

Anniversarian

Nikolay Lakutin

18+

A play for 2 people. Comedy

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Аннотация

Birthday. Guests, congratulations, gifts! Everything is the same as everyone else, everything is the same as always... But not this time! Fate has given the birthday boy its surprise. Yes, even what! It's not from God, it's not from the devil. Let's try to figure it out together by getting acquainted with the comedy "Hero of the Day"!

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A comedy in two acts for two people. (It can be delivered as a one-act version).

The actors

Philemon

Ivy (Sasha)

Filimon's poor bachelor apartment. There are many books on the shelves. The table is set for twenty people, the host is waiting

for guests on the occasion of celebrating his anniversary.

Action 1

Scene 1

Philemon (into the phone). Ay, thank you, dear, it feels good to the core. I'm getting ready, of course. The table is almost set. I don't know if that's a lot or a little for you. For twenty people. Yes, yes. Well, how about it? Family, friends, loved ones. Friends, buddies. That's still a minimum. Yeah. Yes. Thanks, kisses. And a huge hello to him. All right, bye.

He puts down his phone. Nostalgic, dancing, putting the finishing touches to the table decoration. He serves and waits for the guests with anticipation.

Philemon. Where did I put my big, beautiful decanter? It would be very appropriate now. Oh, okay. Let the juices and drinks be in tetrapacks and in bottles. It's not too festive, but what can you do. There will only be all their own, they will not condemn.

Like that. Philemon! Fifty kopecks! He lived! I made it! The age is not to say that it is respectable, but, nevertheless, not everyone can boast even of it today. And how many times have I been saved by God or the devil? The dashing years did not pass me by, everything happened. Thank you for being alive, healthy and sane. But it will be about the past, soon the guests will start

coming ...

Looking at the clock.

Philemon. Yes, soon. Very soon. Oh, how will we get together! How will we sit! Let's celebrate! Just like in the good old days. We don't get together very often now, we need a serious reason for such an event. And there are not so many reasons. We are gathered either at funerals, weddings, or anniversaries. My wedding has been over for a long time, the funeral, I hope, will wait, but the anniversary – yes... Let's laugh, let's remember...

the sound of a message is heard. Filimon finds his smartphone, presses "listen".

A voice message. Philemon, hello. Happy anniversary, happy holiday. I'm sorry, please, the children and I won't be able to come to you. Kostya, the idiot, bought tickets on a hot ticket and said so only now. I wanted to make a surprise... It turned out that way. We have a flight at midnight today, we only have time to pack. Don't think we were actually going to see you. We bought a gift. The children have also prepared something for you personally. But you know that their relationship with Kostya is still not very good. So he decided to fly to Vietnam together to unite the family. His friend works at a travel agency, she found last-minute packages, all inclusive at a good price, and Kostya immediately took them away. But at least I told you yesterday, you fool. Of course, he didn't think about your birthday. And our plans all went to hell. I myself have an appointment with a cosmetologist at nine in the evening, Pashka and a girl were going

to the cinema for an evening session, and Alinka was going to a friend for an overnight stay. We all have plans covered with a copper basin, I'm sorry, please, but don't give up this trip now? When we arrive, we will come to you first, a souvenir from Vietnam is for us! No offense, okay? I'm sorry about what happened... Happy holidays, once again, great to celebrate! Say hello to all of us, we kiss and hug everyone!

Philemon. That's the news! My ex-wife-damn her, along with her unfinished Bone. Everything is always wrong with her, thank God. In marriage, she ruffled my nerves, so then again and after ... (Mimics) Philemon, happy holidays to you, please forgive me, fi-fi-fi, tut-tut-tut... Ugh! I won't forgive you! She's the one who looks so sweet, so innocent of anything, but in life she's still an infection! Well, let her fly with her beautiful new hubby, a fair wind, a flag in her hands... And somewhere else. But the fact that I won't see the children is really upsetting. We don't see them very often anyway. They are conditionally adults. Under thirty for both son and daughter. They don't always have time for the folder. Relationships, work, friends... We call each other, on my initiative, mainly. But so that we can see each other once again... They don't come to me for no reason, even though I call them all the time, but how am I going to see them now? If only my ex lived with them, it would be another matter. As it is, I'm not there at all. I stopped by on business once, so I felt with my whole skin that I was superfluous there. This Kostya keeps quiet, but his gaze is unkind. And this one is also like between two fires.

It was awkward and uncomfortable for everyone. I haven't been to them since.

I thought I'd finally see the kids. While we're talking, maybe I'll scout something out. It's interesting, though, how they live. And the way you don't ask on the phone is the standard answer. Nothing, Dad, everything is fine, everything is as usual.

A message sound is heard. Filimon picks up his smartphone, presses "listen".

A voice message. Hey, bro! Happy holidays! Health, money, good luck and inspiration! This is the case, I have an emergency at the factory. They pulled it urgently. It doesn't happen often, but no, no, yes and yes. I'm already going to. Apparently for a long time. Dasha doesn't want to go without me, especially since both of her daughters are kind of quaint. They cough and sniffle. The infection is walking around the city, now everyone is sick. Suddenly what? Imagine infecting you on your bright holiday? Yes, it will not be possible to beg for it later. Somehow, everything piled up from all sides at once. Let me give you a light as soon as I'm free. Tomorrow evening, I'll probably stop by with Dashka, and let the snotty children stay at home, there's nothing for them to spread the infection. That's it, I'm sorry, I have to run. See you later!

Philemon. And my brother is there too! What kind of day is this? It all started out fine! There should be a holiday! Joy! Family and friends. Gatherings, conversations. Jokes are jokes. My brother is generally the soul of the company by himself,

you can't tan with him. Now he has also lost the main mass entertainer.

Yeah... Everything didn't go according to plan. What can you do – life! The emergency is not a joke. Let them solve problems, fix problems. His job is responsible, his position is high. If it is necessary, then it is necessary.

It turns out that my family will not be at the table. But stop though! Why won't it be? The nephew is a cousin! Yes, he also asked for his new girlfriend, I don't remember her name, he changes them like gloves. I don't really like this idea of his coming to my party with another lady of his heart, but it's inconvenient to refuse. Okay, really... At least he will be from his family, otherwise it doesn't work out well at all.

A message sound is heard. Filimon picks up the smartphone again, presses "listen".

Voice message (in a sleepy voice). Uncle Philemon, hello. I went out with mine a little bit yesterday. We returned home late. To be more precise, it's too early. My eyes are barely open now. We need to wake up somehow, cheer up, understand what's what, where and... and... this... Yes. What did you want to say? You're sitting down without us. Don't wait. We'll swing until we get to you from the other side of the city. Start without us, we'll catch up. We will accept the penalty for being late (yawns) No talking! Even better, two! But no, wait, mine says something... huh? Yeah. Clear. Look, we'll overplay it a little. My bunny urgently needs to hand over a USB flash drive with a diploma, she is my

student. Fussing, the last course. Look, now she's running to a meeting, solving her business, and then straight to you, I'll tell her the address. In the meantime, I'll swing, and I'll jump up about there by the time. I'll meet you at your place. We won't miss each other. Just later.

Philemon. That's an asshole Earring! I knew that I was going to my uncle's birthday at four o'clock! Then why the hell are you wandering around at night? You have to count on it somehow! Youth is careless, he was like that himself. Eh... Where are my seventeen years...

Everything is clear. Later means later. Well, at least I have friends, otherwise I would celebrate the anniversary alone.

A message sound is heard. Philemon clicks "listen".

A voice message. Hello, old man! Happy holidays. Phil. I can't come to you, no offense, okay? I'm whispering, I've got a drop here! I had a fight with my goat. She saw traces of lipstick on my shirt, the secretary, a parasite, messed up again. How many times have I told her to cover up all traces of herself. I cleaned my hair off my clothes, poured my perfume from head to toe to kill the smell of perfume from this my lippy. And there was a trace of lipstick at the neck itself. I don't have eyes on my neck. I looked in the mirror – everything seemed to be in order, but there was a very small footprint. My wife saw it. The scandal almost led to a divorce. Phil, there's really no time to celebrate right now, we need to save our family life somehow. Do you hear him yelling? Yeah, he's freaking out. That's it, I can't talk anymore, now it's

going to be Makhach! Happy holidays, old man. Pray for me just in case. Hang up.

Philemon. Tolyan, again on the same rake! The hunchback, as you can see, will be corrected by the grave. We've been friends with him for as long as we've been together –he's always chasing after every skirt. So many girls have passed through him that he probably lost count himself a long time ago. The wife is beautiful. A very effective woman. Seven years younger than him. Curvy, successful. She has a chain of cafeterias in the city. He does fitness, reads Dostoevsky. The house is clean and cozy. Most importantly, she loves him. And there he is. I've talked to him so many times to calm down, but it's no use.

What kind of life is this? As a good decent woman, there must be some Tolyan next to her. Or vice versa. Take my example. I'm a good man, but I got a mean wife. She traded my anniversary for some kind of Vietnam. Would a normal ex-wife do that? That's what I'm talking about.

So! What happens to the guests there... So I'm waiting for the twins and their wives, and the Quartet. The quartet is what we call one group among ourselves. Our mutual friends. Vova is Hoarse, Sanya is Bald, Tema is Dry and Gena is a Goblin. They always keep a foursome. It's been how many years for everyone, and everyone is in bobbles, none of them has married. They drink and walk. Sabbaths are interrupted, so, nothing serious. The guys are not very conscious, but they are united. Each of them has a hard life, but, nevertheless, they are not optimistic. They should

be here by now, it's already time... by the way, what time is it? Oh, it's been a long time! Where are they?

A message sound is heard. Philemon clicks "listen".

A voice message. I'm pressing the crab, "root". Happy birthday. So what? All. We arrived. Hoarse fit into the Porsche. I fit in fine. Neither he nor we have a muzzle now. I'm going to send you a photo, check it out.

A message sound is heard, followed by several more. Philemon looks at the photo.

Philemon. Christmas trees! Wow, I fit in. Yes, it looks like he was going to ram specifically.

A voice message. Well how? Spectacular? By the way, Drishch sends his regards to you, he got into the frame, he's trying to open his door for some reason. It can and will open, but it is unlikely to close later. But to argue with him... The Bald man and the Goblin are now butting heads with the Porsche driver. They are rolling on the asphalt in search of the lost brotherhood. Maybe they will find it, or maybe the traffic police crew will help in the search. There they are already on their way. That's it, I went to sort out the situation. Well, you got it, right? Don't wait for us.

Philemon. They all seem to be intact, that's the main thing. And the pieces of iron – they are also pieces of iron in Africa. It's a pity, of course, but what can you do. Anything happens. Ay... Let's get the results! So the ex and the kids are flying away.

He removes three plates from the table.

Philemon. A brother with Dasha and two daughters, minus

four more.

He removes four more plates from the table.

Philemon. Tolya and her family are still minus two people.

He removes two plates from the table.

Philemon. The "quartet", of course, will argue about guilt until the night, explanatory, analysis, protocols... Minus four plates.

Removes four plates.

Philemon. Seryozhka will show up with his new lady of the heart only in the evening, and... ah, well, the twins with their wives. They should be there. People are responsible. Thank God, at least someone will come to congratulate me.

A message sound is heard. Philemon clicks "listen".

Voice message (water noise, hum, fuss is heard). Filimon Ekimych, hello. This is Olya. You've probably already lost us. I'm sorry, we didn't think to tell you right away. We have a force majeure situation here. The water broke. We're all running around with rags, trying to prevent a flood. After all, the house is for two owners, the same ones were built so that they would be next to each other all their lives, there was only one water supply. Now we're all in a bunch. Lena sends her regards, and our men are trying to patch something in the underground. I don't know what they can do there now, I think they will have to call the services. We're all dirty, wet. We don't know what to do. We can't come. When the men are free, they will call you. Such things.

Philemon. Well, that, you know... It just doesn't fit in any gate

anymore! I understand everything, there are coincidences in life, a series of failures, accidents... But to do it all at once! One day the world came together like a wedge, and even on me! What for? So that no one can come here? What are the tricks of Fate? For what? Why?

Yes, the twin brothers, indeed, have dreamed of building a house for two families since childhood. There is a partition, but, in fact, there is only one house, and, of course, if they have problems around the house, then these are common problems. The plumbing is old, it should have been changed a long time ago. It blew up after all... No luck. But they were lucky with their wives. Both Olya and Lena are very good women. This is the main thing, and everything else is the little things of life.

Philemon removes four more plates from the table.

Philemon. It remains to wait for the Parasite Earring with its Stutter. The three of us will get the whole table. But that's when. And now...

He pours himself a shot glass. He raises it.

Philemon. Be healthy, Filimon Ekimych! Happy anniversary!

He drinks. He sits down at the table, gets ready to eat.

The doorbell rings!

Scene 2

Ivy enters, looking very defiant.

Ivy. Hello, kitty.

Philemon. And... I... this... Hi. You must be a Bunny
, Ivy. I can be a bunny, I can be a kitty, I can do a lot of things.

Will I come through, or will we just stand in the doorway?

Philemon. Yes, yes, please. Come on in... those.

Ivy. Kitty, let's not do this important thing, high and pretentious. Let's get right to the "you". OK?

Philemon. Ok.

Ivy. It's wonderful. I see you've been waiting for me. The table was set up by that one. I haven't had this before. It was, but not on this scale. Modest mostly. A bottle of wine, two glasses, sweets. And you're just being stupid!

Philemon. So, of course, I waited. How not to wait? A birthday after all.

Ivy. A birthday? Congratulations. How many stars did you get?

Philemon. Fifty.

Ivy. Seriously? Half a dozen? So it's an anniversary!

Philemon. Well, yes. I'm kind of... I'm aware of it.

Ivy. So I'm going to be your anniversary. Ha. Cool.

Philemon. Ahem.

Ivy. Well, what are you doing up there? I covered the clearing

– come on, pour it, if that's the case.

Philemon. Yeah, I get it.

Philemon comes up to the table after the girl, gallantly pulls out a chair for her, sits her down, looks after her. It pours.

Ivy. Oh, my. The cavalier is right where to go. Nicesse...

Philemon. Is something wrong?

Ivy. All in a bunch. Let's have a toast!

Philemon. I think it would be appropriate for an introduction.

Ivy. Exactly. Let's get to know each other.

Ivy immediately clinks glasses and drinks. Philemon slows down.

Philemon. So maybe we'll get to know each other after all?

Ivy. Come on. What's your name?

Philemon. I'm Philemon.

Ivy starts laughing uncontrollably with a hint of mockery.

Ivy. Philemon? Seriously? Where did you find that name? No one has called anyone that for five hundred years. Tell me you're kidding. You're kidding, aren't you? No, ponAture, what's your name?

Philemon. Philemon, really.

Ivy continues to laugh mockingly.

Philemon. What's so funny?

Ivy. This is ridiculous, how funny. Philemon. But what if it's a diminutive? Phil? Monya? Fimonia? Mofil? Phil? Mof? A flask? Monyafil?

Ivy is covered with a new wave of laughter.

Philemon. I admit, I'm a little surprised by your reaction to my name. This is the first one. And secondly, I'm no less surprised that you didn't know my name. Didn't Sergei tell you? However, he didn't tell me your name either, he only told me about his Bunny.

Ivy. Sergey? Which Sergei? Oh, Sergei from the pool, which one? Well, I get it. So you found out about me from him.

Philemon. So who is it from? I don't know about the pool, but of course I learned about you from Sergei. You're weird.

Ivy. Am I weird? Which one of us is called Philemon? And I'm also weird.

Philemon. It's just Sergei...

Ivy. Brrr! I don't want to talk about him. Cut it out. My subscription was taken away because of this parasite.

Philemon. Oh, how! He didn't say anything like that. And why are they so mad at you?

Ivy quickly pours herself a drink, sips some of it.

Ivy. I was relieving myself in the pool.

Philemon. U... yes, it's not very good, but by and large, that's what everyone does.

Ivy. So I also told them that everyone does it!

Philemon. And what about them?

Ivy. And they said that I was alone from the tower.

Philemon. P... ahem. Yeah. An unexpected twist. Why did you climb the tower?

Ivy. So the Gray One wanted to take me on weakly! So I

climbed up.

Philemon. Now everything is clear. Yes, you live a boring life.

Ivy. Are you going to drink, Filly?

Ivy is still sneering.

Philemon. Does my whole name bother you? If you don't like it, you can call it whatever you like. I have never encountered such a reaction in fifty years, but since my name is so across logic and your personal common sense, you can call it something else. And I will drink, but the toast was made for acquaintance, and I still don't know your name.

Ivy. Drink up, drink up. I'll think about what to call you.

Philemon starts drinking.

Ivy. I'm Ivy, by the way.

Philemon blows out what he has managed to get into his mouth. And it blows on Ivy.

Ivy. Oh, your aunt! What the hell?

Philemon. Sorry. How? What did you say your name was?

Ivy. I'm Ivy. What's wrong?

Philemon. Ivy?

Ivy. Well.

Philemon. So Ivy is a normal name, and Philemon is something out of the ordinary?

Ivy. Ivy is fine. It comes to me.

Philemon. Where does he go? What's coming in?

Ivy. Well, I like it, then! Oh, you're a valenok from a previous era, of course.

Philemon. Well, thank you.

Ivy. Okay, no offense. Well, I'm sorry, it's just really hard to communicate with you. You're all like that... I don't know. Men usually behave quite differently with me. And you're something else. He sprayed me again.

Philemon. Sorry, it was an accident.

Ivy. No, I'm so used to it, on duty.

Philemon. On duty?

Ivy. I'm telling you. It's difficult with you. Lan, forget it.

Philemon. Forget it?

Ivy. A-a-a-a... Forget it, in short!

Philemon. Okay, good. Listen, let's have a drink like a human being and eat already. I don't know about you, but I've been hungry for a long time.

Ivy. Let's sharpen it, I'm for it!

Philemon looks at Ivy with a bit of incomprehension.

Ivy. Let's sharpen – it means we'll eat.

Philemon. And let's have a drink, is that your way?

Ivy. Yes, it is. Let's have a drink. We'll bite. Let's roll. Well, there are also indecent variations.

Philemon. Variations? Wow, you! Whatever word you know. I was surprised!

Ivy. Listen, let's not you... Not you... Don't show off. Pour the best one!

Philemon pours again.

Philemon. Have you figured out what you're going to call me?

Ivy. When would I have thought of it? It's one thing, then another. Oh! You're making a smartass out of yourself here. I'll call you Smartass. Is it okay?

Philemon. For God's sake.

Ivy. Then thanks for the introduction, Smartass!

Philemon. Thanks for meeting me, Ivy!

They clink glasses, both giggle at each other, drink. They begin to eat.

Philemon. How's student life going?

Ivy. How do you know I'm a student?

Philemon. How from where? Sergei said.

Ivy. Strange. I don't remember telling him about it. I generally keep my personal life under lock and key, I try not to talk about it. Maybe, if I've just had too much once, I blurted it out.

Philemon. I do not know that. And where is he?

Ivy. Who!

Philemon. Well, Sergey.

Ivy. And how do I know. What do I care about him?

Philemon. Did you have a fight or something?

Ivy. What do you mean?

Philemon. I thought you were a couple with him.

Ivy. Us? With Gray? What are you, Filly! Or Rather, A Smart Guy. What kind of couple are we? I have these Earrings. Actually, to be honest, I don't even understand what kind of Sergei you're talking about right now, it's not about the one from the pool. And what's the difference?

Philemon. Wow...

Ivy. And you too, the fruit is still the same. So, he thought that I was the girlfriend of some kind of Sergei, but nevertheless he invited me to his place!

Philemon. Yes, as it were... I can't say that I personally invited you. I was just put in front of the fact that you would be, and that's it.

Ivy. I didn't understand. Should I leave?

Philemon. No, absolutely not. Please stay, I'm sorry I said that. I'm glad you're here. At least someone came.

Ivy. At least someone?

Philemon. I've called a lot of people. I've prepared everything. I ordered and bought. I eat modestly in my life, I don't make such tables for myself. Sandwich, porridge. Soup sometimes, potatoes...

Ivy. Stop— stop! Hold on. It's your birthday today. There were supposed to be guests, but only I came, despite the fact that you didn't invite me personally. So?

Philemon. Well... In general, yes.

Ivy. So someone decided to give you such a gift. He invited me.

Philemon. Sergei, I suppose.

Ivy. What are you talking about? Sergey – Sergey. Forget about him at all. Come on, don't say another word about this Sergei of yours.

Philemon. Whatever you say.

Ivy. That's better.

Philemon. Then let's just say that Fate gave me an evening with you today.

Ivy. Uh, wait. What evening is it? It's only been paid for an hour! No, I don't mind in principle, but according to the tariff. And by the way, time is ticking, if anything. Of course, we can sit, talk, and eat. Can you show me your album, I'll look at it, I'll even pretend that I'm interested, but what the hell do you need it for? Oh, yeah. You didn't pay. Then whatever. Pour some more, otherwise something doesn't really fit on the dry one.

Philemon doesn't really understand what's going on, but he pours it.

Ivy. The feast continues, am I right? Are we sitting, eating, drinking, talking?

Philemon. As usual...

Ivy. I don't know what you have where it is, this is my first time. Oh, it doesn't matter. Now I'll make a toast, if you don't mind.

Philemon. You are welcome.

Ivy. So, Smartass! I wish you a happy birthday. I have no idea why the hell you're here alone right now, at your holiday table, it's good that at least I showed up, at least something. But it's not about me. And so. I wish every bastard who didn't show up here today, all those you counted on, to itch in all places for a week or two. So that they hiccup like they're out of their mind and can't do anything about it until they realize their guilt! Here's

to that. Let's!

Ivy drinks, Philemon doesn't.

Ivy. What are you not drinking again? Didn't you like the toast, or can't you have a lot?

Philemon. No, it's just that your toast turned out to be quite strange.

Ivy. Didn't like it, then?

Philemon. I liked it, I even mentally supplemented it from myself. But that's not the point.

Ivy. And in what way?

Philemon. It turned out that you wished them everything. But I still have a holiday!

Ivy. Do you want me to wish you itching in all places and godless hiccups?

Philemon. Is there anything else in the assortment of wishes?

Ivy. La, you're still a smart Guy, I just can't get off you. Give him the assortment. Okay, now it's going to be personal, for you personally.

Philemon. Curious!

Ivy. Phew... It feels like I'm retaking the undelivered test. So. Now, okay. Means... Philemon!

Philemon. It's already good!

Ivy. Shut up and don't interrupt!

Philemon. Sorry.

Ivy. On this wonderful bright day, I want to raise this glass... Damn, the glass is empty. Why aren't you watching? Cavalier,

damn it!

Filimon promptly corrects the situation.

Ivy. Oh, how difficult it is with you. That's it, then. On this wonderful bright day, I want to wish you good health!

Philemon. How corny.

Ivy. I'm going to punch you in the face! Don't interrupt, she said, you see, and I'm having a hard time getting it out.

Philemon. I'm sorry, I'm sorry. I'm silent. I'm listening carefully.

Ivy. To... A-a-a-a. Nothing normal comes to mind, only in my style. And you need something so high! Wise. Yes? Pretentious, my God!

Philemon keeps quiet, smiles.

Ivy. Why are you silent? Oh, yeah. That's right, keep quiet. Shortly (Thinking for a long time, stretching out the words, coming up with them in the process of presentation.) So that life is yours, she is... Understand... So that on this day, your birthday, you will not regret that you have lived to your age. So that you do not look into the past with regret, so that you look into the future freely and easily, so that the present does not oppress you, does not oppress you, how to say it correctly. There should be no oppression from what is happening now. In short, I raise this glass so that you, Smart Guy, are not alone in your smartness. To have some smart fool by your side! So that everything works out fine with her, despite the fact that you are already fifty years old! That's it!

Philemon smiles.

Philemon. Thanks for pointing your nose at my age a couple of times.

Ivy. Drink, c... ka, I tried!

Philemon drinks.

Philemon. Thanks Hand me that salad over there, please.

Ivy looks thoughtfully at Philemon, then takes the salad he asked for, brings it to him, begins to take care of him. She puts it on herself, pours it for him, ties a napkin around his neck. He sits down next to me and eats. He looks at Philemon with interest and doubt.

Philemon. And you know, no one has ever said such words to me. Usually everyone wishes happiness, health, and good luck. It's the same thing from year to year. And you did well, you really tried. I appreciated it.

Ivy. Did you pass the test?

Philemon. I passed it. Congratulations.

Ivy. Thanks

Eating.

Ivy. I noticed you have a lot of books. Do you like to read?

Philemon. Yes, I definitely noticed.

Ivy. May I ask where this love of reading comes from? I don't like reading at all. What about you? Did your mother force you as a child? Are you used to it?

Philemon. No, that's not the point.

Ivy. What is it?

Philemon. Books teach a lot. And people, in general, are like books. You read books, you get to know people.

Ivy. Can you give an example of the similarity of books and people?

Philemon. You are welcome! Some deceive with their beauty, others surprise with their content.

They are silent. They look at each other. They think. Eating.

Philemon. So you're a student?

Ivy. Yes, I am studying by correspondence.

Philemon. And you're probably working?

Ivy. Well, yes.

Philemon. And where do you work, if it's not a secret?

Ivy. I mean, where do I work? Here!

Philemon. Where is it here?

Ivy. Well, here! Right now, right here! I am at work now. Well, Smartass, don't be stupid!

Philemon is thinking.

Philemon. If I understood correctly, someone paid you to come to me today so that I wouldn't be so lonely. And it wasn't Sergei who did it, but someone else. I wonder who. So this is your job? Do you get paid to keep lonely people company? Oh, I heard it somewhere. It's kind of like a Friend-for-an-hour service. It finally dawned on me. Your job is "Friend for an hour," right?

Ivy. In a way. A friend for an hour, then already.

Philemon. Are you working for yourself, or for a company?

Ivy. I am an individual.

Filimon. A. Well, in principle, why not. An announcement on Avito and go ahead. Are you self-employed or not officially?

Ivy says nothing, looks suspiciously at Philemon.

Philemon. And what faculty are you studying at?

Ivy. That's it! I've had enough. What kind of interrogation is this? Are you from the police? What do you want from me? What are you picking at, fishing for?

Philemon. Ivy, what are you doing? Why are you doing this half a turn for nothing? I'm not fishing for anything, I just asked to keep the conversation going. If you want, I won't ask you anything else. We will be silent.

Ivy. You didn't answer!

Philemon. And... you mean the police? What kind of policeman am I? God be with you. No, of course not.

Ivy. Why, of course?

Philemon. Because I'm from a completely different "department".

Ivy. What kind of agency? More details, please!

Philemon. The department in this case is a figure of speech. If you are shaking for unpaid taxes or receipts that have not been issued, then it is completely in vain. I am not related to the supervisory authority. And I'm not interested in all this. I'm an artist.

Ivy. What? You?

Philemon. Ya

. Ivy. Don't talk.

Philemon. You're weird. If you ask anything, it's bad! If you tell me something about yourself, it's bad again. You also say that it's difficult for you to be with me. I don't understand how to interact with you at all. You're afraid to step, to her God, like in a minefield. If you take a step, you explode like a bomb. I'm not a minesweeper. And not a policeman. I'm an artist!

Ivy. Why don't you have paintings in your apartment then? The order is like this, everything is free, empty. Artists don't do that.

Philemon. Do you know many artists?

Ivy. Well... no. But I've seen it on TV in movies many times. Creative – they are not of this world at all. Rolled up for the whole cap. Posters, paintings, watmans, or whatever. Brushes, paints. This... There should be a stand... What's her name...

Philemon. Easel.

Ivy. Here! Yes! And where is all this?

Philemon. Ivy, I was expecting guests today. Of course, I took everything away from here. In the next room you will find brushes, paints, an easel, and everything else.

Ivy. In the next room, you say?

Philemon. Yes, over there. If you want, take a look.

Ivy. Want.

Philemon. Go, and I'll eat a little more.

Ivy goes into the next room.

Philemon (loudly). If I were some kind of policeman, as you say, or a tax inspector, then by my age I would certainly

have occupied a worthy place. And believe me, in this case, everyone would have come to my anniversary! I would then be all necessary, all profitable. Everyone would have come to pay their respects without fail. And who needs an artist? What should I charge? No connections, no money, no power. Therefore, the attitude is appropriate. As sincere as possible, I would say.

Ivy comes out with a painting in her hand.

Ivy. Your job?

Philemon looks at the painting.

Philemon. Mine.

Ivy. Cool.

Philemon. Thanks

Ivy. No, it's really cool. I liked her the most. How much is it? Sell it to me?

Philemon is distracted from eating.

Philemon. Did you like it that much?

Ivy. Yeah.

Philemon approaches the painting. He looks at Ivy, sits down, looks at the painting as if it were a child. Stroking her (the painting) lovingly. He gets up and returns to the table.

Philemon. Take it, if that's the case.

Ivy. How much should I pay?

Philemon. Gift.

Ivy. What, really?

Philemon. Really.

Ivy. Not a single thing. It's your birthday, and the gift is for

me. Cool. Thanks

Philemon. Thank you.

Ivy. And why should I?

Philemon. For the dialogue, though difficult, but sincere. For the recognition of my work. For coming and diluting my loneliness. You talk with your weirdness, it's kind of interesting, but I'm glad to see you, even very much.

Ivy. Why are you talking like you're saying goodbye? Is that all? Am I free?

Philemon. It's just that I understand that you work by the hour, and the time is probably coming.

Ivy. Well, yes, and you also need to interact with me somehow, it's unclear how. Yes?

Philemon smiles.

Ivy. Let's try to make it in time. Is the shower there? I'll be right there.

Ivy runs off to the shower, leaving Philemon perplexed.

Scene 3

Philemon. But still, I wonder who gave me such a birthday present? Maybe an ex? No, I don't think so. She couldn't agree on anything with this Ivy, they communicate in different languages, too different. The twins are not up to me, they are messing with their flood there. My brother is also unlikely. The guys from the quartet? Probably them, but who is more? Apparently they decided that since they couldn't get to me themselves, at least they would call a girl so that I wouldn't be bored alone. Well done. Although – stop! They didn't know that everyone else hadn't come either!

No, I doubt they would do something like that. If only my children, ex-wife, brother and family, nephew and young lady were here... This girl would be completely out of business here. Something is not right here. But what about Seryozha's nephew? She kind of knows him, but she speaks strangely about him. I'm completely confused...

Ivy (screams from the shower). Hey, Smartass! The artist! Fly! Do you have a towel of some kind?

Philemon (shouts back). Yes, now.

Philemon finds a large towel, takes it away, and returns.

Philemon (shouting). I put it at the door!

Ivy (screaming). Yes, I see it!

Philemon wanders around the table, thinking about

something.

Ivy comes out. She is wrapped in a large towel, it is clear that there is nothing under it.

Philemon. What are you doing? Not dressed...

Ivy. Do you understand that you like to undress yourself? Not a question. I'll go get dressed then.

Philemon. What did you understand there? I didn't understand anything, but she already understood... Well, explain it to me. I didn't understand.

Ivy. Go take a shower!

Philemon. Me?

Ivy.

Philemon is trying to understand the essence of the message. Then he carefully, as if imperceptibly, sniffs his armpits.

Philemon. Oh, I get it. Well, yes, I was sweating while I was hanging around with all these preparations. But, it seems, everything is not so sad that you drive me straight into the shower?

Ivy. Go on, go on!

Philemon. I can't argue with you much.

Ivy. Go ahead!

Ivy goes to get dressed.

Philemon reluctantly wanders to the closet, takes his robe, hesitantly crumples it in his hands, goes into the shower.

Ivy returns in full dress, with only her shoes off. Admires the donated painting. He goes to the table and pours himself a juice.

He drinks, eats fruits.

Ivy (screaming). The artist! Don't stay there too long! Time is running out!

Philemon (shouting from the shower). Two minutes!

Ivy (softly). Come on, come on.

A voice message arrives on Ivy's phone. Turns it on, listens.

Voice message (nasty drunk male voice). Where are you, maramoyka! How long can I wait? Did you get the money on the card and decided to screw it up? This number won't work with me, I'll get you out of the ground! Are you holding the phone on silent? Look, there are seven missed ones from me. You don't have to joke with me like that. I'll wait another twenty minutes, then take the blame on yourself. I was dropping the address. The house, the entrance floor, you know everything. Apartment fifty-sixth. You have twenty minutes.

Ivy. What kind of nonsense is this?

Ivy puts the phone away, continues to eat fruit. She gets it.

Ivy. Stop it! Fifty-sixth! (SCREAMING) Artist, what kind of apartment do you have?

Philemon (shouting). Eh? What?

Ivy (screaming). What's your apartment number?

Philemon (shouting). Sixty-fifth. And what?

Ivy. Heck! I got it mixed up.

Picks up the phone, records the voice response.

Ivy (sends a voice message). Sorry, kitty, I was stuck in traffic. I'll be there in three minutes!

Ivy grabs her shoes and runs out of the apartment, forgetting about the painting she got as a gift.

The end of the first action.

Action 2

Scene 1

Philemon comes out of the shower in a bathrobe.

Philemon. That's all right. Ivy? Where are you?

Looking for a girl. He doesn't find it.

He gets a message on his phone. Includes. Listening to.

A voice message. Uncle Philemon, hello again. Listen, here's the deal. My Bunny has some problems there, we need to go urgently to solve them. I guess we're not getting to you today. I'm sorry, okay? Happy birthday. We'll come by sometime, for sure. Hello everyone

Philemon (to the empty table). Greetings to all of you, from Seryozha plemyasha.

He walks, thinks, scratches the back of his head.

Philemon. It turns out that we talked about different Sergeevs with her. I don't understand anything. So! Money, documents!

Rushes to the cabinets, shelves. Examines the apartment for theft. He runs around the rooms, checks everything.

Philemon. Everything seems to be in place, I didn't take anything. She even left the painting I gave her. Can someone explain to me what's going on here? Who was that girl? How did she end up here? So, just went to a random apartment for a drink,

a snack and a wash? It's crazy. What the hell is going on. Just what the hell! What a day...

He slowly approaches the table, eats a few "grapes" without appetite, wistfully examines his bachelor apartment, looks sadly at the deserted table. He goes into the room with art supplies, returns with an easel. He puts a piece of paper there and starts drawing. He goes to the table several times, drinks wine, returns, finishes painting, then sits down at the table and falls asleep there.

Scene 2

A series of doorbells wakes Philemon up.

He's coming to open it.

Ivy enters.

Ivy. Hi.

Philemon. We've seen each other.

Ivy. Are you still alone?

Philemon. One.

Ivy. Can I come to you?

Philemon. Did you decide to ask permission this time?

Ivy. Is that okay?

Philemon. Come in. Do you want to eat?

Ivy. No, thanks.

Philemon. Would you like a drink? Wash up?

Ivy. You're kidding, aren't you?

Philemon. Yes.

Ivy. What for? You're not sharp-tongued, I like to cut it with a word. You're different.

Philemon. I don't know, you must have influenced me so much.

Ivy. M...

Philemon. May I ask?

Ivy. Go ahead.

Philemon. Who are you?

Ivy. Phew... Here, you know, sort of... You can't tell right away.

Philemon. Let's not do it all at once, in parts. Somehow tell me who you are. And then I broke my whole head, I can't understand anything, who Fate threw at my name day.

Ivy. Oh, cool, let's assume that I'm your gift of Fate and I'm not explaining anything!

Philemon. Ivy, put yourself in my shoes.

Ivy. No, whatever. It's tinny.

Philemon. That's what I'm talking about.

Ivy. Lan, let's sit down. I'll tell you what's what.

Philemon. Good girl, this is a conversation. Come in, sit down. Juice? Wine?

Ivy. Let me take care of you. It's your birthday after all. Juice? Wine?

Philemon. About how... Let's get some juice and something to chew on then.

Ivy takes care of Philemon, sits down next to him.

Philemon. Thanks And what about yourself?

Ivy. No, I don't want to.

Philemon eats, Ivy is silent. They look at each other. Time is passing.

Philemon. As you tell me interestingly, I was just listening.

Ivy. You've really learned something from me. Now I'm not going to call you Smartass, but Witty!

Philemon. I'll put up with that too.

Ivy. What a...

Philemon you are. Which one?

Ivy. Soft-bodied.

Philemon. You don't know me. I'm scary when I'm angry.

Ivy. Ha! Don't be ridiculous.

Philemon. Seriously.

Ivy. Interesting. And what will you do?

Philemon. I can draw an ugly portrait of my enemy.

Ivy. Oh, yes! It's just scary. I'm really scared right now! You wouldn't wish that on anyone. It is impossible to think of a worse fate!

Philemon. And you're being ironic for nothing, by the way. Everything has its own weight. Do you know what a Voodoo doll is?

Ivy. Are you saying that you're painting a portrait of your enemy and poking needles at him?

Philemon. No, it's not necessary, but the principle is the same. If I draw a man with a black eye or a cast on his leg, I wouldn't be surprised if this man gets slapped in the face or breaks somewhere in the foreseeable future. The information room, no matter how you turn it, is general. Space responds and binds all the available knots with its threads.

Ivy. You're not normal.

Philemon. I'm an artist.

Ivy. Well, that's what I'm saying.

Philemon. Oh, yeah.

Ivy turns her attention to the easel.

Ivy. What are you drawing there? The easel wasn't here when I left. What? Inspiration struck sharply?

Philemon. And... yes, I'm there... so. Something has found it.

Ivy. Can I see it?

Philemon. No.

Ivy. What do you mean, no?

Philemon. Literally, no!

Ivy. You're a tough guy. And what's so-and-so?

Philemon. That's all you can't do!

They sit, they are silent, they look at each other.

Ivy. And if I look anyway?

Philemon. I don't recommend it.

Ivy. What's going to happen? Will you draw me with a black eye?

Philemon. It can be easier to do everything, you're not far away, I can reach out if I want.

Ivy. You are not capable of hitting a girl, you can be seen through. A worthless, soft-bodied little bastard. Only on paper and is able to drive with brushes. You can't do anything else—you don't have the guts!

Philemon. Why are you insulting me all day today? Sometimes you blame your age, then you blame your softness and inability to do something great. Why are you doing this to me?

Ivy. What are you doing? What a Van Gogh! Is it a pity that

someone will see your daub?

Philemon sprays the rest of the juice from his glass into Ivy's face.

Ivy jumps up.

Ivy. Oh, you old prick! I'm going to put your painting on your head now!

He runs to the donated painting and takes it.

Ivy. No, I liked this one, I'll take this one. I'm just painting you over there, along with the easel. Look for a helmet, it won't seem enough!

Ivy runs up to the easel, grabs it and notices the drawing on it. Freezes.

Philemon. What is it? What?

Philemon runs up to Ivy. He takes the easel from her and sets it aside.

Philemon. Where does it hurt? Stretch it? Knock? What? What's wrong with you?

Ivy looks at the drawing, at the one on the easel, then looks at Philemon. He stands at a loss.

Philemon. Well, yes...

Ivy kisses him. Philemon stands like an idol.

Philemon. For what? What have I done?

Ivy removes the drawing from the easel, shows it to Philemon, then to the audience. A one-on-one portrait with Ivy.

Ivy. Something's found, you say?

Philemon. Found it.

Ivy. And what found it?

Philemon. Found it... Something.

Ivy. Mm...

Philemon. Well, yes...

Ivy. Will you give me this drawing?

Philemon. I gave you that one, and I'd like to keep this one for myself. I won't draw it like this a second time.

Ivy. What? Did you like it?

Philemon. Why did you like it right away? I liked it a little bit. Am I an artist that I can't draw some person just like that?

Ivy. I definitely liked it.

Philemon, you... this... Let's change the subject. You were going to tell me about yourself! I'm listening to you carefully.

Ivy. And now I don't want to tell you.

Philemon. Why is that?

Ivy. Because if you find out the whole truth about me, will you immediately stop liking me?

Philemon. Why will you stop?

Ivy. Ah! So you liked me after all!

Philemon. A... I didn't say anything like that at all. I just drew you and that's it.

Ivy. That's it?

Philemon. And everything.

Ivy. Well, that's it, that's it.

Philemon. That's it?

Ivy. Well, that's it. That's all. I went then, since I didn't like it.

He's about to leave.

Philemon. Wait, wait!

Ivy. Yes, yes?

Philemon. Psh... Well, I liked it.

Ivy. And without well?

Philemon. I liked...

Ivy. Here! So it would be right away! We continue the conversation.

They sit down at the table again. Ivy pours wine for Philemon and herself, and looks at Philemon intently.

Ivy. Let's get to know each other!

Philemon. Wait, isn't that where we started?

Ivy. Back then, neither I knew who you were, nor you knew who I was.

Philemon. How did you not know? I immediately introduced myself. I didn't say right away that I was an artist, but what does that change?

Ivy. You immediately, and I did not immediately. Besides, I treated you a little differently. I thought you were just like everyone else. "Bit, chewed and spit out," and you, as it turned out, were not going to "bite" either.

Philemon. Ivy, you seem to be trying to tell me something, to explain, but I don't understand.

Ivy. Don't call me Ivy. My name is Alexandra. Sasha.

Philemon. And Ivy?

Sasha. And Ivy is my stage name, let's call it that. Is it clear

who I am now? Thanks for the introduction.

Sasha clinks her glass against Philemon's. He drinks. Philemon comprehends, catches up with Sasha.

Philemon. Well, let's get to know each other, Sasha. And I'm still Philemon. Either a Smart Guy, or a Wit, or a Filly. Whatever you like.

Sasha. No, no, no. Philemon, as it is, so let it be. I'm sorry that I played with you and behaved so unbridled.

Philemon. Unbridled! Do you even know that word?

Sasha. I'm not stupid. I can communicate decently, it's just that men like silly, frivolous pretty girls with a touch of bitchiness, and I willingly wear this mask for work. Have you finally figured out what kind of job it is?

Philemon. I can't say that I didn't guess, I've been thinking for a long time, I just didn't want to believe it. You're so... She's still very young. And into such a profession...

Sasha. Where to go, money is not lying on the road. You have to pay for your studies, you have to live on something. Everything is necessary.

Philemon. But there are a lot of normal jobs, side jobs.

Sasha. Normal for whom? For the employer?

Philemon. For the most part, yes.

Sasha. Well, you know everything. What will you earn there, in these "normal" jobs and part-time jobs? You will only leave your health.

Philemon. And what's here? Won't you leave it?

Sasha. And you'll leave it here, but at least you'll get something for it, even if not for free.

Philemon. I don't know...

they're silent.

Sasha. Do you despise me?

Philemon is silent.

Sasha. Clear. Okay. I'm going to go. Happy birthday and I'm sorry if anything is wrong.

Sasha leaves, takes the painting that was given to her.

Scene 3

Philemon. Yes... Wow, Fate gave me a gift. I don't even know whether to be happy or sad. I liked the girl, what to hide. Just what should I do with this "liked"? Her life is just beginning, the very dawn is ahead, and my day is already going down. Even if we assume that it is stupid, but nevertheless, if we assume that she will also be able to like me in some way, then what can I offer her? Not rich, not famous, not really realized. A family that doesn't really need me, friends and acquaintances who, if necessary, can easily find an alternative for me. Yes, there is a brother who will always help me, as I will help him, but in the context of this issue, I am completely alone. I have this old murdered apartment, which has never been well renovated. That's all I've achieved in my life. I'm not her match, in any case. She's just wasting her time with me. Get these thoughts out of your head, Philemon. Raise a glass to all the good things and go to rest. No one else is coming to see you today.

Philemon pours wine, picks it up, clinking glasses with the air, and drinks it.

The doorbell rings. He's coming to open it.

Sasha enters without the painting.

Sasha. What if I like you too?

Philemon. Me?

Sasha. You

, Philemon. To you?

Sasha. To me!

Philemon. Why would that be?

Sasha. But it's that simple! Contrary to all logic!

Philemon. I do not believe. Prove it!

Sasha kisses Philemon passionately.

Philemon. Convincing. Come on in.

They go to the table and sit down.

Sasha. What are we going to do?

Philemon. And what are your suggestions?

Sasha. I don't know. There are none. That's why I'm asking you.

Philemon. Why don't you tell me how you got here first, and then we'll think about everything else?

Sasha. Oh, right. I didn't say that. I just got the apartment mixed up. I was called by a client from fifty-sixth, and I rushed to you, at sixty-fifth. Something flashed in my head, I'm pretty sure it's you. And you don't kick out, you play along with the situation. It's not entirely plausible, but nevertheless.

Philemon. I was waiting for my nephew Sergei and his girlfriend to visit. Moreover, a friend could have come earlier.

Sasha. Did you know the name of this friend?

Philemon. He called his girlfriend Bunny. I thought you were the Bunny.

Sasha. It's clear now. And then you called me a Hare from the doorway, back and forth, let's dance tea and coffee, it seems like

everything always started. I didn't suspect anything.

Philemon. No, no. I was talking to you without a second thought back then.

Sasha. And at what point did you have this second thought?

Philemon. I don't know, you'd better tell me about Sergei, whom you were talking about. You're talking about Sergei, and I'm talking about Sergei. At first, everything worked out.

Sasha. Well, I had one client – Sergey. More precisely, not one. I just thought that one of them, one of my former clients, recommended me to you.

Philemon. Exes?

Sasha. What if you and I are together, then you won't mind my work?

Philemon. I will.

Sasha. That's why – exes!

Philemon. Understood. And what about that client from fifty-sixth?

Sasha. It's nothing.

Philemon. And in more detail? If possible.

Sasha. Are you jealous?

Philemon. Me? No-e-e-e.

Sasha. Yeah– no. I can see that yes!

Philemon. What? Is it that noticeable?

Sasha. It's noticeable.

Philemon. And don't provoke me, and it won't be noticeable. So what about this one you've got me confused with?

Sasha. If you're interested in the details, I'll tell you right away. We didn't have anything with him, moreover, he didn't even see me personally, just a profile photo on the work page and that's it.

Philemon. But you said someone paid you for an hour. The hour you spent with me.

Sasha. That's right, he paid for it.

Philemon. So you tricked him? I took the money and...

Sasha. Philemon! Don't think so badly of me. I'm a decent person... I'm sorry, but girls from our, let's say, class are often much more decent than those who imagine themselves to be princesses.

Philemon. Maybe you're right. But did you take the money?

Sasha. What a bore. Look! Otherwise, as you liked it, you'll stop liking it.

They are silent. They look at each other.

Philemon. I'm sorry if I'm bothering you too much with my questions, it's just... Such a situation...

Sasha. Yes, I returned the money to him. I reached his apartment. I stood for a while, thought about it. Then I made a transfer to his phone number, returned the entire amount to a penny and wrote not to wait.

Philemon. Why did you decide to do that? After all, it would be possible...

Sasha. I could have, but that's what I did. I don't know why. I'm sitting here, looking at you, and I'm thinking, why did I do this? Maybe I did something stupid?

Philemon. No, you did the right thing.

Sasha. Thank God, we figured it out. Any more questions?

Philemon. No, no, no. I explained everything clearly.

Sasha. Then I'll ask. Why do you live so modestly? You're a great painter. Talented, I would even say!

Philemon. Oh, Sasha. Talent alone is not enough. Without connections, it is extremely difficult to achieve great success nowadays. There are many talented people, few of those who were able to declare their talent.

Sasha. So why don't you declare?

Philemon. I tried to exhibit at a local gallery. I submitted my works to contests. Some acquaintances appeared, but nothing serious. I live mainly on portraits. Well, the sabbaths, of course, are much better without them. I have enough to live on, but for the soul I paint pictures like the one that I gave you.

Sasha. This is understandable. And why was I alone today? I understood that you are a simple, modest artist, but this is not a reason for those who were invited not to come.

Philemon. I'm telling you. The ex-wife and children are leaving tonight on a burning ticket to Vietnam. Packing, departure to the airport is not up to me.

Sasha. M... there are children, then.

Philemon. There is. Son and daughter. Pasha and Alina. They are already adults. They're about your age.

Sasha. M..

Filimon. My brother has an emergency at work. His wife and

children did not dare to come without him, especially since the daughters had a cold somewhere, sniveling. My friend Tolik is a womanizer, because of his addictions, he was also under attack. My wife and I are fighting, the holiday has been canceled. Four friends got into an accident while driving to my place.

Sasha. All at once?

Philemon. They were driving in the same car.

Sasha. A. So. Next?

Philemon. Even the twin brothers were supposed to come with their wives, but they had a flood at home. The house is for two owners, both families got in at once.

Sasha. Do these twins live in this house for two owners? Are they the owners?

Philemon. Well, yes.

Sasha. Well, I see.

Philemon. Oh, and Sergey also, respectively, with his Bunny.

Sasha. What about them?

Philemon. The devil knows. Something didn't work out, I didn't really understand, I didn't find out the details. That's all. That's why I was left alone.

Sasha. Cool!

Philemon. Do you find it?

Sasha. Of course!

Philemon. Why?

Sasha. Because if they were all here, then I would have confused the apartments, quickly understood everything and

went to where they were waiting for me. And I wouldn't have met a boring artist who for some reason I really liked.

Philemon. Can I ask the boring artist something else?

Sasha. Try it, let's see what happens.

Philemon. Why Ivy? An infrequent name. I have never met such names at all. Does it even exist?

Sasha. Exists. This name is of Slavic origin, for a second, and means "Overripe berry"!

Philemon. I'm sorry, please, but I'm the overripe berry of the two of us! It's kind of...

Sasha. I agree, this has nothing to do with me at all. But I liked the name. I Googled it, and look what they're writing. (Reading from a smartphone.) A person named Ivy is usually characterized as a creative and romantic person. Ivy is very social and sociable, and also has a developed sense of humor and is not averse to making fun of herself.

He looks at Philemon.

Philemon. Yes, there is something from you here.

Sasha. Well, that's it!

Philemon. But the name Sasha is also beautiful. Alexa-a-ndra—how it sounds!

Sasha. Alexandra sounds really good, but no one calls a girl Alexandra in real life. It's too formal. Sasha and Sasha. And I don't really like the name Sasha. Moreover, it is more masculine than feminine.

Philemon. If you want, I'll call you Ivy.

Sasha. Agree. Then I'll be Sasha and Alexandra for everyone, and Ivy will be just for you.

Philemon. Great! Agreed.

Sasha. And what does the name Philemon mean?

Philemon. But I do not know. I've never even been interested.

Sasha. So let's Google it, you'll find out. (Reading from a smartphone.) The name Philemon comes from an ancient Greek name... and.... There are some hieroglyphs here, I can't read ancient Greek. But this word means "affectionate", "beloved", "kissing". Here! Is that clear to you?

Philemon. Clear.

Sasha. What is clear to you?

Philemon. Well, affectionate, beloved, kissing.

Sasha. Nothing is clear to you! Kiss me, come on, confirm your Philemon name!

Kissing. They drink a little, without a toast, but clinking glasses.

Philemon. Listen, Ivy, how are you? Is the wine working properly?

Sasha. It's all right, why?

Philemon. I think I'll go.

Philemon goes to the toilet.

Sasha walks around the apartment, looks skeptically at the poor situation, thinks about something. He takes out his phone. Calls.

Sasha. Hello? Vadik, Hi. We should meet. No, I don't do that

anymore. That's what I decided. I'm on another matter. You'll find out. Well, so what? Are you in town? When can you? (He looks at his watch.) I'll be in time. I'm running.

Philemon returns.

Sasha. I'll be out, don't waste it. I need to meet someone urgently.

Philemon. Can I start worrying already? What kind of person is that?

Sasha. A very serious comrade, but decent, you have nothing to worry about. I have to run now, I'll come back and explain everything. OK?

Filimon. Hmm...

Sasha. Well, Philemon...

Philemon. OK, OK.

Sasha. Do not be sad... I think everything will be fine. Wait!

Sasha is almost leaving. Philemon calls out to her.

Philemon. Wait!

Sasha. What?

Philemon. Here. Take my apartment keys. You will come here as a hostess, not as a guest.

Sasha. Wow! Are you sure? What if I put up an apartment?

Philemon. What is there to take?

Sasha. But you've only known me for a day, haven't you?

Philemon. I'm an artist!

Sasha. M... well, yes, that explains a lot. Fine. I'll leave for three hours and come back.

Philemon. Fine.

Sasha runs away. Is returning. He kisses Philemon.

Sasha. Wait!

He's running away.

Scene 4

Philemon is no longer in his dressing gown, but also not in his former attire. He wanders around the apartment. He can't find a place for himself.

Philemon. The old fool! By God, you old fool! Fifty years – no mind. I fell for a pretty face. Turn on your brain, Philemon! Why did you give up on her? You're nothing more than exotic to her. And so—so exotic. He'll play and quit. He'll forget in one fell swoop.

He wanders on.

Philemon. And on the other hand, to hell with it. Why not? Wasn't that how it was with my wife? I thought there would be one woman for the rest of my life, but this woman did not live with me for long. In fact, she also played enough, and went on walking. Thank you, at least God rewarded you with children, otherwise it would be a longing. Although they are not too eager to contact me, but still. It seems like I've already lived my life for a reason. And here they are, such a birthday gift from heaven. Ivy. However, is it heaven? Sometimes it seems to me that she comes from somewhere there. (He points down.) From Satan.

But I really liked her... Oh, you fool. Now I would calmly read books, draw something, maybe watch a movie. But no! Go, now, worry.

Sasha enters with a solid pile of money in his hand. Defiantly

puts them on the table. He winks at Philemon.

Sasha. Hi. Did you miss me?

Philemon. There is such a letter in this word. And what is it? Where from?

Sasha. And now I'm your personal manager. Your personal agent and your girlfriend. Do you have any objections?

Philemon. Wait, wait. I understand nothing. Explain it!

Sasha. I sold your painting. The one you gave me.

Philemon. You liked her, didn't you? Or did you just say that out of decency? To cheer me up and support me somehow?

Sasha. No, I wasn't lying. I really liked the painting, but you and I had a real chance to succeed, for which we had to sacrifice the painting we liked. I have one friend – my former client, Vadik. A very wealthy man. He organizes exhibitions and does a lot of other things. I've met him. I showed him your painting, he liked it. I bought it for myself, here's the money, half of it is mine.

He takes half of it for himself.

Sasha. But that's not the main thing. He can promote your work, but not like that, quietly for cash in a pub, but at the official level. You can open an individual entrepreneur and provide several paintings with all the documents, signatures and all that is required, then the price will be completely different for your paintings. Or you can just call, meet with this Vadik, he will arrange everything himself. He liked your style, he's ready to work with you.

Philemon. Em... I don't really like this idea. Your former

client, some questionable offers...

Sasha. Don't be jealous of me, please. What happened was what happened. It's already in the past. Now you and I have a real chance to start a new decent life. Who knows, maybe I really got the wrong number for a reason and ended up here with you? Perhaps Fate knows what it's doing?

Philemon. Yeah... It's tempting, of course, but we need to think about it.

Sasha. Think!

They sit down. Sasha defiantly counts the bills. Philemon looks at her, at the money, looks skeptically at his apartment.

Sasha. Listen, why did you decide to become an artist?

Philemon. Firstly, this activity is consonant with me, and secondly, I understood the phrase early: if youth knew, if old age could.

Sasha. Translate it?

Philemon. Often, the experience we get in life gains momentum and reaches a peak when it is almost useless. You already know everything and know how to do it in your field, but you are too old to apply this experience to business. No matter how skilled an athlete is, his success corridor is severely limited by age. Dancers, climbers, models, installers, drivers. Over the years, the wrong speed, the wrong body, the wrong agility, appearance, the wrong look and grip. But, for example, writers, artists, musicians... We can create even in old age. The pressure will jump, we will feel dizzy, we will walk with a stick

and hardly get out of our own bed, but for now the hand is able to hold the brush... The experience realizes itself. It's good to be an honorary artist!

Sasha. And on odd-numbered days – a handyman – a covenanter.

Philemon. We're making a joke, then.

Sasha. Sorry.

Philemon. No, you're right. After all, I really have worked with everyone in all this time. The artistic path has never brought me much income.

Sasha. That was before me! And now everything will be different. So what? Have you decided? I am ready to let a completely different stream of wind into my life! Winds of change!

Philemon. Only if you're in this stream.

Sasha. Where am I going to get away from you now? With such money! You are my chicken with golden eggs. Ahem. It sounds kind of ambiguous, but you get what I mean.

Philemon. Clear. It's all about the money.

Sasha. Money, of course. Who needs a fifty-year-old poor unsuccessful artist?

Philemon. Are you kidding me?

Sasha. Yes. I'm kidding, on behalf of Ivy. And on behalf of Sasha, I speak quite sincerely and seriously. Philemon, I like you. I don't want to deceive you, I don't want to pour into your ears worn-out, but, nevertheless, working phrases about love to the

grave and all that. As long as we live, we will live as long as we live. But let's at least try? And then we'll see. I'm ready to change for you, I want to change for you, but are you ready to change your life for me?

Philemon. Heck! Yes!

Sasha. Awesome Then should we call Vadik?

Philemon. Wait a minute.

Kissing.

Philemon. Listen, about the pool, did you tell the truth, or did you make it up to support Ivy's image?

Sasha. Well, stop it. What's the big deal?

Philemon. Is it true, then?

Sasha. Well, yes...

Philemon. I love you, Ivy.

Kissing.

Sasha. And then I also want to ask you a question.

Philemon. Am I listening?

Sasha. When you realized that you liked me, what did you think?

Philemon. The end of the nervous system! What are you talking about?

Sasha. He'll do it!

Smiling, hugging, kissing.

A curtain

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All the plays of Nikolai Lakutin are presented for review on the official website <http://lakutin-n.ru> the "Plays" section (<https://lakutin-n.ru/piesy.html>)"