him today..

(she points down,
full of shame)

There..you know.

While the students process this unholy information, Maria squints in her particular way when she is defiant.

MARIA

(worried)

Burning sensation?

Ivancica nods, as she enters the panic-room in her head.

MARIA (CONT'D)
 (compassionately)
 Yeah, you'll burn in hell for that.

With lightening speed of rushing hormones of an adolescent, Ivancica burst to tears. She is followed by revealing gestures of frightened students who try to protect their inner thighs.

MARIA (CONT'D)
 But, all of us will be with you
 too.

Relieved to be joined in the same sin, girls burst into laughter that bond them stronger than any religion. Among them, Maria is sincerely happy.

DISSOLVING INTO:

INT. MONASTERY SCHOOL - HALLWAY. DAY.

In the hallway, an ABBESS (40) walks with a military gait, toward the group of female STUDENTS in school uniforms, gathered in front of a board on the wall. They are laughing while looking at something on it, but when they notice the Abbess, the students quickly disperse.

NUN-TEACHER GORDANA (V.O.)
 Napoleon carefully studied strategy
 before every battle.

The Abbess looks at a large board titled "MONASTERY NEWSPAPER" with various papers attached to it, including a large caricature we already saw.

NUN-TEACHER GORDANA (V.O.) (CONT'D)
 He said that the battle was won in
 the eyes of the generals before
 any soldier fired a shot.

The Abbess tears off the caricature from the wall and continues towards the classroom.

INT. MONASTERY SCHOOL - CLASSROOM. DAY.

Maria sits in the classroom with her fellow STUDENTS (16-18) and listens NUN-TEACHER GORDANA (30) teaches.

NUN-TEACHER GORDANA
 It means that we can overcome the
 greatest difficulties if we believe
 in it beforehand.

The Abbess enters the classroom, and all heads turn towards her. She shows the drawing to the class but looks at Maria.

ABBESS
 This is a crime against the state!

The female students are silent and scared.

ABBESS (CONT'D)

I allowed you to create the wall newspaper on the condition that you wouldn't write about politics!

Maria exhales as if a boring fly landed on her nose.

ABBESS (CONT'D) (CONT'D)

But no! You continue to write lies!

MARIA

It's not a lie. Croatian congressman kicked Hedervary's ass in the middle of the parliament a few days ago!

ABBESS

If the Viceroy said it didn't happen, it didn't!

MARIA

He can't order reality around!

ABBESS

He can! He is the Viceroy and he can even close this school if he wants!

Maria sees fear in Sister Gordana's face and begins to realize that she may have been wrong after all.

ABBESS (CONT'D)

(pointing at students)

Then these girls would be left without an education!

MARIA

I didn't know...

ABBESS

Yes, you did! Just like you know that many of them come from families that can't even afford bread, let alone a dowry!

Maria finally realizes the seriousness of the situation.

MARIA

(to the students)

I won't write another word!

ABBESS

(coldly)

Won't you? Tell that to your mother.

Maria is confused.

ABBESS (CONT'D)

I called for her already.

The Abbess quickly leaves the classroom. Maria's eyes betray a pure horror.

EXT. MONASTERY SCHOOL - COURTYARD. DAY.

Maria humbly folds her hands in front of her mother.

MARIA

Please, let me stay! I won't write
a word, I swear!

JOSIPA JURIC (45) is a beautiful woman, dressed in fashionable civilian clothes, with knives in her eyes when she is angry as she is now. She gives her daughter a cold look and grabs her hand, roughly pulling her towards the waiting carriage.

There are Nun-Teachers and a group of students present, sincerely sad that Maria is leaving.

THE ABBESS

(to the students)

You must obey your parents because
they have a life experience you
don't have!

The Abbess is just strict, not enjoying Maria's suffering.

MARIA

Mom, please don't do this!

Josipa pushes Maria towards the carriage. Sister Gordana follows them, carrying Maria's bag.

NUN-TEACHER GORDANA

(to Josipa)

For God's sake, you can't take her
from school a month before
graduation!

JOSIPA JURIC

I can! It's my legal right to do
whatever I want with her while
she's a minor!

NUN-TEACHER GORDANA

But she'll never be able to continue
education in Switzerland!

Some students burst into tears, while others sob quietly.

MARIA

The baron was willing to pay the
scholarship for me to attend the
licey in Zurich!

JOSIPA JURIC

(cuts her off)

I'm sick of your phantasies!

MARIA

But I want to be a teacher!!

NUN-TEACHER GORDANA

(desperately)

Ms. Juric, please! Maria is the best student we have ever had. If she has a slightest chance to go to Swiss, every school in Zagreb will be happy to employ her, and you'll be happy for her not needing to depend on anyone!

Josipa started to question her decision, but, Gordana's last words infuriate her even more. She strongly pulls Maria towards the carriage.

ABBESS

Sister Gordana! The mother knows what is best for her daughter!

JOSIPA JURIC

Oh, I do! I'm going to marry her off! I've already found her a husband!

Maria screams and resists strongly as she is forced into the carriage. Sister Gordana catches up to Maria.

NUN-TEACHER GORDANA

(to Josipa)

Let me give her a blessing!

Josipa backs off enough for Sister Gordana to hug Maria.

NUN-TEACHER GORDANA (CONT'D)

(whispering)

God has given you the talent to be His Word for those who do not understand and the strength to be His angel of justice!

(says out loud)

God bless you!

Sister Gordana kisses Maria's forehead and Maria feels it as a kiss from angel Gabriel himself. She stops resisting. She looks at Sister Gordana's eyes, memorizing them.

Josipa roughly pushes Maria into the carriage, even though she is no longer resisting. The carriage door closes.

DISSOLVE INTO:

EXT. IN FRONT OF THE CHURCH. DAY.

Maria, in a modestly designed wedding dress, and ANDRES MATRAY (45) have just left the church, having been married. He is a man of classical beauty with patches of gray hair. As soon as they exit, he steps aside to greet some guests. Also present are Josipa and Maria's father, IVAN JURIC (50), a charming man with refined seductive manners.

Maria feels sad and dull. A peasant woman with a wide smile approaches her, holding a basket of food. It's MARTA(50),

she is chatting to prevent Maria from crying. (*Strukli* is regional pasta stuffed with cheese.)

MARTA

My sunshine, my dawn! Look what I've made for you: a cherry cake, and *strukle*, but of turnip, I'm out of cheese.

MARIA

How come?

MARTA

They took my cow for the taxes.
(laughing heartily)
But I managed to hide the calf!

MARIA

I'll tell Daddy to give you some money.

MARTA

You'll certainly not! I'm not your nanny anymore..

MARIA

You'll always be my beloved Marta!

Maria hugs Marta - she loves this woman immensely. Her eyes widen in surprise when she sees something.

EXT. IN FRONT OF THE CHURCH - RAUCH'S CARRIAGE. DAY.

From the fancy carriage that has just arrived, comes the BARONESS MOTHER (70) and GEZA RAUCH (40), a full-bodied member of his noble family. Ivan shakes hands with Geza, looking surprised to see them, while Josipa greets them with a short curtsy.

GEZA

Ivan, my fellow! Don't be surprised, not every day a chief manager of my estates marries his daughter.

While Maria and Matray approach to them, Geza looks at Maria pleasantly surprised. Maria greets them with a short curtsy.

MARIA

Kiss the hands, Baroness!
(then to Baron)
Your excellency baron Geza Rauch.

Looking at Maria, Geza greedily measures her.

GEZA

Our petite girl is leaving just as she has grown up.

IVAN JURIC

Let me introduce my son in law..

Geza ignores Matray completely, focused on Maria. He approaches her and pats her gently on her cheek.

GEZA

I know, that Matray guy.

Although embarrassed, Matray greets him with a respectful nod.

To save Maria from Geza's lustful hands, Baroness quickly hand her son a FOLDER.

GEZA (CONT'D)

(passes it to Maria)

Ah, yes. Here's the present to mach your charm.

Maria takes a good look at the folder - there is a logo, the COAT OF ARMS OF THE COUNTS OF RAUCH, on it. She opens it and gasps at the sum of money written on the bank cheque.

MARIA

I don't know what to say..

BARONESS MOTHER

(retorts sharply)

That you're sorry for not going to the lyceum in Zurich, but getting married instead.

Matray would suck up any contempt from high society, while Josipa hides her embarrassment poorly. Ivan is sad almost as Maria is.

BARONESS MOTHER (CONT'D)

Or you've found another way to circumvent the law that forbids married women to work?

MARIA

(devastated)

I haven't..

BARONESS MOTHER

Well, you made your choice then.

MARIA

No, I didn't! I just got caught!

Josipa opens her mouth to say something, but the Baroness turns her back, sending a clear message to everyone to leave. Alone with Maria, Baroness takes off a brooch with a large gemstone from her dress.

BARONESS MOTHER

You'll play with the cards you'll holding now the best you can.

The Baroness takes Maria's hand and places the brooch on her palm.

BARONESS MOTHER (CONT'D)

Just try to make choices according
to your nature, it will be less
painful when you make mistakes.

She closes Maria's hand over the brooch.

BARONESS MOTHER (CONT'D)

Let that be a reminder of the stuff
you're made of.

MARIA

Thank you...
(her voice breaks)

EXT. IN FRONT OF THE CHURCH - MATRAY'S COACH. DAY. - LATER

Late afternoon. Maria is fighting tears while she looks
at Marta and Ivan who struggle to say goodbye to her before
she leaves.

Josipa pulls her daughter aside, annoyed with her.

JOSIPA JURIC

Lighten up, already! You stupid
girl who thinks she's special!
You're not!

(hissing at her)

A woman is safe only in a marriage
or in a convent, and I just saved
your life!

Maria looks down at the floor. Josipa softens. She hugs
Maria, offering comfort, and tears finally stream down
Maria's face.

JOSIPA JURIC (CONT'D)

You're entering the best part of
your life. With your husband, you'll
discover pleasures that will fill
you with such happiness you'll
sing all day long.

Maria stops crying, curious.

JOSIPA JURIC (CONT'D)

You'll find out soon enough.

Maria feels comforted a little, but, more than that, she
is grateful for this rare moment of closeness with her
mother. She hugs Josipa wholeheartedly.

MARIA

Mummy!

Josipa gently kisses her on the cheek, she is moved too.

DISSOLVE INTO:

EXT. ROAD NEAR SZOMBATHELY - HUNGARY. DAY.

Sun is falling down while Maria looks out the carriage window and sees that they are approaching a town. They pass by a sign that reads SZOMBATHELY, with the Hungarian flag.

She looks at Matray, but his face is expressionless.

Nevertheless, Maria is hoping that she's entering the brightly lit town as some kind of a bright future.

INT. MATRAY'S HOUSE - MARIA'S ROOM. NIGHT.

The room is dimly lit and we see only details. Maria, in a negligee, and Matray, with a muscular bare torso, stand facing each other. Matray unbuttons her bodice, and it falls off. She remains naked, shyly smiling.

Matray feels her breast and Maria shivers with an excitement.

Maria is laying on the bed, Matray is on top of her. He looks into her face and - pulls a bed cover over her head.

We see only what Maria sees through the fabric of the cover, which is almost nothing, but we hear everything. First her painful scream, then his moaning, which quickly grows until he releases a sigh of relief.

Maria remains under the cover and listens as he leaves the room without saying a word.

Through the cover, Maria watches silhouette of the flames from the chandelier's candles above her.

THE TITLE SEQUENCE

Quick flashes of POSTCARDS OF OLD ZAGREB with various wording of "GREETINGS FROM ZAGREB" and the years 1895 to 1910. Postcards are brought to life by animation but freeze again as they fall onto a wooden table with an antique typewriter. The sequence ends with a postcard with the title of the series: "INNOCENT IN A MADHOUSE".

EDIT:

EXT. CITY SQUARE - DAY/ EXT. CROATIAN NATIONAL THEATRE - DAY

The square scenes begin with an imitation of an old postcard of Zagreb: "AGRAM SQUARE 1895", which becomes live-action scenes.

Next to the MONUMENT OF BAN JELACIC, a group of students hold the Hungarian flag on two swords. One of them sets fire to the flag, followed by cheering of others.

We are listening to Maria's voice which is excitedly describing the events, when in fact, she is writing.

MARIA (V.O.)

At the same time that Emperor Franz Joseph I of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy was ceremoniously opening the new building of the Croatian National Theater, Zagreb students were protesting against the imposition of the Hungarian language in public institutions in Croatia, shouting - Abzug Magyari! Out with Hungarians!

The old postcard showing the CROATIAN NATIONAL THEATRE dissolves into a live scene of a crowd gathered in front of the building in celebration of its grand opening. EMPEROR FRANZ JOSEPH, in his ceremonial box, is waving to the crowd of NOBLES who cheer him on.

On the square, students carry the burning flag, and citizens join them. Suddenly, police on horseback rush towards them.

INT. MATRAY'S HOUSE - MARIA'S ROOM. NIGHT.

MARIA JURIC's face, now of 21 years old women, is filled with the passion of writing, but looks thin and drained. She writes by hand, quickly and with confidence.

The voice of a CZECH MAID (25) gradually reaches Maria. They speak Czech, and the maid occasionally corrects Maria as she teaches her the language.

CZECH MAID

Mrs. Matray! Mrs. Matray!

Maria blinks and realizes where she is. This is the same room as on her first wedding night. The room is sparse, with a desk full of papers and books. There is also a surprisingly well-preserved folder with the RAUCH COAT OF ARMS. When she sees a plate of food, Maria exclaims with joy, despite the scarcity of food on it.

MARIA

Eliška Procházková, you scarced me again!

CZECH MAID

(correcting her)

It's *scared me*! I knocked and called three times, but you were lost in heaven! Your husband sends dinner...

Maria eagerly devours the food, as if she had never eaten before.

MARIA

(with mouth full)

When are the guests arriving?

CZECH MAID

They are already here. Your husband's boss and his daughter, sorry, wife.

Both of them laugh.

MARIA

Matray wants a promotion and knows how to *impregnate* people..

CZECH MAID

(correcting her)

Impress! Look up to your husband: you could have gotten a whole piece of meat if you had come down for dinner.

MARIA

I wasn't invited!

Maria uses her finger to clean the plate. The maid sees a stylish dress spread out on the bed - it's Maria's wedding dress, a little bit redesigned.

CZECH MAID

Invite yourself or stay hungry.
(lifting the dress)
What a beauty!

The Czech Maid presses the dress to her body, looking herself in the window's reflection.

CZECH MAID (CONT'D)

You did a great job on the dress!

The Czech Maid leaves the dress on a hanger.

CZECH MAID (CONT'D)

You have golden hands and brains, and yet, you haven't managed to wrap a man around your finger in five years of marriage.

Maria turns back to her writing, picking up a pen.

MARIA

He's a man, not a booby.

CZECH MAID

(leaving)

Puppy, we say puppy, for God sake.

While the Czech Maid closes the door on a way out, Maria pauses. She looks at the stylish dress.

INT. MATRAY'S HOUSE - SALON. NIGHT.

Dinner is in progress in the salon. ZOLTAN Andrassy (50) and his wife CSILLA (25), Andras MATRAY (35), MATRAY'S MOTHER (70). They speak Hungarian.

ZOLTAN

He just needs to be patient a little bit longer.

MATRAY'S MOTHER

My son is the first to come to work and the last to leave. In a state-owned company, this is a rarity that should be rewarded, isn't it, Mr. Andrassy?

ZOLTAN

Yes, unfortunately.

(with confidence)

Call me Zoltan, I already feel at home here.

MATRAY'S MOTHER

You are almost like a father to Andras, indeed.

CSILLA

(to Matray's Mother)

Which would mean that you are his wife and not me! Oh, how morbid!

Csilla bursts out laughing. Zoltan gives her a stern look. Matray saves the situation and raises his glass.

MATRAY

To Greater Hungary!

INT. MATRAY'S HOUSE - HALLWAY. NIGHT.

Maria is all dressed up, wearing a redesigned dress, and is approaching the salon.

GUESTS (V.O.)

To Greater Hungary!!

She stops at the door, horrified with what she's just heard.

INT. MATRAY'S HOUSE - SALON. NIGHT.

Zoltan is teasing Matray a bit.

ZOLTAN

By the way, Andras, why are you hiding your wife? I'd like to meet her.

Matray and his mother exchange a look.

ZOLTAN (CONT'D) (CONT'D)

Isn't her father the steward of Baron Rauch de Nyék's estate, a commoner who..

CSILLA

Then she grew up among barons, so she's practically a noble!

ZOLTAN

(angrily)

Now I forgot what I wanted to say.

CSILLA

You wanted to say that it doesn't matter to us if she is ugly, or crippled.. Or lame.

(to Matray)

Is she deaf?

MATRAY

(calculating excuses)

Maria learned Hungarian as a child, but she has forgotten it.

INT. MATRAY'S HOUSE - HALLWAY. NIGHT.

At the door, in a voiceless pantomime, Maria refuses to enter the salon, to be among those monsters. The Maid comes with food and sees her hesitation. She firmly pushes Maria towards the living room and follows her with food.

INT. MATRAY'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM. NIGHT.

Maria enters and mumbles a greeting in bad Hungarian.

MARIA

Evening.

Matray is shocked by Maria's arrival.

ZOLTAN

Oh, here she is! Maria, finally!

Maria politely smiles at everyone.

MATRAY

Mr. Zoltan Andrassy and his wife Csilla.

Maria nods to greet the guests and sits down. Throughout, she has impeccable manners. As soon as the Czech Maid puts a plate of food in front of her, her gaze is fixed on the plate.

Zoltan speaks kindly to Maria, speaking slowly as if she were a simpleton.

ZOLTAN

Now I see why your husband kept you hidden. You are a real lady, Maria.

Maria smiles politely at him. Matray watches her every move.

ZOLTAN (CONT'D) (CONT'D)

So, you grew up on the estate of Hedervary's best man?

Maria nods with a smile, taking bites as delicately as possible but hungrily. She doesn't respond, though.

ZOLTAN (CONT'D) (CONT'D)

I hear that the viceroy often visits as he likes to ride... Have you ever met him there?... Your viceroy?

Maria responds with just a nod and a smile. Zoltan is confused, not knowing what else to say or ask.

CSILLA

Leave her alone, can't you see she's shy?

(to Matray)

You saved her when you took her out of Croatia. Look at what's been happening there these days.

ZOLTAN

What did those students achieve by burning our flag? They got jail time and a ban on studying. They only hurt themselves.

Matray nervously awaits Maria's reaction, but she is focused on the food and he slowly relaxes.

MATRAY'S MOTHER

And they embarrassed their viceroy in front of the emperor, outrageous!

ZOLTAN

It's well known that Khuen rules Croatia with an iron fist, but he didn't deserve THIS! He even had a theater built, and the Croats couldn't agree for years on WHERE to build it. . .

CSILLA

(interrupts him)

Why's that?

ZOLTAN

Because they're stupid! So Hedervary put an end to the wrangling and ordered the location and..

Zoltan is heavily annoyed by Csilla's interruptions.

ZOLTAN (CONT'D)

The point is, those Croatian rednecks should be kissing his feet..

CSILLA

(interrupts him)

Then why did they burn the flag?

ZOLTAN
 (losing his temper)
 Because they're stupid like you!

Csilla is hurt. Her chin begins to tremble.

ZOLTAN (CONT'D) (CONT'D)
 Csilla, I didn't mean it like that.

Zoltan gently squeezes Csilla's hand as an apology. Csilla falls silent.

Maria finishes eating, breathes a sigh of relief with a smile due to a full stomach, then wipes her mouth. Everyone looks at her, remembering she is there. She calmly speaks in perfect Hungarian.

MARIA
 Hedervary didn't "secure" anything, he was persuaded to build the theater by the Croatian Minister, Izidor Krsnjavi. If it wasn't for him, Zagreb wouldn't have gymnasium, or museums or the music hall, and Croats would still be rednecks indeed.

All but Matraya, who feared this, are in a state of shock.

MARIA (CONT'D)
 Hedervary supported the building of the theatre only to be able to demonstrate to the emperor he tamed Croatia and to have a place where he and his lackeys can applaud themselves.

MATRAY
 (warning her)
 Maria!

MARIA
 But he went too far. When Franz Joseph arrived in Zagreb, Khuen sanded the path with the gravel from the Donau and publicly declared that the tzar is walking on Hungarian land now. That's what students couldn't forgive him for.

Consternation at the dinner table. Matray is furious.

Maria gets up from the table.

MARIA (CONT'D)
 It was his own fault...
 (to Csilla, smiling)
 He's stupid.
 (politely to all)
 It was my pleasure. Have a good night.

Maria is leaving the room.

Matray is embarrassed. Zoltan angrily throws the napkin onto the table. Csilla, however, really likes Maria.

INT. MATRAY'S HOUSE - MARIA'S ROOM. NIGHT.

Maria takes off her dress, Matray enters without knocking. They both speak Hungarian.

MATRAY

How ungrateful you are, it's a criminal offense!

MARIA

Me ungrateful...?

MATRAY

For years, I have tolerated your writing for opposition newspapers and you know that I am devoted to the king.

MARIA

You tolerate it because you take all the money.

MATRAY

So what? ALL your money belongs to me anyway.

Maria's eye automatically falls on the Rauch's folder as she remembers he had taken her wedding present too, obviously.

MARIA

But I've earned it and I am your wife, not your slave!

MATRAY

If you were a slave, I would have whipped you for this scene tonight! But I won't because you are mentally unstable.

MARIA

(fearfully)
Andria?

MATRAY

Andres! My name is Andres! You are dangerous with your militant fantasies. Mentally unstable and dangerous! You are going to the hospital tomorrow.

MARIA

(seriously afraid)
Andres, don't joke about these things.

MATRAY

I have sent a telegram. They are coming for you in the morning.

Matray turns and quickly leaves the room.

Maria is terrified. She has a panic attack, gasping for air, reaching for support but finding none, and falls to her knees.

The Czech Maid enters and sees Maria hyperventilating. She rushes to her aid.

CZECH MAID

Milady!

MARIA

I'm fine.

Maria defiantly squints at the concerned Maid.

MARIA (CONT'D) (CONT'D)

Bring me your clothes!

INT. MATRAY'S HOUSE - MARIA'S ROOM. NIGHT.

Maria is dressed as a maid. She puts the fashionable dress she was wearing into a bag.

CZECH MAID

They will look for you at home first.

MARIA

That's why I'm going somewhere they won't find me.

Maria takes off her necklace and puts it in a jewelry box, which is already full of jewelry, including a baroness's brooch.

MARIA (CONT'D)

I'd rather be dead than go to the *nutcase*.

CZECH MAID

It's the *nuthouse*. You are the *nutcase*..

The maid's tears fall down her face. Maria only now realizes that the maid is trembling with fear. Maria approaches her and hugs her tightly. They stand while embracing each other.

MARIA

Tell them that I stole from you.

CZECH MAID

(eyeing her outfit)
Then you'll have to do it properly. Otherwise, you'll freeze.

INT. MATRAY'S HOUSE - HALLWAY. NIGHT.

Maria quietly walks down the hallway with a small bag. She is sneaking away. And she is gasping for air in excitement.

EXT. MATRAY'S HOUSE. NIGHT.

Maria quietly exits, carefully closes the front door. She quickly disappears down the dark street.

INT. TRAIN. DAY.

Maria looks out the train window, which slowly rattles as they pass through the green hills of Zagorje. She rides in a compartment with peasants, servants, and workers. There are also chickens and rabbits in wicker cages taken to the food market. Everyone is sleepy, even the chickens.

Maria is too excited to fall in sleep. She is scared but also happy that she is finally free.

EXT. ZAGREB MAIN STATION. DAY.

Passengers exit the train and blend into the crowd on the platform: mostly peasants, workers, and a few citizens whose servants carry their luggage.

Maria gets off the train, clutching her bag, and heads towards the exit of the station. She flinches when she hears the TRAIN CONDUCTOR'S (50) whistle; her nerves are obviously too tense. *He's yelling the phrase in Hungarian.*

TRAIN CONDUCTOR

Edj pert! Edj pert!

Maria passes through the crowd, witnessing a strange scene.

A PEASANT, PEASANT'S WIFE, and TWO CHILDREN, loaded with baskets, get off the train. The peasant stops because he hears a WORKER shouting.

WORKER

That one doesn't go to Krapina!

PEASANT

Then where!?

But the worker disappeared into the crowd.

PEASANT (CONT'D)

(to Train Conductor)

Mister, where is this train going?

The conductor doesn't respond, he doesn't understand Croatian, but he knows that he doesn't need to.

TRAIN CONDUCTOR

Edj pert! Edj pert!

A few people surrounded him, confused.

FEMALE PEASANT

Where is it going, if not to
Krapina?

WORKER 1

Where is this *Edj pert*, in Hungary?

No one can answer. The Train Conductor blows the whistle three times, and the train starts moving. People protest, and there is a commotion. The peasant runs after the train unsuccessfully; there are too many people.

PEASANT

It took off with my wife and kids!!

Peasant grabs the Train Conductor by his collar.

PEASANT (CONT'D)

Where did they go? Where is
"edjpert"?

FEMALE WORKER

(to Train Conductor)

Speak so we can understand you!

Several other people give support to the Peasant. The Train Conductor panics and gives a long blow to his whistle.

PEASANT

(to Train Conductor)

Give me back my wife! Where have
my children went!? Speak!!

TWO POLICEMEN pounce on the crowd, pushing them away. With a butt of his riffle a POLICEMAN hits the peasant who was shaking the conductor in the kidneys. The peasant falls to the ground. Women scream. The frightened crowd moves away.

Maria, shaken by the event, makes her way towards the exit. She passes by a newsstand COLPORTEUR, who sells newspapers - OBZOR.

COLPORTEUR

Obzor! Buy Obzor! A fight almost
broke out in the parliament! Buy
Obzor! Obzoor!

Maria hands Colporteur a coin and takes a newspaper. She looks at the front page with the headline:

OBZOR. ZAGREB, 03. 10. 1896.

THE OPPOSITION DEMANDS GREATER FREEDOM OF THE PRESS".

Maria continues towards the station exit and hungrily begins to read the newspaper as she walks.

INT. OLD ASSEMBLY HALL - ZAGREB. DAY.

A heated debate is in process: on the right side are sitting ruling Magyarons, in noble attire, such as GEZA RAUCH (70) and JOVAN ZIVKOVIC (80). Aleksandar EGERSDORFER (46) is standing, waving a newspaper.

EGERSDORFER

Must I, as the leader of the ruling party, read these lies against the state every single day?! This rubbish that Obzor spreads!

Strong approval is heard from the ruling party.

EGERSDORFER (CONT'D)

It says here that our illustrious Ban Hedervary rules the land with - carrot and stick?!

Laughter is heard from the opposition on the other side. TADIJA SMICIKLAS (60) is surrounded by JOSIP FRANK (48) and other historical figures, and they wear civil suits.

In the middle of the hall, on an elevated chair, sits KHUEN HEDERVARY (47) and coldly observes the debate.

EGERSDORFER (CONT'D)

If that was the truth, he would have long ago banned newspapers that constantly incite hatred towards this government and the institution of viceroy itself!

TADIJA SMICIKLAS rises and also waves Obzor.

SMICIKLAS

This is the article published in Budapest Tagblatt and Magyar Hirlap, the most reputable and highest-circulation newspapers in Hungary!
(ironically)

True - a curse on the opposition, but these are still YOUR newspapers, gentlemen Magyarons. Obzor only translated that article into Croatian and published it in its "Echoes from Hungary" section!

(punch-line)

How far has your intelligence gone, Doctor Egersdorfer, that you see conspiracy in your own newspapers?

The opposition reacts with loud laughter and stamping of feet.

EGERSDORFER

And how far has your intelligence gone, Doctor Smiciklas, to support the articles of an anonymous author!

FRANK

How is he anonymous if he is called
Jurica Zagorski?

This provokes waves of laughter from the opposition part.

EXT. CITY CENTRE STREET - ZAGREB. DAY.

Their laughter overlaps with Maria's laughter while she, in a maid's outfit, is reading Obzor while walking. She is unaware of the bewildered looks of passers-by and continues to walk and read.

INT. OLD ASSEMBLY HALL - ZAGREB. DAY.

A bit later. Egersdorfer's authority is once again shaken.

EGERSDORFER

You know that it's a pseudonym!

FRANK

A pseudonym is de jure!

GEZA RAUCH

If the writer was an honorable man, he would not hide behind a false name!

(at Frank, smiling)

Maybe it's your pen name, Frank?

JOSIP FRANK stands up angrily, ready for a fist-fight.

FRANK

Are you saying I have no honor?!

Opposition goes crazy, stomping and yelling at Magyarons who yel back at them.

That stomping fades into horses trotting on the street.

EXT. CITY CENTRE STREET - ZAGREB. DAN.

Lost in her reading, Maria wandered to the middle of the road. COACHMAN (60) on the carriage shouts at her.

COACHMAN

Where are you going, like a goose
in the fog!

(then)

Since when do maids read papers!?

Maria bounces back, while the carriage drives away.

She looks around the street to see where she is: ladies in pairs, gentlemen, servants, washerwomen, peasants, boys playing hoop and girls playing with dolls.. She becomes aware of contemptuous looks of LADIES and GENTEMEN passing by her. Then, she notices a POLICEMAN (30) who, suspicious, starts walking towards her, with his eyes fixed upon her.

Maria panics, accelerates her pace, and turns around the first corner. She finds herself close to the entrance of the Botanical Garden.

EXT. BOTANICAL GARDEN. DAY.

Dusk. Safe from people - only a few couples walk around, Maria falls asleep on a bench, with her head on the bag. The GARDEN KEEPER (60) wakes her up, rattling with keys on the ring - it's time for him to close the Botanical Garden.

EXT. CITY CENTRE STREET - ZAGREB. DAY/NIGHT.

Twilight is slowly falling over Zagreb's central street. Maria walks with her head down, not wanting to be noticed by passers-by, who are now exclusively men. The coachman's prolonged "Ho-oj!" announces arrival of a carriage, and its white acetylene lights illuminates the road. Maria sticks to the building, but its no help: the GAS STREET LAMP LIGHTER (50) is lighting a lamp nearby, spreading yellow light throughout the street. Maria realizes that she will be noticed and quickly turns into the first building entrance she comes across.

EXT. BUILDING IN CENTRE OF ZAGREB. NIGHT.

Maria enters the dark staircase, relieved. In the dim light from the entrance door of the nearest apartment, she quickly takes off her clothes. And changes into the dress from her bag. Barking of the dog, followed by voices, from the apartment force her to speed up.

EXT. CITY CENTRE STREET - ZAGREB. NIGHT.

Maria crosses the street with a dug-up canal. Under her cloak, we can see she's wearing her fashionable dress. And her dirty shoes. She heads towards the building with the sign: JÄGERHORN HOTEL.

INT. JAGERHORN HOTEL - ZAGREB. NIGHT.

In the empty foyer, BUDICKI (21) and PENKALA (25) sit and smoke cigars. Obligatory pictures of Franz Joseph and Hedervary hang on the wall, but there is also a picture of Nikola Tesla, with his cite written bellow it: "I don't care that they stole my idea, I care they don't have any of their own"

The hotel owner, LOJZEK (45), brings drinks to the gentlemen.

LOJZEK

The last drinks before closing,
gentlemen. Two Pelinkovac made by
our Pokorny who conquered Europe
with his brandy, as a true patriot!

BUDICKI

Thank you, Lojzek!

(MORE)

BUDICKI (CONT'D)

(at Pankala)

Penkala is even bigger one - he's changed his name into Croatian!

LOJZEK

Drinks are on the house, I say!

(confidentially)

Have you seen how they dug up the street? What does the city need a sewer system for? We are used to swimming in crap, anyway!

BUDICKI and PENKALA laugh.

PENKALA

(ironically)

For the sake of progress, Lojzek.

LOJZEK

What progress? We are exporting inovators such as Tesla to America and importing expensive and bad carosene from abroad. What is our government thinking?

BUDICKI

They want us to live in the dark.

Maria enters, smiling shyly to men. Lojzek hurries over to her, obliging, with an overlearned greeting.

LOJZEK

Welcome to the hotel where the first light bulb in the country was lit up!

Lojzek looks behind Maria to see who is following her.

MARIA

'Evening. Do you have a vacant room?...

Lojzek realizes she's alone and immediately withdraws backward to the counter.

LOJZEK

Oh no, there is no room for women without an escort here!

MARIA

I'm not, I mean, I came to the city to visit my sick aunt, but she's been already taken to the hospital so I have found myself with no place to stay..

Lojzek stands behind the counter like it is a defence wall.

LOJZEK

Sorry, I can't. We are a reputable..

MARIA

I will pay! I don't have money -
of course - but I have jewelry...

(Women were not allowed to carry money). Maria ignores
Lojzek and starts to search for jewelry in her bag...

LOJZEK

There are two lodgings down in the
street..

MARIA

It's really valuable, let me show
you.

Maria takes out "Rauch's folder" from her bag and places
it on the counter for Lojzek to notice it, then a powder
box...

LOJZEK

Please, leave! Police'll fine me
if they find you here!

Lojzek slams his fist on the table, then on the folder.
Then he sees the COAT OF ARMS which he recognises.

LOJZEK (CONT'D)

Is this yours...?

MARIA

(innocently)

Yes, my godmother gave it to me...

Lojzek transforms into a bug faster than Gregor Samsa.

LOJZEK

You will not be paying! There is
no need for it!

Lojzek returns the folder to Maria, in a servile manner.

LOJZEK'S WIFE (V.O.)

Who won't pay!?

Half a deer with huge antlers, standing on two sturdy legs
in rubber boots, passes behind Lojzek. It is being carried
by broad-shouldered woman, LOJZEK'S WIFE (30).

LOJZEK

(confidentially)

She will, be schtumm! She's Countess
De Rauch! Go back to the kitchen,
you'll nail someone with those
antlers!

LOJZEK'S WIFE

I'll nail her if she doesn't pay!

Penkala and Budicki pass by Maria, bowing to her.

BUDICKI

Can I be of help to a young lady?

Maria smiles with a blush and Budicki winks charmingly.

LOJZEK

Budicki, you're out of her league!
Bitte schon, Penkala, carry him
away, thanks!

Penkala and Budicki leave the hotel, laughingly.

Lojzek picks up Maria's bag and takes a room key. She follows him to the room.

INT. CORRIDOR OF THE JAGERHORN HOTEL. NIGHT.

In the hallway with rooms, Lojzek unlocks the door of Maria's room.

MARIA

Can I count on your discretion..?

LOJZEK

You're not here, Your Grace.

Lojzek hands Maria the key and bows.

LOJZEK (CONT'D)

Good night, milady, and sleep well.

While bowing, however shortly, he notices her worn-out shoes, but Maria doesn't notice it.

MARIA

Thank you, I will, all night long!

INT. MARIA'S HOTEL ROOM - JAGERHORN. NIGHT.

Maria is writing in her room. When she fills one sheet, she puts it on "Rauch's folder" and starts another one. She sits in her underwear with holes and patches.

INT. MARIA'S HOTEL ROOM - JAGERHORN. DAY.

The first light of day breaks through the window as well as THE TICKING of the city clock.

Maria stretches vigorously. She opens the window, takes a deep breath of fresh air and becomes enchanted by the sight: Dawn over the Old Town with red roofs and cathedral towers. A fairytale picture of a Central European town awakening with the first song of birds. Maria is startled, smiles, and jumps off the stool cheerfully.

Sheets of paper she wrote all night stay on the table. The title is - EGY PERTZ!

EXT. CITY STREET - ZAGREB. DAY.

Maria hurries down the street. She can easily be mistaken for a servant, judging by the outfit, but more than that, because her face radiates anxiety.

She waits for the HORSE TRAM to pass by with the coachman and looks at the sign on the building across the street: it's OBZOR. Reluctantly, she enters the building.

INT. OBZOR - CORRIDOR. DAY.

Maria walks down the hallway leading to the newsroom. She can hear laughter and conversation from inside it. GJURO GALEC (25), fox-like man, suddenly appears at the entrance.

GALEC

You should have come at dawn, before everyone else!

Galec pulls Maria toward the door of the basement on the left side, from which the muffled sound of printing presses can be heard. In the anteroom at the entrance to the basement, there are buckets.

Galec gives Maria a lewd smile and pats her thigh.

GALEC (CONT'D)

I won't tell anyone if you won't.

He hands her a bucket with dirty rags.

GALEC (CONT'D)

The brooms are downstairs, and so is the bucket. Empty the ashtrays after all of us leave.

Galec enters the newsroom. Maria follows him carrying the bucket.

INT. OBZOR - NEWSROOM. DAY.

Maria stands at the entrance to the smoky newsroom, in the corner, to watch the "show" performed by two journalists, unnoticed. JOSIP PASARIC (35) leans on his desk with a plaque that says EDITOR-IN-CHIEF. Besides them, there are DEŽMAN, GALEC, PECNJAK, who are sitting on the tables.

In the diametrically opposite corner of the room from Maria, stands ŠIME MAZZURA (55), impressive in his height and upright posture. He watches what is happening with a cold and unshakeably serious gaze. Behind him is an office with glass doors, obviously his. VILIM DOROTKA (30) stands with his back turned to the "audience". JOVAN HRANILOVIC (45) is already in his role and waves "Obzor", a newspaper.

HRANILOVIC

Obzor should be banned!

Dorotka turns to the journalists - he has greased his black mustache. The journalists burst out laughing.

DOROTKA

We know why you want to ban it,
Egersdorfer - because half of Zagreb
thinks the way Obzor writes!

The journalists approve with laughter.

DOROTKA (CONT'D)

You have your own newspapers, so
write whatever you want. People
say they are good...for toilet
paper!

A burst of laughter is interrupted by MILIVOJ DEŽMAN (22).

DEŽMAN

You're lying, no way that Smičiklas
would say that!

DOROTKA

He did!
(to Hranilovic)
Jovo, did he say it?

Hranilovic nods affirmatively and continues.

HRANILOVIC

That's how a university rector, a
member of the academy of sciences
and arts, and a distinguished
historian talks! It's also the
level of arguments of your party,
the level of coachmen, cordwainers
and your Jurica Zagorski!

DOROTKA

Your level is even lower: you create
false problems to hide behind the
real ones, and think we will not
notice.

The journalists laugh and protest at the same time.

DOROTKA (CONT'D)

Let's talk about the budget!

The journalists' approval is lively.

DOROTKA (CONT'D)

We demand that money be issued
from the treasury for the
construction of roads between our
major cities. You've built railways
to be able to transport wood from
Croatian forests, but you won't
let us build roads because you
want us to remain buried in the
Middle Ages.

(MORE)

DOROTKA (CONT'D)

(raises his fist)

He who puts out his hand to stop
the wheel of history will have his
fingers crushed!

The journalists go crazy applauding. Mazzura has had enough.
He speaks with a strong Dalmatian accent.

MAZZURA

Enough of that theater, men, back
to work!

PASARIC

And liven up a bit with those texts!

Mazzura walks to his office and the journalists disperse
to their desks.

GALEC

Censors will cut them anyway.

PASARIC

But the passion will be felt in
what remains! Especially in your
case, Galeb, 'cause you write like
a cod, dry and boring!

Maria suddenly becomes indecisive, steps back into the
hallway, and takes a deep breath. When she hears the
rhythmic typing of the journalists, she steps into the
newsroom. She unconsciously holds onto bucket as a crutch.

Next to Pasaric's desk sits his assistant, Dežman, who
looks like a mini version of a stuffy Mazzura. Maria
realizes she's holding a bucket and sets it down. No one
turns around, everyone is diligently typing.

Maria approaches Pasaric, who is reading some text that
Dežman sent him. Maria doesn't want to attract attention
from the others, so she speaks in a low voice.

MARIA

Mr. Pasaric?

PASARIC

Yes?

MARIA

I'm Maria Jurić.

Maria smiles, but Pasaric doesn't recognize her name.

MARIA (CONT'D) (CONT'D)

I came to ask for..

(gets confused)

to offer myself for a job.

Pasaric looks behind her, sees the bucket and inspects it.

PASARIC
You already got it.

MARIA
I mean, to write for you. As a
journalist.

PASARIC
Ma'am, I don't know where you got
this silly idea, but if you're not
a cleaner, I'm asking you to leave.

MARIA
No, actually, I'm writing.
(significantly)
As Jurica Zagorski.

Pasaric is surprised for a moment.. then his face darkened.

PASARIC
Get out right now before I call
the police!

The typewriters stop clacking.

MARIA
I can prove it to you..

PASARIC
(yelling at her)
Get out before I lose my temper!

DOROTKA
(whispers to Galec)
Whose is this one? Galec, yours?

GALEC
No, my girls are beautiful.

Maria hears this and the drop of humiliation on top of a shock brought by rejection is too much. She turns around and runs towards the exit. Fear, anger, and hurt mix on her face.

Pasaric watches Maria run out of the newsroom and lights a cigarette, holding it upside down.

INT. OBZOR - NEWSROOM. DAY. - CONTINUED

The cigarette butt in Pasaric's hand cached fire and the smell is terrible, which makes him more angry then before.

PASARIC
Even girls are mocking us now!

HRANILOVIC
Khuen's people are mocking us.

Everyone looks at him questioningly, except for Pasaric who nods affirmatively.

HRANILOVIC (CONT'D) (CONT'D)

They've sent a message: tell us who Jurica Zagorski is, or we'll send censors to you every day.

PECNJAK

But we have no clue who is behind this name..

(he just realises)

Oh. They think we know.

GALEC

So what, the opposition is grateful we are translating his articles so they will protect us..

PASARIC

They'd sell us for a penny if Khuen would put enough pressure on them!

(decisively)

We have to find out who he is this Zagorski before they start looking for him themselves!

DEŽMAN

So, we know that the translations of his articles have been sent from the post office in Sombotel.

GALEC

From Hungary?!

(to Dežman)

And you are saying this now, after a year of publishing his texts?

PASARIC

We didn't care where they're from or who he was! His articles were brilliant and worked for our cause.

Galec is not satisfied with the answer, as well as some other journalists, who are mumbling among themselves.

DEŽMAN

Guys! After his "carrot and whip" made waves in the parliament, I called the editor of Magary Hirlap to ask about Zagorski.

Everybody momentarily becomes all ears.

DEŽMAN (CONT'D)

The editor told me that his fee is being sent to a certain Andras Matray in Sombotel.

The journalists squirm and murmur.

DEŽMAN (CONT'D)

So I made an inquiry about Matray.
He's some low-ranked official at
the railways. And - he's a Hungarian
nationalist.

Everyone is distressed at first, but then..

HRANILOVIC

It's a perfect cover for Zagorski.

Everyone nodded.

PECNJAK

To which address we send him the
money for translations?

The journalists automatically look towards Mazzura's office.

PASARIC

Mazzura doesn't pay him, that's
for sure.

GALEC

Really? Cheap Dalmatian bastard.

HRANILOVIC

(he's concluding)

Zagorski has been sending us his
articles for free. He is Hungarian
journalist who speaks Croatian..

GALEC

Why not our journalist who speaks..

DEŽMAN

Because not one Croatian journalist
speaks Hungarian.

The buzzing of brain cells can almost be heard.

PASARIC

Still, he knows the situation in
Zagreb perfectly, both in Parliament
and on the street.

(decisively)

Hranilovic and Pecnjak!

Hranilovic and Pecnjak jump to attention.

PASARIC (CONT'D) (CONT'D)

Go through the clubs and cafes and
let it be known that Pasaric wants
to talk to him. (emphasizes) And
that I guarantee him anonymity
with my honor.

(to Hranilovic)

Jovo, you go to Privrednik, they
have hundreds of journalists.

GALEC

Yeah, Serbs have spies everywhere, they know things about us that we don't even know.

HRANILOVIC

Don't talk nonsense, Galec, they lived here..

(corrects himself)

WE lived here for centuries, WE work and mind our own business, which I recommend to you as well.

GALEC

They work behind our backs, yeah. Maybe you told one of those Khuen's ass-kissers that we are hiding identity of Zagorski in the first place!

Hranilovic and Galec jump to their feet and face each other, shouting fiercely like roosters.

HRANILOVIC

You're calling me a spy?

Dorotka tries to calm them down, but Pasaric stops him.

HRANILOVIC (CONT'D) (CONT'D)

You and your nationalists who scare women and children in Serbian villages with some spooky tales about Greater Serbia...

GALEC

That spooky tale is described in Garasanin's programme in detail!

Hranilovic is taken aback and lowers his tone.

HRANILOVIC

That's just nonsense. You should be smarter than those who fall for it.

GALEC

You're a good man, Jovo, but naive.

PASARIC

Galec and Dorotka! You visit cigar clubs, cafes, wherever gentlemen gather...

DOROTKA

And brothels?

PECNJAK

But not those you prefere, but those with clean women.

Dorotka shows him "the finger" and laughs. Pasaric looks at an article in Obzor and thinks aloud.

PASARIC

He doesn't seem like the type for brothels to me. More like a professor... He could be a lawyer... maybe even a doctor. Dežman, maybe he is one of yours?

DEŽMAN

My esteemed colleagues are dead fish when it comes to politics.

DOROTKA

And mine too. But I run a funeral home, so it doesn't count.

Everyone laughs, eager to remove the discomfort from the previous quarrel.

Pasarć watches them leaving the editorial office in a hurry.

PASARIC

One of them could actually be Khuen's spy. If nothing else, as revenge for Mazzuri paying them less than his own maid.

DEŽMAN

I have lunch with them every day at the pub. I'd catch some sign if there was one. No. These mules burn for every word they write against his politics.

Pasaric is angry with himself for suspecting his own people.

PASARIC

That's Khuen's doing too! To make us suspect each other and argue while he robs us in the dark!

DEŽMAN

(reassuring Pasaric)

I'll make some calls, we'll find our mystery guy.

INT. MARIA'S ROOM - JAGERHORN. NIGHT.

In her hotel room, Maria sits in front of the mirror, looking calm. She takes off her hat and unclasps it from her hair. The clasp gets stuck and she tries to take it out, but it won't budge. Maria pulls the clasp with force until she starts pulling it frantically, tearing her hair out. In despair and anger, all disheveled, she takes the "Egy percz" text papers and tears them in half. She almost tears them again, but the door trembles from pounding.

SINIŠA (V.O.)

Open up, police!

Maria remains motionless, looking at the door as it opens. Lojzek opens it with a spare key. Two policemen barge into the room, one of them is SINIŠA (20), handsome and completely by the book. He looks at the warrant in his hand, then at Maria, and nods to the other POLICEMAN (30).

SINIŠA (CONT'D) (CONT'D)

Maria Matray, we are arresting you
in the name of the Emperor!

MARIA

Why, for God's sake?

Behind the angry Lojzek is his scowling wife. The POLICEMAN approaches Maria and bind her hands behind her back. She is more surprised than frightened.

LOJZEK

Countess, my foot! You deceived
me!

MARIA

I didn't say I was a countess!

LOJZEK

But you left me believing that you
were, that's the same thing!

This hits Maria hard because Lojzek is right.

MARIA

I'm sorry, please forgive me.
(to Siniša)
What have I done?

LOJZEK'S WIFE

Righteous women don't run away
from their husbands!

Maria can't grab her things because the zealous Siniša roughly pulls her out of the room.

MARIA

Where are you taking me?

SINIŠA

Your husband has issued a warrant
for you and ordered us to take you
to the mental hospital.

It takes a few seconds until it dawns on her, then she screams with all her might.

MARIA

No! Nooooo! Let me go! You have no
right!!! Please!!!

The policemen pick up Maria and carry her out as she struggles. Lojzek, frightened, huddles up next to his wife.

His wife suddenly feels pity for Maria, like she's questioning the righteousness of the whole situation.

INT. SANATORIUM - CORRIDOR. DAY.

Two orderlies bring bound Maria into the "Stenjevec" hospital. Over the scenes of patients, we hear a male voice.

The scenes are terrible, as we expect in a mental hospital of that time: patients are scantily dressed, some drool, some neatly stack their feces on the wall with their hands.

OLD PSYCHIATRIST (V.O.)
 Maria Jurić, middle name Mariana,
 born on March 2, eight hundred.

A patient with a chamber pot on his head like a helmet charges at the bars through the window.

A woman sings a beautiful folk song, but the noise creates bad reactions from the others so the nuns try to stuff a cloth in her mouth.

OLD PSYCHIATRIST (V.O.) (CONT'D) (CONT'D)
 ...eighty-three, daughter of Josipa
 and Ivan Jurić from Stubički
 Golubovec, the Steward of

PSYCHIATRIST (V.O.) (CONT'D)
 Rauch's estate, blah blah blah..

They bring Maria, broken and dull, before the OLD PSYCHIATRIST (80) who reads from Maria's medical record.

OLD PSYCHIATRIST
 . . she was hospitalized a couple
 of years ago due to a nervous
 breakdown.
 (something horrifies
 him)
 I don't want to deal with her.

The old psychiatrist closes Maria's file and hands it to the NURSE, a nun, beside him.

OLD PSYCHIATRIST (CONT'D) (CONT'D)
 Give her to the young doctor. Let
 him practice on her.

The nun nods.

OLD PSYCHIATRIST (CONT'D)
 But first, take her to therapy.

He waves his hand and Maria is taken down the hallway like a log.

INT. DR. GUTSCHY'S OFFICE. DAY

In the corner of the room decorated as a living room, with armchairs, a carpet, and a coffee table, Dr. Gutschy (48)

pours himself tea and inhales its aroma. He dances to his working desk with the cup. He looks more like Salvador Dali than a doctor, but as soon as he sits at the desk with the obligatory brain model, he becomes serious. He takes the first file from a pile of medical files on the desk.

INT. SANATORIUM. DAY

Maria trembles in a bathtub as a nun throws ice cubes into the water. Her lips are already blue.

INT. CIGAR CLUB. DAY

In a smoke-filled club for gentlemen and their top hats, Dorotka and Hranilovic talk to a GENTLEMAN (70) who shakes his head denying that he knows anyone who could be Zagorski.

INT. DR. GUTSCHY'S OFFICE. DAY

Dr. Gutschy closes and puts away a file, then takes a new one from the pile. He reads it with surprise and interest, raising an eyebrow.

INT. SANATORIUM. DAY

Maria is given a rubber piece to bite on as they prepare to pass electricity through the wires connected to her head.

INT. UNIVERSITY BUILDING IN ZAGREB. DAY

In a hallway of the university, Dorotka and Hranilovic show a page of Obzor to a PROFESSOR (75) who, yes, reads Obzor, but doesn't know who Zagorski is.

INT. DR. GUTSCHY'S OFFICE. DAY

Dr. Gutschy flips through a file, then closes it. He drinks a tea and picks up the same file again, opening it.

INT. SANATORIUM. DAY

Electricity is released through Maria's body, causing her to shake. The electricity stops. The nun adjusts the dial to a higher voltage and releases the electricity again. Maria's torso jumps from the table.

EXT. CABARET "KAUDERS". NIGHT

Dorotka and Hranilovic exit the cabaret, exhausted and drunk. Dorotka throws Obzor in the garbage.

EXT. SANATORIUM - PARK. DAY

It's morning in the beautiful hospital park, where bird chirps occasionally mix with human screams from the hospital building.

INT. SANATORIUM - MARIA'S ROOM. DAY

Dr. Gutschy observes Maria sitting on the bed in a hospital gown. Maria is groggy.

DR. GUTSCHY

Maria, baths and electrical shocks didn't help you the first time you were here. With your permission, I would like to try a new method.

Maria has an empty stare.

DR. GUTSCHY (CONT'D)

I interned with Dr. Freud in Vienna. His method was very successful with women - within two to three years, complete healing occurred.

Maria doesn't react. Gutschy looks at Maria's chart.

DR. GUTSCHY (CONT'D)

I see that three years ago, you experienced some difficult events.

Under the weight of the memories, Maria closes her eyes.

DR. GUTSCHY (CONT'D) (CONT'D)

(reads)

Your husband issued a warrant for you as a mentally ill woman, but he didn't say why you ran away from home.

Maria doesn't show any signs of understanding.

DR. GUTSCHY (CONT'D)

The problem with traumas is that they come back in the form of various unpleasant symptoms, even though you've already forgotten about them. Until you realize what really hurt you in that event, they'll keep troubling you.

Maria doesn't react.

DR. GUTSCHY (CONT'D) (CONT'D)

Now, you need to get some rest.

Dr. Gutschy gives Maria a sleeping pill on his palm. She doesn't take it with her hand but with her mouth, like an obedient puppy. Then she rolls over on her side and closes her eyes. Dr. Gutschy watches for a moment and then leaves the room.

INT. SANATORIUM - MARIA'S ROOM. DAY

Maria sits on the bed, slightly dazed, while Dr. Gutschy sits across from her.

DR. GUTSCHY

We're just going to talk. Do you agree?

Maria gives him an empty stare and he continues.

DR. GUTSCHY (CONT'D) (CONT'D)

Tell me, has your husband ever hit you?

Maria barely shakes her head no.

Dr. Gutschy writes something on her chart.

DR. GUTSCHY (CONT'D)

Did he cheat on you with another woman?

Maria rolls her eyes: he is so predictable and boring.

Dr. Gutschy slams the chart shut.

DR. GUTSCHY (CONT'D)

I'm not going to put words in your mouth. You'll talk to me voluntarily or not at all.

Dr. Gutschy lets a long moment of her decision-making pass.

MARIA

He's right, I'm mentally damaged.

DR. GUTSCHY

What does that mean?

MARIA

That I'm weak and weaklings need to perish according to the law of evolution.

(then)

I am Nobody.

Dr. Gutschy writes something down. He writes constantly, every time she says something interesting. But he's also talking to her.

DR. GUTSCHY

You've been reading Darwin...hmm.

(then)

Have you had a lover while married?

MARIA

Oh yes, several.

Maria looks at him provocatively. She starts to unbutton her dress, pretending to be a seductress, but she does it awkwardly, so she looks like some grotesque Marilyn Monroe.

MARIA (CONT'D)

I'm hot.

Dr. Gutschy doesn't react.

Maria pretends to cool herself off with the edge of her dress, lifting it up so that he can see she's not wearing any underwear.

DR. GUTSCHY

You're hot in the middle of winter?

MARIA

Cold baths and electricity stimulate circulation. Try it sometime.

Maria persistently cools herself off, becoming more and more insecure and nervous. Dr. Gutschy gets up and approaches her.

Maria makes a victorious-disappointed grimace: "I knew it."

Dr. Gutschy pulls a blanket from the bed and wraps Maria in it.

MARIA (CONT'D)

(sadly)

You see, I'm not even a woman.

DR. GUTSCHY

You are. But I don't want to abuse my position.

Dr. Gutschy returns to his chair. A light comes on in Maria's eyes.

INT. DR. GUTSCHY'S OFFICE. DAY

A few days later. Maria, still a bit groggy but much clearer, sits opposite Dr. Gutschy, at the desk. Behind Maria is a corner of the room that looks like a living room.

Dr. Gutschy hands Maria a cup of tea. As she takes the cup, her hands shake. She notices that he's not drinking.

MARIA

What did I do to deserve this?

DR. GUTSCHY

You don't have to deserve act of kindness.

MARIA

Then take away my sleeping pills.

Dr. Gutschy writes something in his notebook.

DR. GUTSCHY

Sleep is crucial for recovery.

MARIA

But nightmares are not. I dreamt
of my husband last night and I
couldn't wake up.

Maria loudly sips her tea.

DR. GUTSCHY

Why are you slurping? You're not a
peasant.

MARIA

Why do you always write? You're
not a writer.

Dr. Gutschy is taken aback.

MARIA (CONT'D) (CONT'D)

You said we would TALK. And you're
questioning me like a policeman.

Dr. Gutschy smiles barely perceptibly.

DR. GUTSCHY

It helps me remember better. But
I'll try to take notes as little
as possible.

Maria nods and politely takes a sip of her tea.

INT. DR. GUTSCHY'S OFFICE. DAY.

Dr. Gutschy pours tea from the teapot for Maria, who is
more focused now, but still tense, and himself. They are
now sitting in the "living room" corner of the office that
suggests comfort of a home. Maria is focused but tense.

MARIA

This is how my dad and I drank tea
in the cafe.

DR. GUTSCHY

He took you to the caffee bar?

MARIA

He often took me with him to Zagreb.
We would go first to the menagerie
to see the seal that extinguished
matches with its breath!

Dr. Gutschy now sees Maria smile for the first time,
specifically, the happy little girl in her.

MARIA (CONT'D) (CONT'D)

But I liked the cafe the most. He
treated me like a real lady. He
didn't care about the gentlemen
who looked at me as if I were a
lost mouse.

Dr. Gutschy smiles gently, drinks tea, and listens attentively.

Maria starts to relax slowly.

MARIA (CONT'D)

Sometimes Aunt Greta would be with us. Of all Dad's friends, Greta was my favorite.

DR. GUTSCHY

Did Mom know about her?

Maria smiles for a moment.

MARIA

Dad forbade me to mention his female friends to Mom because she wouldn't understand and would get angry with him.

DR. GUTSCHY

You didn't answer my question.

Maria momentarily becomes an embarrassed little girl.

MARIA

It just slipped out of me. (with self-disgust) Stupid me.

DR. GUTSCHY

How did your mother react to that?

MARIA

She asked me to swear on my sister Danica that Dad hadn't slept with Greta.

(quietly)

And I did.

DR. GUTSCHY

Why did you lie?

MARIA

So Mom wouldn't cry so much.

(with a sigh)

But she didn't believe me anyway.

DR. GUTSCHY

What did she say to you?

MARIA

Nothing. She tied me to a tree in the woods. The next morning, Marta the nanny found me.

Dr. Gutschy nearly chokes on his tea.

MARIA (CONT'D) (CONT'D)

She was right, I did lie.

DR. GUTSCHY

Did your father have the right to ask you to lie for him?

MARIA

Dad loved me. And Marta. They could ask me for anything.

DR. GUTSCHY

Did Marta ever ask you to lie for her?

Maria shakes her head in denial. Tears well up in her eyes.

MARIA

Dad never said a word against Mom, but she would talk to me for hours about how he was wicked and cruel, and I had to listen. I hated him.

DR. GUTSCHY

But you also loved him.

MARIA

When I was with her, I hated him, and when I was with him.
(it catches in her throat)

DR. GUTSCHY

A child finds it difficult to accept that parents can be selfish and cruel, so they take the blame for their behavior. But the child is never to blame.

(then)

From a psychiatric point of view, a child is not even responsible for murder.

Maria, struggling with tears, is surprised by this.

DR. GUTSCHY (CONT'D) (CONT'D)

You lied because you wanted to protect your mother from suffering and your father from her anger.

MARIA

I don't want to make excuses for my weaknesses!

DR. GUTSCHY

But you make excuses for their weaknesses.

Maria looks at him in amazement, then her guard breaks down and tears flow. Dr. Gutschy sets aside his tea to give Maria a tissue from his pocket, even though there is a pile of them on the table.

EXT. SANATORIUM - PARK. DAY.

Maria is wearing hospital clothes and wrapped in her cloak. Dr. Gutschy walks with her through the park, whose beauty is not marred even by the patients walking around like zombies.

MARIA

When will you let me go from here?

DR. GUTSCHY

When I'm convinced that you won't have another nervous breakdown.

Maria is somewhat taken aback.

DR. GUTSCHY (CONT'D)

Your file only lists events that led up to it, but I'm interested in what happened inside you.

Maria nods with a sigh - it's hard to explain.

MARIA

I was overcome by the feeling that I was rotten and wicked because I was only consuming food that someone worthier should be eating..

(quietly)

I don't know why.

DR. GUTSCHY

You have much stricter standards for yourself than for others. That's why people can easily convince you that you are the way they see you.

Maria leans against the railing, looking at her face in the water.

MARIA

How will I know that I see myself correctly, and not others?

DR. GUTSCHY

Check the facts - objectively.

MARIA

What about the fact that I'm ugly?

DR. GUTSCHY

You may think that, but I don't.

Maria smiles. They continue walking.

DR. GUTSCHY (CONT'D) (CONT'D)

Why does your husband want to declare you insane?

MARIA

So he can collect monthly rent on my name, which he would lose if he divorced me, as well as twenty thousand forint dowry..

DR. GUTSCHY

(allegedly impressed)

I wish I were worth twenty thousand forints to someone!

MARIA

I wouldn't be.

DR. GUTSCHY

(provoking her)

A million?

MARIA

No!

DR. GUTSCHY

I studied for ten years, and I make less money than that. Why should you be worth more than me?

MARIA

That money is the price they set for me, but I'm worth much more!

DR. GUTSCHY

And that's an objective fact.

Maria looks for signs that he's poking her, but he's serious.

DR. GUTSCHY (CONT'D)

I'll give you some homework.

INT. SANATORIUM - MARIA'S ROOM. DAY

Maria takes her clothes off in front of the mirror. Before she takes off her panties, she stops. She changes her mind and starts to take off the top first. Then again, she takes off her panties first, but closes her eyes. She takes off her negligee, but still squinting, puts her panties back on.

MARIA

Open your eyes, you don't have a hunch on your back!

She squeezes her eyes even harder. She begins to shake and tear off her negligee with force. In the face of possible breakdown, her subconscious would rather break the reflection of her nudity. She pushes the mirror to the ground, and it shatters with a crash.

INT. SANATORIUM - MARIA'S ROOM. DAY

Later, Maria sits broken on her bed. Dr. Gutschy gazes thoughtfully at the fragments of the mirror.

DR. GUTSCHY

What happened?

MARIA

(rapid-fire)

It seemed to me that a man was watching me through the keyhole. And that he was coming into the room, approaching me from behind, hugging me, and blindfolding me...I didn't dare open my eyes anymore.

DR. GUTSCHY

Why?

MARIA

Because I knew it was you.

DR. GUTSCHY

(carefully)

Who? Your father?

MARIA

No. You.

DR. GUTSCHY

That's OK. It just means you're a healthy woman.

MARIA

But I don't like you at all!

Dr. Gutschy, with an expressionless face, bends down and begins to collect the glass shards.

MARIA (CONT'D) (CONT'D)

(submissive)

I'm sorry. I lied...to see how you would react. You see, I'm wicked.

DR. GUTSCHY

You're not. You're just testing me, to see if I'll hurt you when I get angry.

Dr. Gutschy continues to pick up the glass. Maria leans down and silently picks up the shards with him.

EXT. SANATORIUM - PARK. DAY.

Maria has taken Dr. Gutschy's arm, and they walk under the umbrella he carries. The sky resembles a concrete dome, but the rain isn't heavy, just drizzling.

DR. GUTSCHY

You have trouble assessing what's your responsibility and what's someone else's. Even when something obviously is not yours.

Dr. Gutschy glances at Maria, with some intention.

MARIA

In the end, everything is our responsibility, even if we get struck by lightning. We shouldn't have gone out in the rain.

DR. GUTSCHY

But there are natural laws we can't do anything about.

(carefully)

As a woman, you know what I mean.

Maria just nods and falls silent.

DR. GUTSCHY (CONT'D) (CONT'D)

It's easier for us humans to think that we caused some tragic event rather than accept it. It comforts us to feel that we have control over events, but we usually don't.

Maria stops. She looks Dr. Gutschy in the eye.

MARIA

I had a greater influence on my tragic event than you think.

Dr. Gutschy is seriously concerned about how the conversation might end, but he successfully hides it.

Neither birds nor people can be heard, only the gentle patter of rain. Maria looks out at the lake where wild goose with its young hides in the bushes on its bank.

MARIA (CONT'D)

From the moment they placed him on my chest, all blue and wooden... wrinkled like an old doll...

DR. GUTSCHY

Wasn't he stillborn?

MARIA

(nods)

They thought he might come to life if he heard my heartbeat. So he lay on me... it seemed like hours.

Maria is unusually calm, determined to face herself.

MARIA (CONT'D) (CONT'D)

When I got home, I thought Matray would be the husband, I'd seen glimpses of tenderness, caring...

(takes a deep breath)

I thought he is just a man burdened with too responsibilities, growing up without a father.. But, I've just imagined kindness in him.. There was only a hatred.

DR. GUTSCHY

For you?.. Why?

MARIA

The doctor told him I was too thin and that's why I'd given birth to a stillborn son.

DR. GUTSCHY

Why didn't you eat during the pregnancy?

MARIA

I wasn't hungry. Since I came to that house, he measured the thickness of my bread slice with a ruler. The humiliation hurt more than the hunger so I got use to small portions of food.

Dr. Gutschy knows he must be empathetic but firm to her.

DR. GUTSCHY

You knew you had to eat.

MARIA

(nods she knew)

But I didn't want to.

Dr. Gutschy tries to understand without interfering.

MARIA

My son couldn't hear my heartbeat because it wasn't beating for him.

(coldly)

He came into this world, and I didn't want him to live. I didn't want him at all.

Dr. Gutschy feels deeply sorry for her, but is on a mission.

MARIA (CONT'D) (CONT'D)

I told you I was weak and wicked, you didn't believe me.

DR. GUTSCHY

Why didn't you want your baby?

MARIA

I'm telling you I'm a monster!
Because I'm the twisted spawn of
Satan!

Maria becomes consumed by self-destructive rage and begins to scratch herself.

MARIA (CONT'D) (CONT'D)

Millions of women have children
with husbands who hate them, even
beat them! Only I won't! I'm wicked!

Dr. Gutschy holds her hands firmly to stop her from scratching.

DR. GUTSCHY

Why?!

MARIA

(screams in anger)

It's not natural for a woman not
to want a child!

Dr. Gutschy breathes a sigh of relief, as he is finally on the right track.

DR. GUTSCHY

Not true. Many women who've been
raped don't want to have children
conceived that way.

Maria is surprised and calms down for a moment.

DR. GUTSCHY (CONT'D)

Also, many women don't want to
have children with their husbands,
but they do what is expected of
them.

(he takes her hands
into his)

Perhaps you would want to have a
child with someone else.

Maria stares at him intently.

DR. GUTSCHY (CONT'D) (CONT'D)

And if you don't want to be a mother
at all, so what? I don't want to
be a father, but I don't feel guilty
about it.

(softly)

If I've learned anything in this
profession, it's that we're all
pressured by social norms, and
some of them work against us, they
are outdated and inhumane.

(even more gently)

You, Maria, are not to blame for
being sold to a man who starves
you.

Maria's face begins to contort in a voiceless scream. Dr. Gutschy just takes her hand to prevent her from falling.

Then she lets out a scream. That scream tears through the air like thunder and, as if she can really control nature, the clouds part in a thin gap.

Dr. Gutschy lets Maria scream at the sky, giving her the security that he is with her and waiting for her to calm down.

EXT. SANATORIUM/PROFESSOR'S OFFICE. DAY.

It's morning. Maria, in hospital clothes, stands with Dr. Gutschy in front of the Old Psychiatrist who is examining documents.

OLD PSYCHIATRIST

You wrote - "her brain is sane."

(suspiciously)

You've made this conclusion after only a month of therapy?

DR. GUTSCHY

I followed your instructions for an individual approach to the patient - more baths, less electricity.

Maria has to bite her lip not to laugh.

OLD PSYCHIATRIST

(remains suspicious)

How do you know it's not just a long lucida intervalla?

DR. GUTSCHY

I don't. But, I think she's young and she should return to her marital duties as soon as possible.

The old psychiatrist nods in agreement. He addresses Maria, but doesn't look at her, instead he flips through her chart.

OLD PSYCHIATRIST

(trick question)

And you, do you intend to continue writing for newspapers?

MARIA

I have to. My husband doesn't earn enough.

Dr. Gutschy clenches his lips in distress.

OLD PSYCHIATRIST

(slyly)

WHAT will you write about?

MARIA
 About "štrukli".
 (a beat)
 For the section on traditional
 recipes.

The old psychiatrist looks at her, not quite convinced,
 but he signs the release form. Dr. Gutschy is relieved.

INT. DR. GUTSCHY'S OFFICE. DAY.

Maria is now in the dress she had arrived in. They drink
 tea. The release form is folded on the table.

DR. GUTSCHY
 I don't understand why you have to
 write about politics.

MARIA
 I care about justice.

Dr. Gutschy looks at her as if he's checking whether she's
 messing with him.

MARIA (CONT'D) (CONT'D)
 To you, that's naive, but I, on
 the contrary, don't understand why
 others don't care as much!
 (calmly)
 Only when I write, I feel free.

DR. GUTSCHY
 Then write poems or stories.

MARIA
 Politics is also about making up
 stories. Most of them are dangerous
 narratives that govern our lives
 and grind us as they please. Well,
 I want to fight them with truth!

DR. GUTSCHY
 But you HAVE TO be aware of the
 limitations of our narrow-minded
 society.

MARIA
 (nods)
 Woman is safe only in marriage and
 convent.

DR. GUTSCHY
 Maria! If you end up in the hospital
 again, they'll never let you out.

Maria is taken aback, but she hears him. To reassure him,
 she takes a letter from the table and smiles.

MARIA (CONT'D)

My mom will support me when she reads your letter. And dad, he will talk to Matray, like he should have done a long time ago.

Maria is optimistic, but Dr. Gutschy is not. His face shows only pure concern.

INT. DR. GUTSCHY OFFICE/SANATORIUM - CORRIDOR. DAY.

Later on, Dr. Gutschy sees Maria out of his office. She fidgets with the letter in her hands. He takes her hands to calm her down, and squeezes them. She looks at him.

MARIA

(joking but sorrow)

I'll stop by for a tea, sometimes.

Dr. Gutschy doesn't want his emotions to get the better of him, so he gently pushes her away.

DR. GUTSCHY

Your mother has come for you. Hurry up, don't keep her waiting.

Maria is surprised. Then she clicks with joy.

MARIA

Mom?!?

INT. SANATORIUM - CORRIDOR. DAY.

Overjoyed, Maria runs down the hospital hallway towards the exit.

She opens the front doors wide and the light blinds her.

MARIA

Moom! Mommy!

EXT. SANATORIUM - FRONT COURTYARD. DAY.

But outside the hospital, Marta is waiting for Maria. Maria feels a pain in her stomach and her face twists.

Marta waves to her. Maria tries to hide her disappointment. By the time she gets to Marta, she manages it mostly. But Marta is perceptive. She hugs Maria tightly.

MARTA

You've lost weight! We'll fatten you up like a piggy!

Maria smiles, her eyes full of tears. Marta understands everything, but doesn't allow Maria to have an emotional breakdown.

MARTA (CONT'D)

Look, I've put some cheese here..

Marta gives Maria her bag with her things.

MARIA

My bag?!

MARTA

Some bearded woman at Jagerhorn
gave it to me.

Maria pulls out "Rauch's file" from the bag. She opens it in disbelief and sees torn pieces of paper - the joy on Maria's face is overwhelming. And, she's determined.

MARIA (CONT'D)

We need to go to the post office
before it closes!

Maria runs toward the carriage. Confused Marta hurries after her into the carriage.

INT. DR. GUTSCHY'S OFFICE. DAY / EXT. SANATORIUM - FRONT COURTYARD. DAY

Dr. Gutschy watches as the carriage drives away, his face showing no emotions. He drinks his tea and puts the cup down on a saucer. The cup clinks as he watches the carriage.

INT. MAIN POST OFFICE - ZAGREB. DAY.

Maria and Marta wait in line at the post office. As Maria puts torn pieces of paper into an envelope, we see the title: EGY PERCZ.

MARIA

When I tell my mom why I ran away
from him, she'll forgive me.

MARTA

She knows everything.

MARIA

(like she didn't hear)
...she knows how terrible it is to
live in an unhappy marriage.

MARTA

Don't go home yet. Wait until Josipa
calms down.

Maria stubbornly doesn't understand. She looks at her questioningly, frowning.

MARIA

Where am I supposed to go then?
To Matray?

MARTA

(with difficulty)
She forbade you to come home.

MARIA
 Who? My mom? Forbade me?
 (a beat)
 Dad? What did he say?

MARTA
 He slapped her. Then he fell silent.

MARIA
 As always.

Maria hands the envelope to the POSTAL WORKER at the counter. The address on the envelope reads MAGARY TAGBLATT, BUDAPEST.

Maria turns to Marta with a realisation.

MARIA (CONT'D)
 She wants to force me to go back
 to Matray. But I'm not. Not ever.

Marta nods as she leads Maria out of the post office.

MARTA
 You just need time to think it
 over.

EXT. MARTA'S RELATIVE'S APARTMENT - BUILDING. DAY.

Maria and Marta approach the entrance to a building. Marta is trying to cheer her up, again.

MARTA
 There's a young actress living
 with my cousin. You won't be alone.

Maria hesitates to enter the building. She is desperate.

MARTA (CONT'D)
 She came back from Vienna, divorced
 from a famous architect.

Marta's heart is breaking, she hugs Maria, who sinks into that embrace. Marta quietly sings a beautiful lullaby she used to sing to her.

MARTA (CONT'D)
 "I think of you when the dawn
 breaks, I think of you when the
 day awakens"

The song is carried over to the next scenes.

INT. MARTA'S RELATIVE'S APARTMENT. DAY

In a modest working-class apartment, Marta says goodbye to her COUSIN (45) while Maria stands sadly with her bag.

MARTA (V.O.)
 "...I think of you when every being
 quietly prepares to sleep."

Maria hands a beautiful necklace to Marta's COUSIN.

Marta and Maria hug at the door, and Marta leaves.

MARTA (V.O.) (CONT'D) (CONT'D)
 "I love you, my gold, you are my
 whole happiness in this world..."

Martina's Cousin leads Maria to the door of Irma's room.

INT. IRMA'S ROOM - MARTA'S RELATIVE'S APARTMENT. DAY

Maria enters the room and sees IRMA POLAK (23) standing next to an open window, blowing cigarette smoke out. Irma looks Maria up and down curiously. Then smiles broadly.

IRMA
 Welcome! I am Irma. Irma Polak.
 The future star of Croatian theater.

Irma's warmth makes Maria feel better, like a balm on an open wound that pulls her out of her stupor. Irma points to the neatly made bed. Irma often uses many German words.

IRMA (CONT'D) (CONT'D)
 This is your bed!

Maria places her bag on the bed.

MARIA
 I am Maria.

IRMA
 She doesn't let me smoke inside.
 It bothers her. It bothers me too,
 so what.

Irma puts out her cigarette on the windowsill.

IRMA (CONT'D) (CONT'D)
 We don't have much time, rehearsal
 is in half an hour.

Maria doesn't understand what Irma is talking about.

IRMA (CONT'D)
 At the theater. Meine freund is
 directing, actually he's not a
 friend, but he will be soon,
 verstehst du?
 (she laughs obscenely) And I want
 to act in his next play, so I'm
 going to seduce him. And you're
 coming with me.

MARIA
 To the rehearsal?

IRMA

Hmm, as I see... (pointing to
Maria's bag)
you don't have any extra clothes.

Irma opens her closet full of dresses.

IRMA (CONT'D)

But I do!

From the gallery of dresses and hats, Irma chooses one and
throws it to Maria, who catches it.

IRMA (CONT'D)

You won't sit here alone in the
dark! (she grins)
Take off your clothes! Hurry up!

Maria is confused while holding the dress in front of this
hurricane of a woman, and starts undressing because you
don't contradict a hurricane.

EXT. IN FRONT OF HNK BUILDING. NIGHT.

Maria and Irma run into the theater through the backstage
entrance for actors. Both are fashionably, but moderately,
dressed.

INT. HNK - HALLWAY. NIGHT.

Maria and Irma walk down a dark hallway toward the theater.
Irma takes off her coat along the way.

Maria doesn't want to take her coat off. Irma gets it.

IRMA

You look so sexy in this dress..it's
my present to you.

Maria is startled.

IRMA (CONT'D)

And it's only polite to open a
present upon receiving it!

Irma laughs and helps her to take off the coat while walking
toward theatre.

INT. THEATER - HNK. NIGHT.

They enter the dark theater. On stage, three ACTORS and
director JOSIP BACH (28) are rehearsing.

Maria is fascinated by this magical space. Irma smiles
when she sees the expression on her face and grabs her
hand.

Irma leads Maria and shows her to be quiet. They sit in
the audience.

They sit behind SLAVKO VODVARKA (25), who turns around and smiles at Irma in greeting. Irma playfully sticks out her tongue at him. Slavko scrutinizes Maria with a seductive gaze. Maria doesn't notice him at all, she only sees the stage. Slavko asks Irma with his eyes "who is that" and she replies, threatening him with her finger. He smiles and turns toward the stage.

Irma points at the director sitting in the first row.

IRMA
Isn't he cute?

Maria doesn't hear her. She watches the rehearsal with big, childlike eyes.

INT. HNK CAFÉ. NIGHT.

The café is smoky and full of loud actresses and actors. As soon as she enters with Maria, Irma is in her natural element and affects.

IRMA
Hey, gang, this is my roommate,
Maria!

The actors collectively greet Maria.

ACTORS
Hi Maria! Hiiiiiii!

Maria smiles at them. Irma sits among the actors and chatters with one of them. Maria doesn't know what to do with herself or her coat.

SLAVKO
I suggest a trade.

Slavko hands Maria a glass of alcohol and takes her coat with his other hand.

MARIA
Thank you, but I don't drink.

Slavko throws the coat on the backrest, stares fixedly at Maria and sticks to her side. Maria moves away slightly, feeling uncomfortable. Slavko clinks his glass with hers.

SLAVKO
Slavko Amadej Vodvarka, at your
service.

Irma hears this and turns to Slavko.

IRMA
Save your charm! (to Maria) Slavko
wrote this comedy, and he writes
satire for magazine Thorn.

Maria nods, indicating that she knows about Thorn.

SLAVKO
So, did you like it tonight?

MARIA
(uncertainly) It was nice.

SLAVKO
Just "nice". Hm. How nice of you.

MARIA (CONT'D)
You're talented at mocking human weaknesses.

SLAVKO
(roguishly)
"Humani nihil a me alienum puto".

Maria looks at this bug who puts her on some kind of test by speaking Latin with restrained contempt and sighs.

MARIA
Ok, you consider nothing human is alien to you..

IRMA
And female even less! Leave her be!
(sees Bach)
Here he comes!

Behind Maria comes JOSIP BACH (23).

BACH
(to the actors)
You were great! Ex- cel- lent!
Freundenreich, you're still overacting a bit, but it'll be good.
(sees Maria) Maria?

MARIA
Josip Bach!

Bach warmly hugs Maria. Then he steps back and looks at her.

BACH
You're a grown woman!

SLAVKO
And such a woman!

And he drinks up. Maria rolls her eyes "what a annoying jerk".

MARIA
You told me I had to grow up fast so we could work on the show together!

Both of them laugh at it as a nice memory. Irma is not jealous but she doesn't want to be in the background when Bach is around.

IRMA

We watched the play! You set it up brilliantly!

Bach doesn't pay attention to Irma, he hugs Maria in a friendly way and addresses everyone.

BACH

Maria acted in the drama group I led in school of the Merciful Sisters.

Everyone is surprised, especially Slavko.

SLAVKO

(to Maria, lasciviously)
Oh! I hope you kept your uniform.

MARIA

(to Slavko, retorts) I did, and the whip for penance!

Slavko smiles, he finds her cute.

BACH

Maria wrote one-act plays and acted in them.

Slavko looks at Maria with different eyes and interest.

BACH (CONT'D) (CONT'D)

(to Slavko) Don't worry, she's not your competition. She likes patriotic melodramas.

Bach's tone doesn't sit well with Maria, so she checks.

MARIA

Were they bad?

BACH

Not at all! For a fifteen-year-old girl. Still, it was just pathetic scribbling on paper.

Maria's smile freezes. Slavko notices it.

BACH (CONT'D)

(to everyone) I remember she signed one of them with - Zagorka.

Bach doesn't want to offend, he's just tactless, and the actors laugh only out of courtesy to their director. But Maria's face stiffens, and Slavko sympathizes with her.

SLAVKO

If you were a better teacher, she would have written better. She obviously had talent.

Bach looks at Slavko in surprise, who looks at him challengingly.

IRMA

Bach didn't mean anything bad, right? And you don't have to defend her, Slavkic, she has a husband for that.

Maria is shocked by Irma's statement, and Slavko is also surprised.

SLAVKO

(to Maria, sourly) The lady is married? Cheers to that!

Slavko takes Marij's drink and drinks it all at once. Maria feels betrayed, hurt by Irma, but Irma has already turned to Bach.

SLAVKO (CONT'D)

Married, so what? It's nothing to be ashamed of.

MARIA

I'm not, but she should be!

Maria grabs her purse and coat and leaves the cafe. Irma doesn't notice, focused on Bach.

Slavko watches Maria leave, feeling sorry that she's going.

EXT. MARTA'S RELATIVE'S APARTMENT - BUILDING. NIGHT.

Maria arrives outside the building where she currently lives.

IRMA (V.O.)

Maria! Maria, stop!

Maria turns around and sees Irma running towards her.

IRMA (CONT'D)

Why are you upset?

MARIA

I don't want people gossiping about my personal life!

IRMA

(laughs) But, nobody cares! Everyone only thinks about themselves and doesn't care whether you're married or not! (hugs Maria) Seriously, I was just joking.

MARIA

Marriage isn't a joke. It's a prison

IRMA

It doesn't have to be if the woman
knows what she wants and needs..

Maria smiles reluctantly because Irma is tipsy and silly.

IRMA (CONT'D)

Take Slavko, for example. I mean,
litteraly, take him! Have fun!

Maria gives Irma a contemptuous look.

IRMA (CONT'D)

It's true, he's not handsome, but
he's got some moves! Women a-do-re
him. (winks meaningfully) And for
a goood reason, I hear.

MARIA

I'm not interested!

Maria enters the building, followed by Irma.

IRMA

A! Du bist eine Lesben, aren't
you? Just so you know, ich liebe
Manner, haarigen Manner..

Maria rolls her eyes and slams the door in Irma's face.

INT. IRMA'S ROOM - MARTA'S RELATIVE'S APARTMENT. DAY

Maria and Irma are getting ready for bed.

IRMA

You're too sensitive.

MARIA

That's what people say when they
hurt somebody and just don't care.

Irma gets tangled in her dress and falls on the bed. It's
comical, but Maria is serious.

MARIA (CONT'D)

What does that even mean, that I
have to put up with every fool at
any cost?

IRMA

Verzeihung, aber Slavko isn't a
fool.

(amicably and firmly)

You have the wrong attitude! With
that attitude, life will be a barren
agony without any enjoyment.

MARIA

I'm not interested in that kind of "enjoyment"!

IRMA

Then go back to the convent.

MARIA

Better there than in a brothel of the teather!

Irma looks at her in surprise.

MARIA (CONT'D)

Sorry...

IRMA

Anyway, you can't get divorced, you can only get annoyed.

MARIA

Why not? You got divorced.

They lie down in bed. Irma turns off the light.

IRMA

In Vienna, you can, but here. . . Did your husband beat you and break your ribs?

MARIA

No.

IRMA

Then you won't get a divorce. And even if you get it, no one will blame your husband, but you. On top of that, you foolish girl don't want to live while you're young!

Maria angrily exhales, but not at Irma, at people.

IRMA (CONT'D)

Herzlich, don't be angry. I really like you.

Irma turns to the other side and falls asleep. Maria tries to fall asleep, but she can't. She gets up and takes out "Rauch's folder" from her bag.

INT. IRMA'S ROOM - MARTA'S RELATIVE'S APARTMENT. DAY.

It's morning. Irma is snoring. Maria is dressed to go out. She takes a paper with the title JEDAN ČASAK (Egy Percz). Maria skims the text that is in Croatian and starts to put it in "Rauch's folder." She stops. Defiantly squints at the signature: JURICA ZAGORSKI. Then decisively crosses it out. She signs it with - ZAGORKA.

CUT TO:

EXT. CITY STREET - ZAGREB. DAY.

Maria stands in front of the "Obzor" building and waits for a carriage to pass. She crosses the street determinedly.

INT. OBZOR - HALLWAY. DAY.

Maria walks down the hallway towards the editorial office, listening to the sound of typewriters from inside. She strides decisively towards the office.

INT. OBZOR - NEWSROOM. DAY.

Maria walks past the desks and journalists. Everyone turns to look at her, confused. Maria approaches Pasaric's desk and puts her papers in front of him on his desk.

MARIA

I brought you the proof.

Pasaric frowns.

INT. OBZOR - NEWSROOM. DAY - CONTINUED

Pasaric scans her text, the title ONE MOMENT (Egy Percz), then back to Maria, then back to the text.

MARIA

This is a translation of today's Budapest Tagblatt... that you haven't printed yet.

PASARIC

(sneeringly)

You don't say.

MARIA

It's about how peasants get on the wrong trains because they don't know that "edj pert" means the train stays at the station for a moment.

Journalists gather around Pasaric's desk, curiously.

PASARIC

(stops her)

I know that. So. You've been translating articles published in Tagblatt and Hirlap in Croatian and sending them to our office?

MARIA

Yes. Right after I sent them originals.

Silence. The only thing you can hear is the buzzing of brains trying to understand what she's saying.

PASARIC

How can that be?

MARIA

Well.. it's known that you can't publish articles that are critical of the government in Obzor because the censors would remove them. But I knew they couldn't touch articles that come from Hungarian newspapers, no matter how critical they are...

Pasaric nods as he understands the logic, but he's completely bewildered otherwise.

MARIA (CONT'D)

..so I came up with an idea to send you their translations by mail at *the same time* I send them to Tagblatt, so you can publish them as soon as possible.

(victoriously)

And it worked!

Maria points to her translation in front of Pasaric.

MARIA (CONT'D)

This one, I wanted to give you in person.

PASARIC

So..you know who Jurica Zagorski is?

This refusal to accept the obvious starts to annoy Maria.

MARIA

I AM Jurica Zagorski.

(smiles)

From today, I sign as Zagorka.

After the first encounter with an alien, denial is normal. Silence descended on the editorial office for several long seconds. Maria passes through the confused and angry faces of the journalists.

DEŽMAN

(snaps, to Pasaric)

Josip, she's been sent to destroy us.

Maria is confused.

DEŽMAN (CONT'D)

If we fall for the provocation and admit that a woman is behind Zagorski - Obzor is dead.

PASARIC

For Khuen sympathisers, as well as for the opposition. For all subscribers!

The journalists murmur with a mixture of fear and anger.

Mazzura came out of his office. Several journalists saw him and immediately withdrew in fear.

Maria realizes that no one believes her. She begins to quote the article quickly and decisively, like a machine gun.

MARIA

Our gentlemen in power compete in pleasing the Hungarians as much as possible, while the people suffer their oppression. But, gentlemen oppressors, beware! You might come to a station where the people will shout One moment! to your survival!
(points to the text) The thirtieth line.

Maria's confidence shook Pasaric. He helplessly sits down.

PASARIC

I'm gonna kill myself.

Maria puts on the most charming smile.

PASARIC (CONT'D)

I've never heard of a female journalist anywhere in Europe..

He looks at the journalists if they have heard of such a creature, and they all dismiss this idea with disgust.

Dežman is a well known scientist with a sharp mind.

DEŽMAN

Why was Matray receiving the fee for Zagorski, if you are him?

Maria realizes she's entering a trap and can't avoid it.

MARIA

Matray is my husband.

Maria is free-falling and grasping for air.

MARIA (CONT'D)

No editor can transfer the money to a woman's name only to her husband's.

DEŽMAN

A well-known Hungarian nationalist.

MARIA

He is, yes - but I'm not!

Maria takes a breath, aware that she can't lose her temper now.

MARIA (CONT'D)

Think about it. If my husband wrote those articles, he would be here, not me.

PASARIC

Then he can come and testify that you are Jurica Zagorski, right?

MARIA

He can't. (straightens up) He can, but he won't. We're not on good terms.

"Click!" - the trap is closed. Pasaric stands up and signals that the conversation is over.

PASARIC

I'll have to think about it. I'll let you know.

MARIA

I can be useful as an editor for Hungarian newspaper articles.
(enthusiastically)
I'll do anything, just let me work with you here.

At her last words, the journalists stirr in discomfort, it's a picture they don't like at all.

PASARIC

Please, leave now.
(points to the exit)
We'll let you know, either way.

MAZZURA

(roars)
No! We won't!!

Mazzura, walking tornado, is approaching.

INT. OBZOR - NEWSROOM. DAY. - CONTINUED

Mazzura pulls Maria by the collar and the arm towards the exit. He is very tall, she is short, he almost carries her through the editorial office. Journalists move out of his way.

MAZZURA

No woman is going to sit in Obzor while I'm the director!

PASARIC

Shime, don't take it out on the woman.

The journalists are uncomfortable, but no one opposes the boss. Maria collects herself from the first shock, pushes Mazzura away and stands on her own, angry.

MARIA

Do you like to use violence against
someone weaker than you!?

The journalists are appalled - she crossed the line, all lines any of them could ever tolerate. In Mazzura, anger reaches boiling point.

When Maria turns to leave, he grabs her from behind under the shoulder and lifts her up into the air...

EXT. CITY STREET - BUILDING OF OBZOR. DAN.

Mazzura roughly drops, almost throws Maria onto the street in front of the entrance to Obzor.

MAZZURA

I don't know what your plan was,
but if you step through these doors
again, I'll kill you like a dog!

Maria gets up as quickly as she can. She is completely in shock.

She gathers her things from the floor and pieces of her dignity. Passers-by look at her, appalled, and avoid her.

Maria walks down the street, humiliated to the core. She angrily wipes away a tear and grits her teeth defiantly.

DISSOLVE INTO:

EXT. JURJEVSKA STREET - ZAGREB. NIGHT

A man in a coat hurries down the empty street, carrying a thick folder under his arm. He enters through the massive street doors, behind which we see a luxurious palace.

This is Josip Pasaric. As he enters, we read on the sign above the door "JURJEVSKA 5".

EXT. STROSSMAYER PALACE/COURTYARD - NIGHT.

Pasaric hears footsteps approaching from inside. The door is opened by a SERVANT IN LIVERY (20). The man in the coat hands a letter to the Servant.

PASARIC

Good evening. For his eminence's
eyes only.

The servant nods. Before closing the door completely, a loud voice is heard from inside.

BISHOP (V.O.)

Josip! Is that you?!

INT. STROSSMAYER PALACE - FOYER. NIGHT.

The servant closes the door behind Pasaric, who looks around the foyer: an architecturally ornate, baroque foyer signaling that the owner is not at all ascetic.

Actually, a huge portrait on the wall shows a Catholic Bishop in his 40s in a luxurious red bishop's dress.

BISHOP (V.O.)

My dear Josip!

BISHOP JOSIP J. STROSSMAYER (90), the man in the portrait, approaches him in pajamas, slippers and with a nightcap on his head. But, he's a man who looks powerful without any signs of power on himself.

BISHOP (CONT'D)

What trouble brings you here at this hour?

The bishop warmly shakes Pasaric's hand, like an old friend.

PASARIC

A woman, Your Excellency.

The bishop brightens up like a true Slavonian who has caught a whiff of bacon.

BISHOP

Oh! Women are my favorite kind of trouble!

Pasaric smiles at the lively bishop, despite his tiredness. The bishop hugs him and they head towards the room, while the servant starts to extinguish oil lamps in the foyer.

CUT TO:

EXT. JURJEVSKA STREET. NIGHT.

The foyer light is now as dim as that on the empty street. Lights are turned off in the windows of the upper town buildings. Somewhere in the distance, a coachman's shout of a warning is heard, "Oopaaa!"

END OF 1. EPISODE