

AN IMPOSSIBLE LOVE

CHARACTERS:

NICOLE
ALEXANDRA

Scene 1

NICOLE:

The story you will see never happened.....

DE TRADUS

Scene 2

A lawyer firm. Typical meeting room, without any personal touch. A big round table, some office type seats, some artistic objects: a painting, a sculpture, some art albums.

At the table: ALEXANDRA dressed in an office suit and NICOLE with casual neat clothes. ALEXANDRA takes an interview to NICOLE and she is marking the answers on some papers she has on a notepad.

NICOLE
Atanasescu.

ALEXANDRA
How old are you?

NICOLE
Twenty-eight.

ALEXANDRA
Hmm.

NICOLE
What?

ALEXANDRA
Nothing.

NICOLE
You think it's odd?

ALEXANDRA
No.

NICOLE
People die very young nowadays. Don't you know? Atherosclerosis. Sudden death. Heart attack under thirty years of age. Stuff like that.

ALEXANDRA
Are you a doctor?

NICOLE
No. I work in IT. Computer stuff.

ALEXANDRA
Yes, I know.

NICOLE
But I've had to deal with them – doctors, I mean.

ALEXANDRA
Oh. I'm sorry.

NICOLE
Why?

ALEXANDRA
Well – in general, dealing with doctors is not a pleasant thing, is it?

NICOLE
You think so?

ALEXANDRA
(embarrassed)
Whatever.

(she looks in her papers)
Look, we really have here something about that... Here, yes... You work for... We need the name of your employer.

NICOLE
I'm not employed. I'm working project-based.

ALEXANDRA

You are a free-lancer.

NICOLE
Sort of. What about you?

ALEXANDRA
What about me?

NICOLE
For how long are you working here?

ALEXANDRA
Three months.

NICOLE
Uh-huh.

ALEXANDRA
I'm a stagier.

NICOLE
Nice.

ALEXANDRA
Yeah. Whatever.

NICOLE
Isn't it nice?

ALEXANDRA
Yes, it is. Yes. But only I... It's a very long way for me in this career. I have to work very hard.

NICOLE
You are filling questionnaires.

ALEXANDRA
Well, no...

NICOLE
For strange young women.

ALEXANDRA
Strange? That's not true.
(short break)
I really enjoy working with you.

NICOLE
Honestly?

ALEXANDRA
Yes, honestly.

NICOLE
It's not just another standard formula for a good professional relationship?

ALEXANDRA
No.

NICOLE
It sounds like that.

ALEXANDRA
It is not.
(A long exchange of glances)

NICOLE
I have a feeling I can believe you.

ALEXANDRA
Well, there are some standard formulations for such situations...

NICOLE
I see...

ALEXANDRA
But I really like you. Honestly.
(short break)
Look what stupid things you make me to say.

NICOLE
Why that? It's OK.

ALEXANDRA
A lawyer-client relationship isn't just about printing some sheets. The lawyer had to understand the problem in its entirety, in order to be able to draw up that document which comprises all the legal aspects of the case. We have to think about those things that you don't- or can't - anticipate. But they are born from human problems and sufferings.

NICOLE
"Human problems and sufferings". Nicely said. I think you read a lot.

ALEXANDRA

Yeah, whatever... There are some special clauses you want to mention in your will?

NICOLE

One only.

ALEXANDRA

Yes?

NICOLE

I don't want an orthodox funeral. I want to be incinerated.

ALEXANDRA

I see.

NICOLE

That's why I want to have this will.

ALEXANDRA

That's the only reason?

NICOLE

(thinks for a moment)

Yes. That's all.

ALEXANDRA

Are you afraid that some people could not agree with this specific will?

NICOLE

Oh yes!! My entire family!

ALEXANDRA

Your mother, your father?

NICOLE

The uncles, my aunts... Everybody! But they don't really care... They are all so far away from me...

ALEXANDRA

You are not from Bucharest.

NICOLE

No. You?

ALEXANDRA

Born and educated "after the blocks".
Sorry – that question doesn't exist in this formulary.

NICOLE
No problem.

ALEXANDRA
No?

(A long exchange of glances)

NICOLE
If I don't want, I don't answer – isn't it? It's pure logic.

ALEXANDRA
(strangely moved)
Fine... Who do you want to be your executor?

NICOLE
What?

ALEXANDRA
The executor is that person which...

NICOLE
No, no. I understand. I mean – I can imagine what that person is.

ALEXANDRA
The ideal thing would be to name a friend. Someone who can understand all the aspects: the legal, as well as the social ones.

NICOLE
A friend – sure.

ALEXANDRA
Yes, a friend.

NICOLE
OK. I'll think about it.

ALEXANDRA
That means that we'll have to meet another time.

NICOLE
Is that a problem?

ALEXANDRA

Not at all. But that will cost you extra. We are remunerated by hour. It won't be so much. When you'll decide you can call me – here is my card. We will fix another meeting at once. There won't be such many supplementary details. For example – you'll have to do a list with all your values – the important ones – and the people you want to receive these values.

NICOLE

This is movie like.

ALEXANDRA

We will do this list only if you want such.

NICOLE

Yes, of course – just I... It's weird...

ALEXANDRA

This whole story is weird.

NICOLE

You think so?

ALEXANDRA

You don't see every day young beautiful women which wants to sign their will.

NICOLE

Thank you. But I don't feel beautiful. Nor young.

ALEXANDRA

The youth relies in your soul.

NICOLE

Precisely.

ALEXANDRA

And the beauty in others eyes.

NICOLE

You read a lot.

ALEXANDRA

Mostly law books.

What about you? What hobbies do you have?

NICOLE

This is in your formulary?

ALEXANDRA

You won't believe it – yes.

NICOLE

Oh. Well... not much.

I like movies. I download them from internet. I don't get out often. I used to go to theatre a lot. Not anymore. Lately I enjoy making puzzles. You now – that big ones, with thousands of pieces. I finish one in one or two months.

ALEXANDRA

Cool!

NICOLE

What about you?

ALEXANDRA

(she smiles)

This is not in my formulary.

Scene 3

A cafeteria, in the evening.

Alexandra and Nicole at a table. Some empty glasses between them.

ALEXANDRA

That's it. So... Are you thinking about killing yourself?!

NICOLE

Why do you ask?

ALEXANDRA

Lawyer's duty. We have to know everything.

NICOLE

Yeah? That was the reason for your theatre invitation? How did you said? "Human problems and sufferings"

ALEXANDRA

Maybe. Maybe I just enjoyed the moment.

NICOLE

Me too.

ALEXANDRA

Suicide is a grave sin.

NICOLE
So they say.

ALEXANDRA
It's true.

NICOLE
If you believe that kind of stories.

ALEXANDRA
You don't believe in God?

NICOLE laughs.

Pause.

NICOLE
Do you?

ALEXANDRA
Yes. With all my heart.

NICOLE
Then – sorry.

ALEXANDRA
You don't have to apologize. I'm just trying to help.

NICOLE
You would help a lot if you'll finish that will faster.

ALEXANDRA
Are you in a hurry?

NICOLE
Not tonight.
(pause)
(she signs for another bottle of wine.)
Well?

ALEXANDRA
(she covers her glass with the hand)
Not anymore...

NICOLE
Com'on... If I'll take another glass you'll never know what I should say to you...

(she pours her first)

ALEXANDRA

Yes. And I'll take a table dance.

NICOLE

Huh – that will be interesting!

ALEXANDRA

No – believe me! And I'll never catch the last metro.

NICOLE

We'll take a taxi. It's on me. And the wine too.

ALEXANDRA

No, no...

NICOLE

Yes, yes. You bought the theatre tickets – don't you?

(she gently takes away Alexandra's hand and pours her a glass of wine)

Cheers!

ALEXANDRA

Cheers!

(They drink)

It has been a very nice evening.

NICOLE

Yeah.

ALEXANDRA

The play was lovely.

NICOLE

Really?

ALEXANDRA

What do you mean?

NICOLE

You actually liked it?

ALEXANDRA

A lot. Didn't you?

NICOLE

I haven't seen such an abomination in a long time. What, does that come as a shock to you?

ALEXANDRA

No, I'm just surprised...

NICOLE

The most annoying thing was the applause at the end. The cheering! I believe this type of entertainment is not for me anymore. It gives me the feeling that I'm the crazy one and That I don't understand "Art" – although I know that's not the case. Because I have other terms for comparison.

ALEXANDRA

I have no terms for comparison.

NICOLE

There's no problem if you liked it. Good for you.

ALEXANDRA

What bothered you so much?

NICOLE

I can't stand lies.

ALEXANDRA

You didn't think the love stories seemed credible?

NICOLE

The stories were OK. The acting...

ALEXANDRA

For me it was the opposite. I liked the actors, not the stories.

NICOLE

(laughs)

Why?

ALEXANDRA

At least the second story was...

NICOLE

The one about the lesbians? Why?

ALEXANDRA

Well... I don't think you find that type of women everywhere you go.

NICOLE

Oh, there are a few...

ALEXANDRA

Maybe, but...

NICOLE

Besides, this is theatre – exemplary stories.

ALEXANDRA

And still...

NICOLE

Oh, come on, you never happened to like the way a woman looked and...

ALEXANDRA

Excuse me?!

NICOLE

What? I was joking, what is the matter with you?!

(Nicole glances at Alexandra and thinks of something)

(long pause)

ALEXANDRA

What is it about a funeral that bothers you so much?

NICOLE

Sorry?

ALEXANDRA

I was asking you...

NICOLE

Yes. The ceremony.

ALEXANDRA

Oh.

NICOLE

It's so stupid.

ALEXANDRA

Stupid?

NICOLE

Yes. Ridiculous.

ALEXANDRA

Ridiculous. Some people believe in it.

NICOLE

I don't.

ALEXANDRA

Still... The flames...

NICOLE

What flames?

ALEXANDRA

I was referring to cremation. Wanting to burn...

NICOLE

But I don't want that!

ALEXANDRA

But you said...

NICOLE

Yes. Because that won't be me in there, but a mouldy, livid body.

ALEXANDRA

This is becoming morbid.

NICOLE

All I'm saying is – ashes seem more hygienic.

ALEXANDRA

I thought they were more pale than livid.

NICOLE

Who?

ALEXANDRA

People.

NICOLE

People? You mean – corpses?

ALEXANDRA

Corpses – yes...

NICOLE

I think it differs, from one case to another.

ALEXANDRA

This is becoming morbid.

NICOLE

Yes – I have this gift – to cheer up people.

(Change in light – spot on Alexandra.)

ALEXANDRA

And then I suddenly remembered of Sylvia. Strange and said – an old memory. This is the wine working – I said to me.

Sylvia, my only friend in high school. A crazy girl. She liked boys so much! I didn't see her for two years after I went to college. And one day, just like that, I found out she had died. Stupidly, in a motorcycle accident. Twenty two years old. I didn't even recognize her at the wake. She lay there... A body... So pale. She had already begun to reek. She had such a kind soul. God forgive her.

And when you think... she was so full of life. In high school we were... We sat naked one in front of the other and... And now there's a feeling an emptiness in my stomach when I remember it.

(She suddenly start coughing. The light changes and we are seeing Nicole smoking with an absent appearance.)

ALEXANDRA

Sorry. I can't stand the smoke.

NICOLE

No. You have to excuse me. I can't help myself. (she trays the cigarette) Shall we go?

ALEXANDRA

Yes, it would be better.

(Nicole waves for the waiter)

NICOLE

I pay, OK?

ALEXANDRA

Fine.

NICOLE

Thank you for the evening.

ALEXANDRA

Me too. Next time I'll come to see your puzzle collection.

NICOLE

Neah, you cannot enter so easily in my boudoir.
Next time I'll take you to some special effects movie to Mall.

ALEXANDRA

I don't like them.

NICOLE

As you like it. Your loss.

Scene 4

The lawyer firm. The meeting room. Nicole, sitting by the window, stares out, with a cigarette in her hand, barely refraining herself from lighting it. Alexandra comes in.

NICOLE

Hi.

ALEXANDRA

Hi.

NICOLE

Why are you avoiding me?

ALEXANDRA

I'm not.

NICOLE

You are avoiding to look in my eyes.

ALEXANDRA

(stares at her eyes)

NICOLE

OK. Fine.

ALEXANDRA

Why did you come here?

NICOLE

I had an idea about my will.

ALEXANDRA

Oh. From yesterday night till this morning.

NICOLE

Ah! I knew it – you are upset for what happened yesterday night.

ALEXANDRA

Nothing happened yesterday night.

NICOLE

Correct!

ALEXANDRA

Nicole, I was in the middle of an important meeting...

NICOLE

I should have called first?

ALEXANDRA

Yeep!

You should know that the will is not ready yet. It takes some time.

NICOLE

I know. That's not the reason I'm here.

ALEXANDRA

Then what?

NICOLE

I'm sorry about the other night.

ALEXANDRA

You don't have to be.

NICOLE

I know.

ALEXANDRA

You know!

NICOLE

In fact you only want to see my puzzle collection. And after that you told me all those things about your boy friend and...

ALEXANDRA
I thought I can trust you.

NICOLE
So you really can.

ALEXANDRA
(shrugs in doubt)

NICOLE
Alexandra
(She reaches for her hand but Alexandra avoids her)
You can trust me.
Honestly.

ALEXANDRA
OK. Then – you are probably right. It was my entire fault. I came to you. I said all that stuff...
and maybe... something in my attitude...

NICOLE
No! I don't know...
I don't do stuff like that. Ever.

ALEXANDRA
Me neither – thank God!

NICOLE
It was just a silly impulse.

ALEXANDRA
It's a sin.

NICOLE
Why? It was OK!
Pause.
What? It wasn't OK? You didn't like it?

ALEXANDRA
Could we go back to the will?

NICOLE
I liked it. I mean – it was a bit strange, but...

ALEXANDRA
Please!

Pause.

ALEXANDRA

It's a sin. A grave one. In front of God, that's what I mean.

NICOLE

Oh – that kind of sin! I get it. (*short pause*) So I've turned you into a sinner. (*short pause*) Now you're going to go to Hell because of me?

ALEXANDRA

Don't be silly.

NICOLE

Was I a temptation from the Devil?

ALEXANDRA

Don't joke about these things, please.

NICOLE

No, it's really cool! What do you know – maybe I'm Satan in the flesh!

ALEXANDRA

Don't mention...!

NICOLE

Wow! It's really serious.

(*short pause*)

I don't get it. How can you believe in these things?

ALEXANDRA

I don't need you to get it. It's my problem. "OK"?

NICOLE

OK.

ALEXANDRA

If you don't want to work with me anymore...

NICOLE

Are you kidding? More than ever!

ALEXANDRA

Why?

NICOLE

What other temptation could be greater for the-one-whose-name-shall-not-be mentioned than a pure soul such as yours?

ALEXANDRA
I thought we could be friends.

NICOLE
I think we still can.

ALEXANDRA
Then please stop talking like that about God! It's my faith!

NICOLE
OK. Sorry.

Pause.

ALEXANDRA
So?

NICOLE
Huh?

ALEXANDRA
You said something about the will.

NICOLE
Oh, yes, yes.
(short break)
I'd like you to be my executor.

ALEXANDRA
Me?!

NICOLE
It would be interesting – right?

ALEXANDRA
I don't think so.

NICOLE
It will be exciting.

ALEXANDRA
You have a very romantic notion of what a lawyer does.

NICOLE

Maybe. So? What do you say?

ALEXANDRA

Why me?

NICOLE

Because you're a stranger.

ALEXANDRA

Thanks.

NICOLE

No, really. I mean – I'm sorry, but... I mean... OK. We like each other. We drank a glass of wine together one night, we also licked each other for about a minute...

ALEXANDRA

You don't need to go into details.

NICOLE: It was probably on an empty stomach and that's why.

ALEXANDRA

Yeah, sure.

NICOLE

Because I have no such predilections.

ALEXANDRA

Me neither.

NICOLE

Thank God. Thank God! – as they say.

ALEXANDRA

Yes, they do say that.

NICOLE

So – coming back – I was saying that we're virtually friends or could become friends or we could become even better friends. That is, if the licking part wasn't a hold back.

ALEXANDRA

Would you please stop mentioning...?

NICOLE

OK. OK. But, all in all, we are... Each with her own business, with her own life.

ALEXANDRA
Right.

NICOLE
Right. And that helps me. Because an executor will have to fight my troglodyte family.

ALEXANDRA
In case you die.

NICOLE
Yes.
(short break)
Are you satisfied by that answer?

ALEXANDRA
Hmm.
(short break)
It will cost you.

NICOLE
What? The funeral?

ALEXANDRA
No.

NICOLE
Cremation is cheaper. And more honest.

ALEXANDRA
Being your executor will cost you. It's serious work, you know.

NICOLE
Wow! You play hard ball! I like it!

ALEXANDRA
If you can't afford it...

NICOLE
I can afford it. You know that.

ALEXANDRA
Your parents could use that money.

NICOLE
Uh-huh. So now we're in psychology class, or what?

ALEXANDRA
Why not?

NICOLE
It's not working.

ALEXANDRA
Then stop insisting.

NICOLE
Why?

ALEXANDRA
It's not for me.

NICOLE
It's doesn't matter to me that you have no experience or that your bosses treat you like dirt...

ALEXANDRA
Thank you.

NICOLE
I appreciate you.

ALEXANDRA
Wow, I already feel better.

NICOLE
No, come on now – it's as clear as day – they gave you a case. A nut job who wants a will at the age of thirty. So what? This is not... a big legal thing. I think. Just paperwork.

ALEXANDRA
It's getting better and better.

NICOLE
But *to me* it is important. And *it's good* that it's you.

ALEXANDRA
I just got a promotion, if you care to know.

NICOLE
See?

ALEXANDRA
What?

NICOLE

That means that I'm not the only one who trusts you. Do we have a deal?

ALEXANDRA

(sighs; after a long pause)

I can't do it, Nicole.

NICOLE: Why not?

ALEXANDRA

I can draw up your will. After all, it's just papers, as you very well put it. But this whole story with the cremation and the fact that you don't want a burial service...

NICOLE

What? Don't say you'd much rather throw a few shovels of dirt over my body.

ALEXANDRA

Hmm. It's not that. There's a whole symbolism in it...

NICOLE

Yes... Returning to one's origins, becoming one with the universe...

ALEXANDRA

Yes, and...

NICOLE

... Passing into a new cycle. That kind of stuff.

ALEXANDRA

Sort of. Yeah.

NICOLE

I know. I was once passionate about the history of religions.

ALEXANDRA

Then you have to be familiar with the beauty of those beliefs.

NICOLE

Oh, come on!

ALEXANDRA

You can disagree... But you can't force me to agree with you either.

NICOLE

Isn't that a lack of professionalism on your side?

ALEXANDRA

No. I was designated to draw up your will. No one can force me to be your executor as well. If you don't have someone, a friend...

NICOLE

Alexandra! I don't have a friend. That's why...

ALEXANDRA

... Then it's right of me to recommend someone from this office who could occupy that role successfully.

NICOLE

Fine! OK! I get the idea!

ALEXANDRA

Nicole... I wish I could help you. Honestly. Help you, not participate in this whole madness...

NICOLE

I know that service is forbidden for suicides anyway, so what do the "flames" matter in case...

ALEXANDRA

Exactly! I don't want you to end up there!

NICOLE

Why? Am I going to Hell?

ALEXANDRA

If... Yes.

NICOLE

If you believe in God.

ALEXANDRA

Anyway.

NICOLE

But it's just a bedtime story...

ALEXANDRA

You're offending me.

NICOLE

And you me. It's my business what I do with my life!

ALEXANDRA

Of course.

NICOLE

So no one has the right to judge me.

ALEXANDRA

But I'm not judging you.

NICOLE

... No stinking God!

ALEXANDRA

What harm did God do to you to make you so bitter?

NICOLE

He didn't do anything. That's just it. Because He doesn't exist!

ALEXANDRA

You really like repeating that!

NICOLE

Yes. It's fundamental truth for the everyday life.

Nicole storms out.

Scene 5

*In a trolley in his way to the garage – almost empty. Late evening.
Alexandra sits on a chair.*

ALEXANDRA

Stop staring, beard face! Ugly! I never liked bearded men, if you care like to know. Not even him. A sad truth for a girl who goes to church. Ha ha! Poor girl! Take the cab, he told me. But there are more people in the trolley bus, there's no risk that the cab driver might have a goatee or gel in his hair or be a perv... Yeah, like this obese, tired trolley is any fuller. It's a good thing I caught it. Look at that, there's dirt under my nails. I look like I've been working with a plough. Pulling on the wagon of existence. Ha ha. We are born in sin. And you, old lady, what are you looking at? The hairs on the cheek are tolerable, but the ones you feel when you stick your hand inside... Honey, it's just a game. We're so close now. So close. We're full of sin, aren't we, old lady? I'd better get off at the next stop. I'll walk there. His breath was bitter – it seemed more tolerable before. So what if it rained, we had a blanket. My mouth is dry. And there's just the two of us here. Just the two of us. The sky was really grey. Monotonous, quiet. Quiet, just like him. Until the storm. By force. We're just so close. Close to what? The sky – no way. What did I tell you about quiet men? I'm such an idiot! I'm more of an idiot than that drunk beggar. Happy glue-sniffer, yours is the kingdom of Heaven. Amen. I need a file, these won't come off when I wash them.

Scene 6

Nicole is on the couch, dressed casually. She is working on her laptop. A wine bottle and two glasses are on the table.

The doorbell rings. She goes to open the door. It's Alexandra, in a modest evening dress.

NICOLE

Hi.

ALEXANDRA

I thought you'd gone out. To the theatre.

NICOLE

Nooo. I have to hand in a project. *(closes the laptop)*

ALEXANDRA

If I'm keeping you from work...

NICOLE

No no no. It's OK. The project's OK and I really needed a break.

Pause.

NICOLE

So, what's wrong?

ALEXANDRA

Should we drink some wine?

NICOLE

Sure. Look, I'm ready.

ALEXANDRA

You must think I'm a drunk...

NICOLE

Or you must think I am one.

ALEXANDRA

Never.

NICOLE

After all, I'm the one with a cabinet full of bottles.

Nicole opens the bottle, pours. The toast, they drink. Alexandra downs her glass in one sip.

NICOLE

Wow! You must be really thirsty.

ALEXANDRA

Hmm. *(she holds out the glass again)*

NICOLE

So – what’s up with you?

ALEXANDRA

Nothing. *(Nicole pours, Alexandra laps up the second glass as well)*

NICOLE

Something’s wrong.

ALEXANDRA

Nooooo.

Alexandra stands up and starts to undress. Methodically.

NICOLE

What are you doing?

ALEXANDRA

Should we put some music on?

NICOLE

What’s up with you?

ALEXANDRA

Would you please put some music on? It would change the mood. I feel you’re tense.

NICOLE

I’m tense?

ALEXANDRA

Yeah... Pour some more wine.

NICOLE

No.

Alexandra finds the stereo and turns it on. There’s old rock music playing, something like Jethro Tull.

ALEXANDRA
Hmm. That works...

Nicole stands up, turns the stereo off.

NICOLE
No, it doesn't. Not at all. I only listen to that kind of music when I'm alone.

ALEXANDRA
Hmm. So many rules.
(She pours herself another glass of wine)
Then put on something else, something that will suit this moment.

NICOLE
What moment? Are you crazy?

ALEXANDRA
Ha ha ha. Miss Suicide should talk.

NICOLE
This is not funny, you know.

ALEXANDRA
Who says it should be funny?

Alexandra keeps taking her clothes off.

NICOLE
Stop. What do you want?

ALEXANDRA
I want... What's that term... It seems I haven't drunk enough.
(She downs the third glass as well, with a bit more difficulty)
Oh, yeah. I know. I want you to FUCK me.

NICOLE
(laughs)
Now you're funny.

ALEXANDRA
(finishes undressing. She's almost naked)
Am I?

NICOLE
What's up with you?

ALEXANDRA

I want you to fuck my brains out.

NICOLE laughs.

ALEXANDRA

I told you this is not funny.

NICOLE

It depends from what angle you're looking at it.

ALEXANDRA

What do you mean?

NICOLE

Given that I am NOT gay, I DON'T know if my experience will allow me to fuck your brains out.

ALEXANDRA

Whatever. It was just an expression. Something like "rock my world".

NICOLE

Something like that.

ALEXANDRA

Yeah.

NICOLE

This is what we are going to do.

ALEXANDRA

We have to do it.

NICOLE

OK. OK.

ALEXANDRA

You're the closest person I know. Except from God.

NICOLE

Forget about...

ALEXANDRA

You've stopped badmouthing Him. It's a start, you know.

NICOLE
Put some clothes on.

ALEXANDRA
Why? I'm not good enough for you?

NICOLE
Stop it. That's crazy talk.

ALEXANDRA
No, no, this could actually be a reason. You are... sweet.

NICOLE
Thanks. But I think you need someone to talk to right now, not someone to shag.

ALEXANDRA
Here's where you're wrong.

NICOLE
Especially when it comes to the closest person you know, as you said. Especially when it's a woman.

ALEXANDRA
I need a woman.

NICOLE
No. Put some clothes on, damn it!

ALEXANDRA
Stop cursing.

NICOLE
Please.

ALEXANDRA
This is what we are going to do: I'll put something on.

NICOLE: Okay.

ALEXANDRA
(while she puts her top back on)
And afterwards, I tell you what you think is bothering me...

NICOLE
Great.

ALEXANDRA

... And if at the end you say I'm right, you fuck me. Okay?

NICOLE: Fine.

ALEXANDRA heads towards the bottle.

NICOLE

No, no, no. The rest is for me.

ALEXANDRA

(walking across the room, a bit disoriented)

Yeah...

NICOLE

Well? Are you going to tell me?

ALEXANDRA

Sure, sure... Can I wash my hands first?

NICOLE

Of course. The bathroom is...

Scene 7

NICOLE

The whole story about the boyfriend who did this and that didn't convince me. OK, I can understand the thing about religion. Although... saving yourself for the wedding night seems...

OK, in that case, I can understand him more. Poor guy. He was aggressive. Whatever, maybe, what should I know. But in fact I think she was just looking for an excuse. Because it's what she had wanted from the very beginning. Not me – she.

Something happened while she was talking and...

I wasn't at all ready for this. Given the... physio-mechanical circumstances (*she smiles*). We improvised. (*she laughs*) And even if I didn't rock her world, we still reached a certain result. It was somewhat... thrilling. And afterwards... that is already another story.

Scene 8

Morning. Nicole is sleeping between the sheets.

Alexandra is making herself busy around the room – she is tidying up. The empty wine bottle falls to the ground with a loud noise. Nicole turns around.

NICOLE

(sleepy) What are you doing?!

ALEXANDRA
I'm tidying up a little.

NICOLE
At this hour?!

ALEXANDRA
It's almost ten o'clock.

NICOLE
Yeeees, I know. Exactly.

Alexandra gets into bed near Nicole and tries to tickle her.

ALEXANDRA
What time do you usually wake up?

NICOLE
Not at ten o'clock, anyway. Wait! Hey, stop! Cut it out!

Alexandra stops.

ALEXANDRA
So? What time?

NICOLE
Never before noon. *(She turns her back to Alexandra)*

ALEXANDRA
Wow!

Alexandra kisses her back, her hair.

NICOLE
What are you doing?!

ALEXANDRA
I'm usually in court at this hour...

NICOLE
So? What are you waiting for?

ALEXANDRA
(continues the game)
Today's Saturday, babe.

NICOLE
Stop it.

ALEXANDRA
(stops)
Do you want me to let you sleep?

NICOLE
Too late, baby.
(She turns to face her)

ALEXANDRA
(kisses her)
Well, you'll make an exception for our first morning together.

NICOLE
That's for sure.

Alexandra suddenly stands up and walks out of the room.

NICOLE
What are you doing?

Alexandra reenters with a full breakfast tray.

ALEXANDRA
Ta-daaa!

NICOLE
What's this?

Alexandra puts the tray on her lap.

ALEXANDRA
Guess.

Pause. Nicole quickly wakes up.

ALEXANDRA
Omelette, cheese, tomatoes...

NICOLE
I can see that.

ALEXANDRA
It's not OK? You don't eat in the morning?

(short pause)
I thought it would be nice.

NICOLE
Yes. It is.

ALEXANDRA
Enjoy!

NICOLE
Thanks.

Pause.

ALEXANDRA
The omelette is getting cold.

NICOLE
Take it away.

ALEXANDRA: Is there something wrong?

NICOLE: Take it away. Please. Take it away.

Alexandra exits with the tray, confused. Nicole stands up, paces around the room, trying not to cry. She finds the bottle of wine from the last evening under the bed. She sips the remains of the wine. Alexandra re-enters and tries to take her away the bottle.

ALEXANDRA
For the Christ's sake – what are you doing?

NICOLE
“For Christ's sake”. You mean – what the hell!
I'm trying to forget.
(she breaks down on the bed crying)

ALEXANDRA
I apologise. I don't know what for – but I do.

NICOLE
No, no. I'm sorry.
(she tries hardily to calm down)
That stupid tray remembered me of someone.

ALEXANDRA
(takes her in her arms)

Shhh.

NICOLE

I should get rid of it a long time ago.

ALEXANDER

You mustn't do such a horrible thing.

NICOLE

I'm sorry. I've been alone for three years.

ALEXANDRA

And I've been alone forever. So it seems to me now. So...

NICOLE

(whipping away the tears)
I had a small advantage then.

Scene 9

Empty space.

ALEXANDRA

It's nice. It's like a great release.

NICOLE

It's nice. Sometimes it's annoying.

ALEXANDRA

To not have doubts. To finally understand yourself.

NICOLE

To not hear the echo. That old, elegant house has a terrible echo.

ALEXANDRA

It's... exciting. And new.

NICOLE

It's annoying that you have to... get used to someone in the house.

ALEXANDRA

She never cleans up after herself. Clothes, dishes... nothing.

NICOLE

She's terribly formalist. Sometimes I'll leave laundry in her path on purpose.

ALEXANDRA

And she has that lost stare... Sometimes I think they're two little light bulbs flickering, like the screen of her laptop.

NICOLE

Okay, never underwear. In her path. Because she might presume something else...

ALEXANDRA

Although she does have gorgeous hair. I could sleep wrapped inside it.

NICOLE

She cooks well. It's interesting to be able to work and not stop for such petty things.

ALEXANDRA

I believe it would be the best sleep in my life.

NICOLE

However, sleeping in the same bed is torture.

ALEXANDRA

If we ever slept at the same hour.

NICOLE

As well as going out. She's paranoid – she thinks everyone knows what we are.

ALEXANDRA

It's madness.

NICOLE

It's madness.

ALEXANDRA

And I feel the due date closing in. The judgment.

NICOLE

It's a good thing I don't have to answer to anyone for this.

Scene 10

Seashore. At night. Full moon.

Nicole is alone. She caresses the sand with her hand. She listens to the waves.

Alexandra appears with a bottle that she keeps hidden behind her back.

ALEXANDRA
I finished “the nest”.

NICOLE
You finished “the nest”?

ALEXANDRA
Yees... I laid out the sleeping pads, the bags... I joined the sleeping bags. (*she smiles at her*) It wasn't easy at all – you know, they're not the same model and the zippers don't really fit together.

NICOLE
I'm sure. What about the luggage?

ALEXANDRA
I arranged them neatly under the tent.

NICOLE
Good girl.

ALEXANDRA
Have you ever been to the seaside like this?

NICOLE
Camping? Never.

ALEXANDRA
I went once – on a pilgrimage to Iași, to Saint Parascheva.

NICOLE
To see the relics?

ALEXANDRA
Uh-huh.

NICOLE
You kissed dead peoples' bones?

ALEXANDRA
I... They're holy objects.

NICOLE
Of course they are.

ALEXANDRA

I don't even think about them like that – like “bones”. They're holy objects.

NICOLE

I believe you. And what do you usually do there, pray? To have your wishes come true?

ALEXANDRA

Yes. It depends. Some people pray for health, others...

NICOLE

What about you? What did you pray for? Did you pray to be here with me one day?

ALEXANDRA

I didn't exactly imagine it like this...

NICOLE

But how?

ALEXANDRA

I prayed to have a family.

NICOLE

A family.

ALEXANDRA

You probably think I'm a weirdo.

NICOLE

No, no. I... You could say the same about me.

ALEXANDRA

No – why?

NICOLE

Just... a weirdo. With all my... memories and... the story with my will and...

ALEXANDRA

We all have our quirks.

NICOLE

Yeah.

ALEXANDRA

Here.

(She holds the bottle out to her)

NICOLE
Martini? Wow!

ALEXANDRA
I was hoping you'd like it.

NICOLE
My favourite! Are you crazy? Of course.

ALEXANDRA
Do you drink this with ice?

NICOLE
It's just as good dry.

ALEXANDRA
We don't have any glasses either...

NICOLE
Oh well! Cheers! (*She drinks straight from the bottle*)

ALEXANDRA
Cheers.

Pause.

ALEXANDRA
When I went to Iași I took lodging with some people there. I placed my tent on their property. It was nice. But this, now...

NICOLE
Yes, it's magical.

ALEXANDRA: It's a gift from God.

NICOLE
Hmm. That's one version. (*after a short pause*) I remember I went camping once – to the mountain side, in the Apuseni mountains. When I was in college, with my colleagues. Nice. I didn't think I would live through such... bohemian experiences. But your idea was much too cool.

ALEXANDRA
Daniel...

NICOLE
What about him?

ALEXANDRA

He didn't like things like this?

NICOLE

No. Why did you bring him up?

ALEXANDRA

Sorry.

(pause)

You promised... you'd tell me.

NICOLE

Sometime.

ALEXANDRA

Sometime, yes. I think it's been a while and...

NICOLE

What would you like to know?

ALEXANDRA

What your life was like.

NICOLE

Common.

ALEXANDRA

Well... It must have been... Look – what was your most romantic night?

NICOLE

Most romantic?

ALEXANDRA

Yeah, like this. Alone, on the sea shore...

NICOLE

In this wilderness?

ALEXANDRA

I wasn't talking about the wilderness.

NICOLE

We went to Costinești once. But with all that blaring music, there wasn't much romance. We were more... Fun for us meant going to see a movie at the mall, eating breakfast at MacDonald's at one o'clock in the afternoon and watching "South Park" – the original – on the Internet.

ALEXANDRA
That sounds... exotic.

NICOLE
It's not. Now... if I look back... It seems pretty... discouraging.

ALEXANDRA
Then...

NICOLE
What?

ALEXANDRA
Nothing.

NICOLE
Say it.

ALEXANDRA
No, it was silly.

NICOLE
Then why did I love him so much? (*pause*) I don't know. OK – everything's relative, right? We even broke up a couple of times. But we couldn't stay away. We were... I don't know – complementary. We laughed a lot together. There are so many reasons why you can love or hate a person, the same person. I know, it sounds boring, but it's just the way it is. At 120 kilos and 1,95 meters tall, you couldn't say he was a Prince Charming. But he gave you security. He seemed distracted with others, but he was very... gentle. And so on and so forth.

ALEXANDRA
You don't have to explain.

NICOLE
I know I don't.

Pause. They drink.

ALEXANDRA
So much silence.

NICOLE
Yes. Like the end of the world. Fuck! I don't know what's wrong with me tonight, I keep talking in clichés.

ALEXANDRA

I like it.

NICOLE
Oh...

ALEXANDRA
Maybe you're in a sentimental mood.

NICOLE
You wish.

ALEXANDRA
Yes, I wish.

NICOLE
Anyway – thanks. For bringing me here.

Pause. They drink.

NICOLE
You'll get drunk.

ALEXANDRA
So what?

NICOLE
It's a sin.

ALEXANDRA
Uh-huh. It wouldn't be first one, would it?

NICOLE
His family insisted a lot. That it wasn't suicide.

ALEXANDRA
So? Was it?

NICOLE
Some people believed so. Because he talked about it sometimes. But he was just kidding. I know better than anyone. He had his moments, but he would never... Especially since the new drug was working really well. The drug for his depression. Later on, someone, a doctor, told me that could have been the reason. Supposedly, they hadn't tested it enough beforehand. Like that mattered anymore – the explanations.

ALEXANDRA
And his family? Why did they insist?

NICOLE

You should know better why. So that they could do that shitty Orthodox service! For him – who didn't believe in anything and made fun of pious bigots. And that was when I was still trying to convince him that there's something Beyond – there has to be. Good for him! (*pause*) He just lay there, in the wind – a huge chunk of stinking flesh. It's a good thing it was cold outside. All around – a devastated mother, a pile of relatives who faked grief, a few hypocritical wailers and a drunk priest. A senseless, snuffled, endless sermon. And he was nowhere anymore. Nowhere! I hope it's clear to you now why I need this will. They won't fool me with their stupid ceremony.

ALEXANDRA

I'll take care of it.

NICOLE

I hope so.

ALEXANDRA

You're with me now.

NICOLE

(*snorts*)

With you? Life is very funny sometimes.

ALEXANDRA

Isn't it?

NICOLE

No. It's not.

(change in light. Nicole's apparte)

NICOLE

And then the storm broke out. No, literally – the storm. (*she laughs*) It was a disaster! And I didn't think she could be that clumsy. She said she had been camping before – she should have known, even I know – that at the seaside, the tent is anchored with bottles of sand buried in the sand. This way – we ran around almost the entire night, chasing our clothes, our tent stakes and our sleeping bags. Those light sleeping pads – they went to the dogs. And I had to fish the awning out of the sea.

I was terribly amused by all this, but she was all freaked out. I wouldn't have expected a "God-fearing" person to be so easily scared. And so attached to objects. I could have slept right on the wet sand, especially since I was somewhat aroused by this whole story. I felt really... fit. Really alive.

Only she... You couldn't even talk to her, let alone anything else. So I ran after the tiny tank tops and the tiny t-shirts almost all night long. With moil and toil, we managed to set up the tent again and we both flaked out.

And then, just like that, out of the blue – you know, when reality blends in with sleep – she sprung the surprise on me.

(The light is back to normal.)

ALEXANDRA, who has been lying down behind Nicole until now, somehow outside the stage, now sits up.

ALEXANDRA

You know I haven't been to church in a very long time. Ever since...

NICOLE

I suspected it.

ALEXANDRA

I want to go now. I feel the need to.

NICOLE

Very well.

ALEXANDRA

This week. Thursday.

NICOLE

Why Thursday?

ALEXANDRA

My confessor is freer on Thursdays.

NICOLE

Uh-huh. Good for you!

Pause.

ALEXANDRA

I'm going to tell him about us.

Long pause.

NICOLE

Too bad.

ALEXANDRA

I have to.

NICOLE: You'll be sorry.

ALEXANDRA

That's the idea.

NICOLE

That's the idea?

ALEXANDRA

You can't keep secrets from God.

NICOLE

Well, he already knows, right?

ALEXANDRA

Yeah... It's more complicated than that.

NICOLE

I'm not stupid.

ALEXANDRA

You have to acknowledge your sin and confess it to your priest, who symbolizes authority...

NICOLE

No shit.

ALEXANDRA

Here you go again!

NICOLE

I'm sorry, but that's just the way it is. I mean – it's either this or that.

ALEXANDRA

What do you mean?

NICOLE

I mean – you'll be sorry. I mean – you know very well what's going to happen.

ALEXANDRA

What needs to happen will happen.

NICOLE

Is that so?

ALEXANDRA
Yes.

NICOLE
Just when I was starting to get used to it...

ALEXANDRA
Get used to it?

NICOLE
To you.

ALEXANDRA
To me? Get used to me?

NICOLE
Yes. You know very well. To the idea.

ALEXANDRA
To the idea.

NICOLE
OK, just drop it. I'm not in the mood for this kind of conversations at this hour.

ALEXANDRA
Fine. Me neither.

NICOLE
Great.

ALEXANDRA
Excellent.

NICOLE
Uh-huh. Sweet dreams!

ALEXANDRA
Yeaaaah... Really sweet.

Scene 11

NICOLE

And she was gone. Game over. End of story. Recycle Bin. Delete. End of the adventure. If only things were always this simple... But they're not. When you think that something... makes sense. But no. The good Lord comes and pukes on you. A sea of love.

Oh well, I'll fight. Each with his own weapons, so to speak.

Because I think it's cool. Not to be alone anymore. To be with someone. To force yourself to accept someone beside you. With all her habits. Good, bad. With everything she stands for. It's fun. It's like a game – with a lot of love for her. Especially since it brings her such joy. She seems made for this.

Scene 12

Conversation on the cell phone.

NICOLE

Alex?

ALEXANDRA

Yes.

NICOLE

Hi.

ALEXANDRA

Hi.

NICOLE

How are you?

ALEXANDRA

I'm fine. Sorry I didn't answer earlier. I was...

NICOLE

It's OK.

Pause.

NICOLE

What's going on with you? You haven't come home in two days.

ALEXANDRA

Home?

NICOLE

Yes.

ALEXANDRA

I'm moving to my place.

NICOLE
You're moving.

ALEXANDRA
Yes.

Pause.

ALEXANDRA
I'll come to talk. In a few days.

NICOLE
In a few days? You need to pluck up the courage to do it.

ALEXANDRA
I'll come.

NICOLE
Yeah...

ALEXANDRA
I will. The priest gave me a canon and...

NICOLE
The priest gave you a canon? Not God?

ALEXANDRA
You know very well...

NICOLE
I told you this would happen. You're so naïve!

ALEXANDRA
I'll come over.

NICOLE
I don't need you to.

NICOLE hangs up.

ALEXANDRA
Yes... Yes... But I do...

Scene 13

A table in a cafeteria.

NICOLE
You said you'd come.

ALEXANDRA
I can't.

NICOLE
I miss you.

ALEXANDRA
I miss you too.

NICOLE
So?

ALEXANDRA
It's a sin.

NICOLE
A sin, huh? And what about "God is love" then?

ALEXANDRA
My confessor says that I need to understand my feelings, to take them as they are and transfer them to another level, a higher one.

NICOLE
That means no sex.

ALEXANDRA
Yes, if you want it to.

NICOLE
OK.

ALEXANDRA
OK?

NICOLE
Yes, OK.

ALEXANDRA
You didn't like it? With me? You never told me that.

NICOLE
Well...

ALEXANDRA
Alright, I know, there were a few clumsy things in the beginning, but afterwards...

NICOLE
Afterwards – what?

ALEXANDRA
So it's true.

NICOLE
No, no, wait! I think I might have misspoken.

ALEXANDRA
Really? Then tell me the truth. But be honest!

NICOLE
OK. OK.
(pause)

You should know I'm only starting out too. I mean – you know it very well. I hadn't tried it until I met you... I'm somewhat like you. Worse even. I've been alone for so long. For a very long time. But I'd like to try again. With you.

ALEXANDRA
Now... For now...

NICOLE
We can be just friends. Like the people from the church suggested.

ALEXANDRA makes a nervous gesture.

NICOLE
Or not! I mean – as you wish, I was just... making a suggestion.

ALEXANDRA
The temptation would be too big.

NICOLE
Hmm.

ALEXANDRA
Yes. All I can think about is... It's a disease. I have to heal.

NICOLE

A disease.

ALEXANDRA

The priest helped me find someone. A man.

NICOLE

You don't say!

(short pause)

These priests are real troopers, I'll be darned!

ALEXANDRA

Stop talking like that! You don't know him.

NICOLE

You're talking as if you were in a trance, so please...

Pause.

NICOLE

This is madness.

ALEXANDRA

No. What we were doing was madness.

NICOLE

Stop it! You know very well what you want! What you are!

ALEXANDRA

I don't know anymore...

NICOLE

I'm really lonely without you.

Long pause.

NICOLE

There are worse sins than this one, you know...

ALEXANDRA

Probably. I know.

NICOLE

You'll know it very well.

ALEXANDRA

What do you mean?

NICOLE
How's it going with my will?

ALEXANDRA
Your will? I thought you'd given up on it.

NICOLE
I changed my mind.

ALEXANDRA
You can't do this to me!

NICOLE
If you can't do it, then I'll go somewhere else. But I'm putting in a claim for damages.

ALEXANDRA
No! Don't.

NICOLE
So? How is it going to be?

ALEXANDRA
I'll do it. I'll do it.

NICOLE
Fine. Hurry up.

Scene 14

*Nicole's house. Nicole is lying on the bed.
Alexandra is cleaning up noisily. She's dressed for the office. Nicole wakes up.*

NICOLE
What are you doing?

ALEXANDRA
I'm cleaning up after you.

NICOLE
Hmm.
(she gets up, gathers herself together)
And? As for the rest?

ALEXANDRA
As for the rest? I'm doing fine.
(she keeps cleaning)

NICOLE

Are you here to take your puppy? The one you sleep with at night?

ALEXANDRA

I don't sleep with it at night!

NICOLE

Whatever. It's under the bed.

ALEXANDRA crawls under the bed.

NICOLE

Next to the whisky bottle. The one I emptied last night. Because I was sad that my girlfriend left me.

ALEXANDRA

There's no whisky bottle under the bed.

NICOLE

You really believed me?! I was kidding.

ALEXANDRA

And Spike?

NICOLE

Spike? He's not under the bed?

ALEXANDRA

No.

NICOLE

I thought so. That means I threw it away. I'm serious now.

ALEXANDRA heads towards the kitchen.

NICOLE

Last week.

ALEXANDRA

Why did you do that?

NICOLE

Because I hate everything you love. Starting with God.

ALEXANDRA

At least you're honest.

NICOLE

I told you I hated lies. What about you? What brings you here?

ALEXANDRA

I've finished it. The will.

NICOLE

Oh. (*short pause*) Wonderful.

Pause.

NICOLE

So? Where is it?

ALEXANDRA

I didn't bring it.

NICOLE

Makes a nervous gesture.

ALEXANDRA

Wait! Wait. I'm having it multiplied and signed.

NICOLE

I trusted you.

ALEXANDRA

And I hope you will keep on trusting me. It will take two more days – at most.

NICOLE

Why so long? Is the copier broken?

ALEXANDRA

It's a big firm. The boss has to sign it and... It takes a while.

NICOLE

I hope this is the last time.

ALEXANDRA

I'd be happier if you gave it up.

NICOLE

Why?

ALEXANDRA
I love you.

NICOLE
Hmm.
(*pause*) How?

ALEXANDRA
How?

NICOLE
Oh, you love me – okay. I’m all soft and mushy.

ALEXANDRA
But it’s true.

NICOLE
Maybe. Are you coming back to me?

ALEXANDRA
Yes.

NICOLE
When? Now?
(*long pause*)

No, Alexandra, do you want me to tell you why you’re putting on this whole show now? Do you? Because you’re afraid that I’ll do that deed and because, in your foolishness, you believe that this will affect my alleged afterlife, and it’s a tremendous consolation to you that you’ll be making such a nice gesture, like the good Christian that you are, if you save my soul from Hell. But – let me tell you – I don’t believe a word of this whole Sci-Fi. And let me tell you another thing: you’re afraid for you own little soul as well! That this death will weigh on you or – “God forbid” – make you regret something, make you feel it like a sin over you. Because then – pronto at the canon and genuflections before the dear old priest!

ALEXANDRA
I’m only thinking about you.

NICOLE
Like the good Christian that you are, right?

ALEXANDRA
No!

NICOLE
No?

ALEXANDRA

No. You can be so selfish! You think that just because you caught this thing with my belief, that's it – you know everything about me? What do you know about me? Nothing. You only care about yourself and your dramas. Fine. I can understand that. I feel sorry for you and I'd do anything for you, just to see that you're fighting.

NICOLE:
For what?

ALEXANDRA
For life.

NICOLE
Life is shit.

ALEXANDRA
Yeah, smashing. You really settled everything with that phrase.

NICOLE
What do you want?

ALEXANDRA
I want you to stop being a coward.

NICOLE
What else? Do you want me to make you five babies?

ALEXANDRA
Maybe that too.

NICOLE
Touching.
(short breath)

I know what you want. Relax. I want you to know now that – if anything should happen – it will be my fault and through my will entirely.

Alexandra breathes in.

ALEXANDRA
You want to be like him, don't you? To finish it all like him, right? Is that it?

NICOLE
You're talking rubbish.

ALEXANDRA
I expected a little more imagination from you.

NICOLE

Oh well, we can't be creative all the time. But I'll try.

ALEXANDRA

Nicole! Life is beautiful!

NICOLE

Ha ha!

ALEXANDRA

No – seriously – you're young, you're beautiful.

NICOLE

Come on, I have a mirror in the bathroom.

ALEXANDRA

It doesn't count if you haven't slept in five nights. You're smart.

NICOLE

Yeah.

ALEXANDRA

I'm serious. You could have any man in this world if you wanted to.

NICOLE

Or woman.

ALEXANDRA

Yes.

NICOLE

You're funny.

ALEXANDRA

No. I'm serious. Look at me.

NICOLE

I've looked enough.

ALEXANDRA

You hate God? Fine.

NICOLE

This is getting interesting.

ALEXANDRA

Organize a rally! Protest against Him! Create an organization. You're not the only atheist in the universe.

NICOLE

I don't like to jostle.

ALEXANDRA

Then... Anyway, you get the point.

NICOLE

I don't have a problem with God, but with his messengers on Earth. His so-called messengers.

ALEXANDRA

Very well! Write a book. An essay.

NICOLE

There's no use, baby.

ALEXANDRA

Go see the States. Isn't that what you wanted at one time?

NICOLE

I can go anywhere from my laptop.

ALEXANDRA

It's not the same. Remember when we went to the seaside last month.

NICOLE

We were together then.

ALEXANDRA

And we still... my feelings haven't changed.

NICOLE

Hmm.

ALEXANDRA

Please. Give me a little more time.

NICOLE

Oh. No problem. *I* have all the time in the world.

ALEXANDRA

Promise me nothing will happen. Look, on Thursday I'll be here with the will.

NICOLE
Nothing's going to happen.

ALEXANDRA
Should I believe you?

Long exchange of glances.

Scene 15

*In Nicole's apartment. Evening.
She is sitting near the bed, motionless.*

NICOLE
I come from the city where nothing happened. There are a lot of cities like this, I guess. It's just that there's something magical about mine. That's how it often is. I mean – high school and memories and all of that... Afterwards, I came here, to the capital, to college, I met him and everything changed. Sure, it was nice, but in a different way.

I mean – I would have liked to go back to my city sometime, to live that easy life again. I would have liked that, to some extent. But he came along and took me to America, to his virtual America, because we never got to actually visit it. But it was as though we had already been there. Anyway, we talked about emigrating there.

Sometimes I'll focus on a dot and that dot becomes like a really huge thing. Doesn't that ever happen to you? Like that image at the beginning of "The English Patient". We saw something we thought were sand dunes and, at a given moment, the angle changed and you could think that the respective surface was actually the skin on a human body. Or it might be. It was a matter of perspective, you know. If I concentrate on my hand from up close, I can see trenches and valleys and wrinkles that will grow and turn into something horrible over the years. If I look at this spot on this cement floor, I will be able to see a whole universe changing. Fantastic stories, shadows, silhouettes and faces.

Moreover, if we increase the distance, it might also be my life – viewed from somewhere very high. A stain on the asphalt. Even if I went to America or back home to my parents, life would still be the same. Nothing important will change. Nothing... will be nothing. Which is what we all are. Like in the Ecclesiastes – you know?

For some time now, beside Nicole's monologue, we can hear knocks at the door, which are growing in frequency and intensity, until they become unbearable.

ALEXANDRA
(will remain outside the whole time and will be yelling through the door)
Nicole! Nicole!

NICOLE
(speaking calmly, as if the other character were standing right beside her)
Yes.

ALEXANDRA
I know you're in there!

NICOLE
What do you want?

ALEXANDRA
Open up! I brought you your will!

NICOLE approaches the door.

ALEXANDRA
Open up!

NICOLE
Slip it under the door.

ALEXANDRA
(stops knocking)
Phew! So you're home... you're alright...

NICOLE
I don't want to see you. Slip it under the door.

ALEXANDRA
(after a long pause)
It's too thick.

NICOLE laughs and backs away from the door.

ALEXANDRA
Honestly. Open up.

NICOLE
(resumes in a normal voice, although she is far away, and the rest of the scene unfolds like this, at a distance. Curiously, Alexandra answers to the almost whispered lines uttered by Nicole, only she speaks loudly)
I'm not stupid.

ALEXANDRA
I mean it. Open up.

NICOLE
Slip it under the door.

ALEXANDRA

I want to see you. I miss you.

NICOLE
That's a little too much for me, baby.

ALEXANDRA
I love you.

NICOLE
Exactly.

ALEXANDRA
I spoke to my confessor. He knows. I told him that I love you and that I miss you and I can't be without you.

NICOLE
A sea of love.

NICOLE takes out several vials of pills and starts swallowing them, one by one.

ALEXANDRA
I don't know what to do. I really don't.

NICOLE
There's a forest. Very green. A fresh green. There. In my spot, the one I'm crushing with my glance. Can you see it? There.

ALEXANDRA
He said that... The confessor. He said that we would find a way.

NICOLE
And a seal. A seal is romping amid the little trees.

ALEXANDRA
If you want to come to church and confess... If we try to refrain ourselves as much as we can and...

NICOLE
The sun is laughing among the branches, and she is so thirsty.

ALEXANDRA
Nicole! Open up!

NICOLE
I'm sorry for you, Alex.

ALEXANDRA

Open up! I love you! Open up!

NICOLE

My, my, my, that poor seal!

ALEXANDRA

Open up!

(short pause, then whispering)

The neighbours can hear me.

NICOLE

The neighbours are nothing but seals. No, plumped out sperm whales.

ALEXANDRA

Open up!

NICOLE

It can't be that thick, silly.

ALEXANDRA

Open up!

NICOLE

You should slip those papers under the door. One by one.

The knocks intensify, while Nicole slowly glides to the floor.

Scene 16

An Orthodox burial service. We can hear the monotonous chant of the priest in the background.

In the foreground, Alexandra, dressed in mourning clothes, faces the audience.

Nicole is a little behind her and to the side. She seems to be whispering over her shoulder.

NICOLE

Why did you do this?

ALEXANDRA

I've given it much thought. I couldn't leave you like that.

NICOLE

You broke your professional ethics. You broke the law. You destroyed my will.

ALEXANDRA

I had the hardest time with the church. Convincing the relatives. The priest. The doctors.

NICOLE

You should have respected my choice.

ALEXANDRA

I had to give you a chance to redeem yourself.

NICOLE

Suicidal people go straight to Hell. God knows anyway.

ALEXANDRA

God forgives everything.

NICOLE

Then you shouldn't have bothered. With all these. The worms. The smell.

ALEXANDRA

God will forgive you for your good soul.

NICOLE

Good? How do you know it's good?

ALEXANDRA

It's wonderful.

NICOLE

Shame it doesn't exist anymore. It's gone. Pop-pop! In the wind. (*she blows*) Blow balls. And you know what? You'll never know. Anything. Until you die as well. Then you'll know which of us was right.

ALEXANDRA

I'm talking to you.

NICOLE

(*laughs*)

You think so?

ALEXANDRA

Your laughter. I'll never forget it.

NICOLE

No, baby, you're not talking to me.

ALEXANDRA

Only you can say "baby" like that.

NICOLE

That's just your memory.

ALEXANDRA

No. I don't think so.

NICOLE

If you were right, then I wouldn't be hanging around here with you right now, instead I'd be far away, with my boyfriend, in that wonderful place he would have deserved to go to. But since your God doesn't exist and there's nothing afterwards – it means that what you're hearing is just a voice in your head.

ALEXANDRA

So much waste.

NICOLE

So much waste? Do you want me to tell you something? Waste is all that crap you're destroying your life with. People are afraid. Of what they might discover if they suddenly realized that this life is the only one that was given to them. They would all be horrified by the daily waste. They would all rebel. They would want to fight for every second. Fortunately, they're cowards.

ALEXANDRA

That's my Nicole.

NICOLE

You think I would have stayed with you?

ALEXANDRA

At least for a moment.

In the background, covered for the moment by the noise of the service, we can hear the sound of waves and seagulls' cries, which will gradually increase in intensity.

NICOLE

No, baby, don't kid yourself. I'm just a voice telling you that it's your fault I'm dead. That I became desperately alone after your priests took you away from me.

ALEXANDRA

No. I wanted to come back.

NICOLE

Somewhere you know that if you had stayed with me all that time...

ALEXANDRA

Stop it.

NICOLE

Why? Because it's a sin? How do you choose between two sins, Alex?

ALEXANDRA

I didn't choose. You did.

NICOLE

Yes. That's right.

Alexandra cries.

NICOLE

What can you do about it, we're full of sins. Like the leper is full of scales.

ALEXANDRA

I hope you're fine wherever you are.

NICOLE

No no no! You're not getting off that easily! Get it through your head: I'm gone. From everywhere. Forever. And the pain you're feeling in your chest will never go away. It will change, but it will never disappear. Because you will never know for sure if there's anything left. Believe me, I know it from experience.

ALEXANDRA

May God have mercy on you.

NICOLE

This is a problem, right? These imaginary voices. Which are telling you something different than what you'd like to hear.

ALEXANDRA

May God have mercy on you.

NICOLE

Something different than what you were taught to believe.

ALEXANDRA

May God have mercy on you.

NICOLE

Right, right... keep going...

Alexandra wipes her tears and gradually calms down. She begins to take her clothes off. We can hear the service louder and louder, the whole imperfection of the voices, as they were described by Nicole at the beginning.

The moment Nicole finishes undressing and is left wearing only a swimsuit, the same swimsuit in the scene with Nicole at the seaside, the sound of the service suddenly stops. The only thing we can hear now are the waves. Alexandra is calm, melancholic. She sits on the sand and plays with it pensively, as Nicole did in the scene at the seaside.

A WOMAN'S VOICE
(sweet voice, from off stage)
Alex? Alex? Where are you?

ALEXANDRA
Here.

WOMAN
Are you coming? I've finished neatening up in here.

ALEXANDRA
Yes, I'm coming. Now.

Alexandra stands up. She takes the crucifix off from around her neck. She wants to throw it into the sea, but she hesitates. She kisses it, clenches it in her fist and exits.