



Valentin Krasnogorov

*Translated from Russian by Eugene Reznikov and James Walker*

Norman Maine Publishing

Copyright © 2005, Valentin Krasnogorov

**ALL RIGHTS RESERVED**

**Let's Have Sex!** is fully protected under the copyright laws of the United States of America and all of the countries covered by the Universal Copyright Convention and countries with which the United States has bilateral copyright relations including Canada, Mexico, Australia, and all nations of the United Kingdom.

Copying or reproducing all or any part of this book in any manner is strictly forbidden by law. No part of this book may be stored in a retrieval system or transmitted in any form by any means including mechanical, electronic, photocopying, recording, or videotaping without written permission from the publisher.

A royalty is due for every performance of this play whether admission is charged or not. A "performance" is any presentation in which an audience of any size is admitted.

The name of the author must appear on all programs, printing, and advertising for the play. The program must also contain the following notice: "Produced by special arrangement with Norman Maine Publishing Company, Sarasota, FL."

All rights including professional, amateur, radio broadcasting, television, motion picture, recitation, lecturing, public reading, and the rights of translation into foreign languages are strictly reserved by Norman Maine Publishing Company to whom all inquiries should be addressed.

Norman Maine Publishing  
P.O. Box 1400  
Tallevast, FL 34270

"Let's have sex!"  
Should be used as a greeting.  
What better way to express  
An openness and willingness  
To make contact?

—Girl

**Let's Have Sex!** was produced in 2003 at The Theatre of Roman Viktyuk, Moscow, and was directed by Roman Viktyuk.

**MICHAEL FATEEV:** Husband

**EKATERINA KARPUSHINA:** Wife

**NIKOLAI DOBRYNIN:** Professor

**ALEXANDRA FLORINSKAYA:** Girl

**NATALIA POGORELOVA:** Sister

## Let's Have Sex!

**THEATRE OF THE ABSURD.** Five people search for love, self-affirmation, and happiness, all of which prove illusive in this absurd, humorous play. A wife tries to talk to her husband about sex, but he would rather read a book. Soon a psychiatry professor appears and convinces the wife to run away with him, but while she is packing her bags, a young woman comes along and invites the professor to run away with her. The characters' tragic pleas of "Let's have sex!" fail to bring about any human intercourse, but as a discourse, the phrase provides an empty slogan with which to communicate their isolated and alienated existence in a hostile postmodern world.

**Performance Time:** Approximately 120 minutes.

# characters

(2 m, 3 w)

**HUSBAND**  
**WIFE**  
**PROFESSOR**  
**GIRL**  
**SISTER**

## SETTING

A room. It may be furnished with nothing more than a table, some chairs, and an armchair.

## SYNOPSIS OF SCENES

**ACT I:** A room.

**ACTII:** A room, moments later.

## PROPS

Book  
Pen  
Notepad  
Tablecloth  
Eyeglasses, for Girl  
Mop  
Tray of medicine bottles, syringes  
Hand mirror

## SOUND EFFECTS

Tango music



## ACT 1

*(AT RISE: The Husband is reading a book. The Wife enters. The Husband continues to read. The Wife goes out, enters again. The Husband continues to read.)*

WIFE: Let's have sex.

HUSBAND: Okay. *(Continues to read.)*

WIFE: Let's have sex!

HUSBAND: *(Continues to read.)* Okay!

WIFE: I said, "Let's have sex!"

HUSBAND: What?

WIFE: Sex!

HUSBAND: Right now?

WIFE: Why not?

HUSBAND: Just let me finish reading this page.

WIFE: What if I want it right now?

HUSBAND: What has come over you?

WIFE: Nothing. Do you have any objections?

HUSBAND: Me? No. *(Continues to read.)*

WIFE: Well?

HUSBAND: Well, what?

WIFE: You said that you have no objection.

HUSBAND: To what?

WIFE: To doing it.

HUSBAND: Doing what?

WIFE: Put down the book, or I'll throw it out the window.

HUSBAND: The book doesn't have anything to do with it.

WIFE: I know that it doesn't. But you don't want me throw  
*you* out the window, do you?

HUSBAND: What do you want from me?

WIFE: I have said, "Let's have sex."

HUSBAND: You interrupted me in a particularly interesting place—he is sneaking up to her bed with a gun.

WIFE: Nobody sneaks up to my bed.

HUSBAND: That's good.

WIFE: I am not so sure.

*(Husband furtively glances at his book.)*

HUSBAND: I think he's going to kill her now.

*(Wife grabs the book away from him and throws it into the corner.)*

WIFE: I will kill *you* now.

HUSBAND: What do you want from me?

WIFE: Nothing. A woman is not supposed to want it. *You* are the one who is supposed to want it.

HUSBAND: You seem very irritable today.

WIFE: There is nothing wrong with me.

HUSBAND: Did something happen at work?

WIFE: Do people have sex only when something happens at work?

HUSBAND: No. Not necessarily.

WIFE: Thank God. Otherwise, I would think that nothing ever happens to you at work.

HUSBAND: I think that now it is not the right time, and this is not the right place.

WIFE: For you, never is the right time, and nowhere is the right place for sex.

HUSBAND: Somebody could come in—

WIFE: But we're alone now, so let's hurry!

HUSBAND: You know, it would be inappropriate here.

WIFE: So tell me when and where it would be appropriate for you? Why does it always have to be in the matrimonial bed, always at the same time, on the weekend, ten minutes after

the light is turned off? Why not in the morning? Why not in the afternoon? Why always lying in bed? Why not standing up or sitting down? Why not on the floor or on a table? Why not on the washing machine? Why not on a swing in the garden? Why not on a roll of barbed wire? Why not by candlelight? Why don't you take me by surprise, without warning, when I'm not expecting it, where it's inconvenient? Why does it always have to be at home, in a warm and comfortable room, when we're yawning before going to sleep, in the same everlasting bed?

HUSBAND: Because...because in the bed is more convenient.

WIFE: More convenient? Then why are the times on the backseat of a cramped car, or in a forest on an ant hill, or on a dark backstairs, the ones we remember forever, while matrimonial caresses at home in the soft wide convenient bed so suitable for sexual pleasure are forgotten in ten minutes?

HUSBAND: Because...I don't know why.

WIFE: Why don't you come up to me when I'm washing the dishes and take me from behind? Why don't you look for a chance? Why don't you pursue me? Why I am always sure that you won't do anything unexpected? Why not at a symphony concert? Why not in someone else's apartment, where somebody might come in at any moment?

HUSBAND: Somebody could come in here at any moment.

WIFE: Well, let them. Let something happen at last. I don't want to be stuck inevitably doing the same thing over and over. I want unpredictability. I want to not know what awaits me tonight. Maybe a meeting with a girlfriend in a cafe, or maybe a party at somebody's home...or a quiet walk alone through the park, or taking a rest in an armchair with a book in my hands, or an unexpected rendezvous on a dark beach under the stars...under the bright stars in a mysterious black sky...white sand, pounding waves, the

passionate embrace of unfamiliar arms, hands greedily exploring a new and unfamiliar body—my body—that longs impatiently for those arms. But none of this will ever be, and I know precisely what will happen today, and tomorrow, and the day after tomorrow. It seems as if my life has already ended, because I already know everything; I've already gone through everything. There is nothing new left to happen. I'm not living, I only continue to exist. I read the same page of the same book, and it is so boring to me, boring, boring. It's so boring to me! Let's have sex!

HUSBAND: My God, again?

WIFE: Again? Did we already do it?

HUSBAND: In general or today?

WIFE: What happened in general, I don't remember anymore.

There never was anything, and there never will be. All that there is, is *now*. Why do we live only in the past or in the future? Why not try to live now, and so that *now* can make us happy? Let's have—

HUSBAND: Sex.

WIFE: Yes. For a change.

HUSBAND: I don't know what has come over you. You sound so cynical. Such a matter-of-fact and naked way of putting it. "Let's have sex."

WIFE: And what do you want me to say? "Let's make love"? Love? Doesn't that seem ridiculous to you? Aren't you embarrassed? Doesn't it sound cynical? And you don't seem to approve of the word "naked." Better to be clothed. In a long coat, for example. All buttoned up.

HUSBAND: In a decent society, they don't talk about sex.

WIFE: You might think that in a decent society they don't have sex.

HUSBAND: They do, but they just don't talk about it.

WIFE: But each of us is not first and foremost an executive, a teacher, an engineer, a doctor, or a member of parliament.

First of all, we are men and women. Why shouldn't we think about it and talk about it? Why should I be ashamed of what is natural? Of what gives me pleasure?

HUSBAND: You shouldn't be ashamed, but you shouldn't talk about it either.

WIFE: And what do they talk about in a decent society?

HUSBAND: I don't know. About money.

WIFE: You want me to talk to you about money? About what you call your salary? Well, then, let's talk about money.

HUSBAND: No, better not.

WIFE: And what is so cynical in the word "sex"? It is matter-of-fact. I agree. But sex is a fact of life. A part of our lovely, comfortable, boring, miserable everyday life. You say, "Let's have supper." So why can't I say, "Let's have sex"? Let's watch TV. Let's go shopping. Let's go to the movies. Let's have sex. Let's take out the trash. Let's do the laundry. Let's have sex. Let's call up some friends. Let's—

HUSBAND: Enough!

WIFE: Let's move the furniture. Let's buy a teapot. Let's have sex. Let's go to bed. Does "Let's go to bed" sound cynical too?

HUSBAND: It depends on with whom.

WIFE: With my husband.

HUSBAND: With your husband it does not sound cynical.

WIFE: It doesn't sound anything at all.

HUSBAND: So tell me, are you having a hard time at work?

WIFE: I'm having a hard time at home. At home, not only do I not have sex, but I'm also forbidden to talk of it.

HUSBAND: Why should we talk about it?

WIFE: Precisely because we don't do it. And what else should I talk about? About the children that I don't have?

HUSBAND: What has come over you today?

WIFE: Nothing. Today I want to talk about sex, again about sex and only about sex. Even if it's just for today. Even if

only to talk. I kept silent about it all my life. I talked about everything in the world. About Beethoven and the prices at the market. About skirts and French painting. About local elections and the boss's tie. So really, do Beethoven, French painting, prices, skirts, elections, and the boss's tie interest you and me more than sex?

HUSBAND: Skirts interest you.

WIFE: And you too.

HUSBAND: Everything about a woman interests me.

WIFE: Yes. Everything between her knees and her waist.

HUSBAND: I'm a normal man.

WIFE: I wish I was sure of that.

HUSBAND: You are talking recklessly.

WIFE: That's good. I grew up inhibited and uptight. Sex was forbidden. Nobody spoke about it. It was obscene, done only at night. Only with the shades down and the lights off. So that nobody would see, even yourself. It was forbidden to remember it in the morning or discuss it at work. We were sexless. We had nothing between our legs. And now they do it in broad daylight. Now they show it at the movies. Now they write about it in children's books. Recently I found 22 tips on how to use birth control in a magazine for schoolgirls. And I had never read about it before.

HUSBAND: So what do you want?

WIFE: To take the taboo off of sex. To free it from sin. To lift the veil of secrecy from it. To stop alluding to it. To call things by their proper names. Penis. Orgasm. Vagina.

HUSBAND: You're crazy.

WIFE: Yes, I'll repeat the word "vagina" 20 times, 200 times, until the word starts to sound neutral, sterile, medical. Until you stop reacting to it. Until people who hear it stop giggling, or being offended by the vulgarity of it, stop being indignant, or getting excited. Vagina, vagina, vagina—

HUSBAND: Stop it!

WIFE: Vagina, vagina, vagina—

HUSBAND: You're crazy.

WIFE: And you're a hypocrite. A puritan. What is more attractive to you than a vagina? What do you see in your dreams? What do you pay the most attention to when you look at paintings in museums? What is the main thing for you in a woman? The eyes? The smile? Well, answer me!

HUSBAND: You're crazy.

WIFE: I know. This life is enough to drive anyone crazy. Have I ever truly lived? What have I seen? What have I done? Home and work, home and work, home and work. And what happens at home? What happens at work? Where is my life? What have I done with it? So there is only one thing left to do—try to lose myself in sex and forget all my petty problems. They are not worth worrying about anyway, but still they overwhelm and oppress me. To stop hating myself, even for just ten minutes. Not to think, even for just one second. Not to remember. Not to care. Just feel. The joy of being alive. The pleasure. The delight of taking and being taken. Man and woman are always in a state of war, and sex is the one moment of truce, the one field of mutual understanding and attraction. The one moment when you don't feel lonely. An act of unity, a time of reconciliation with life, an illusion of love, a glimpse of happiness, an opportunity for self-affirmation.

*(Pause.)*

HUSBAND: Well, if you really want to have sex with me...

WIFE: With you? What makes you think that?

HUSBAND: You said, "Let's have sex."

WIFE: But I didn't say, "with you." Just "Let's have sex."

HUSBAND: Not necessarily with me?

WIFE: No, not necessarily.

HUSBAND: With whom then?

WIFE: Do you have anyone else that you can have sex with but me?

HUSBAND: Not right at this moment.

WIFE: What about other times?

HUSBAND: Theoretically...with anybody.

WIFE: Leave the theory aside, let's get to the practice.

HUSBAND: I am tired of your nagging.

WIFE: My poor, unfortunate husband. He's tired to death of sex. Apparently, forever.

HUSBAND: You know, I've had enough of you. Maybe you really think I am your husband, but I don't consider you my wife. And I am not going to have sex with a strange woman.

WIFE: Why do you think I want to have sex?

HUSBAND: Well, what do you want?

WIFE: Nothing. That's the problem. I don't want anything. I'm depressed. Every day the same thing. I am so depressed...

HUSBAND: So why torment me? Why ask for sex if you don't want it? Just to spite me?

WIFE: Have I no right to talk? I'm your wife!

HUSBAND: Leave me alone! You are not my wife! I hate the very word "wife"! My wife has ruined my life! My wife has driven me crazy! Stop it! Leave me alone! *(He exits.)*

WIFE: A little more of this, and I really will go crazy. I have to save myself. I need a change. As soon as possible...otherwise it will be too late. As soon as possible. What to do? What to do?

*(Professor enters.)*

PROFESSOR: What to do? I'll tell you. Let's have sex.

WIFE: That's a surprising proposition.



PROFESSOR: Good! Sex shouldn't be planned. It's only good when it's spontaneous. It should be sudden like a whirlwind, unexpected like an earthquake. It should catch us by surprise, when we're not hoping for it, where it doesn't seem possible. Do you agree?

WIFE: Yes.

PROFESSOR: Then let's start now.

WIFE: Not so fast.

PROFESSOR: But you said you agreed.

WIFE: I agree in principle. Not to your proposition, but to what you said about the whirlwind and earthquake.

PROFESSOR: If you agree in principle, then let's get started. We can work out the details as we go along. Or when we're done.

WIFE: I don't have time.

PROFESSOR: Neither do I. So let's not waste it. Let's get started right away.

WIFE: I am not used to doing it *right away*. I need time.

PROFESSOR: Nonsense. Imagine you've been swept up by a whirlwind.

WIFE: Besides, we don't really have time. By the way, what time is it?

PROFESSOR: You're kidding! Who has sex with a watch in his hand?

WIFE: What makes you think that I want to have sex?

PROFESSOR: Everybody wants to have sex.

WIFE: But not me.

PROFESSOR: So what do you want to do? Learn to speak German?

WIFE: I don't want to do anything. And definitely not have sex.

PROFESSOR: You don't want to have sex at all or just right now?

WIFE: Not at all.

PROFESSOR: That's why you've called me?

WIFE: Me? I didn't called you. Who are you, anyway?

PROFESSOR: I am a world-famous professor of psychiatry, psychology and sociology. A sexologist and sex pathologist. Treatment, consulting, lecturing. I get rid of complexes, inspire self-confidence, free people of their inhibitions. I cure frigidity and impotence. I satisfy the unsatisfied. It's very hard work. Lots of calls. I get very tired.

WIFE: Are you a doctor?

PROFESSOR: Not exactly. I am a sex consultant. I teach, give advice, help to solve problems, cure any illness, everything.

WIFE: Why everything, if you're just an expert on sex?

PROFESSOR: Because lack of sex is the cause of all illnesses. Now do you understand why you feel bad?

WIFE: What makes you think that I feel bad?

PROFESSOR: You told me you don't want to have sex. That's a type of derangement.

WIFE: Do you think I'm crazy?

PROFESSOR: No, I didn't say that. Madness is normal because we all live in a mad world. The abnormal one is the person who's normal. But I'll cure you.

WIFE: How?

PROFESSOR: I have a universal remedy: sex three times a day. Instead of meals.

WIFE: I agree.

PROFESSOR: Excellent. But the patient has to be very healthy to take this cure. Are you healthy?

WIFE: Yes.

PROFESSOR: Then there's no need for me to treat you. So let's just have sex. Do you know what it is?

WIFE: I once knew, but I've forgotten.

PROFESSOR: Do you have a husband?

WIFE: A husband and sex are two different things. And besides, I'm not sure if I have him.

PROFESSOR: What?! You don't even know if you have a husband?

WIFE: I have him, but I don't know whether he is my husband.

PROFESSOR: My dear, now I see. You need to start life all over again. And I'll help you. Nobody in the entire world knows what sex is, but me. I have devoted myself to it completely. I have given it the best years of my life. I studied it in libraries and archives, at lectures and in museums, at conferences and seminars.

WIFE: And nowhere else?

PROFESSOR: If you mean nitty-gritty experience, perhaps that may be good for an amateur, but not for a top-notch professional. You can't even imagine what a rich world will be opened up for you when I start sharing my knowledge! Primitive sex. Ancient sex. Greek and Roman sex. Medieval sex. Renaissance sex. Baroque and Classical sex. Romantic sex. Modern sex. Oriental sex. French sex. Sex of all countries, times, and peoples. And we'll start learning all this right now.

WIFE: Right now? I clearly told you, I am not in the mood for sex right now.

PROFESSOR: We'll have sex in the academic sense. A course of 480 hours, for a start. We will study the theoretical principles. The history. The social aspects. Practical applications. Tantra and the Kama Sutra. Pictures. Films. Physiology and psychology. Hygiene and techniques. Exercises for the hands and legs. Voice training—shouting, sighing, groaning. Resisting, relaxing, surrendering. Pretending.

WIFE: I already know how to pretend.

PROFESSOR: I will teach you how to pretend so well that you'll believe it yourself.

WIFE: And when I learn all this, then what?

PROFESSOR: Then everything will still be the same. But you will never learn everything. Sex is a boundless science. A science that brings us happiness. All your life is not enough to explore it completely, even if you start from childhood and don't stop until you die. This subject should be taught in school. Why do we have to learn algebra, which is of no use to anybody, and not sex, which everybody needs all the time? Tell me, have you ever needed to know Newton's binomial theorem?

WIFE: Never.

PROFESSOR: And yet sex is with us always and everywhere. It accompanies us all our life. It warms us in the winter and cools us in the hot summer. It soothes us but does not let us rest. It's a magic elixir which gives us a sense of youth and happiness. That's why we love it so much.

WIFE: Right now I detest it.

PROFESSOR: Don't deceive yourself. It's not sex that you feel an aversion to, but your partner. Change partners. Three times a day. Start today. I will teach you. Right now. You are a beautiful woman, and it is your duty to be happy. My services are expensive, but I am willing to teach you for free.

WIFE: I always thought that in circumstances like this the teacher pays, not the girl. And I didn't call you.

PROFESSOR: Called me. Didn't call me. What's the difference? Remember, we don't have much time. Let's get started. One, two, three, go!

*(Pause.)*

WIFE: How do we start?

PROFESSOR: You see, you don't even know how to start. One, two, three, go! *(Pause.)* One, two, three!

WIFE: Stop that. It would be better if you teach me...

PROFESSOR: Teach you what?

WIFE: How to live differently. Not like I live now. Better. More sensibly.

PROFESSOR: To live differently? It's very simple. To live in another way you must live with another partner. This idea might seem like a commonplace joke to you, but it's true. You can't change yourself now, so left to your own devices, you will always live the same way you have before. But life with another man will force you to live differently.

WIFE: Better or worse?

PROFESSOR: Worse for sure. But differently. That's what you want, isn't it?

WIFE: I don't even know what I want. I only know what I don't want. To live here. To live like this. A miserable, boring life. Alone. People are alienated and crazy. Their favorite pastime is tormenting each other. I want to run away. Doesn't it seem to you that everybody has gone mad?

PROFESSOR: No, it doesn't just seem that way. That's the way it really is. So there is nowhere to run away to.

WIFE: The years will pass like peas in a pod, but each one uglier than the one before. The end will come, and I'll ask myself, what did I live for? Did I ever live at all?

PROFESSOR: My dear, life does not and cannot have any meaning, except for the continuation of life. In other words, the meaning of life is sex. Sex is the affirmation, continuation, and celebration of life. You and I are ants, and nature does not care about each separate ant. Its goal is to preserve the anthill.

WIFE: I despise the human anthill.

PROFESSOR: An anthill? That's an undeserved compliment for our society. Ants work together in harmony, while we are a society of competitors, where everybody is a wolf to each other.

WIFE: I don't know how to solve my problems anymore.

PROFESSOR: Don't complicate things. All problems come from sex. Happy sex—happy life. Bad sex—unhappy life. That's all. Is your sex life good?

WIFE: No.

PROFESSOR: And the rest of your life?

WIFE: No.

PROFESSOR: Q.E.D.

WIFE: That's why I want to run away. Away from this life.

PROFESSOR: To tell the truth, so do I. Who will you run away with?

WIFE: Alone. But it would be better with somebody.

PROFESSOR: Together is certainly better.

WIFE: Why don't we run away together?

PROFESSOR: I am asking myself the same question.

WIFE: And what is your answer?

PROFESSOR: Let's do it. That's what I offered to do when I first got here.

WIFE: You offered to have sex when you first got here.

PROFESSOR: Sex is just an escape from life.

WIFE: I thought it was life itself.

PROFESSOR: Let's not argue. We don't have much time.

WIFE: So you'll take me with you?

PROFESSOR: I'll abduct you, steal you, take you away, carry you away in my arms.

WIFE: Where to?

PROFESSOR: Nowhere.

WIFE: That's the problem.

PROFESSOR: But we have to run away all the same.

WIFE: Where to?

PROFESSOR: That's not important. The main thing is not to stop. Not to think. Not to look back. Give me your hand.

WIFE: Right now?

PROFESSOR: Otherwise someone will come and it will be too late.

WIFE: Then wait here, I'll just get some things to take with me.

*(Wife exits. Pause. Girl enters.)*

GIRL: Let's have sex.

PROFESSOR: So it was *you* who called me?

GIRL: Me? Called you? What for?

PROFESSOR: To have sex, I believe.

GIRL: No, it wasn't me. But I'm ready.

PROFESSOR: So who called me?

GIRL: If someone wanted to have sex, just presume it was me who called. A very urgent call. Let's start immediately.

PROFESSOR: That's just what I wanted to suggest. Who are you, by the way?

GIRL: I work with the husband.

PROFESSOR: It's a pleasure to meet you.

GIRL: Whether it's a pleasure or not, we'll soon find out, I hope. *(Starts to unbutton her dress.)*

PROFESSOR: And why don't you have sex with the husband?

GIRL: With whose husband?

PROFESSOR: With yours, for a change.

GIRL: I don't have a husband.

PROFESSOR: But you work with him!

GIRL: I work with him, but he is not my husband.

PROFESSOR: That changes things completely. If he isn't your husband, it is simply your duty to have unlimited sex with him. Especially since you work together. It's very convenient and saves time.

GIRL: Unfortunately, he's terribly busy.

PROFESSOR: Busy? At work!? With what? Impossible! What can keep a person busy at work?

GIRL: Sex, of course.

PROFESSOR: That's different.

GIRL: I make out his daily schedule for him and keep a record of his work: the beginning of sex, the end of it, with whom, when, on whose recommendation, who's next. It's a lot of work.

PROFESSOR: If he's so busy, you should have sex with someone else.

GIRL: That's just what I proposed to you.

PROFESSOR: My pleasure.

GIRL: I want to make sure of that.

PROFESSOR: You are in luck. You've found the right person.

GIRL: Prove it.

PROFESSOR: My reputation does not require any proof. My name speaks for itself.

GIRL: And who are you?

PROFESSOR: I am a world-famous professor of psychiatry, psychology, and sociology. A sex consultant. I get rid of complexes, inspire self-confidence, free people of their inhibitions. I cure frigidity and impotence. I satisfy the unsatisfied. I teach, give advice, help to solve problems. I cure all illnesses.

GIRL: I would like to become such a consultant, too.

PROFESSOR: Then I'll teach you. Do you know who said the famous words: "I have taken all knowledge—"

GIRL: "...to be my province."

PROFESSOR: Exactly right. It is me who said it.

GIRL: I didn't know that.

PROFESSOR: There are still many things you don't know.

GIRL: So let's study. I'm very curious. Let's start right now.

PROFESSOR: Good. We shall begin by checking your sexuality. *(The Girl starts to undress.)* No, don't undress! It's not necessary.

GIRL: *(Disappointedlly)*. Not necessary? Then how will you check me?



PROFESSOR: I have a special system of tests. Sit down facing me and concentrate. *(They sit down opposite each other.)* Are you ready?

GIRL: Yes.

*(Professor takes out a pen.)*

PROFESSOR: Tell me, what does this pen remind you of?

GIRL: Sex.

PROFESSOR: Very interesting. Well, what does this armchair remind you of?

GIRL: Sex.

PROFESSOR: What? Sex again? But why?!

GIRL: Everything reminds me of sex.

PROFESSOR: But tell me what an armchair has to do with sex?

GIRL: Oh, it has a lot to do with sex. If you only knew, Professor, how many of my fantasies involve an armchair! Unfortunately, they're only fantasies and not memories.

PROFESSOR: I am giving you the highest score! One hundred points. You have a rich imagination.

GIRL: I have a normal imagination. The trembling sails full of desire to be opened and give themselves up to the wind; the ray of sunshine piercing the moist depth of the sea; the clouds merging with each other; the train confidently entering the tunnel; the smokestack of a power plant; the trunk of a poplar; a candle...all of these represent the same thing to me. A carrot is a man; a turnip, a woman. A banana is a man, too—what a man! And potatoes, beets, apples, porridge—all of these are women.

PROFESSOR: You have amazing abilities. I need to learn from you, not you from me.

GIRL: The sister says that I am crazy.

PROFESSOR: Forget the sister. Trust me. You are normal.  
She isn't.

GIRL: I live in a world of symbols. A spoon and a plate...

PROFESSOR: (*Joins in.*) ... a cylinder and a piston...

GIRL: ... a ring and a finger...

PROFESSOR: ... an arm and a sleeve...

GIRL: ... a seed and the soil...

PROFESSOR: ... a blade and a sheath...

GIRL: ... a key and a lock...

PROFESSOR: ... all these are symbols of the eternal union of  
man and woman. Each is meaningless and impossible  
without the other.

GIRL: Don't stop talking! It's getting me so excited!

PROFESSOR: Tell me, what do you know about sex? No, let  
me put it another way. What don't you know yet about sex?

GIRL: I have to admit, I don't know what sex is at all. I've  
never had it. That's why it's so interesting to me.

PROFESSOR: We shall start having it, and we shall have it for  
a very long time, all day long, from morning till evening,  
and from evening till morning, and you will learn  
everything. We'll start right now.

GIRL: Now? I'm afraid we can't do it now.

PROFESSOR: Why?

GIRL: We can't do it here.

PROFESSOR: I know. But why not try?

(*Girl looks around.*)

GIRL: (*Lowering her voice.*) Can you keep a secret?

PROFESSOR: Yes. But you'd better not tell it to me anyway.

GIRL: No, I'll tell you. I want to escape.

PROFESSOR: You, too? Where will you go?

GIRL: Where everything is different. And why do you say,  
"You, too"? Do you want to escape, too?

PROFESSOR: Who doesn't?

GIRL: Then we will run away together while we have the chance.

PROFESSOR: Dear, how can I run away? I don't run anymore. I shuffle. I don't breathe. I gasp for breath. A few steps more and my run on this earth will be finished.

GIRL: Oh, don't talk about these awful things! Follow my example and think only of sex. Think about it all the time, so you won't think about anything else. Do you understand me? I forbid you to think about anything else. We'll run away from here, and you'll live another thousand years. Are you ready to go?

*(Professor stretches out his hand to Girl.)*

PROFESSOR: With you...to the ends of the earth.

GIRL: Let's leave at once, right now, without losing a moment, not stopping, not looking back, otherwise it will be too late.

*(She pulls the Professor toward the exit, but he stops suddenly.)*

PROFESSOR: Wait! I just remembered...I can't.

GIRL: Why? Are you afraid?

PROFESSOR: I am. But that's not the point.

GIRL: What then?

PROFESSOR: I just promised a lady that I would run away with her.

GIRL: So...?

PROFESSOR: I ought to at least explain to her...

GIRL: Why do you think you have to explain anything? Are you the first man to leave a woman?

PROFESSOR: No, but...

GIRL: Did you have an affair with her?

PROFESSOR: Not exactly, but...

GIRL: Whether you did or didn't, it doesn't matter. Sex is no reason to talk things over or prolong a relationship.

PROFESSOR: But since we've gotten to know each other—

GIRL: So what? Sex is no cause for acquaintance. But if you're so scrupulous, leave her a note. Get out your remarkable pen. Write "My dear, don't worry. I have run away with another woman. I won't be back anytime soon."

*(Professor gets out his pen and a notepad and starts writing, then stops.)*

PROFESSOR: I should tell her myself. Or maybe the three of us could run away together?

GIRL: Will she agree?

PROFESSOR: Why not?

GIRL: A threesome is not so interesting.

PROFESSOR: On the contrary, it can be even more interesting.

GIRL: Well then, go and talk to her. I'll wait here. But don't leave me alone for long! I hate being alone. It makes me feel sick.

PROFESSOR: I've been sick of being alone for a long time now.

*(Professor exits. Husband enters.)*

HUSBAND: Let's have sex.

GIRL: Okay.

HUSBAND: I'm serious.

GIRL: I could tell right away that you're not joking. *(Starts to unbutton her dress.)* Well?

HUSBAND: Right now?

GIRL: Certainly not tomorrow.

HUSBAND: Right here?

GIRL: Where else?

HUSBAND: Who will start first?

GIRL: Don't we have to do it together?

HUSBAND: Yes, but somebody has to take the initiative.

GIRL: You have already done it. You offered; I agreed. Now it's your turn again.

HUSBAND: What should I do?

GIRL: Do what you offered to do, I think.

HUSBAND: That would be great. But I don't know how to start.

GIRL: That's the most difficult part.

HUSBAND: What do you suggest?

GIRL: To tell the truth, I don't have any experience.

HUSBAND: You've never had an affair with a man?

GIRL: Never! But men sometimes had an affair with me.

HUSBAND: And how did they start?

GIRL: All sorts of ways.

HUSBAND: I think we're supposed to talk for a while first.

GIRL: What for?

HUSBAND: I don't know. That's how it's done.

GIRL: What should we talk about?

HUSBAND: I don't know. Books, movies, painting...

GIRL: And how long do we have to talk?

HUSBAND: I don't know. It depends.

GIRL: Why not talk afterward?

HUSBAND: We can talk afterward, too, but somehow you don't want to anymore. Usually the talk comes first.

GIRL: Well, if that's the way it's supposed to be, then talk. But make it quick.

*(Long pause.)*

HUSBAND: Under other circumstances, I would offer to take you out to a café.

GIRL: Thanks. I already had a cup of coffee today. I thought you were proposing something else.

HUSBAND: That offer remains valid.

GIRL: So, what's the matter?

HUSBAND: You see, sex should not begin from the end. It should begin from the beginning. There should be a resistance, there should be a struggle, and there should be a victory. That's what brings satisfaction.

GIRL: We have resistance. On your part.

HUSBAND: I'm not resisting.

GIRL: Oh really? Are you being aggressive, then? Well, I surrender. It's impossible to resist you. So, we've had resistance. We've had victory. Now it's time for satisfaction.

HUSBAND: But, first, let's talk.

GIRL: Haven't we talked already?

HUSBAND: We haven't even started to talk.

GIRL: Is that so? Well then, let's talk.

*(Long pause.)*

HUSBAND: What will we talk about?

GIRL: Tell me about your Don Juan list of conquests. I suppose it's incredibly long.

HUSBAND: Yes, I have a lot to tell.

GIRL: Well, how many women have you had? Tell the truth. Twenty? Thirty? A hundred?

HUSBAND: Maybe more. *(Pause.)* To tell the truth, though, not quite that many.

GIRL: Well then, how many? Ten?

HUSBAND: Not quite.

GIRL: Less than ten? And you call that a list? Still, I want to know. How many? Nine? Eight?

*(Husband thinks.)*

HUSBAND: Including my wife?

GIRL: On the Don Juan list? Absolutely not. You can only include women on the list. Is your wife really a woman to you?

HUSBAND: Then...I have to admit...I...I don't have a Don Juan list. I mean, I do have a list, but there are no women on it.

GIRL: So get started on it!

HUSBAND: Right here?

GIRL: Yes, right here, right now.

HUSBAND: You know—right here, just like that—it doesn't seem right.

GIRL: What do you mean, "just like that"?! We've already been talking for five or ten minutes now!

HUSBAND: That's not much. Imagine that you're about to start traveling across a country that is completely new to you. Is your purpose just to reach the final point? No. You will be looking forward to the whole journey, from beginning to end, over all the hills and valleys, cliffs and canyons, roads, and trails. Or, if you open a new book, will you start reading from the last page? Without a beginning, there is no plot; without a plot, there is no climax. And do you think that the goal of a climber is just to be on top without making the climb? Without having to make an effort, without the climb, there is no summit point, no climax.

GIRL: I'll have a climax. But, of course, it depends on you to some extent. So let's have sex, finally!

HUSBAND: But we are already having it!

GIRL: Really? I am an inexperienced girl, and easy to fool, but it seems to me that we're doing something else.

HUSBAND: Sex is not what you think. It's not just the last 15 minutes. It's not the curtain falling at the end of the last act.

It's a drama that has to be played out from beginning to end. Words, gestures, looks, serenades, flowers, gifts, advances, retreats, proposals, evasions—they are all a part of the great game called sex. It's a ceremony, a series of rituals as old as the rutting of deer or the mating dance of cranes. It is a way of life, the foundation of culture. Fine clothes are not just worn to be taken off at the right moment. The most refined rules of etiquette, novels and poems, the sighs of violins and songs of flutes, pictures and sculptures of the beautiful Venus—all of these are created to convey the yearning of body and soul.

GIRL: Listen—

HUSBAND: No, you listen to me! What an intricate interrelation of the sexes mankind has devised! Certain parts of the body are concealed. Different clothes for different sexes. Different standards of behavior for men and women. The “strong heroic man” and the “weak fragile woman.” Don't you see that none of this is accidental? It all fits together, doesn't it?

GIRL: Are you all right?

HUSBAND: What do you mean?

GIRL: You're acting as though you're from the century before last. You talk too much.

HUSBAND: You oversimplify life.

GIRL: And you make it too complicated. Sex is a very useful, very simple, and a very necessary thing. Unfortunately, people go about this simple, pleasant, and useful act in complicated, roundabout ways, and spend a lot of effort, time, and money on it. Why not simply approach someone, give them a big smile, stretch your hand and say, “Let's have sex!” Like saying, “Good morning” or “Goodnight.” And how can it be a good night without sex?

HUSBAND: You're right.



GIRL: "Let's have sex!" should be used as a greeting. What better way to express an openness and willingness to make contact?

HUSBAND: You're right. And what would be the response to this greeting?

GIRL: Something casual. Like, "Thanks, my pleasure." Or, "Always at your service." Or just, "Sure."

HUSBAND: And how would we say goodbye?

GIRL: There's no need to change anything. The words "See you later" already have a certain sexual connotation. You can hear in them a promise of something sweet, intimate, and long awaited...at least I can. (*Softly, to herself.*) "See you later...."

HUSBAND: See you later. (*Moves toward the exit.*)

GIRL: Where are you going?

HUSBAND: You said, "See you later."

(*Girl stops him.*)

GIRL: I was talking to myself. I swear, you *are* crazy.

HUSBAND: I'm completely normal. Maybe a bit old-fashioned, that's all.

GIRL: That *is* crazy. But we've talked enough. Now it's high time to do something! We live in a time of action. If you're not always running to keep up, you'll fall behind.

HUSBAND: (*Anxiously.*) Who can outdo me?

GIRL: Anybody! You talk, talk, talk, and meanwhile someone will come and snatch me from under your very nose.

HUSBAND: (*Scared.*) Will you leave with him?

GIRL: If someone takes me, I'll leave. I'm a young, inexperienced girl, I don't know how to resist.

HUSBAND: Please, don't leave!

GIRL: Well, all right. You said that we have to have some kind of foreplay. Let's play then. Pretend this is not the first time we've met, but the second.

HUSBAND: And then what?

GIRL: When we meet the second time, we don't necessarily have to talk. The formalities are over, and we can get right to the main act.

HUSBAND: No, I can't do it. Sex is an art, an act of creation...

GIRL: So let's procreate!

HUSBAND: But at least tell me something about yourself first. What's your name? What are your interests...?

GIRL: I don't have any interests. I'm a young, inexperienced girl—pure, enthusiastic, and romantic—who is interested only in sex.

HUSBAND: And nothing else?

GIRL: What *else* is there? (*Thinks.*) Maybe, also math.

HUSBAND: Mathematics?

GIRL: I once calculated that at any given moment at least 10 million people in the world are having sex. Think of that! While we're talking now and wasting time, at this very moment, 5 million couples all over the world are doing what you and me are not doing. If you laid them all out in a straight line six feet apart—the width of a king-size bed—they would form a chain over 5,000 miles long! Can you imagine that? A cosmic process! A factory! It takes my breath away!

HUSBAND: Mine too.

GIRL: So let's join them!

HUSBAND: Right here?

GIRL: Right here, right now. Hurry! We don't have much time, you know!

*(The Husband hesitantly approaches the Girl, but suddenly he hears something and shudders in fear.)*

HUSBAND: Hush!

GIRL: (*Frightened*). What?

HUSBAND: Somebody's coming!

(*Both listen. Silence.*)

GIRL: I just knew that this would happen!

HUSBAND: Hush!

(*Both listen. Silence.*)

GIRL: There is no one coming. Hurry, let's do it! Otherwise it will be too late.

HUSBAND: Maybe later? Not now and not here.

GIRL: Are you afraid?

HUSBAND: Aren't you?

GIRL: To tell the truth, I am. But you have to take the chance sometime. You have to prove sometime that you have the right to do what you want.

HUSBAND: Maybe tomorrow?

GIRL: And tomorrow you won't be afraid?

HUSBAND: I'll never stop being afraid. I'm afraid all the time. I'm afraid to make a mistake. To say sometime wrong. Take the wrong bus. Shake the wrong hand. Take the wrong side. Bet on the wrong horse. Everybody is climbing, climbing, climbing, and I'm afraid I can't keep up. I don't have the elbows, claws and teeth to make my way through the jungle. I'm afraid of tomorrow. I'm afraid of next Friday. I wait in fear of next month. I'm afraid I'll lose my job. I'm afraid I'll get sick. I'm afraid of women. I'm afraid of old age. I'm afraid to die. And even more afraid to live.

GIRL: Calm down.

HUSBAND: And this damn money. Money, money, money!  
It's all anyone thinks, talks and cares about. Wives don't want love from their husbands, just money. That alone is enough to drive you crazy.

GIRL: Aren't you afraid to always be afraid?

HUSBAND: Of course I am. Don't you see what's going on all around? Every day is the same, without purpose and without hope. Nothing changes, and if it does change, then it's only for the worse. We are caught in a net and flop around like fish. We open our mouths to scream, but nothing comes out. Nobody hears. We keep running just to stay in place—round and round on the same wheel, in the same cage, today just like yesterday, tomorrow just like today, the day after tomorrow just like always. We struggle to make our way up, up, up. Up the down escalator. All the time we have no time. We want to have time to do everything we want to do, to make all the money we want to have. We reach out, clutch, hold, and scramble up. We're almost there, so close, just one more step, just a little more effort—grab it, take it! But there is nothing to grab because you can't hold onto happiness. That's how we spend our lives. You can never get those years back. And what is it all for? What for? You want to run away from this life, run as fast as you can. But you just don't have the strength to do it. You start to get out of breath, you stop, look back, and think. You get scared, and then you start running again. So let's run away. There's no time left!

GIRL: You think too much. You shouldn't think. There is no tomorrow. There is only today. Don't think, okay?

HUSBAND: You think that we shouldn't think?

GIRL: I think we should run away, that's all.

HUSBAND: Where to?

GIRL: The important thing is not where to, but where from.  
Away from the place that we hate, away from here. Here,

where nothing is possible, where everything is forbidden, everything has to be by the rules and according to schedule. We'll escape to a better world, where everyone is free, where nothing is forbidden, where there's not a ceiling overhead, but a big high blue sky with big white clouds floating by. Where people laugh. Where they're happy, and sing and dance. They're cheerful and never sick. And nobody tells them how to live or what they have to do.

HUSBAND: Is there really such a world?

GIRL: Yes, it exists! It's a world where no one is afraid, where everybody goes to bed whenever they want to, with whomever they want to; where there is plenty of sun and plenty of sex. Where no one is boss and everyone is happy.

HUSBAND: And where will we live without money?

GIRL: Wherever we want! We'll live on a bench. In the bushes. On a soft green meadow. In a boat. Yes, in a boat! We'll lie in it, embracing, and it will rock gently and carry us away, always to somewhere new. A brass band will meet us on every pier, and the music will ring out, and they'll shower us with flowers, and we'll drift and drift and have sex, and we'll go so far that nobody will ever find us.

HUSBAND: Nobody will ever find us...okay, let's do it!

GIRL: When?

HUSBAND: Right now.

GIRL: Perfect. Wait here for me. I'll go get a glass of water, take a tranquilizer, and then we'll be ready to go.

HUSBAND: Just come right back, otherwise I'll start thinking again.

GIRL: And what then?

HUSBAND: I'll start having second thoughts and change my mind.

GIRL: I forbid you to think. You understand? Follow my example.

HUSBAND: I'll try.

GIRL: Sit here, don't move, don't do anything, and don't think. I'll be right back, and we'll begin a new life!

*(The Girl exits. The Husband waits for her impatiently. Blackout. Intermission.)*