



Scissors & Secrets

**Osudové setkání s výstředním kadeřníkem,
které rozbilo svět na předtím a potom.**

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B1/B2



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1 Scissors

Pilsen, today

1.1

The salon in the midday **gloom** looked like an expensive, quiet temple. The air was filled with a typical blend of **scents** that seemed to get under Alex's skin: the heavy aroma of sandalwood from luxury candles, a **hint** of expensive orchid shampoos, and the slightly sharp, clean smell of tool disinfectant.

Everything was shining. Black leather armchairs reflected the dim light of designer lamps, and the huge mirrors showed the emptiness of a space that was usually full of life. Without the noise of hairdryers and the chatting of customers, you could only hear the monotonous sound of rain beating against the shop window and the ticking of a designer clock above the reception desk. These were the symbols of success which sometimes calmed Alex down, but today they rather irritated him.

Alex was going through papers. Receipts and invoices from suppliers, **VAT** reports – this was the biggest nightmare of his business.

When he still had his old salon, everything was much easier, so sometimes when he got angry at the paperwork, he would **swear** with words which definitely didn't belong in a shiny, snobbish salon: *"Fucking hell, this VAT, I miss the golden days at Alex Hair!"*

But he knew very well that the real golden days only started when David arrived. His former classmate from vocational school had spent about 8 years in a top London salon, where he worked his way up, and after his return to Pilsen, he changed Alex's hairdresser's shop into an exclusive salon with customers from all over the country.

gloom – šero, přítmí

scents – vůně

hint – náznak, nádech

VAT – DPH (value added tax)

to swear – klít, nadávat (později v příběhu také *přísahat*)

1.2

Alex was impressed by the incredible amount of money that David **must have earned** as a top London stylist to be able to finance this whole beautiful place.

There were only two of them working, because the concept of *Scissors and Secrets* was built on two things, literally: the scissors controlled by Alex, and the secrets surrounding David. The reputation of a salon where you could easily wait half a year for an appointment with one of the two great gay hairdressers, was basically the main driving force of their brand.

Alex sighed again at the memory. *Gay hairdressers*. He would never **get rid of** that label.

He sorted the invoices from suppliers and put them in an envelope for the accountant. Now, the card payment receipts.

It was May, the week of the Liberation Day celebrations, when Pilsen was usually bursting at the seams. Unfortunately, the celebrations didn't go very well this year because it was cold and raining. Alex looked out through the wet window. It was high noon and the salon was fully lit, even though they had no customers today. It was a public holiday, and he had made a promise to himself to **catch up on** the accounting **backlog**.

Suddenly, he jumped in shock. Someone grabbed the door handle so hard they almost broke it off its **hinges**. The door was locked, but maybe because the lights were on, someone outside thought it was open. A big man with curly hair stood behind the door and knocked on the glass.

Alex looked in disbelief at the man standing outside in the rain, knocking on the door, right next to the "closed" sign. But maybe he didn't speak English. Many Americans came for the Liberation Day celebrations, but this one looked more like a Greek, with that big nose. But that didn't mean much; even an ethnic Greek can be an American citizen nowadays.

must have earned – musel (v minulosti) vydělat

to get rid of (somebody / something) – zbavit se (někoho / něčeho)

to catch up on – dohnat něco (resty)

backlog – resty (nedokončená práce)

hinges – dveřní panty

1.3

Now he saw the man face to face – it was a serious, expensively dressed man **in his fifties** wearing a dark wool coat, which was now completely **soaked**.

"It's a holiday, we're closed," Alex explained in Czech.

The man briefly looked at Alex's hands and asked, "English?"

Alex pointed to the sign that said "closed" in English, but the man ignored him and said uncompromisingly, "I need your help. I'm from London."

That sentence stopped Alex in his tracks. London. A magic word that meant everything in this salon.

Alex spoke English quite well, but he wasn't the **confident** type, more the *overthinking* one, and when expats' wives started coming to them after he and David changed the brand, he was terrified of the idea of having to speak English with them. Fortunately, David took care of all that. After years in England, his English was much better than Alex's, who had spent only about three months in Australia just so he wouldn't be completely **clueless**; because the English lessons at vocational school were quite useless.

He could just **shrug** now, pretending he didn't understand, but since there were no witnesses, he didn't have to be so shy, and he switched to English.

"How can I help you?"

The man positioned himself in such a way that Alex had no choice but to step back and let him in. Hopefully, he wasn't trying to **sneak in under a pretext** and "*beat the fucking faggots black and blue*" (as they could sometimes read in the comments under their social media posts). Not even their fame protected them from the hatred of some groups of people. *It's unlikely*, Alex realized. He wasn't in danger, but he still hesitated for a moment about whether to lock the door again. He decided not to.

in his fifties – padesátník, v letech mezi padesátkou a šedesátkou

soaked – promáčený (skrz naskrz)

confident - sebevědomí

clueless – úplně mimo

to shrug – pokrčit rameny

to sneak in under some pretext – vloudit se pod záminkou

beat the fucking faggots black and blue – zmlátit (zmalovat do modra) ty zas*aný buzeranty

1.4

"You are famous and I need a haircut. I came for the celebrations, so I wanted **to kill two birds with one stone**. My hair is too long and **messy**."

"It's a holiday, we are closed today."

"Should I come tomorrow?" the man asked.

"We are fully booked for the next six months," Alex said.

"**No wonder**," the man said appreciatively and looked around. "I wanted to experience it. I heard that a hairdresser from London works here. I have a feeling I used to go to him too."

This was a whole different thing. A customer who had travelled all the way from London. For the **renowned** stylist David. This took things to another level. David was good at social media marketing; if they could post a picture and say how people travel all the way to Pilsen to see them, it would be great. So he said, "In that case, welcome to Scissors and Secrets."

First, they discussed the haircut and then moved behind a **screen** to the area with **basins** and massage chairs. The man sat down and Alex was thinking about locking the door now that nobody was in the front. But he still didn't really want to be locked in here with this giant. He washed his hair and then they went to the front room.

The man clearly wanted to chat. Alex wasn't that fluent in English, so at first, he decided to just let the man talk. *But what if I don't understand him? Maybe it would be better if I control the conversation myself, so we would talk about something I know.*

He asked, "Did you come to Pilsen alone?"

The man **frowned**, and Alex started wondering if his sentence was correct. He didn't know that the word "alone" hit this giant like a ton of bricks.

to kill two birds with one stone – zabít dvě mouchy jednou ranou

messy hair - rozuchané vlasy

no wonder – není divu, žádný div, to mě nepřekvapuje

renowned – renomovaný, proslulý, vyhlášený

screen – zástěna, paraván

basin – umyvadlo

to frown / a frown – (za)mračit se, zamračení

1.5

Yes, I came alone. I am here alone because I am alone. Because thirteen years ago I made a terrible mistake and I'm still not over it.

Alex couldn't have known that.

"Yes, I came alone. And are you alone here today too?" he asked.

"My partner is on holiday," Alex explained, and focused on cutting the thick, greying curls. If he had seen the customer in the mirror at that moment, he couldn't have missed his next frown. The word "partner" stabbed him like a **dagger** to the heart.

"Your partner, is he the hairdresser from London?"

"Yeah, he came back and turned my life upside down. I had the Alex Hair salon and he told me that it was boring. *It's not just hair*, he said." Alex kept cutting and again missed the man's next frown.

It's not just hair – that was the sentence that started it all back then.

–

Two days later, David returned to work looking **fresh as a daisy**. He was perfectly groomed, beautifully tanned, and surrounded by a cloud of expensive perfume that briefly stole the show from all the other salon scents. He put his car keys on the reception desk and quickly checked if the towels were arranged strictly by colour.

"So, how is Pilsen? Did you miss me at all?" David asked, looking at the appointment diary for next week.

Alex grinned and went on cleaning his scissors.

"Well, just paperwork and invoices... It was a public holiday **anyway**, so I kept it closed. How was Greece?"

dagger – dýka

fresh as a daisy – svěží jako rybička (daisy = sedmikráska)

anyway – stejně, beztak

1.6

"Just the usual stuff. Sun, sea, beach – it was like watching paint dry. What about you, anything exciting?"

"Yes, **actually**. We had an international visitor. Just imagine, a guy was banging on the door. He said he was from London. He mentioned he used to be your client."

David's eyes froze on the diary page **for a split second**. He slowly raised his head. "From London? That's a very broad term, Alex. In Soho, people came and went like they were going through **a revolving door**."

"He looked really... well, respectable. The kind of guy who buys clothes from **Savile Row** and drives a Bentley," Alex shrugged. "So I took him in."

David closed the diary. "And?"

"I thought it would be great advertising. That people still travel to see you even after thirteen years. And then we took a photo for the **pinboard**, as usual. It was a nice change, from being buried in paperwork all week. See for yourself, it's over there in the corner."

He pointed to the pinboard with Polaroids. Among the photos of smiling models and local businessmen, one new picture stood out. The figure in it was dominant. That profile, that sharp Greek nose, and those deep eyes that looked almost black in the Polaroid.

"Oh, and I spoke English with him, I didn't even know I was so good. He was easy to understand. I guess he wasn't a native English speaker."

actually – vlastně (pozor: neznamená aktuálně)

for a split second – na zlomek sekundy

revolving door – otočné dveře (jako na běžícím pásu)

Savile Row – ulice v Londýně proslulá nejluxusnějšími, extrémně drahými pánskými obleky na míru

pinboard – nástěnka

1.7

David felt a cold sweat on his neck.

"Do you remember him?" Alex asked from behind his back.

David looked at the photo for a few seconds. Then he turned it over **out of habit**, because customers usually wrote a message, a greeting, a thank-you note, some wish, or just their name on the back. It said, "*13 years of saying sorry*". He pinned the photo back on the board.

"It's a small world," David said vaguely, running his finger over a small scar on his **collarbone**.

"You look as if you've seen a ghost," Alex remarked.

At that moment, the Pilsen salon **vanished** right before David's eyes.

The scent of sandalwood and Alex's voice faded away into thin air.

Instead, the noise of the London **Underground** and the strong smell of wet asphalt overwhelmed him.

out of habit – ze zvyku

(*out of jealousy, out of fear, out of love – ze žárlivosti, ze strachu, z lásky apod.*)

collarbone – klíční kost

to vanish – zmizet

faded away into thin air – vypařit se, rozplynout se jako dým

underground – podezmní dráha, metro

THE BIG GAME

London, 13 years ago

2 Just Hair

2.1

The air in the Velvet Desire salon in London's Soho was heavy with the scent of expensive conditioners and hot hairdryers. David stood by the ceramic basin, mechanically massaging shampoo into the hair of a man whose name he didn't know yet. He only knew that the manager called him "Doctor".

He could feel the eyes of the other hairdressers and the salon owner on him. Everyone knew it – David was not hired for his skills, but because of his hands and his face. He was the pretty face supposed to **charm** the clients while they were charged **ridiculous** prices for the *experience*.

"You have sensitive fingers," the man muttered with his eyes closed. He seemed stiff, as if every touch was a **necessary evil**. When it came to the haircut, the awkward moment arrived. The doctor said quietly to the owner, whom he **obviously** knew: "Couldn't he do it?" and pointed at David. "I hate it when people touch my head, and I've already got used to him."

The owner nodded at the salon manager, who hesitated for a split second with a flash of panic in his eyes – as he knew that David's skills were limited to washing hair and applying gel. But he kept up his professional mask, and, with a **fake** smile, he gestured for David to continue.

David's palms sweated, as he took the scissors. He started cutting. Carefully, slowly, as if he was **defusing a bomb**.

"Something like this?" David asked after a while, flashing a bright smile at his client in the mirror.

to charm somebody – okouzlit, uhranout, dodat někomu pocit výjimečnosti

ridiculous – směšný, nehorázný, absurdní

necessary evil – nutné zlo

obviously – evidentně, zjevně, viditelně

fake – falešný

to defuse a bomb – zneškodnit bombu

2.2

"I don't really care, as long as it lasts a bit. It's just hair."

David stopped with the scissors in his hand for a second. *Just hair?* It was more of a **punch** than an insult.

"It's not just hair," he protested quietly, with his fake certificate and the fear of being fired in his mind. "It's my living."

The client opened his eyes; their eyes met in the mirror. The man looked **taken aback** by the answer, as if he suddenly realised that the beautiful **lad** standing by his chair wasn't just a decoration.

"I didn't mean it like that. I just wanted to say that I don't care about my looks."

-

Three days later, London was drowning in the rain. David was leaving his shift, his jeans rolled up so they wouldn't get soaked, with his head hidden in a hood. As he walked past a pub, a voice stopped him. "The hairdresser who takes hair seriously!"

It was him. The doctor. David knew by now that he was a dentist. He stood in the doorway of the pub and looked much less stiff than in the salon.

"Would you like to get a drink? As an apology for my words about hair."

David hesitated. This middle-aged man seemed well-off, but there was something in his eyes that reminded David of a **stray dog** who had found a **shelter**.

"I'll have a Coke then," David said carefully.

punch – rána, úder

to be / to look taken aback – být / vypadat zaskočený, vyvedený z míry

lad – mladík

stray dog – toulavý pes

shelter – přístřešek, úkryt, útulek

2.3

"Just like that? With nothing else?" the man pointed to the bar full of bottles of hard liquor.

"With ice."

They were sitting in a corner at a dark wooden table. David sipped his Coke and watched the man who – perhaps out of nerves, perhaps out of habit – was drinking glass after glass. David felt awkward. He saw the man's eyes shine when he looked at him. He knew he was just "the pretty boy" to him, but at the same time he felt that this man was as uncertain as he was.

When they were leaving, the man was a bit drunk. David grabbed his elbow. He could feel the **fabric** of his expensive coat.

"I'll **walk you** home," he said.

They stood in front of a house in a quiet street in Kensington. The city noise was just a distant, monotonous hum here.

The dentist leaned against the front door; his face was red and his breath smelled of gin.

"You are incredibly kind, David," he mumbled.

And then something happened that faded from the dentist's memory the next morning, like fog over the Thames.

David remained standing there long after the dentist had closed the door, wondering if what had just happened meant anything for the future.

fabric – látka

walk somebody – doprovodit někoho (pěšky)

3 Visiting Olympus

3.1

The next afternoon, David stood in front of the luxury house again, his finger hesitating over the doorbell. Why was he actually here? Did he just want to make sure the dentist was all right, or did he have a secret reason?

David was **conscious** of his looks. He knew that he was a magnet for men with money and lonely eyes.

"Hello?" came from the intercom.

"It's me." he said nervously and looked into the camera's eye.

"Hold on, I'll be right there," the voice said quickly, as if he was afraid David would take another step.

They met and had **barely** greeted each other when the camera sensor lit up, as someone upstairs activated the intercom. After a moment, a deep voice with a slight accent spoke up. "David, why are you standing outside with your young friend? Invite him up to for dessert with us."

The silence in the lift was so thick you could cut it with a knife. The dentist watched the floor numbers on the panel and avoided looking at the hairdresser. While the hairdresser felt butterflies in his stomach. This wasn't the plan. He didn't expect a partner. And he definitely didn't expect his customer to be named David, too.

When the flat door opened, David was taken aback. In the middle of the room stood a man – big, with shoulders like rocks, with dark curly hair falling over his forehead.

"I am Konstantinos," the **colossus** said and offered David his hand. His **grip** was firm and warm.

"David." He smiled his professional smile.

"Well, that's truly amusing," Konstantinos said.

to be conscious of (something) - být si (něčeho) vědom

barely – sotva, skoro ne

colossus – kolos

grip – stisk

3.2

Young David kept staring at him without a word.

"You look as if you've seen a ghost," the Greek laughed, and his eyes sparkled.

"More like a god," the word slipped out before David could bite his tongue.

"I always thought they were lying in those films about Greek gods."

Konstantinos laughed out loud, a sound that filled the whole room.

"Welcome to Olympus then!"

David bent down and pulled his **sneakers** off his bare feet. Both hosts looked at him in surprise. David noticed their looks.

"We always take our shoes off where I'm from."

Konstantinos took him by the elbow and led him in as if that was exactly why David was here now.

"And where are you from?" he asked with interest.

"Czechia. Prague. Well, Pilsen, but only beer lovers know that town," he said honestly. He hated the Czech beer culture.

"I've never been there," Konstantinos said, and then, as if realising they weren't alone, he added, "we've never been there, right, David?"

Dentist David looked as if he wanted to be invisible. He sat at the table, picking at his Greek dessert, hoping no one would ask why this handsome lad had come today.

Meanwhile, Konstantinos took charge. Young David felt every look from him on his skin.

"I'm from Rhodes." Konstantinos smiled.

David just thought to himself, "*That fits*".

sneakers – tenisky

3.3

Konstantinos tried to bring his partner into the conversation again, but he excused himself and went to do something in the kitchen.

And so, Konstantinos talked about the dessert they were having, about the Greek sun and sea, which he only saw once a year on holiday, because he had lived in England for 30 years. His family had moved here for work a long time ago.

"So, you are a hairdresser, Davy," Konstantinos said.

Dentist David was just **sipping** his tea and choked. *Here we go. If the boy lets the cat out of the bag, I'm a dead man.* Although nothing had happened, well... he wasn't sure. He didn't remember much. And now he was so focused on his fears that he didn't even notice the **affectionate nickname**: Davy.

"If you want, I can cut your hair sometime too," young David said, **tossing** his head to sweep the hair that fell over his eyes. It was a gesture that made rich men weak at the knees. He did it naturally, but he was no **spring chicken** anymore; now, at twenty-six, he knew how to use it **consciously**.

Konstantinos slid his phone over to young David. "Here, give me your number. I will book an appointment sometime."

Dentist David sighed with relief that Konstantinos didn't ask for more details. He understood that David and David met at the hair salon and it was enough for him.

But he could and should have guessed that this was just the **calm before the storm**.

to sip – upíjet, pomalu pít, usrknout si

to let the cat out of the bag – prozradit tajemství, prokecnout se

affectionate nickname – něžné oslovení, láskyplná přezdívka

to toss – pohodit (vlasy, nebo hodit minci)

spring chicken – zajíček (velmi mladý člověk)

consciously – vědomě

calm before the storm – klid před bouří

4 Blue Neon

4.1

In the evening, London was as cold as young David's own place. So he walked the streets, not wanting to go home – his small, **stuffy** room was no place for someone who had just visited "Olympus."

He ended up in a gay club where he went whenever he felt invisible.

He was sitting at the bar with a glass of Coke with ice, feeling the eyes of two men in the corner. They were watching him like **vultures**. His phone vibrated in his pocket.

-

After the rain, the London streets smelled of wet asphalt and **exhaust fumes**. Konstantinos was walking fast, his hands deep in the pockets of his sports jacket. He had left the flat right after the bedroom door closed behind his partner. He knew David didn't have a headache. He could feel the heavy **burden** of guilt hanging in the air. David was scared. He was afraid of questions about why that young hairdresser knew their address, and he was afraid to admit that he had lost control last night.

But Konstantinos had a problem of his own. That young lad with gentle fingers who called him a god made his head spin like never before. It made him feel uncomfortable. He was supposed to be the sensible one, the stable one, the protector. And now his hands were **trembling** just at the thought of **texting** him.

He stopped on the corner. He took out his phone. The screen lit up his face. For a while, he just stared at the empty message box. He asked himself:
"What am I doing?"

stuffy – zatuchlý, vydýchaný, dusný

vultures – supi

exhaust fumes – výfukové plyny

burden – břímě, tíha, zátěž

trembling – třesoucí se, rozstřesený (to tremble – třást se)

to text – napsat textovou zprávu, esemeskovat

4.2

In the end, he sent a careful, neutral text message: *David went to bed, he's got a headache. I hope my talking or the food didn't give you a headache too? Are you alright at home?*

The reply came instantly: *I am sitting in The Blue Neon bar on Old Compton Street. I think that if my date doesn't turn up in half an hour, those two vultures watching me will probably eat me alive.*

Konstantinos felt his heart skip a beat. The Blue Neon. Old Compton Street. That wasn't just a message. It was a map. An invitation. He looked at his clothes – he was wearing a light grey **tracksuit**, an expensive one indeed, but still just a tracksuit because he only wanted **to get a breath of fresh air**. In a bar like the Blue Neon people dress in leather, **silk**, or at least wear an expensive perfume. He just smelled of the night air and soap.

He hesitated. Old Compton Street was quite far. He barely had enough time to get there; changing his clothes was completely **out of the question**.

By the time he got there, the half hour had long passed. David might have already left with someone else. Maybe he really was expecting a date. But why would he send the address?

The uncertainty was paralysing and intoxicating at the same time.

Eventually, he made up his mind because he needed to run away from his own fear.

–

When Konstantinos opened the heavy doors of The Blue Neon, the noise and flashes of blue lights hit him hard for a second. He looked around. The bar was packed with people in tight shirts, with dark circles under their eyes and drinks in their hands.

my date – rande, člověk s kým mám rande, doprovod

heart skips a beat – srdce vynechá úder

tracksuit – tepláková souprava

to get a breath of fresh air – nadýchat se čerstvého vzduchu

silk – hedvábí

out of the question – nepřichází v úvahu, vyloučeno

eventually – nakonec (pozor: neznamená eventuelně)

4.3

He stood there in his sports jacket, looking as if he had just popped in by mistake. But as soon as he got in, people started stepping aside instinctively. Maybe it was his shoulders, maybe the way he held his head. Even in the clothes most plain, he showed authority. He was like a lion in a terrarium.

He spotted him in the corner. David was sitting on a high stool, with a glass of melting ice in front of him. Two men were leaning against the bar close to him, whispering. Konstantinos walked up to him. He didn't say a word. He just placed his hand on the bar right next to David's palm. Those two vultures immediately looked away. The power of Konstantinos's presence was clear.

David looked up with his eyes, but kept his head slightly bowed, with his hair falling over his forehead. If the glass wasn't already empty, he would be sucking on the straw. It worked like a **charm** every time. Even serious gentlemen like Konstantinos would **promise him the moon**.

He didn't seem surprised with Konstantinos's clothes. He just said, with a smile: "Most **intriguing**."

Konstantinos replied in a deep voice, tapping his expensive watch: "I've got a sporty outfit, but my sporting performance wasn't great."

"I am not exactly keen on sporting performances." David remarked, just to test the situation and see if Konstantinos was really interested.

But at that moment, the Greek knew for sure he was in trouble. That this young lad wasn't just a **passing fancy**, but an **inevitable** disaster.

Konstantinos wanted to order a drink, but at that moment David slid off his stool to signal that it was time to go. They stood close to each other, their eyes on the same level. It made Konstantinos look down because it seemed as if David was wearing **heels**. But he was wearing the same simple sneakers he had taken off at their flat a few hours ago.

Slender, graceful, and gentle like my David, but as tall as me. I didn't notice before.

charm – kouzlo

to promise somebody the moon – slíbit modré z nebe

intriguing – fascinující, velmi zajímavé, poutavé, rafinované

passing fancy – chvilkové pobláznění, krátký románek

inevitable – nevyhnutelný

4.4

Outside the bar, Konstantinos looked around. It was a **silly** idea to come here. If only they had stayed inside, he could have had a drink, and they could have chatted a bit more. But **what on earth** were they going to do outside?

David knew he wasn't in charge now, but he was surprised when the big man suddenly looked taken aback and didn't know what to do. He clearly wasn't going to take him to another bar; perhaps he didn't feel comfortable in his sports clothes. And there was his boyfriend sleeping in his bedroom.

"This way then?" David asked, pointing in the direction of his home.

Konstantinos shrugged to show he didn't really mind but stopped after just a few steps. David turned around to look at him.

"What's wrong?"

"You're walking too fast." Konstantinos wasn't very fit, and David had long legs and was indeed walking fast.

David explained: "It's a bit cold for a walk."

Konstantinos had no idea if he should take this as a hint that they were supposed to be heading somewhere specific. But he didn't have a destination in mind. Perhaps he could have walked David home, and it crossed his mind that it might not be the end of the night; but he had no idea if the young man was expecting anything.

"Do you do it for money?" he asked directly. He wanted to know **who he was dealing with**.

"You mean the haircuts?" David asked, tossing his head again to get his hair out of his eyes.

Konstantinos said, trying to stay calm: "I mean sex."

He needed to know. However, he wouldn't reject him for that. If this pretty boy wanted him, he would gladly pay him. He would do it. He had never done it before, but he knew he simply couldn't resist now.

heels – podpatky

silly – hloupý

what on earth... – co proboha, co sakra...

who he is dealing with – s kým má co do činění

4.5

David shifted from one foot to the other, bit his upper lip, and thought for a moment whether he should feel **offended** or just answer.

I was teasing him, wasn't I? I was seducing him at their place, and even led him out to this bar, so why shouldn't this rich gentleman think he could buy me now? He can, just not for a quickie.

"No." He didn't say anything else. They were still standing there, looking at each other.

"Are you cold?" asked Konstantinos, and as he could see the boy really was called, he unzipped his jacket and offered it to him. David refused it.

"Don't be silly, put it on. I would really like to go for a walk. Slowly."

"I can't wear other people's clothes."

"Pride?"

"Obsession. Everything has to be either **brand new** or washed."

"So you'd rather stay freezing?"

"I'd rather die."

Konstantinos searched his face for a smile to see if it was a joke, until he realised that the boy was serious. His arm offering the jacket slowly dropped to his side.

"No night walk then? I haven't got anything washed at hand."

"I suppose not. I really need to walk fast."

"Well, I won't follow you around like a dog. But..."

David waited.

offended – uražený, dotčený

to tease – škádlit, provokovat

to seduce – svádět

quickie – rychlovka

brand new – zbrusu nové, úplně nové

4.6

"Why did you text me where you were? If you just want to run away now? Is it because I asked about the money? Don't be **cross**, I don't know how this works."

"I'm not running away, but dressed like that, you can only go to the gym." He pointed at Konstantinos's sporty outfit.

"Maybe not," Konstantinos said, deciding to risk everything. There were a few places in London where they knew him and would let him in anytime, regardless of whether he was wearing a tie. However, they also knew his David, so it was a risky business, but he had definitely lost his head over this lad.

He **hailed a cab**, and in a short while, they got out on Curzon Street in front of the Dorian club and were led straight from the door to a private room.

David tried not to look around; he had been to a few similar private clubs before, though always dressed much better than today. He realised that they knew Konstantinos here, so nobody commented on their clothes. Besides, each of them had their own unique charm. Konstantinos was majestic and David was cute, so they could **get away with** anything.

*We make a **striking** couple*; it crossed David's mind.

"So, will you tell me something about Prague? Or Pilsen?"

"I'd rather not."

"Bad memories?"

"A bad place."

"Didn't you like it?"

"If I did, I wouldn't be working here like a servant."

"And what about your job?"

"What about it?"

"You're a hairdresser, not a servant, aren't you?"

cross – naštvaný

to hail a cab – zastavit taxík, přivolat gestem, mávnout na taxík

to get away with (anything) – projít někomu něco (všechno, cokoli)

striking – působivý; výrazný, do očí bijící, nepřehlédnutelný

4.7

"An illegal immigrant. I get paid cash in hand, and I don't know if I can still come to work tomorrow. **Mind you**, I've been quite lucky, I've been in the same place for eight years now." And he knocked on his teeth with his knuckles, so as not to **jinx** it. Other assistants came and went **as if through a revolving door**; after a few weeks, nobody ever heard of them again. David knew that if all those ladies, and especially the homosexual gentlemen, weren't looking forward so much to his massage while washing their hair, and if he didn't still look so young, he would have lost his job a long time ago.

Konstantinos's eyes nearly popped out of his head. "Eight years?" But he didn't mean that eight years seemed like a long time in one place. He tried to figure out how old David **actually** was. He guessed he was around twenty. But that didn't make sense.

"Well, I arrived when I was eighteen, and with a face like this..." he shrugged, "they took me on without even handing me a pair of scissors to see if I knew how to use them." At that moment, he preferred to keep quiet about his fake **certificate of completion** from the Pilsen vocational school, which he had presented at the salon with a poker face, along with his then-still-valid passport.

"You're no spring chicken then," Konstantinos breathed out when he put two and two together.

"Do you mind?"

"No, on the contrary... this way... there's only twelve years between us."

"Between whom?" David asked in surprise.

"Well, between you and me."

Now it was David's turn to be shocked. He definitely thought Konstantinos was older. Such a respectable gentleman in his fifties. Yes, definitely fifty. Now David was **doing the maths**. Thirty-eight.

mind you – podotýkám (fráze pro upřesnění; upozorňuju, pravda je)

(not) to jinx something – (ne)zakříknout

certificate of completion – výuční list

doing the maths – počítat (dělat výpočty)

4.8

He used a similar remark: "You're no **old geezer** then." And smiled.

With that, the last barriers broke down.

Konstantinos had a partner at home who was four years older, and sitting here now with this young man, who was no little boy, he didn't feel so perverse.

David indeed wanted to **pick up** a rich, **well-off** gentleman, and he knew very well that such a gentleman wouldn't be **in his prime**... And now he met a man barely forty years old. That sounded like a good deal. Except that this **late thirty-something** already had another David at home. And when they say goodbye tonight and go home, he would sleep in the same bed with him, while David would be all alone.

Everyone always thinks he has a queue of fans at his bedside. Not just for sex, but also for fun, that simply everyone wants to be with him. But he had realised a long time ago that for most people, only his innocent puppy-dog eyes existed, that this was his entire capital, so he tried to sell it for the best price. And right now, he could sell it to the king. To the god.

Unfortunately, they parted on bad terms. David knew that he had gone too far, but he felt that Konstantinos had needlessly hinted too many times that he would pay him for sex.

He probably didn't mean it like that, perhaps he was just speaking in general, but David didn't like it. He reacted irritably, "Stop **beating around the bush** and put your money on the table, how much would you value me at?" And Konstantinos shouted, "Who do you think you are, you little **brat**? Do you think I'm some desperate guy who can't control himself and only has one thing on his mind?"

old geezer – starej dědek, páprda

to pick up – sbalit (někoho na rande)

well-off – zajištěný, movitý

in his prime – na vrcholu sil, v nejlepších letech

late thirty-something – pozdní třicátník; komu táhne na čtyřicet

beating around the bush – chodit kolem horké kaše

brat – spratek, fracek

4.9

Suddenly, David was just an illegal immigrant again, with a desirable body but undesirable pride. A brat, **even**. To everyone, he was just a **lowlife**.

He tried to save the day with the sentence: "*I just haven't met a different kind of guy yet,*" but the damage was already done. Even though it was the truth, it was simply unfair to **tar Konstantinos with the same brush**, because he had been nice to him all the time. And when he talked about gifts and money, he most likely meant taking care of him, maybe some nice reward, and not a **paycheque**.

When Konstantinos shouted at him, David knew right then that he could start begging, but he didn't want to. He wasn't **willing** to be bought, so he got up and left without a single word.

Konstantinos sat there for about an hour, staring into his glass and wondering if he had risked everything for this – for such a **whim**; by coming to a place where he was well known, with a boy like that – yes, he knew now (if it was true) that David was no little boy, and he also knew (if that was true too) that he wasn't a prostitute – but anyone who could see them together today would probably think so **anyway**. And on top of that, his outburst...

It irritated him when David kept suggesting that Konstantinos wanted to pay him for sex. It was a misunderstanding, because Konstantinos had been in a long-term relationship and had absolutely no idea how to act when he was so **infatuated**.

In the end, though, he was glad that it was over. Nice and easy. There would be no complications. His David had gone out with that lad one evening, Konstantinos had gone out with him the next, each had enjoyed their brief moment of lost youth, and everything would go back to normal.

even – dokonce (*slovo even má spoustu odlišných významů podle situace, najdeš vysvětlené v sekci "Amendments / Tricky words"*)

lowlife – spodina, ubožák

to tar somebody with the same brush – házet do jednoho pytle

paycheque – výplata

willing – ochotný, svolný

whim – rozmar

infatuated – poblázněný, zaslepený (láskou)

5 Checkmate

5.1

In the flat on "Olympus", the silence over the last few days had been agonising.

Dentist David avoided Konstantinos's eyes. Every touch, every shared meal reminded him of the evening he preferred to keep quiet about. He had no idea what was on Konstantinos's mind, he had no idea that his partner too had **guilty conscience**. David thought that Konstantinos was cold to him because he was **jealous**. Because that young lad, the other David, had unexpectedly entered their perfect world.

Why didn't Konstantinos ask how a random hairdresser knew where his client lived? Or why he came? David was sure – Konstantinos knew that David had already met the lad privately. Surely, he was angry but didn't want to talk about it.

David felt foolish. Yeah, if he were single, he would gladly have had a **fling** with that pretty boy. But he wasn't single. Just looking at him for a while would make him happy.

"You need holiday," Konstantinos said on the third evening with a glass of cognac in his hand. His voice was calm, almost too rational. "I bought you a week in Dubai. Sun, sea, no **drilling**. I will take care of your patients."

David felt a huge weight lift off his shoulders. *He doesn't want to leave me, flashed through his mind. He just wants to get me away from temptation. He wants to protect me from my weakness.* David gratefully agreed to the week of separation, having no idea that the "god" who had just sent him on holiday was actually **paving** his way to **sin**.

guilty conscience - špatné / černé svědomí, výčitky (guilt = vina)

checkmate - šach mat

to be jealous – žárlit

fling – románek, aférka, krátké povyražení

drilling – vrtání

temptation – pokušení

to pave the way (to sin) – dláždit si cestu (k hříchu)

5.2

Dentist David sat in the departure lounge and watched the planes through the huge glass wall. His phone was burning a hole in his pocket. He knew what Konstantinos expected from him – that he would sort out his confusion during the week. He was supposed to pull himself together in Dubai, clear his head of the image of that hairdresser, and return as the stable partner he had always been.

But **the closer** it got to departure time, **the more** the idea terrified him. He didn't want to just vanish into thin air. He wanted the other David to know about him. He hesitated, his fingers hovering over the keyboard.

What if Konstantinos finds out? What if I mess everything up? He thought.

In the end, the need for connection with the young lad was stronger. He wrote a message that was as **cowardly** as it was honest.

"Flying to Dubai in three hours. This week will do us good. D."

By this, he meant a week of separation from young David, as well as from Konstantinos, because their relationship needed some breathing space and distance from temptation. But he had no idea how the person on the other end would interpret it.

-

Young David was lying on his **spacious** bed, which was the only piece of furniture, along with a small wardrobe and a mirror in his tiny room. He was holding his phone.

Flying to Dubai in three hours. This week will do us good.

His heart missed a beat. He read the message over and over in his mind. Is this an invitation? Has this serious dentist completely lost his mind and wants him to pack his bags right now and fly with him?

the closer... the more... – čím blíží tím víc

(the sooner the better – čím dřív tím líp / the younger the faster – čím mladší, tím rychlejší, apod.)

to mess up - způsobit zmatek, zamotat nebo pokazit

cowardly – zbabělý, zbaběle (coward – zbabělec)

spacious – prostorný

5.3

He stared at the screen, his breathing quickening. It was madness; even if he immediately hailed a cab, what good would it do? His passport had expired years ago. But then he read the sentence one more time. Slowly. *Us*. A word that wasn't supposed to include him.

"So they are flying away together, and this is just a goodbye message," he whispered to himself. He felt a **pang** of jealousy that took him by surprise. The idea of Konstantinos sunbathing on a beach, having drinks with his dentist, was unbearable. He had to see them. He had to see Konstantinos before he left London for a week. He didn't want things to end between them with that last **fight**. Even if it was **beyond repair**, he at least wanted to justify himself somehow.

Even though he knew he wouldn't be able to say anything specific in front of dentist David; even though he understood that dentist David had texted him in secret; even though his coming to the airport would probably cause a lot of confusion – he couldn't resist. He hailed a cab, which **cost an arm and a leg**, and rushed to Heathrow. All the way, he was thinking about the two men who belonged to each other, looking forward to a week in an exotic paradise.

Heathrow Airport was buzzing like a beehive. In the departure lounge, he quickly scanned the boards looking for flights to Dubai. When he finally found the passport control gate, he couldn't spot Konstantinos's tall figure anywhere.

Suddenly, he saw dentist David. He stood there alone, looking uncertain and lonely next to his designer suitcase.

No broad shoulders, no deep laugh, no "Greek god" nearby.

pang – bodnutí, prudká bolest (citová)

fight – hádka

beyond repair – neopravitelné, nenapravitelné

to cost an arm and a leg – majlant, celé jmění

5.4

"Where is Konstantinos?" young David **blurted out**, barely catching his breath.

Dentist David **jerked**. Then sadness replaced the surprise in his eyes.

"Konstantinos? He stayed at home. He is cross. He sent me away. He said it was for a holiday, but I **reckon** it's to keep me away from you... Before something happens."

Young David's head started spinning. The phrase "*this week will do us good*" suddenly took on a completely different, chilling meaning. It wasn't a week for them to be together, but quite the opposite – a week apart.

Konstantinos wasn't flying away. Konstantinos stayed in London. Alone.

While dentist David went through passport control with the feeling that he was doing the right thing to save his relationship, hairdresser David was standing in front of the gate trying to understand. A few minutes after the dentist disappeared from his sight and presumably texted Konstantinos that he had passed through security, a message pinged on David's phone.

Konstantinos: "*Sleeping Beauty?*"

David stared at those two words. He was confused. *Sleeping Beauty?* What was Konstantinos **hinting at**? Did he want to be nice, or was it just another hint that the hairdresser was nothing more than a pretty face?

But slowly, young David started to understand. Konstantinos didn't send his partner to Dubai to protect him from temptation. He moved him out of the way like **a pawn on a chessboard** so he could play his own game.

to blurt out – vyhrknout

to jerk – trhnout sebou, cuknout

I reckon – mám za to (I think)

to hint at something – něco naznačovat

a pawn on a chessboard – pěšák (figurka) na šachovnici

5.5

David: *"Nobody sleeps here on a Saturday night."* – Although the Saturday noise in his house was a reality he hated, he wanted to demonstrate that he had plenty of fun and wasn't waiting around for a call.

Konstantinos: *"How about a traditional Greek breakfast to clear the air. 9 a.m. Our place."*

David put the phone down and looked at his reflection in the train window. Konstantinos didn't write: *"David has gone on holiday, come and see me."* He pretended it was a normal invitation to their place, as if nothing had changed. Just like the last time when they had the dessert together.

Konstantinos was now putting on a show for an audience who had seen behind the scenes and knew the script.

So, breakfast on Olympus, David thought. And then he remembered David on the plane.

No, mate – he didn't send you away because he's afraid something might happen, but because he wants something to happen...

mate – kámo

6 Temptation

6.1

Sunday morning on "Olympus" was so quiet you could **hear a pin drop**.

Konstantinos had set the table for two. The smell of strong coffee and fresh pastries mingled with the scent of disinfectant, which he subconsciously used even at home.

Nine o'clock. Ten. Eleven. Young David didn't turn up.

Konstantinos walked back and forth in the living room. In his head, fear alternated with unexpected **relief**. *Perhaps it's for the best*, he told himself. *He didn't turn up; I'll bite the bullet. David will come back from Dubai in a week, and this madness will be over.*

But that relief tasted bitter, just like burnt coffee.

Then he got a text message from an unknown number.

"For Doctor Konstantinos. I wanted to book an appointment at the surgery, but I've lost my phone. Could you get back to me on this number? David the Hairdresser."

Konstantinos rang the number straight away. David's voice on the phone sounded weak and strange.

"I am sorry," David mumbled. "I couldn't make it."

"What happened? Davy, are you alright?" Konstantinos's medical instinct rang alarm bells. David sounded as if he was speaking through a thick wall.

"I've got... a **split lip** and probably a broken rib. Someone didn't like the look of me."

Konstantinos froze. "Have you seen a doctor? Have you been to the police?"

hear a pin drop – slyšet spadnout špendlík

subconsciously – podvědomě

back and forth – (přecházet) tam a zpátky, sem a tam

relief – úleva

bite the bullet – přijmout něco nepříjemného (zatnout zuby)

surgery - ordinace

split lip – rozseknutý ret

6.2

"No. I can't. I am not here legally, Konstantinos. **It will pass.**"

"**Hardly**," Konstantinos said in a tone that allowed no argument. "Give me your address. Now."

The address took him to a neighbourhood where people like him didn't usually set foot. It was a house where too many people were crammed behind every door, and the air smelled of damp and cheap food.

A small, thin **bloke** opened the door to the tiny room number 4. Just behind him, Konstantinos spotted David on the bed. The bloke exchanged a few words in Czech with David and left.

Konstantinos's heart sank. That beautiful face was black and blue, his lip was split and swollen, and it looked like his wrist was injured too. At that moment, he stopped being just an erotic object to Konstantinos.

"I'm taking you to our place," Konstantinos said while carefully examining the nasty bruise on David's ribs. A few days ago, he couldn't have imagined touching his bare skin so soon, let alone in this condition. "We have a spare room. You might have a **concussion**; that's serious."

David didn't argue. The trust he felt towards this giant of a man was stronger than his pride at that moment.

"I have to take my things," he whispered. "All of them. Somebody could steal them if I wasn't here for a while."

Konstantinos helped him pack. He opened the wardrobe and his eyes fell on three pairs of **stiletto heels**, which stood there like a silent scream. He froze for a second. He knew what it meant.

David looked at him ashamed and proud at the same time. At that moment, another wall between them came tumbling down. The cat was out of the bag.

it will pass – to přejde

hardly – těžko, to sotva

bloke – chlápek, týpek (UK / guy US)

concussion – otřes mozku

stiletto heels – lodičky na jehlovém podpatku

6.3

The flat on "Olympus" smelled clean. David looked **anxiously** at the bed in the guest room.

"The bed sheets..." he started, but Konstantinos interrupted him. He took a clean set of bed sheets out of the wardrobe, still with the **dry cleaner's tag** on it.

"It's freshly washed, Davy. Nobody has slept in it."

If David hadn't felt so miserable after that night-time beating, he would definitely have been grateful to Konstantinos for remembering his obsession, and for respecting it so naturally.

The evening passed in silence.

Konstantinos prepared a light meal that David could eat without **straining** his jaw too much. Then he checked his teeth – professionally, gently. David patiently let Konstantinos push his strong fingers into his mouth through his swollen lips. Luckily, everything was fine.

Konstantinos liked perfect teeth, straight, **flawless** little pearls, and David didn't have those. His upper **canines** leaned slightly forward, while his **incisors** leaned backward. It wasn't a smile from a dental catalogue, but rather from Playboy. Konstantinos had noticed before that the sexiest people often have imperfect teeth. Everyone loved the gap between Madonna's front teeth, or the rebellious irregularity of Johnny Depp's teeth, or the slight **overbite** that looked so aristocratic on Brigitte Bardot. Even the famous asymmetry in Tom Cruise's mouth proved that perfection was basically boring.

anxiously – úzkostlivě, znepokojeně

dry cleaner's tag – lísteček z čistírny

to strain – namáhat

flawless – bezchybné, bezvadné

canines – špičáky

incisors – řezáky

overbite – předkus

6.4

David lay in the soft bedding, his head spinning with thoughts.

Originally, he had wanted dentist David. He wanted money, luxury, and safety. He wanted someone with whom he could trade his good looks for a quiet life.

But now he was here with Konstantinos. With a man who had seen him at his worst, in the ugly flat, and still hadn't turned his back on him. A man who called him Davy.

He felt a pang of regret when he remembered the reason of their fight a few days ago. He had no right to tar Konstantinos with the same brush as those beasts he had met before. He **managed to steer clear of** them now; even so, he would never forget their ways.

While somewhere in Dubai, dentist David was writing peaceful messages about how the sun and the time apart were doing him good, **a storm was brewing** in London.

Konstantinos looked at his phone and hesitated. He was thinking how – and whether at all – he should explain to his partner over the phone that there was – now sleeping in their guest room – the lad because of whom they were both lying?

to manage – zvládnout, dokázat (něco dělat)

to steer clear of (someone/something) – vyhnout se obloukem, držet se dál

a storm was brewing – schylovalo se k bouři, k průšvihu

7 Perfect Lie

7.1

Wednesday afternoon in London was grey, the exact opposite of the blinding sun in Dubai.

Dentist David turned the key in the lock with a feeling of **defeat**. Running away hadn't helped. A few days in a luxury resort had only shown him that the silence between him and Konstantinos was louder than the sound of the sea. He needed to be at home. He needed to look Konstantinos in the eye and say: *"I know that you know. I'm sorry. Let's sort it out."*

The flat smelled of expensive coffee and something else – a medical **ointment**.

"Konstantinos?" he called into the silence.

Nobody answered, but David heard the **rustling** of fabric from the living room. He walked in and his heart skipped a beat. The hairdresser was sitting on the sofa. That lad because of whom Konstantinos had sent him miles away. He was alone, wearing a T-shirt and **pyjama bottoms**, looking like a ghost.

But that wasn't the worst part. When the young man raised his head, dentist David saw his face. Yellow and blue bruises on his **cheekbone**, a swollen, split lip, an arm in a bandage.

Different dark scenarios started spinning in the dentist's head in a split second. *Why is he here? Why is he alone? And most importantly: Who did this to him?* The sight of the injuries sent a shiver down his spine.

The first thing that crossed his mind was that maybe this young man is someone who sells himself for money and enjoys pain.

Or the second, much more terrifying version: Konstantinos **beat him black and blue**. Konstantinos, his "calm god", mad with jealousy – and when he realised what he had done, he was trying to make it right.

defeat – porážka

ointment – mast

rustling – šustění

pyjama bottoms – spodní díl pyžama, pyžamové kalhoty

cheekbone – lícní kost

7.2

Young David tried to smile, but his swollen lip wouldn't let him.

"You came back early," he whispered.

Dentist David didn't move an inch. "Is Konstantinos at work?"

"Mhm. He will be back any minute. He is looking after me."

Dentist David put down his bag. His hands were trembling. He looked at those bruises and saw Konstantinos's anger in them.

"You look dreadful," he said with bitterness in his voice. "Is this... is this because of me?"

Young David bowed his head. In his mind, he saw that moment at the airport. That quick, **bold** kiss with dentist David, because he wanted to cover up the real reason for his presence, and then those three shadows following him to the **Tube**. Unfortunately, he made the mistake of getting off at a random station to shake them off, but they got off right behind him. He found himself in the middle of nowhere, with nowhere to hide and no one to call for help. If he hadn't rushed to the airport so **recklessly**, or if he hadn't said goodbye to David with that incriminating kiss, they probably wouldn't have noticed him.

"I guess," the hairdresser replied quietly. "I suppose so."

Dentist David felt a stab in his heart. *So, Konstantinos knew the truth. He knew about every look, about every hint.*

"Beating you up like this..."

"It was quick," young David nodded, thinking of the punches in a dark alley somewhere in Hounslow. "I didn't even have time to fight back."

bold – odvážný, drzý, troufalý

Tube – londýnské metro

recklessly – bezhlavě, neuváženě

7.3

"And now he is taking care of you," the dentist stated, feeling his stomach turn. "He is rubbing ointment on you and bringing you food to **make up for** it."

Young David looked at him a bit confused, but then just closed his eyes. He remembered how Konstantinos had carefully rubbed the healing ointment on his lips and then also on his ribs. It was quite intimate to feel his strong and warm hands on his stomach, but it was completely innocent – he was just helping him heal.

"He is very kind. Nobody has ever taken care of me like this."

Dentist David leaned against the table. The madness of it was shocking. A victim who loves his attacker, and an attacker who plays the hero. *And I was the one who had started this whole mess.*

"You should leave," he blurted out.

"I have nowhere to go," the hairdresser said simply and got up. He painfully straightened his T-shirt, which was twisted. "And besides, at least I feel like nobody else is going to punch me when I'm with him."

At that moment, keys **rattled** in the lock. Konstantinos was home.

When Konstantinos saw dentist David in the living room, his face turned to stone. Just for a split second. Then he put on his professional, calm mask.

"David, darling. I didn't expect you so early."

Dentist David pointed at the beaten-up boy in pyjamas.

"What on earth is going on, Konstantinos? Why is he here?"

Konstantinos slowly took off his jacket and hung it on a hanger. He needed to buy some time.

to make up for something – něco napraviť, odčiniť, vynahradiť

to rattle – chrastieť, šramotiť

7.4

"A terrible thing happened. I got a message on Sunday. David found my number on the clinic's website. He was desperate. He was **mugged**, robbed, and he didn't know where to turn. He can't go to the hospital, and he can't go to the police either. He hasn't got a **residence permit** or any insurance. I was the only person in this city he knew how to contact and ask for help."

Konstantinos only realised now that the hairdresser hadn't known whose number it was on the clinic's website, whether David or an assistant would see the message – he had written it very cleverly, almost like a secret code.

Young David sat on the sofa and kept quiet. He heard every word. He knew Konstantinos was lying. He knew he had sent him a coded apology for the missed breakfast, not a cry for help. But he realised that Konstantinos was building a wall to protect them both. He nodded and looked down.

"So you just took him in?" asked dentist David. He didn't know what to think.

It could be a lie, just an **excuse** because Konstantinos didn't want to admit what he had really done. But it could also be the truth. On the one hand, Konstantinos's **nobility** impressed him; on the other hand, he was terrified of himself – *How could I so easily believe the idea of Konstantinos beating the boy black and blue?*

"I am a doctor, David," Konstantinos said in a tone that allowed no doubt. "I couldn't leave him in such a state in some **dump** in Peckham. He has peace and quiet here. When he is back on his feet, he will go his own way."

As soon as he said it, Konstantinos realised that he couldn't imagine coming home one day and not finding him here anymore.

mugged – přepaden

residence permit – povolení k pobytu

an excuse – výmluva

nobility – šlechtetnost

dump – díra, barabizna, hrozné místo

8 Branded by Love

8.1

While it seemed that Konstantinos was ignoring young David's presence – because he could hide his inner emotional storm so well – dentist David watched him with quiet horror.

He noticed it right on the first evening, when the young man got up from the table to take away an empty cup. That movement of his hips, those gentle hand gestures, that fragility.

This is a younger version of me, he thought and he felt a pang in his heart.

He remembered the time ten years ago when he and Konstantinos got together. Back then, however, it was preferable to hide such gentleness in a man. He had to wear stiff-collared shirts and speak with a deeper voice to fit into society. Young David was different. Even with those bruises, he possessed that incredibly bold freedom to be **effeminate**. Whenever the young man casually ran his fingers through his hair or **curled up** in an armchair, dentist David saw Konstantinos's eyes light up.

"You look at him as if you've found a lost toy," he told him one evening when they were alone in the bedroom.

"He is just a boy who needs a helping hand," Konstantinos replied without even looking at him.

No, thought David. *I know exactly why you want him here.*

And he tried to **banish** the thought of the young hairdresser being here for him and with him. He wasn't jealous that Konstantinos wanted the young man, but because the young man was literally **eating out of his hand**.

Naturally, David didn't want anyone to ruin their long-term relationship, but he had already taken the first step himself; and if he had started an affair with the hairdresser, he would have put their relationship at risk too.

effeminate – zženštilý

to curl up – schoulit se

banish – zahnat, odehnat, vypudit

eating out of someone's hand – zobat někomu z ruky

8.2

He had a vague idea of what had happened between them on the evening when young David walked him home. He wanted to remember it, because he had never had a fling with anyone like that before, but at the same time he was glad that his memory of it was a bit foggy – at least his guilty conscience wasn't tearing him apart.

It had barely been a week since he first met David while having his hair cut, and the boy already acted like he was at home here.

–

Bit by bit, Konstantinos became increasingly possessive of young David.

Dentist David watched history repeat itself right before his eyes – live, and with someone else. He noticed the little things: How Konstantinos listened to the young man's imperfect English with a smile he hadn't seen on his face for years. How he admired clothes on the hairdresser that he never wanted his partner to wear because they were too **extravagant**. How he **cherished** that boyish vulnerability and called him "Davy".

Dentist David realised that he had become the "boring **safe bet**" for Konstantinos, while hairdresser David was a **blast from the past**. It was as if Konstantinos wanted to turn back time and live the first few months of their relationship again. Without having to leave his partner. He wanted to keep both – his history as well as his new, upgraded present.

to cherish – hýčkat

safe bet – sázka na jistotu

blast from the past – závan minulosti

8.3

That evening, blue shadows from the television rolled lazily across the living room and the air was heavy with silence.

Dentist David was sitting in an armchair, and Konstantinos was on the sofa with young David. After a while, Konstantinos put his arm around the lad's neck and gently pulled him closer. He playfully ran the fingers of his left hand over David's **prominent** collarbone.

Then the large ring on his ring finger twisted, and the sharp edge of the stone unexpectedly scratched David's skin. He **jerked**; a sharp pain hit the sensitive **hollow** at the base of his neck.

Konstantinos was flooded with excitement. Not because he wanted to hurt him, but because David simply pressed his lips together and tried to act as if nothing had happened. Even though Konstantinos couldn't see his face, he could picture it **vividly**. How he rolled his eyes and his upper eyelids **fluttered**.

It was as if he had two faces, or two lives. One moment he was confident and seductive enough for anyone to easily believe he offered sex for money, and the next he was so submissive. Konstantinos was starting to understand. The boy desperately wanted to **belong with** someone, but at the same time he had to protect himself. *Don't worry, he thought. Now you belong with me.*

Therefore, he also pretended that he hadn't noticed the scratch from the ring; he kept the ring turned down and started running it over the same spot time and time again. Slowly. Rhythmically. With gentle pressure.

prominent – výrazný, vystouplý

hollow – důlek, prohlubeň

vividly – živě, barvitě

to flutter – chvět se

belong with – patřit k někomu = sounáležitost

(belong to – patřit někomu = vlastnický)

8.4

The Big Brother show was on television, and David felt the rough rubbing under his neck turn into a burning cut. He **endured** it. He just pressed his head more firmly against Konstantinos's arm behind his neck and let the ring gradually **brand** him.

He felt his skin stretching under the sharp stone until a single, heavy drop of blood flooded the point of contact. It was the answer to everything they couldn't say to each other. It was a sign of belonging.

He remembered how, the day after he moved in, he had accidentally mentioned why he was mugged the other night. After that, there was no point in keeping secrets. Konstantinos had frowned, and David felt sorry for betraying dentist David by talking about the minor cheating, telling Konstantinos that they had kissed at the airport, and even on the evening he walked him home.

Konstantinos kept frowning and then said, "I have no intention of sharing my darling."

"Do you love him?" Young David asked.

"Him?" Konstantinos replied with resignation.

Now David was resting his head on his shoulder, breathing deeply to bear the pain. He hoped the other David hadn't noticed anything – although if he ever had to fight with him over Konstantinos's **affection**, he would definitely use this as **ammunition**.

He was proud of the aching spot under his neck and felt a strange, deep sense of belonging. It was proof that they belonged together and it was important for him.

The only scar he truly wanted to have on his body.

to endure – vydržet, snášet

to brand – cejchovat, značkovat

affection – náklonnost, city, vřelost

ammunition – munice

9 The Secret Room

9.1

David looked into the open box he was holding in his hand.

Konstantinos couldn't read his reaction straight away, because when David lowered his head to see his new gift, his face was partly covered by his **fringe** which he had been keeping long to please Konstantinos.

"This is jewellery," David said when he gathered his thoughts, still staring into the box.

"Do you like it?"

"I am a man, Konstantinos," he said firmly and raised his head. At the same time, he **unconsciously** made a gesture, tossing his fringe out of his eyes, which seemed to contradict the sentence he had just spoken.

"I never doubted that," Konstantinos smiled.

"This is women's jewellery. Am I supposed to wear women's jewellery?"

Konstantinos didn't say a word. He wasn't cross; he knew very well that David would reject this gift at first. He had known since the day he helped him move his things from his old flat (after he was mugged and beaten black and blue with a split, swollen lip) how **self-conscious** he felt and how hard he tried not to look effeminate.

Yet, everything about him was so gentle, so delicate, so cute. He was like a fragile flower, and that was exactly why Konstantinos was absolutely crazy about him.

But David had been beaten up for that beautiful exterior a few times before, as Konstantinos found out, and that was why David fought against it so much. Konstantinos believed that if he protected him, if he **spoiled** him a little, David might just **come to terms with** himself.

fringe – ofina (UK / bangs US)

unconsciously – nevědomky

self-conscious - nesvůj

to spoil somebody – rozmazlovat

come to terms with – s něčím se smířit, vyrovnat, akceptovat

9.2

"You don't have to wear them if you don't want to. You can just secretly look at them from time to time, just like you look at those stiletto shoes you have in your wardrobe."

David froze. The three pairs of stiletto heels were like his **kryptonite**. They could destroy him. He had put them on a few times for a night out at a club, pretending it was just a massive joke. Yet he felt absolutely fantastic, and at that time he also stopped drinking alcohol in public. He wanted to enjoy it, to be conscious of it, to look like he didn't care while secretly being **on cloud nine**.

When they had packed all his worldly possessions into a few bags that Sunday, he had ignored Konstantinos's look at those shoes. In the three weeks they had spent here together, neither of them had ever mentioned it.

David wore sneakers, jeans rolled up above his ankles, and a long-sleeved T-shirt. He wanted to look normal, but he only emphasised even more that this simply wasn't his cup of tea. His walk and gestures belonged to another world, and Konstantinos wished him with all his heart that he accepted himself. Konstantinos also needed a long time to accept that a mountain of a man, with the looks of a Greek god, was **into boys**. He liked these **enchanted** princesses. He couldn't help it.

"How about you just punch me? I suggest your left hand, with that big ring, you know, right here," he tapped his finger on his cheekbone, which had finally healed. "Better you than someone else. Then you would treat it nicely again for me, wouldn't you?"

kryptonite – kryptonit (naprostá slabina)

on cloud nine – v sedmém nebi

to be into boys / girls – být na kluky / na holky

enchanted – zakletý

9.3

Konstantinos shook his head and walked away. He didn't want to force him. He knew David had to deal with who he really was on his own.

David put the box down on the table and slumped into a chair. He felt like crying. Had the person he trusted turned him into a toy?

Then he laughed out loud and blinked quickly. *I just said I am a man, and now I'm crying.*

He slapped his palm on the table. He didn't want to be like this, but he was. He hadn't even finished his vocational school because of it. This popular London hair washer, waiting for his chance to become a famous stylist, was lying about his hairdressing education. And why?! He had believed that choosing this profession, which made his whole family angry, was safe enough for a queer guy. **Bloody hell!**

And so he left Pilsen and started living in London. It took him a few years to understand that he couldn't run away from himself. That he would always carry his burden with him.

He looked at the jewellery box again. He pulled it closer to himself. It could easily be fake, he couldn't tell. But he didn't think Konstantinos was the type to buy cheap stuff in Primark.

Dark green suits me, he thought and laughed again. *Oh my God! Look at me!*

He took the necklace with a large green stone out of the box and **ran it through** his fingers for a while.

Bloody hell! – Sakra! Kruci! Do p*dele!

(pozn. od Katky: v české verzi najdeš ještě ostřejší překlad; hodilo by se sem zvolání "Fuck!" ale nechtěla jsem to psát anglicky tak vulgárně)

to run something through fingers – protahovat si něčím mezi prsty

9.4

He took three deep breaths and then put it around his neck. He **fastened** it without even knowing how. His gentle fingers naturally found the **clasp** behind his neck, and now a large green piece of glass rested on his black T-shirt. He pulled at his T-shirt and the stone slipped underneath. It felt cold on his chest.

David closed his eyes and, in his mind, he saw himself back in that club, in green stiletto heels – still in those rolled-up jeans, still in the long-sleeved T-shirt he wore most of the time, and with that **necklace** around his neck.

*Alright then, darling, he thought and tapped the **pendant** under his T-shirt. You're going into the wardrobe to join your friends. Into my secret room.*

He got up, took the box with **matching** earrings, and when he raised his head, he found Konstantinos leaning against the door frame, watching him. He didn't say anything.

David squeezed past him without a word, but when he was behind him, he remarked casually, "Time for tea, is it?"

to fasten – zapnout

clasp – zapínání, drobná přezka

necklace – náhrdelník

pendant – přívěsek

matching – s něčím ladící, hodící se k sobě

10 Soaking Wet

10.1

David stood in the park, by the bench where Konstantinos could see him from the window of his surgery. They had agreed to meet here when he finished work at four.

When David arrived, it was just starting to rain. Now the rain was slowly stopping, drops were falling from the trees, and the damp air stuck to his coat and hair.

David was holding an umbrella that only protected his head and shoulders, otherwise he was soaking wet. The fine fabric of his wide trousers soaked up the water from the bottom, so he felt the wet cold right up to his knees.

Konstantinos was supposed to finish almost half an hour ago, but he was either delayed with a patient or didn't want to go out in the rain.

When David finally saw him, he wanted to walk towards him, but then he remembered. They had agreed to meet by that bench. And as he had already waited half an hour, he would wait now until Konstantinos came to him.

He saw him smiling, walking up to him slowly. His voice sounded calm and slightly amused. "Why didn't you come inside to see me when it was raining?"

David pulled the umbrella closer and just shrugged.

Konstantinos knew very well that if he told David to wait somewhere until he came, he would do exactly as he was told.

surgery – ordinace (UK)

(US: ordinance = doctor's office US / surgery = operace)

10.2

Konstantinos had been watching him from that window; his last patient had actually cancelled the appointment, and Konstantinos could have finished earlier, but that spring rain came at the perfect time. He was just about to leave the surgery when he saw David open his small umbrella, because although he was willing **to put up with** any discomfort, he protected his hairstyle at all costs.

Konstantinos couldn't resist; he watched him and let him wait there until the rain stopped.

Now he smiled at him, seeing those soaked **trouser legs** and the tips of stiletto heels. He had expected him to fight his feminine side much longer. But it only took a few days of Konstantinos showing him that he was still the same person whether in sneakers or in stilettos, and that the most important thing was to be happy – and now he felt that David had finally accepted it.

"Let's go for a walk, the air is beautifully fresh after the rain."

David hesitated. His eyes slipped down his soaked coat to the wet **pavement** full of puddles, because although the rain was short, it was heavy, and the water hadn't had time to **drain away**.

"I am soaked..." he objected.

"It doesn't matter," Konstantinos said and gently took David by the elbow.

to put up with – snášet, tolerovat, smířít se (s něčím nepříjemný)

trouser legs – nohavice

pavement – dlažba, chodník

(*chodínek UK: pavement / US sidewalk*)

to drain away – odtéct (drain – odtok, výpust', kanál)

10.3

David relaxed and nodded.

Walking through the park, he felt the drops from the trees running down his neck and shoulders, but he knew he had chosen the most absurd combination of clothes himself.

Konstantinos talked calmly about all sorts of things – about the surgery, about patients, about the new chairs in the waiting room. He occasionally glanced at David, still **amazed** at how David could turn completely ordinary moments into an absurd drama, which **thrilled** them both so much.

David tried to avoid the puddles, but the dry ground seemed to move out of his way. Konstantinos walked calmly beside him, as if he didn't see the puddles, or the soaked trousers, or the stiletto heels that made it difficult for David to avoid the streams of water.

"You really are soaking wet," Konstantinos remarked suddenly, without taking his eyes off their surroundings or pausing his calm talk about something completely ordinary, as if naturally mixing a little teasing with gentle care.

"Well, thanks," David mumbled, quite pleased that Konstantinos wasn't judging his discomfort, and he adjusted his wet coat.

"How about a **cuppa**?" Konstantinos suggested.

David nodded, still a bit annoyed about his soaked feet, but he knew this was a little game they both enjoyed. Every step in a puddle, every drop from a tree, every little **gust of wind** – it was all part of the feeling that Konstantinos could slow down the world so that David could be happy.

amazed – užaslý

thrilled – nadšený, vzrušený

cuppa – cup of tea

gust of wind – poryv větru (little gust – závan)

11 The Colour of Guilt

11.1

Konstantinos hadn't had much time for young David lately, because he and his David were getting ready for a long holiday in a few weeks, just like every year, and they needed to get a lot of work done in advance at the clinic.

Young David's injuries had healed by then, and he was grateful that neither dentist had started to talk about him leaving yet. He tried not to get in their way and hoped that he could still be useful for them during their holiday and keep the flat **airy** and water the plants; but at the same time, he suspected that they would hardly leave an unknown **intruder** with an expired passport alone in this luxurious nest.

Whatever he felt for Konstantinos, the dentists simply officially belonged together, and the hairdresser was a **third wheel**. Sooner or later, he would have to look for a new place to live.

-

The early London evening had that colour of wet asphalt and bus lights reflected on the pavement. They slowly walked side by side. Young David, with his hands in his coat pockets, occasionally touched Konstantinos's elbow lightly, just casually, to confirm that they were together.

It was a nice evening. It really was. But somewhere halfway home, David noticed that Konstantinos had gone quiet. Not completely. He still answered. He still smiled. It just wasn't the same anymore.

"Are you tired?" he asked carefully.

Konstantinos shook his head. "No."

They took a few more steps.

airy - vyvětraný (keep the flat airy - pravidelně větrat, udržovat čerstvý vzduch)

intruder – vetřelec, narušitel

a third wheel – páté kolo

11.2

"Did I say something wrong?" David tried again.

"No, darling," Konstantinos answered calmly. "It's not about you."

This was exactly the answer that showed it was about him. Besides, Konstantinos had never called him *darling* before.

David slowed his **pace**.

"What's going on?"

Konstantinos was quiet for a while. Then he shrugged. "It's just... I wanted you to wear that green blouse today."

David stopped. "But... it is green," he said automatically.

Konstantinos looked at him.

"No," he said. "It's **turquoise**."

David felt his stomach drop. "I thought..."

"I know," Konstantinos interrupted him gently. "It's my problem, not yours. I just imagine green differently."

That sounded reasonable. Almost reassuring. So why wasn't it reassuring?

They walked home without a word. David took off his coat more slowly than usual. He knew something was going on. He just didn't know exactly what.

"I'm sorry," he said again.

Konstantinos stood by the window and looked out at the wet street.

"That won't **cheer me up**," he replied calmly.

David was silent for a moment. Then he stepped closer.

"So... shall I make you a cup of tea?" he tried.

Konstantinos shook his head.

"A head massage?" David suggested more quietly. This was their thing.

Konstantinos liked it. It always calmed him down.

"No."

pace – tempo

turquoise – tyrkysová

cheer up – zlepšit, zvednout náladu

11.3

It wasn't just about the blouse anymore. David felt it.

"So... what would cheer you up?" he finally asked directly.

Konstantinos looked at him. For a long time. And then he said: "I don't know."

That was worse than anything else. David smiled nervously.

"Well, I'll put on something green right now," he said lightly, almost as a joke. "Or which colour would you like?"

Konstantinos kept quiet and a smile **twitched** at the corner of his mouth.

And then it flashed through David's mind for the first time:

It wasn't about the blouse.

It was a game.

A game he wanted to play.

"So... what should I do?" he said quietly.

Konstantinos didn't answer. David laughed. A bit uncertainly.

"So what," he finally blurted out, half-jokingly, half-helplessly, "should I spend the night on the balcony or what?"

David said it almost without thinking. He had no idea what else to suggest to keep the game going.

It was quiet in the room.

Konstantinos looked at him calmly and David realised that his last sentence was still hanging in the air between them.

"The floor on the balcony is quite hard," Konstantinos said after a while.

David laughed briefly, but the laugh was rather defensive.

"Then I will stand." He said it ironically. Already a bit tired.

Konstantinos watched him for a while.

to twitch – jemně cukat (twitch – jemné cuknutí, např. v koutku úst)

11.4

"Stand and walk," he then said calmly. "So you won't feel cold."

David blinked. "Does that mean I can't even get dressed?"

"Of course you can."

David breathed a sigh of relief.

"Pyjamas," Konstantinos added. "And those stiletto heels."

David just stared at him.

At that moment, dentist David joined them. He sat in an armchair and picked up a book. He pretended not to listen to them, but he took in every word, and even every **quiver** of the invisible tension that sparked between them like static electricity.

"Do you really want this?" David asked.

Konstantinos shook his head. "Not me. You want it. Because you want to apologise."

That sentence sounded completely different than anything before. David rested his hand on the edge of the table and was quiet for a while.

Konstantinos looked at him once more and his eyes sparkled.

The game wasn't just about David making a mistake and having to fix it; it was also about how far he was willing to go, what he would agree to. And so he nodded quietly.

"It's settled then," said Konstantinos. "Now we just need to agree on when the night begins and when it ends."

Dentist David smiled over his book. He knew this very well. But they hadn't played it for a long time; this spark had vanished from their relationship years ago. Both of them always knew that it was just a **roleplay**, but it seemed to him that the hairdresser was taking it a bit too seriously. He threw himself into everything so fully, almost maniacally.

quiver – zachvění, chvění

roleplay – scénka, hraní rolí, divadýlko

11.5

"How about from midnight... until six?" Young David suggested.

Konstantinos watched him for a while and then nodded, as if this was exactly what he had expected. But then he raised an eyebrow.

"If I'm sleeping, how will I know that you really walked there all night?"

David couldn't believe his ears. It was supposed to be a game, and he wanted to play it, but it hadn't crossed his mind that he would need proof. He shrugged.

Before he answered, dentist David shook his head and quickly turned a page in his book. This game of theirs was slowly going to extremes.

"I can **stream** it," the hairdresser suggested.

Konstantinos looked sceptical. "Stream it?"

"On YouTube. Using your phone. It will be **recorded** and then you can watch it."

Konstantinos thought about it. He was old school; he didn't know much about this.

"Alright," he finally said.

Young David nodded. Then he said once more, "So... from midnight."

"Yes."

"And until six."

"Yes."

-

Midnight arrived quietly. It wasn't a dramatic moment. The numbers on the phone display just ticked over from 23:59 to 00:00, and David was now standing by the balcony door dressed in satin pyjamas. He was holding his stiletto shoes in his hand.

to stream – vysílat živě (v přímém přenosu přes internet)

to record – nahrát

11.6

Dentist David was already in bed. But he couldn't fall asleep. He kept thinking about those two. Who was still playing and who was already crossing the line? He couldn't decide what irritated him more: Was it Konstantinos's sadism or David's masochism? What was the driving force of their strange relationship? Because he was almost sure that sex had nothing to do with it.

Young David took Konstantinos's mobile phone, set it up on the **windowsill**, and ran the charger cable to the **socket** under the window inside. It took a while to find the right angle, until the camera captured most of the balcony. He checked the picture and started a private stream.

"How will I find it?" asked Konstantinos from the comfort of his armchair.

"The recording will stay saved here in the app," David replied.

Konstantinos just nodded.

Then David open the door. Cold night air immediately slipped inside. It wasn't cold in the sharp winter sense; it was the type of chill that slowly gets under your clothes. David put on his shoes. He loved them, but mostly for clubs, for dancing. The first step on the balcony **tiles** was different from what he expected – not painful, but unsteady. He had to keep his balance. He stopped for a moment by the **railing**. Then he turned back towards the door.

Konstantinos sat in his armchair for a little longer, watching him. Not for long. Just long enough to make it clear that the moment had truly begun. Then he got up. He walked over to the window, looked at the phone resting on the windowsill, and slightly adjusted its position.

They stood facing each other through the glass for a moment.

windowsill – parapet

socket – zásuvka

tiles – dlaždice, kachličky

railing – zábradlí

11.7

"Well... good night," Konstantinos said quietly and turned off the light.

David nodded.

He noticed that the door remained slightly ajar.

He started walking slowly from one end of the balcony to the other. His steps were cautious at first. Not because of fear. Because of concentration. Inside the flat, the last light went out.

Konstantinos settled into bed. He thought his David was already asleep, but suddenly he heard his quiet voice: "Are you really going to leave him out there all night?"

"What do you mean, leave him out there? He's an adult, the door is open, and he can come inside anytime and go to bed."

"You know he won't," David said firmly.

"I know. But I'm not responsible for him, am I?"

David, who liked *The Little Prince*, had his own opinion on the rose. He believed that when you make someone emotionally attached to you, you are responsible for them **once and for all**.

"You have gone completely crazy," David said finally and turned his back to Konstantinos.

ajar – pootevřené

once and for all – jednou provždy

12 Six Hours of Saying Sorry

12.1

The phone on the windowsill glowed quietly. The recording was running. On the balcony, David stopped looking inside after a few minutes. There was no need anymore. He knew that Konstantinos was sleeping – or would fall asleep soon.

And yet he kept walking at a steady pace. Back and forth. Back and forth.

After a while, he began to feel the hard tiles under his feet. Harder than he expected. The shoes weren't made for long walking. Every step required attention. He looked at the sky once. It was clear. He crossed the balcony again. This time even more slowly. Then once more.

In the last hour before morning, he was completely resigned. He only checked the time on the phone with every turn. It felt endless by now. *How much could I have walked?*

He didn't walk the whole time; he stood around, leaned against the wall, but it was cold, leaned on the railing with his hands until he started freezing.

–

Six o'clock, **at last!**

He wanted to rush into the living room, but after those six hours on the balcony he was completely stiff, so he walked in carefully and slowly. He took his shoes off right by the balcony doors.

Konstantinos and the other David were already awake. They were sitting at the table with a teapot, and a third cup was already poured for David.

Konstantinos looked at him calmly, almost neutrally.

Dentist David preferred not even to look up. He could imagine how young David felt, even though what he himself had experienced once was only a fraction of what was happening now.

at last – konečně

12.2

"I see you are not in a hurry, Davy," Konstantinos commented on his slow arrival and pointed to the cup of tea. "We have been waiting for you. It's somehow sad here without you." Which was true.

Even though dentist David was confused by all this, he had to admit that it was simply **lively** here with him. Despite everything that was happening, he felt comfortable in the hairdresser's presence. He had such a strange charm; people couldn't stay angry with him too long. Hate him, probably yes. Attack or hurt him, too. But unless a person felt such a strong emotion, they just had to like him.

David sat down very slowly and held his mug of tea. Then he asked: "So... do you think it's alright now?"

Konstantinos looked up. "I haven't seen the recording yet."

David was silent for a moment. The sentence wasn't harsh. It wasn't cold either. It was simply **precise**.

"When you see it..."

"I will watch it this morning."

Dentist David couldn't listen to this. He got up and left for the bedroom.

Young David just nodded. He immediately understood what that meant. Six more hours at least. At least six more hours before things are clear. At least six hours before he knows if all this was enough.

"Alright," he just said.

He warmed up a bit with the tea and then moved to the bathroom for a hot shower. *I managed it*, he thought. And he couldn't wait to curl up in bed and finally get some sleep.

lively – živo, plný života

precise – přesný

12.3

Konstantinos didn't play the recording until around noon.

The phone was placed on the windowsill by the door. The picture was steady. The whole balcony was visible. David was walking slowly back and forth, exactly as he had promised. For the first hour, he walked energetically. Then he stopped. He looked directly towards the camera. And said something. Konstantinos **skipped** the recording back a few seconds. He turned the sound up. David was speaking Czech. He listened to him for a while. He didn't understand a single word. Just the tone. Then another segment. Another short sentence. Czech again. Konstantinos kept watching.

In the second hour, David stopped again. He rubbed his hands. He said something longer. This time faster. He sounded annoyed. Konstantinos paused the recording.

-

When David had warmed up, stretched, and got some sleep, he came into the kitchen. Konstantinos's phone was still lying on the table, but it wasn't clear if he had watched the whole video. Six hours in the dark, where nothing happens... But with his very first question, Konstantinos made it clear to him that he had indeed watched it.

"What were you saying?" he asked and pointed to the phone.

David understood immediately.

"I don't know exactly," he said carefully. "I was cold."

Konstantinos watched him for a while. "You looked a bit cross."

David shrugged. "My feet hurt."

"Were you **complaining**?"

David looked up.

"A bit."

to skip back / forward – přeskočit zpět / dopředu

to complain – stěžovat si

12.4

Konstantinos nodded.

Then he glanced out of the corner of his eye at the other David. He wanted to know if he was listening again. The flat was spacious, but besides the bathroom, there were only three rooms there – their bedroom, the guest room, and the living area, which was a hallway, kitchen, and living room all-in-one. They spent time here, mostly together. Dentist David was almost always reading something. Just like now. Konstantinos wasn't sure if he wanted his partner to hear what he was about to say. He didn't want him to **interfere**. It seemed to him that dentist David couldn't stand the hairdresser's endless submission to all this nonsense anymore.

"But if you were complaining... then you didn't mean the apology sincerely." David froze. Suddenly, the whole night came back to him. The chill. The pain. The silence. The steps back and forth. And now the possibility that all of this actually wasn't enough.

"I stayed there all night," he said quietly.

Konstantinos looked at him calmly. "Yes."

He didn't say anything else. And that silence was the worst thing. Because the question hung in the air: whether those six hours outside were enough. David stood still for a moment longer, as if waiting for Konstantinos to take the statement back. That he would correct it. Clarify it. Add something. He didn't.

"I wasn't complaining," David finally said quietly. "I was just... talking."

"Well, what were you saying?"

David took a breath.

"Nothing at the beginning. I was just telling myself that I could manage it."

to interfere – zasahovat

12.5

Konstantinos said nothing.

"Then... sometime later I said it was cold."

"That sounds like a complaint to me."

David shook his head.

"No. That's a **statement of fact**."

It was quiet for a moment. Konstantinos leaned against the table.

"And the feet?"

David smiled briefly.

"They hurt."

"So you were complaining."

David searched for an answer for a moment.

"I knew the camera was running," David continued quietly. "At the beginning, I spoke out loud **on purpose** to show that I was really there. That I wasn't sleeping somewhere inside." He took a short breath. "Then I only spoke **to keep myself standing**."

Konstantinos smiled for a moment. Very faintly. But then he turned serious again. "And why were you saying it in Czech?"

David rubbed his fingers, as if he only now realised that there wasn't actually a simple answer to that question.

"Because when I feel **miserable**," he said slowly, "it's more comfortable for me in Czech."

statement of fact – konstatování (faktu)

on purpose – schválně, naschvál

miserable – bídě, mizerně

to keep standing – udržet se na nohou, vydržet stát

12.6

Konstantinos just stared at him for a while. The sentence was much more personal than he had expected. "And yet you stayed there."

David nodded. "Yes."

"All night."

"Yes."

"Even though you were cold."

"Yes."

"Even though your feet hurt."

"Yes."

"Not because I wanted it."

"No."

"But because you wanted it."

"Yes."

Dentist David turned a page with a rustle. Konstantinos suspected that he wasn't reading anything at all. That the rustling was just to show his disapproval. That it was a silent call for Konstantinos to end it.

Konstantinos watched them both for a moment longer. Very calmly. Then he finally said with a slight hint of a smile: "It's alright."

Young David didn't move for a few more seconds. As if his body needed more time to absorb the words.

"Really?" he asked quietly.

Konstantinos got up. He stopped right in front of him.

"Really," he said and stroked his hair.

Dentist David cleared his throat while still looking at his book. He was obviously relieved.

12.7

Konstantinos was pleased that his partner was willing to listen to it all; he didn't want to do anything behind his back. He wasn't actually doing anything harmful, and he wasn't cheating on him – he was just having fun – and because his David had known him very well for many years, he simply let him be. He just discreetly kept an eye on them, so everything stayed within reasonable limits.

"That video," Konstantinos said after a while.

David looked up, once again with his famous seductive look, even though it was spontaneous this time, without thinking.

"What about it?"

"Can anyone see it?"

"No," David said immediately. "It's private."

Konstantinos was quiet for a while.

"And if it weren't private... could someone see it?"

"Of course," he said carefully.

Konstantinos raised an eyebrow slightly. "As many people as possible should see it."

David paused. "Why?"

Konstantinos answered calmly, "Because you were there."

David was silent for a moment. "It's enough that you saw it."

Konstantinos shook his head. "It's not enough."

The words hung in the air for a while.

Hairdresser David took a breath.

12.8

Dentist David snapped his book shut, tossed it on the table, and marched out of the room. He had had enough.

"I don't want anyone to see it," the hairdresser said.

Konstantinos looked at him calmly, "Why?"

David didn't understand.

Konstantinos walked over to the table, picked up the phone, and opened the video. He paused it somewhere around the third hour. David was walking slowly back and forth in it. His shoulders slightly hunched, his arms close to his body.

"Publish it," Konstantinos said quietly. "So that as many people as possible can see it."

"Nobody will watch a six-hour **footage** anyway. People watch a stream when it's live..." David objected, but at the same time he realised that it was his last argument; because if nobody was going to see it, he could just publish it.

"It doesn't matter." Konstantinos shrugged. Then he added, "I heard the title is the most important thing to attract people."

David sighed.

"And what should I write?"

Konstantinos thought for a moment. Very briefly. Then he said, "Night apology."

David looked at him.

Konstantinos shook his head.

"No, wait." He searched for more precise words for a moment. Then he pronounced slowly, "Six hours of saying sorry."

David closed his eyes.

footage – záznam, filmový materiál

12.9

"That's terrible," he said, but he knew that was exactly the sort of title that would **do the trick**. "And do you really want to publish it?" he asked one last time.

Konstantinos looked at him.

"You want to publish it."

A short pause.

Then he added more quietly: "Once you publish it... it will be done."

David stood motionless for a while.

Then he picked up Konstantinos's phone. He stared at the screen for a moment. And pressed *publish*.

"This... I wouldn't want to go through this again," he mumbled finally, looking blankly at the screen.

Konstantinos just smiled faintly.

"That's up to you, after all," he said calmly. "I wasn't the one who wore the wrong blouse."

David sat back down, still a bit confused.

"But... I thought... that I made you happy with this."

"You did," Konstantinos admitted. "But what comes next? This was just a different shade, can you imagine how you would fix it if it were a completely different colour? You can't just march around the balcony every night."

David sighed and **swore** to himself that he would be more careful with his ideas next time.

But at the same time, he felt that the big game was only just beginning.

to do the trick – zabrat, zafungovat, udělat své

to swear – přísahat (dříve v příběhu *klít, nadávat*)

13 Ascot

13.1

The morning sun shone through the tall windows of the Kensington flat and the air was unusually fresh.

Konstantinos walked into the guest room holding a black silk suit cover.

David was sitting in front of the mirror, running his fingers through his hair and critically examining his reflection.

"Here," Konstantinos said, put the cover on the bed and left again.

David eagerly unzipped the cover. Wide, **flowing** trousers made of heavy satin and a bottle-green silk blouse with a high **stand-up collar** and delicate **frills** slipped out. This choice of long sleeves impressed David; it proved to him that he wasn't just a toy, that he was a respected **human being** and that Konstantinos **acknowledged** him.

He pulled back the left sleeve and revealed the old scars.

Back then, when Konstantinos was treating him after the mugging, he checked David's whole body and obviously noticed the scars on his back, buttocks and thighs – healed long ago, but still there. He had hinted again that David was a cheap prostitute. "*Or didn't some old man do this to you?*" he had asked angrily.

David put on a defensive expression. "*Yeah, he did.*"

But Konstantinos couldn't see into his head. He wanted David to be his sweet pet, and in his eyes, he was turning out to be a vulgar prostitute. It bothered David that Konstantinos thought this about him, so he said to himself – *it serves you right*. He wanted to punish him; to make Konstantinos think he was caring for someone who actually disgusted him.

Ascot – nejslavnější a nejprestižnější koňské dostihy v Británii, známé pro extrémně přísný dress code

flowing – splývavé

stand-up collar – stojáček

frills – volány

human being – lidská bytost

to acknowledge – uznat, potvrdit, vzít na vědomí

it serves you right – dobře ti tak, to máš za to

13.2

In reality, those scars were a souvenir from when David's dad decided to simply beat the gay out of him. To make it hurt less, David had gradually added scars to both his **wrists** himself.

He smoothed his sleeves. He didn't mind that it was a women's top, because outfits like this always looked like the latest avant-garde fashion on him.

Ten minutes later, David was standing in front of the large mirror in the living room. The blouse perfectly fitted his shoulders and the satin trousers flowed around his legs. He looked incredible – fragile and dangerous at the same time.

"Wow... I'm a Vogue star!" David breathed out and admiringly turned from side to side. Then he stopped, ran his fingers over his forehead and looked at Konstantinos.

"Look, shouldn't I have a little hat to go with this? A fascinator or something."

Konstantinos leaned against the door frame, hands in his pockets, and that familiar, ironic shadow flashed in his eyes.

"Hats and fascinators are for women, Davy," he said slowly, and his voice was deep and calm. "You are a man." He threw back the sentence David often repeated when Konstantinos brought something that pushed the boundaries of their game a bit further.

David stopped for a second, a memory flashing through his mind of their first discussion about jewellery and about where fashion ends and identity begins.

Then he burst into his light, easy laugh and playfully ran his fingers through his hair. "Right, no fascinators for men."

Konstantinos lifted the corner of his mouth. Maybe it was a smile, maybe just an acknowledgement of David's new strength to come to terms with himself.

wrist – zápěstí

fascinator – fascinátor (ozdobná pokrývka hlavy)

13.3

David adjusted his **cuffs** for the last time and turned to Konstantinos, radiating energy.

"Alright then, where am I going now?"

David was used to pointless, crazy, yet immensely exciting missions – Konstantinos sometimes sent him to specific places just so he could watch from a distance how David's appearance fascinated people on the streets of London.

"Nowhere this time. We are going to Ascot."

David's smile froze on his lips. "Horses? You know I don't enjoy that. And what about David? Weren't you supposed to go together?"

"He has to sort out some family business at his boring aristocratic estate," Konstantinos waved his hand vaguely. "Come with me, it's already paid for."

–

David didn't say a word the whole journey. He looked out of the window of the limousine, looking for crowds of people in hats, police officers on horses and colourful **grandstands**. But the closer they were to their destination, the more deserted and greener the landscape became. No traffic jams, no noise.

When the car turned onto a long, narrow driveway lined with oak trees, David became unsure. The Bentley wheels crunched on the white **gravel**.

At the end of the road, there was no stadium, but a massive, **ivy**-covered **manor house**. No sign, no neon advertising. Just heavy oak doors and two **butlers** who looked like they had already served Queen Victoria.

cuffs – manžety

grandstands – tribuny

gravel – štěrk

ivy – břečťan

manor house – (venkovské) panské sídlo

butler – sluha, majordomus

13.4

David got out of the car. His satin trousers shone almost inappropriately in the absolute silence of the countryside. He stood there in his stiletto heels and silk blouse in the middle of the green land and felt like a colourful bird that had accidentally flown into an empty cathedral.

"So where are they?" David asked, trying to keep the panic out of his voice.

"Where are the grandstands? Where is the famous Ascot?"

Konstantinos got out, straightened his jacket, and without looking at David, gestured towards the hotel.

"This is Ascot, Davy."

They walked inside. David stopped in the middle of the hall and ran his eyes over the massive oak staircase and the portraits in heavy frames, from which old men in **wigs** looked down on him. Everything here smelled of old money and history.

"Look," he whispered and gripped the frill on the sleeve of his green blouse.

"Aren't we at his place by any chance? Didn't you say that David went to his family estate?"

He didn't like the idea of the other David, the serious dentist with a perfect **pedigree**, emerging from around the corner at any moment and finding him here in his "Vogue" outfit. He suddenly felt like an intruder who had **desecrated** a family temple.

"If we are at his home, it really isn't funny, Konstantinos. I'd rather be with those boring horses than meet his angry relatives."

Konstantinos looked at him with that blank expression that David hated.

Could the boy honestly believe I'd be so crazy as to introduce him to my partner's traditional English family?

wig – paruka

pedigree – rodokmen, původ (z dobré, urozené, bohaté rodiny)

desecrate – znesvětit

13.5

They walked a little further, where couples were sitting at small tables. No families with children. Just older men in perfect suits and their young companions – young women, but also boys who looked like David, only more tired and less bold.

At that moment, David realised where they were.

This wasn't the **racecourse**, nor an old family estate. This was a place where the "traditional family values" were put on ice for the weekend.

"Ah," David breathed out and relaxed his grip on his sleeve.

Konstantinos finally looked at him.

"Nobody asks any questions here, Davy."

When they were offered a welcome drink, David wanted to refuse it. He didn't drink alcohol. But Konstantinos gently nudged his elbow. "Take it," he said quietly. "Just use it to clink glasses when we meet people."

They walked through the house. French doors opened and David held his breath. Before them lay an endless, perfectly cut lawn that sloped down to a lazy river. The air smelled of wet grass and **reeds**. On the terrace there were several high tables with white tablecloths, and couples engaged in hushed conversations.

It all looked as innocent as afternoon tea at grandma's in the country.

They stood at one of the tables at the edge of the terrace. A waiter in a white **waistcoat** approached them. David expected Konstantinos to ask for his usual cognac, the heavy scent of which accompanied him almost every evening.

"Sparkling water for both of us. Lots of ice, no lemon," Konstantinos said.

David blinked at him in surprise.

"Water? Why?" he asked.

Konstantinos leaned slightly towards him: "Have a guess."

racecourse – dostihové závodiště

reed – rákos

waistcoat – vesta

13.6

At that moment, heat shot through David's body that had nothing to do with the spring sun. He remembered that evening in Soho, when he explained to Konstantinos why he didn't touch alcohol in the company of other men. He had told him: *'I want to keep a clear head. I like it and I want to remember it.'*

For Konstantinos, that ice water wasn't just a drink.

David was nervous. He had lived with Konstantinos for two whole months in the flat in Kensington like a **rare exhibit**. He slept in the guest room, had breakfast with him and his partner David, and went on missions around town. Until then, he had felt that he was just an intellectual toy for Konstantinos, someone he enjoyed spending time with, but Konstantinos's real life belonged to the other David.

Now, it was different. Konstantinos had just hinted that he was willing to cross the line. That he was willing to actually cheat on his David – the one he had built a home with for years.

For the hairdresser, it wasn't just an offer of sex. It was a promise.

When they got their glasses with ice, David slipped the straw between his lips and sipped slowly. He raised his eyes but kept his head down. At that moment, Konstantinos thought that he might go mad with desire.

Then David asked quietly, "Have you fallen in love with me?"

Konstantinos looked directly at him but didn't answer. He just shrugged.

"What does that mean? Is it like I can choose? So that I don't feel like a **slut**, while you still get your **dose** of sex?" he snapped at him irritably.

"And what about you?" Konstantinos asked a question.

"What about me?"

"Have you fallen in love with me?"

rare exhibit – vzácný exponát

slut – děvka, coura

dose – dávka

13.7

David stepped back from the table and, with a gesture of his hand, presented himself from head to toe. That outfit, that **stance**, those shoes. As if to say: *Do you see what I'm wearing? Do you see what I'm doing? How can you ask?*

But Konstantinos just stirred the ice in his glass with his straw.

"That means nothing."

"Nothing, right?" David asked, and for a second there was silence.

"Well, if nothing, then nothing."

And before his words had even faded, he reached for his waist and pulled off his satin trousers. Konstantinos didn't even have time to react.

David stepped out of that expensive satin puddle at his feet and, wearing only black boxers and that classy green blouse, he marched back into the building, **exaggerating** his *catwalk*, with his hips swaying to the rhythm of his anger.

Konstantinos stood there, stunned.

Everyone on the terrace turned to look at David – this was crossing the line even for this unconventional circle.

David looked around quickly, searching for a sign of the washrooms. He didn't want to **show off**, but he couldn't stand the mood swings anymore. One moment on top of the world, the next back in the mud. He needed to know where he stood. He needed some peace in his stupid, confusing life.

A young **maid** in a uniform with an **apron** immediately ran up to Konstantinos. She picked up the trousers from the ground and neatly folded them over her forearm.

Konstantinos thanked her with his eyes and said, "Take them to him."

And then he stood there, sipping his ice water.

stance – postoj, držení těla

to exaggerate – přehánět

to show off – předvádět se

maid – služebná

apron – zástěra

14 Confession

14.1

When the maid walked into the house, an older **steward** saw the trousers on her arm and just indifferently jerked his chin in the direction where the young man in boxers had walked off a moment ago. They were used to all sorts of things here, although this was probably the **highlight** of the season.

The maid looked at the sign above the door – Ladies' toilets. *Oh well*, she shrugged, went inside and knocked on the only closed cubicle.

"I have brought your trousers," she said in a muffled voice.

There was a rustle in the cubicle and the door opened slightly. David curiously peeked out. He knew that accent. It was definitely Czech.

"Martina? What are you doing here?" he breathed out in Czech.

The girl frowned, looked at him closely, and then her eyes lit up with recognition.

"David... didn't you say that you were a hairdresser?" she **teased** him. There was nothing judgmental about it. Back then on the bus during the long journey from Pilsen to London, they had got on well right from the start. They hadn't seen each other for – how long? Martina counted in her head. Eight years.

"It's a long story," David mumbled.

"I bet it is," she said and handed him the trousers.

David slipped into them right in front of her, without even closing the cubicle. Then he checked himself in the mirror.

"Where is he?"

Martina understood. "I don't know, but earlier he was still standing there."

steward – správce, vrchní číšník, provozní

highlight – vrchol, zlatý hřeb

to tease – dobírat si přátelsky, provokovat (dříve v příběhu význam s erotickým podtextem)

14.2

David straightened up the sleeves of his green blouse and the satin of his trousers. He took a deep breath to stop his hands from trembling. He knew that returning there would be harder than his initial catwalk. He had to walk past all those people who had seen him only in his boxers a minute ago and pretend that he was in control.

Martina leaned against the washbasin and **crossed her fingers** on both hands. "Good luck," she whispered.

David gave her a short, confident nod, even though he had butterflies in his stomach, and walked out. He walked through the luxurious interior as if he owned the whole house. He ignored the whispers and the raised eyebrows of the guests.

When he stepped out onto the terrace, the sun blinded him for a second.

Konstantinos was still standing there. Motionless, with the glass in his hand, as if he were part of the stone balustrade, looking at the river.

David walked up to him, stood by the table and took a sip of his water without a single word. The ice clinked against his teeth. He decided he wouldn't be the one to break the silence, even though he knew that he actually **owed** Konstantinos an answer. He liked wearing those outfits, jewellery and stiletto heels. Not just for Konstantinos, but also for himself. He had wanted to explain that he could only feel so free and safe with someone he loved. But it had all sounded wrong.

"This has to stop," Konstantinos said without taking his eyes off the flowing river.

David's ears were ringing. He interpreted it in his own way – yet another lesson on behaviour?

"Then don't bloody provoke me," he muttered through clenched teeth.

Konstantinos slowly turned to him. There was no anger in his face, just a strange, tired determination.

"That is exactly what I mean. We have to end this."

fingers crossed – symbol pro štěstí (u nás: držení palců)
to owe – dlužit

14.3

David's heart skipped a beat.

"Are you **breaking up with** me now or what?"

Konstantinos kept looking at him in silence. Then he shook his head.

"We are not **dating**, Davy."

That sentence hit David like a whip. He felt the colour draining from his face. Two months in his house, breakfasts together, these games... and now this.

"No," David breathed out so quietly that it almost got lost in the wind. It wasn't a disagreement but a confirmation of the brutal truth.

Konstantinos put the glass down on the white tablecloth. He took David firmly by the elbow and started leading him away from the terrace, deep into the building. David didn't resist. He walked like a puppet carved out of **marble**. He had no idea if Konstantinos was taking him back to Soho, but he didn't care anymore.

They walked through the house which smelled of old lavender soap and dust, until they reached a heavy door at the end of the corridor. Konstantinos opened it and let David inside. It was a luxurious room, with a **super king size bed** and a view of the garden.

They stood facing each other. David in his green blouse, which now looked almost black in the gloom of the room, and Konstantinos still as **impenetrable** as ever. Normally, in sneakers, they looked each other right in the eye, but in those high heels David now towered over Konstantinos. Konstantinos looked straight ahead, so David's beautifully shaped lips were exactly at his eye level. It was incredibly difficult to reject him at that moment and not **long for** him.

to break up with somebody – rozejít se s někým

to date somebody – chodit s někým

marble – mramor

super king size bed – velká manželská postel

impenetrable – neproniknutelný

long for somebody / something – toužit po někom / po něčem

14.4

"Yeah," Konstantinos said in a quiet, deep voice, as if they had never interrupted the conversation. "I think I really have fallen in love with you. But I have never understood what you want."

David opened his mouth to say something, but his throat was dry and he couldn't speak. He felt more **exposed** than when he had been on the terrace without his trousers a moment ago.

Konstantinos turned around and walked over to the small French window that led onto a stone balcony.

"**I could really do with a fag**," he mumbled and stopped for a second. He noticed David's face go pale again. He saw in those young eyes that lightning flash of anger because of another hint at David's identity.

"A cigarette," Konstantinos corrected his statement emphatically and stepped out onto the balcony.

David followed him.

"I didn't know you liked fags," he said and shot him a look. "Cigarettes, I mean."

Konstantinos leaned against the railing and exhaled.

"I quit when I saw the teeth of some of my patients. It's disgusting. But right now, I would kill for one."

"Shall I get some?" David offered immediately.

"They definitely don't sell anything here, Davy." Konstantinos waved his hand dismissively.

"Leave it to me." David winked at him and slipped out of the room.

exposed – odhalený, zranitelný

I could really do with (something) – vážně bych si dal, hrozně bych potřeboval

fag – slangově cigareta (UK) / vulgárně homosexuál, buzerant (US)

14.5

He was in luck. He bumped into Martina just one floor down, putting towels on a trolley. He quickly explained the situation to her.

"Go to the bar, try that skinny waiter, his name is Gary. He always has something on him. Mind you, it will cost an arm and a leg."

"Damn... I didn't think of that. I haven't got a single pound on me."

Martina sighed, reached into the deep pocket of her apron, and pulled out three ten-pound notes she had made in **tips** today.

"**Here you go.** And make sure you pay me back, alright?"

"You're a star, **I owe you one**," he blurted out and headed for the bar.

Gary was just polishing glasses and looked as if the whole world were a burden.

"I need a packet of cigarettes. Urgently," David said.

Gary didn't even look at him.

"I've only got a few for myself, mate. We don't sell tobacco."

David leaned against the bar and put on that look of his that usually made the female customers at Velvet Desire weak at the knees. A mixture of **pleading** and magnetism. He placed the three ten-pound notes on the wooden counter of the bar.

Gary stopped for a second. He looked at the money, then at David. He took an opened packet of Camels out of his pocket, expertly tapped out three for himself, and put the rest in front of David. Then, with a smooth movement, he swept the money off the bar and continued with polishing the glasses as if nothing had happened.

David grabbed the packet and disappeared.

tips – dýška, spropitné

here you go – tady máš, tady, tumáš

I owe you one – máš to u mě, jsem tvůj dlužník

pleading – žadonění (prosebný)

14.6

"Here. Mission **accomplished**." And he put the Camels in front of Konstantinos on the balcony table.

Konstantinos just looked at the packet. He didn't touch it. He just left it lying there in the cool shadow of the old house.

David just stared at him in disbelief.

"Are you **kidding me**? So you sent me there just for fun again? Are you not even going to **light** one?" He felt that helpless anger boiling inside him again.

Konstantinos looked up at him and shook his head.

"I can't."

"Well, smoking is surely allowed on the balcony, isn't it?" David said, looking around for an ashtray, to make the setting complete.

But it wasn't complete, as he realised when Konstantinos said, "I haven't got a **lighter**, Davy."

David slumped into the chair opposite him and put his head in his hands with a sigh.

"I am such a fool," he said, shaking his head in disbelief. This whole circus... and now this.

Then he felt Konstantinos stroking his hair. They were alright again. They were back on that **wavelength** where they couldn't do without each other, even though they had wanted to kill each other a moment ago.

accomplished – splněno

kidding someone – dělat si z někoho srandu

to light (a cigarette, a candle) – zapálit ohněm (cigaretu, svíčku)

lighter – zapalovač

wavelength – vlnová frekvence

14.7

"I would like to give you some money," Konstantinos said, and when David raised his head, he pressed a finger to his lips to stop him from protesting. "I don't mean it like that. I want you to be independent. This way you can be sure that you are with me... because you want to, and not because you need me."

David waited until Konstantinos moved his finger away, until he was ready for his reaction.

"So that I can be sure – or you?"

"Me," Konstantinos admitted with a sigh.

"Alright then," David said with resignation.

Sure, it was an **appealing prospect**, but at the same time, it was also essentially a test. And he didn't want to be tested; he just wanted Konstantinos to trust him. Money was great, but when absolutely everything was measured by it – **devotion**, love, loyalty – all the magic was suddenly gone.

Could I really sell my soul? David asked himself.

appealing prospect – láková vyhlídka / láková představa

devotion – oddanost

to sell the soul – zaprodat duši

15 Secrets

Pilsen, today

15.1

David had a headache that evening after his long shift.

The huge difference between the hustle and bustle of the salon and the peace and quiet of the holiday was striking. When he and Pavel were just resting on the beach, listening only to the sound of the sea, he was actually a bit bored. He had been looking forward to a week just for the two of them, but after a few days, he realised he missed the kids.

Pavel had **joint custody** of his eight-year-old twins – Katia and Pavlik – and David enjoyed **messing around** and playing with them. He hadn't really enjoyed his own childhood, so he was more like an older brother to Pavel's children. Pavel sometimes joked that he had three children instead of two – although he was younger than David.

Age didn't matter. It was the role that mattered. Pavel was the responsible dad while David was the crazy "cousin" – even though he was turning thirty-nine this year. A holiday without those lively kids just wasn't the same.

Alex threw his jacket over his shoulders. "Well, thanks for finishing up for me," he said, getting ready to leave.

"Linda would kill me otherwise. She is quite **fierce**," David laughed. He meant Alex's girlfriend – it was her birthday today, which was why Alex was rushing home and David was closing the shop alone. Linda was a former **flight attendant** with a sharp tongue, ready to have her way.

"Oh, and don't forget to post that photo. A customer who came all the way from London, we have to share that."

David just dismissed it with a wave of his hand.

hustle and bustle – shon a ruch

joint custody – střídavá péče

messing around – blbnout, dělat hlouposti

fierce – rázná (silná osobnost)

flight attendant – letuška

15.2

Alex walked across the square and then turned around one more time to look at the glowing shop window of the business he and David had opened thirteen years ago.

He smiled.

It was incredibly ironic. The whole of Pilsen knew them as an **inseparable duo**, as a symbol of a certain lifestyle. People saw the illusion they had so carefully created for them...

A memory from thirteen years ago popped into his mind. A completely different world.

Pilsen, 13 years ago

He saw the small room where David had stayed when he came back from London. At that time, Alex thought David was just on holiday, so when they got in touch on the very first day, Alex took David to stay at his grandmother's place in Litice. She rented out rooms in her villa to college students. And she always had a free room in the summer.

They were sitting on the floor, leaning their backs against the bed, talking about their years at vocational school and drinking the iconic rum and coke.

"I should watch my back around you, shouldn't I?" Alex joked, as David poured a bit more rum into his glass than before.

David looked at him, his eyes slightly glazed, but his hand didn't tremble.

"Hey, chill out," he chuckled. "Since you lost all that weight, you're just not the same."

David knew Alex wasn't into boys, and that he was just joking, because he wasn't the type to think that just because you're gay, you aren't **picky**.

"You like fat guys, don't you?" Alex burst out laughing and patted his belly.

David turned serious for a second.

"You were never fat, Sasha," he said quietly. "I just like it when I have someone to lean on."

inseparable duo – nerozlučná dvojka

picky – vybíravý

15.3

"So, you have your own salon now," David remarked a bit later.

Alex smirked.

"Well, a salon... I wouldn't exactly call it a salon."

David shrugged.

"At least you have something of your own."

Alex looked at him curiously. He had thought that David only needed a break for a few weeks from that big world that everyone in Pilsen only dreamed of.

"And when are you actually going back?"

David took a long sip and then answered, looking into his glass.

"Never, Sasha. I am not going back. I am staying here. And we will open a salon together."

Alex was taken aback for a second.

"Like, you and me? David, don't be silly; what could I offer you? You are a top stylist from London. You've had the best courses; you've cut God knows whose hair... I get that you want to relax after London, but this is hardly your level."

David kept quiet.

Alex turned as serious as he could after a few glasses of rum and coke.

"David, I've got two chairs in there and a sign on the door saying *Alex Hair*. What on earth would you be doing there?"

"I will hand you towels and massage the clients' heads," David said calmly.

"And we will change that sign. It has to be something glamorous. It's not just hair, you know."

Alex's eyes widened.

"What are you talking about? A top London stylist is going **to splash** about in a sink and wash hair in Pilsen? That's nonsense, nobody would **buy** that."

to splash – cákat

to buy something – přenesený význam: uvěřit (believe)

15.4

"Well, you're right, that wouldn't sell very well," David nodded, and for the first time in years, enthusiasm sparkled in his eyes. A new idea had just been born.

"How about this: *A top London stylist has come to Pilsen to take care of your hair. So you don't have to travel all the way to London, where your fabulous new hairstyle and highlights would get ruined by rain within five minutes anyway.*"

Alex burst out laughing so loudly he was afraid he'd wake up his grandmother downstairs. But at that moment, amidst the laughter and the alcohol, he understood.

It was spot on. It was the right story.

"And what about the name?"

"Well, tell me... what symbolises you the most?" David asked.

Alex thought about it. He wasn't a romantic; he was an ordinary bloke who just wanted to do his job well.

"Scissors," he shot back after a while.

David laughed. He really appreciated Alex's simple approach.

"Scissors. Right. And what symbolises me?" he asked.

"Fame? Luxury?" Alex offered grand words that suited David in his eyes.

David closed his eyes for a second.

"Secrets," he then said quietly.

"Scissors and secrets?" Alex frowned. "That doesn't sound very chic, David. It sounds more like a title for a bad detective story."

David didn't answer.

He picked up a pencil from the table and wrote in his curly **handwriting** on a piece of paper: *Scissors & Secrets*.

Alex stared at the paper for a long time.

highlights - melír

it was spot on – bylo to přesné, trefa do černého

handwriting – rukopis

15.5

"People won't even know how to pronounce it," he objected.

David looked at him with his typical, **cheeky** smile.

"We will open a glamorous salon where people who can't pronounce it have no right to come."

Alex felt it was absolutely insane, but at the same time, he knew it was spot on. That David had just created a world everyone would want to belong to, even with this **tongue-twisting** name.

Pilsen, now

Alex reached his car and drove home to meet Linda.

The whole of Pilsen and half the country considered "Scissors & Secrets" to be a famous duo of extravagant gay hairdressers – *Alex and Davy*, who had brought London chic from the big world to the West Bohemian metropolis. Customers felt like they were in a different universe. They believed in the name; they believed in that aura of exclusivity that David had built from two words written on a scrap of paper.

It was a perfect illusion.

And yet, Alex was just an ordinary **straight** bloke, Alexandr or Sasha Balík from Rokycany, who had simply learned to act theatrically from time to time, just to fit into the concept.

But what was it that even Alex didn't know?

That David, the star of the salon, hadn't passed his final exams at vocational school on his second attempt either; and over in London, he really had only been handing towels to master stylists and massaging their clients' heads.

And the fact that one 'gay' icon was actually straight, while the other, truly **flaming** one, was a man with a literally "cold" surname David Studený – that was the most intriguing part about the whole illusion.

cheeky – rošťácký, drzý

tongue-twister – jazykolam

straight – zde ve významu heterosexuální

flaming – žhnoucí (teplý – ve smyslu velmi nápadné orientace)

BONUS: BEYOND LIMITS

Confession in Ascot

England, 13 years ago

....

"I would like to give you some money," Konstantinos said. "I want you to be independent. This way you can be sure that you are with me... because you want to, and not because you need me."

"So that I can be sure – or you?"

"Me," Konstantinos admitted with a sigh.

"Alright then," David said with resignation.

Sure, it was an appealing prospect, but at the same time, it was also essentially a test. And he didn't want to be tested; he just wanted Konstantinos to trust him.

Money was great, but when absolutely everything was measured by it – devotion, love, loyalty – all the magic was suddenly gone.

Could I really sell my soul? David asked himself.

16 Misleading Appearances

16.1

The room was quiet except for the sound of splashing of water from the bathroom. Konstantinos stood by the window, holding a glass with just some almost melted ice.

When he heard a light knock, Konstantinos opened the door. David was standing in the doorway. His David. The one he had shared years of his life with; the clinic, and morning coffees. The one who was originally supposed to be here with him, if family matters hadn't called him elsewhere. He looked tired; his jacket had a few small **creases** from the seatbelt after a long drive.

He looked at Konstantinos, then his gaze slipped to the slightly ajar bathroom door. He could hear someone inside. In this hotel, at this hour – it needed no explanation. The scene was set before anyone even spoke.

Dentist David just stood there, hands in his pockets, with the expression of someone who had just finished the last page of a book that he had stopped enjoying a long time ago.

"Is it over?" David asked quietly.

"Yes," Konstantinos answered just as quietly.

Dentist David nodded, even though that "yes" could mean the end of the game with the lad in the bathroom, as well as the end of their ten years together in Kensington, the end of everything they had built. But imagining what had just happened here, he believed that after Konstantinos had enjoyed what he wanted, he was finally ready to finish with his hairdresser. And dentist David was ready to forgive him.

"If I see him having breakfast with us one more time, I swear I will smash your expensive Greek porcelain set over your head," David hissed.

misleading appearances – klamná zdání, klamný vzhled

creases – záhyby, faldy, zmačkání (na látce)

16.2

At that moment, the bathroom door opened and young David stepped out. His hair was wet and messy, and he was wearing his favourite long-sleeved T-shirt and jeans. He stopped in his tracks and his eyes **darted** between the two men. The silence in the room was so thick you could cut it with a knife.

"Hi," he breathed out and instinctively pulled at the collar of his T-shirt, as if it were choking him. It looked like a gesture of guilt. Yet, nothing more intimate had happened in this room than a strong man's hand stroking a young lad's soft hair. And two cigarettes smoked in harmony.

'You will smell like an ashtray,' Konstantinos had told him when David found some **matches** and they smoked on the balcony. That was why he had been scrubbing his teeth for several minutes in the bathroom and washing the smell of smoke out of his hair.

However, probably nobody else understood their game, which had only been about excitement and tension so far, and not about sex. Nobody believed it. Dentist David gave him one short, almost **pitying** look, then looked back at Konstantinos.

Young David didn't need an explanation. He put on his sneakers, checked the packet of Camels in his pocket and slipped out without a single word. He left them there to talk. When he shut the door behind him, he heard dentist David shout. He was surprised. The dentist was really angry.

to dart – těkat (v kontextu pohledu očima)

matches – sirky, zápalky

pitying – pohrdavě, shovívavě soucitný

16.3

He ran down the stairs to the bar. Gary was just throwing a towel over his shoulder. David put the Camels down in front of him.

"Do you want your money back?" Gary asked.

"No. Have you got a lighter?"

Gary chuckled, pulled a lighter out of his pocket and jerked his chin towards the back door. "I'm on a break."

They went out into a small yard with three **stinking bins** and a few empty crates. The evening air in that cold corner, where the sun didn't shine all day, was quite chilly, but it was refreshing. Gary took a cigarette from the packet, then handed it to David and clicked the lighter.

David **took a deep drag**. *Well then, I will smell like an ashtray.* And then, casually, he blew thick smoke out of his mouth and nose at the same time.

Gary raised his eyebrows in surprise.

"Misleading appearances, huh," he remarked and leaned against the wall. He had expected David to be a **sissy**. He didn't understand them, those boys who came here with older men, but **each to their own**. And the boys definitely got better money than he did here behind the bar, watching it all **firsthand**.

David laughed. "Yeah. I learned it at fifteen. When I believed it would make me a man."

"Right. We all wanted that," Gary nodded.

stinking bins – páchnoucí popelnice

to take a deep drag – zhluboka si šluknout, potáhnout si z cigarety

sissy – padavka, bábovka, zženštilý kluk

each to their own – svůj k svému (*pozn. od Katky: v české verzi najdeš další variantu překladu, víc expresivní*)

firsthand – z první ruky, na vlastní oči

16.4

David took a long, slow pull from his cigarette.

His answer was clear to Garry – at fifteen, everyone wants to be an adult. Gary couldn't have known that for David, "being a man" meant building a wall of **tough-guy** gestures around himself so that nobody would constantly call him a queer.

-

Afterwards, David walked along the river for some time, and when he thought he had probably given the two dentists enough time, he returned to the room.

He stood in front of the door for a moment and listened. No voices, no clinking of ice. When he finally turned the door handle and walked in, the room was unnaturally quiet.

He expected to see Konstantinos sitting in an armchair, or a packed bag and the angry dentist David. Instead, there was a dead silence. Only the satin trousers and the green blouse, which now looked like a dry leaf, were lying on the bed.

David felt a knot in his stomach.

He quickly ran down to the reception.

"Those two gentlemen from room 205... did they check into a different room?" David blurted out, nervously drumming his fingers on the marble counter.

The receptionist looked at him with that professional, blank smile.

"No, sir. The gentleman from that room left a moment ago," she said.

tough-guy – drsňák

17 Trapped

17.1

"Left?" he repeated in disbelief.

The receptionist **took pity on** him. Firstly, she knew these situations, and secondly, David was simply charming and inspired protective feelings at first sight. Unless he inspired disgust that ended in a beating, of course.

"I know them, both dentists. And they both left." She stopped being formal and stopped calling him 'sir'.

David looked towards the window. It was already getting dark outside.

"Is there a bus from here? Or a train?"

The three ten-pound notes Konstantinos had handed him, to give back to Martina, were burning a hole in his pocket. David now realised that although he owed the money to Martina, it was literally the only cash he had. Martina had already finished her shift by now and was gone.

"The room is paid for until Tuesday. Mr Konstantinos mentioned that he would come back for you."

"He paid for me to stay here until Tuesday?" David breathed out.

"No, the room was booked from Saturday to Tuesday."

David looked at her with a question in his eyes: *What am I going to do?*

The receptionist was no romantic; what she saw here daily was **life in the raw**.

She said, "You have full service **at your disposal**. The restaurant, the spa, the garden. If I were you, I would simply enjoy myself."

to take pity on someone – nad někým se slitovat

life in the raw – syrový život, bez příkras, drsná realita

at your disposal – plně k dispozici

17.2

She knew about his dramatic little show without trousers on the terrace, and she seemed to be on his side. She didn't look down on the boys who discreetly earned money by providing their company. She looked down on those perverted men who couldn't find a proper partner and needed to hide away in this place.

"It's a pity I only drink water with ice," he said a bit playfully, to lighten the situation for himself.

The receptionist straightened up as some guests walked past and then leaned over the counter towards David again.

"If you think they charge any less for ice water here than for champagne..." she winked at him.

David felt a bit relieved after this friendly chat.

The two dentists needed to talk things out, they couldn't do it here, that was why they left; and whatever happened, Konstantinos would come back for him. And even if he didn't, David had once managed the bus journey from Pilsen to London, so he would surely find a way out of here too.

He slowly went back upstairs. They had left him here like a forgotten parcel. He walked into the room, sat on the bed and looked at that green blouse. Three days of silence. Three days of waiting to see if the "big boss" would even come for him, or if this was just an elegant way of getting rid of him **for good**.

-

At noon on Tuesday, David had to leave the room. The room that had been his for three days together with it the 'full service'. He went downstairs, in a plain T-shirt and jeans, with his light bag over his shoulder. He went outside and sat on a stone bench by the driveway.

The sun was shining, but the air was chilly. He decided he would sit there and wait until the familiar Bentley appeared.

for good – nadobro, navždy

17.3

David knew it might take a long time if Konstantinos only set off after finishing his **surgery hours**. But then he realised Konstantinos probably had a day off, since he had the room booked until today.

He waited an hour. Two. Three.

Around three in the afternoon, **nature called**. He stood up, grabbed his bag and returned to the hotel lobby. He headed for the toilets by the reception. They were the same ones where he had hidden without his trousers a few days ago.

Inside, he put his bag on the floor and opened it. He looked at those satin trousers and the green silk blouse. It felt like his **battle uniform**. In a T-shirt and jeans, he felt too vulnerable for what was going to come.

Five minutes later, he stepped out of the cubicle. The satin flowed around his legs; the blouse shone under the fluorescent lights. He put on his stiletto heels and straightened up.

A girl was standing by the mirror. She might have been around twenty and looked like she was bored to tears, staying here with some dull old geezer. She was just putting on a bright pink lipstick, but she was looking at David in the mirror. She couldn't understand the injustice of why some boys looked so gorgeous, without make-up, just like that, while she had to constantly fix her hair and makeup.

Their eyes met in the mirror. "Can I borrow that?"

The girl paused, the lipstick halfway to her lip. She looked at him, at his figure, at those stilettos, and then back at the lipstick.

"Women don't share lipsticks," she said, confused.

David flashed that disarming smile of his, tilted his head slightly and put on his puppy-dog eyes.

surgery hours – ordinální hodiny

nature called – příroda zavolala (potřeboval si odskočit)

battle uniform – bitevní uniforma, brnění

17.4

"But I am a man," and he let the echo of that absurd sentence fade away in the tiled ladies' washroom.

The girl looked at him for a moment and then amusement lit up in her eyes. In her world full of boring old men, David was a **breath of fresh air**.

"Well, that's different then," she said and laughed. She handed him the lipstick.

David stared at the pink stick for a moment. He had never worn make-up before. He had no idea how to do it.

"Hang on." She took the lipstick from his hand, rubbed a bit of colour onto her fingertip and stepped closer to him. "Like this." She started gently blending the colour onto his lips. "Just a little touch. So you don't look like a slut."

David pressed his lips together, exactly as he had seen women do in adverts. The colour was rich and matched the green blouse. The girl looked at him with a critical eye, still smiling. Then another idea flashed in her eyes. "Do you want to know if he's really interested?"

David was taken aback. He didn't know what to say. He wasn't here with a client, but with someone he considered a 'boyfriend'. Even though things had their ups and downs between them.

"Hmm," he just said.

The girl reached out, touched his lower lip with her thumb and, with one quick movement, **smear**d the lipstick down, over the edge of his lip, a bit onto his chin. It was a pink **smudge** that looked like an accident after a passionate kiss, or simply just a mistake.

"Are you crazy?" David snapped and instinctively raised his hand to fix it. The girl stopped his hand.

"Leave it. Look, if he wants to fix it for you... if he touches you to wipe it off... you've got him. Really. It's a good test. You'll see."

a breath of fresh air – závan čerstvého vzduchu, vítaná změna

to smear – rozmazat

smudge – šmouha

17.5

David looked at himself in the mirror. The pink smudge looked ridiculous, but she was absolutely serious about it. She let go of his hand. David straightened his blouse, grabbed his bag, gave a nod that said 'thanks' and walked out without a single word.

He sat down on the bench again. Upright this time, his satin trousers shining in the sun, stiletto heels on his feet and that pink smear on his face. He looked absurd and gorgeous at the same time.

It wasn't even ten minutes before the Bentley appeared in the driveway. Konstantinos. The car stopped a few metres from him. Konstantinos stayed sitting inside, the engine running. He flashed his headlights twice. It was an arrogant call: *Come here, get in.*

But David remained sitting. Motionless, head held high, as if he couldn't see the headlights at all. *Forget it. I'm not a call boy*, he thought to himself.

Konstantinos sighed. He turned off the engine. The door opened and he got out. He looked tired, but he kept a poker face. He walked over to the bench and stopped right in front of David.

"We are going home," Konstantinos said.

And before the sentence could even fade away, his hand moved and his thumb softly touched David's chin, wiping away the pink smudge with the pad of his finger. It was a gesture between two close people who belong together so naturally that they don't even need words. It was an intimacy hidden in a single movement of the hand.

David felt the warm touch on his skin, while the words of the girl from the ladies' washroom echoed in his head: *"If he touches you to wipe it off... you've got him"*.

Konstantinos looked him in the eyes for a second, with his hand near David's face for a moment longer, before he realised what he had just done. That with this single reflex, he had just denied all those cold words about them "not dating".

call boy – společník (za peníze) / call girl

18 South Bank

18.1

When they drove into London, David sat up straight in his seat. He watched the familiar streets, but the car didn't turn towards Kensington Gardens. Instead, the Bentley headed towards the river, across the bridge to the South Bank.

"Where are we going?" David blurted out, and genuine panic sounded in his voice.

"Home," Konstantinos said briefly. He didn't look at him, his hands firmly on the steering wheel.

David's throat tightened at the thought that he would **dump** him now at that awful block of flats in Peckham, with its dirty stairs and the smell of cheap Indian food, from where he had picked him up two months ago, beaten up after the mugging.

Instead, they stopped in front of a glass monster made of concrete and steel. No oak doors, no butlers. But not his old, noisy house either. Just a quiet lift that took them high above the Thames. David followed him as if in a dream. He didn't dare ask a single question.

Walking into that flat was a shock. The first room was narrow and long. On the left by the window, there was a **shiny** kitchenette where nobody had probably ever cooked. On the right stood a round dining table with no chairs. In the middle of the table sat a large vase with flowers – they looked perfect. They walked into the next room. It was spacious, **generous** and pleasant. It was dominated by a huge bed with a dark frame. Next to it stood a massive wardrobe.

to dump – vyklopit, vyhodit, vykopnout (z auta) / odkopnout, dát kopačky

generous – velkorysý (prostor, může být i člověk)

18.2

And then there was the bathroom. David looked in disbelief. It was like a glass box between the bedroom and the balcony. Both of its walls were transparent, and it was the only way to get to the balcony for some fresh air. One had to walk through the shower to get to the balcony. It was modern, extra luxurious, but in its total nakedness, it felt perverse.

Folded bedding that smelled brand new lay on the bed. Konstantinos didn't say anything, he just watched David's reaction.

David opened the wardrobe. His things were there. Clothes, shoes. Jewellery, watches, all the gifts. Neatly arranged, as if they had been waiting for him there all along.

"This is for you," Konstantinos said and handed him an envelope that David hadn't noticed before. He was almost afraid to look inside, because Konstantinos had talked about that money earlier. He wasn't wrong. There were documents for a bank account in his name and a **tenancy contract** for this small, luxurious flat in Battersea.

"What is this?" David breathed out.

"Your freedom," Konstantinos said and finally looked at him. "There is enough money for you to live on without a job for a year. Or to open your own salon. You are no longer my guest, Davy. You are no longer dependent on whether David allows you to have breakfast in our kitchen."

David stared at the papers and felt his hands trembling.

"Why?"

"Because only now will I know what you truly feel for me," Konstantinos said with both hope and fear in his voice.

No. Now I know what you truly feel for me, David thought. I have to prove something again.

tenancy contract – nájemní smlouva

18.3

But exactly like every time their relationship **hit a freezing point**, something happened that lifted them back to the heavens.

"But you have to find the key. Otherwise, you can't get out. Or you can't get back in," Konstantinos said, and David asked this time: "Are we playing again?"

"You know you don't have to. You have a **safe word** to stop it whenever you want. Say your safe word and the game ends. You have never used it, I don't know why."

"Why? Because it might be a game to you, but I mean it. Once I say my safe word, it's not going to be the end of the game. It's going to be the end of everything. Remember that."

And so they kept playing.

David didn't look for his key, he had no desire to go out, he didn't need anything, he had enough food in the kitchenette, so it was enough for him just to step out onto the balcony and look down at the world from above for a while.

It wasn't until about the third day that he wanted to add some water to those flowers in the big vase, and when he picked it up, something clinked inside. He pulled the flowers out and discovered they were **artificial**, truly perfect imitations. The vase was dry and his key was at the bottom.

-

Nearly a month in the glass flat on the South Bank passed like a dream. David lived there like a rare exhibit – everything around him was luxurious and untouchable. Konstantinos visited him occasionally when he finished at the surgery, sometimes even in the morning or at lunchtime; still torn between his old life in Kensington and this new experiment.

hit a freezing point – klesnout na bod mrazu

safe word – bezpečné slovo, heslo (termín známý z BDSM her – slovo, které okamžitě zastaví veškerou akci)

artificial – umělý

18.4

They were still getting to know each other.

Even though they had their privacy, they didn't rush to physical satisfaction. Time passed in exciting desire and **anticipation**. David laughed, calling their relationship "sex after marriage". And that little scar on his collarbone was like an engagement ring. Konstantinos kept an eye on it. He stroked it with his finger, and asked in a quiet, almost caring voice: "Does it hurt?"

Sometimes he unexpectedly dug the edge of his ring into the skin again to reopen the healing **wound** and remind him that their bond remained. The accidental scratch had become a symbol of their bond. David felt the scar under his T-shirt with every movement. It was a **seal** on his body that he could take with him, even if he decided to leave everything else behind in that glass flat.

"We are going to Greece. For three weeks," Konstantinos said one evening at that round table with no chairs.

David knew what that meant. It was the planned holiday. The tradition with which Konstantinos and his David celebrated their anniversary.

"There will be enough time to finally sort it out. I will tell him it's over, but I want him to have time to recover. Then I will be only with you. I promise."

David looked at him through the glass wall of the bathroom.

"If you leave for Greece with him now, Konstantinos, you might not find me here when you come back."

Konstantinos just smiled faintly, as if it were just another of David's dramatic scenes. *I will. Where would you go?* he thought to himself.

anticipation – očekávání

wound – rána po zranění

seal – pečeť

19 Cold Kiss

19.1

The suitcases stood in the hall, where the taxi driver had put them, and the flat on Olympus felt stuffy after three weeks without **airing**. Konstantinos walked across the room straight to the balcony door and opened it. The air quickly and noticeably freshened up.

Dentist David reached into the letterbox, and then, with a strange, quiet look in his eyes, handed Konstantinos one small object. It was a key.

Konstantinos recognised it immediately. It was from that modern flat with the glass bathroom.

Konstantinos didn't say a word. He left the suitcases and David behind, ran down the stairs and jumped into the first cab. He hadn't broken up with his partner, and he had a guilty conscience. But young David couldn't have known that, could he?

All the way to the South Bank, he kept nervously dialling young David's number. The phone just kept ringing. Long, monotonous tones that nobody answered. *He just wants to teach me a lesson*; Konstantinos reassured himself in his mind. *He wants me to worry*.

He burst into the flat. It was tidy. Absolutely, perfectly tidy. No clothes thrown around, no shoes at the door. The wardrobe was empty.

He dialled the number again. The ringing was coming from the kitchenette. The phone was lying on a shelf, plugged into the charger. Konstantinos had bought him this phone after they returned from Ascot. David had left it here... plugged into the charger so it would keep ringing, so it would stay online, so Konstantinos wouldn't know when he had left if he decided to contact David from his holiday.

His **mind was racing**; he didn't know what to think.

airing – větrání

mind racing – hlava šrotuje, na plné obrátky, jako o závod

19.2

Konstantinos grabbed the phone and at the moment a plastic card, which had been lying underneath it, fell at his feet. He immediately recognised the bank card, but right now he just needed to find David.

He **frantically** started searching through the phone; fortunately, it wasn't locked. *Maybe it was on purpose – did he leave a hint for me?*

Call history. Deleted. Messages. None. Photos. Not a single one. No hint at all. He felt like a fool.

As if those three crazy, yet wonderful months had never existed. As if David had never been part of his life.

His heart was pounding in his throat. The silence wasn't just empty; it was terrifying. The worst images flashed through his mind – he remembered David's scars on his wrists, and the fragility he tried to hide.

What if he couldn't cope? What if he couldn't handle the pressure?

With trembling fingers, he opened YouTube. He needed to see that video "6 hours of saying sorry", which David had streamed from the balcony in Kensington. Now it could mean the only connection, the only memory, the only thing left. He found it. But something was wrong. The video ended after three minutes. *Where are the six hours?* Konstantinos played it again, confused, thinking it was a connection error. But no, it really showed a total time of 3:02.

"Damn it, David," Konstantinos swore and wanted to write a comment under the video for him. He wanted to scream, to beg, to ask where he was. But he wasn't logged in, he couldn't remember his passwords, and in this digital world he suddenly felt completely lost. Then he clicked open the video description. There was a text there that hadn't been there before. Four lines in Czech and the last two words in capital letters, with an expressive emoji at the end. He quickly copied the text and put it into a translator.

frantically – zběsile, horečně, zoufale rychle
(not) to cope – něco (ne)zvládnout, ustát

19.3

I walked there for six hours. I was cold. My feet hurt. And yet I knew the whole time that the blouse WAS GREEN 👉

Konstantinos's breath caught in his throat. It was a clear **settling of scores**. He understood a second after he read it. Six hours in the cold, with his feet hurting in stiletto heels, just to make him happy. To prove to him that he was willing to put up with discomfort, for love. A pure, sincere, and completely voluntary sacrifice. Now he finally knew. It was a confession. And yet Konstantinos had left him alone in this flat and gone away for three weeks with someone else. He couldn't give him the one thing David really wanted from him – to be his absolute favourite.

That middle finger at the end wasn't a rude gesture. It was the cry of someone who had given everything and got nothing. One terrifying thing still awaited Konstantinos: finding out what was left in the account he had opened for David only a month ago. Actually, he **dreaded** finding out. He hoped David hadn't refused the money and would use it somewhere else for a fresh start. But he wasn't sure at all now. Konstantinos felt that by this he would buy his way out of responsibility and clear his conscience.

Because if that sum was lying there untouched, it would be the **ultimate slap** in the face. It would mean that David hadn't taken anything from him at all. That he had thrown all that wealth and security back in his face and preferred to walk away into the unknown empty-handed rather than....

His hand holding the phone dropped. His eyes rested on that large vase on the table. Nothing was left of David in any drawer, but what if –!

settling of scores – vyřizování účtů, zúčtování

to dread – děsit se

ultimate slap in the face – poslední, největší facka

19.4

Despair drove him to a final step. He remembered the game they had played here on the first day – David had had to find his key, which was in that vase. He pulled the dead, colourful flowers out of it and turned the vase upside down. Nothing. He looked inside. It was empty. As he was going to put the flowers back inside, he noticed that a rolled-up strip of paper was hanging from one of the **stems**.

Konstantinos unfolded it with trembling fingers. It was David's "safe code", which he could use to end the game at any time.

The code he had never used.

In his mind, Konstantinos could hear their conversation...

He laughed when David said: "My safe word will be *pusinka*."

"What's that? It sounds like *pussy*."

"It means a kiss. Or lips," David explained.

Konstantinos slowly ran his finger over his bottom lip and said: "*Your pussy is hot*."

David shook his head. "No. The safe code will be: *Your pussy is cold*. My surname is Studený, and that's not *hot*, but *cold*."

And then David's voice echoed in his head one more time. He had told him the last time:

"This isn't just a game for me, Konstantinos. I mean it. Once I use the safe code, it's over. Definitely over."

despair – zoufalství

stems – stonky

pussy – původně kočička (pussycat), ale dnes extrémně vulgární označení pro ženské přirození

AMENDMENTS



GEOGRAPHICAL GLOSSARY

Ascot – Nejslavnější a nejprestižnější koňské dostihy v Británii, známé pro extrémně přísný dress code.

Battersea – moderní čtvrť na jižním břehu řeky (South Bank).

Peckham – čtvrť spojovaná s vysokou kriminalitou, chudobou a gangy.

Curzon Street – Ulice v luxusní čtvrti Mayfair.

Heathrow – Nejznámější a největší londýnské letiště.

Hounslow – Okrajová část Londýna, která se nachází poblíž letiště Heathrow.

Kensington / Kensington Gardens – Prestižní a bohatá londýnská čtvrť.

Old Compton Street – Ulice v srdci Soho, která je historicky centrem londýnské gay komunity.

Savile Row – Ulice v Londýně proslulá nejluxusnějšími, extrémně drahými pánskými obleky na míru.

Soho – Živá čtvrť v centru Londýna známá svým nočním životem a kadeřnickými salony.

South Bank – Jižní břeh řeky Temže.

Thames (Temže) – Hlavní řeka protékající Londýnem.

Pilsen – Plzeň



SPECIAL TERMS

queer (9.3)

Výraz pro neheterosexuální orientaci. Původně znamenalo zkrátka *divný, zvláštní* (bez jakéhokoli sexuálního podtextu). Dnes se používá jako neutrální zastřešující pojem pro kohokoliv, kdo *není heterosexuální nebo cisgender*.

straight (15.5)

V reálné angličtině jde o zdaleka nejběžnější, hovorový způsob, jak říct, že je někdo *heterosexuální*.

to be into boys (9.2,15.2)

Běžná hovorová fráze vyjadřující sexuální preferenci – *být na kluky*.

gay (1.2, 4.1, 13.2)

Přídavné jméno (nikoli podstatné). Mělo by se používat k popisu, tedy *a gay man, gay people, gay community, gay hairdressers nebo gay club*. Používat ho jako podstatné jméno ("He is a gay" nebo "the gays") zní dnes rodilým mluvčím velmi nepatřičně, zastarale a často až urážlivě.

faggot, fag (1.3, 14.4)

V americké angličtině (a dnes už celosvětově vlivem internetu) jde o jednu z nejhrubších a nejagresivnějších nadávek pro homosexuála vůbec – *buzerant*.

V Británii se slovo *fag* naprosto běžně a bez urážky používá jako slangový výraz pro cigaretu (např. "am going for a fag"). Navíc, v britských hospodách si běžně můžete objednat „faggots and peas“ (tradiční masové kuličky z vepřových vnitřností s bylinkami a strouhankou, typicky podávané s hráškem a omáčkou), což americké turisty obvykle naprosto šokuje.

flaming (15.5)

Velmi specifický slangový výraz pro gaye, který svou orientaci dává nápadně najevo, často až stereotypně zženštilým chováním.

TRICKY WORDS

conscience / consciousness

- **conscience** (guilty / clear – čisté / špatné svědomí): 5.1, 8.2, 19.1, 19.3
- **consciousness** (vědomí)
- **conscious** (vědomý): 3.1, 9.2
- **consciously** (vědomě): 3.3
- **subconsciously** (podvědomě): 6.1
- **unconsciously** (nevědomky): 9.1
- **self-conscious** (nesvůj): 9.1

- POZOR: sebevědomý (příd.jméno): confident: 1.3, 8.3, 14.2

light

a) Podstatné jméno (Noun) – světlo

- 1.1 – „...reflected the dim light...“ (odrážela tlumené světlo)
- 11.1 – „...bus lights reflected on the pavement.“ (světla autobusů, které se odrážely v chodníku)
- 11.7 – „...turned off the light.“ (zhasnul světlo)

b) Sloveso (Verb) – rozsvítit (se), rozzářit (se), zapálit (minulý čas *lit up*)

- 1.2 – „...the salon was fully lit...“ (salon byl plně osvětlený)
- 3.1, 4.1, 8.1, 14.1, 17.4 – rozsvítit se nebo rozzářit (např. o senzoru, displeji telefonu, nebo když se někomu rozzáří oči poznáním či pobavením)
- 14.6 – „...not even going to light one?“ (ani si jednu nezapálíš?)

c) Přídavné jméno (Adjective) a příslovce (Adverb) – lehký, lehce, světlý

- 4.2 – „...a light grey tracksuit...“ (světle šedá teplákovka)
- 6.3 – „...a light meal...“ (lehké jídlo)
- 13.2 – „...his light, easy laugh...“ (jeho lehký, uvolněný smích)
- 16.1 – „...a light knock...“ (lehké zaklepání)
- 17.2 – „...with his light bag over his shoulder.“ (s lehkou taškou přes rameno)

d) Odvozená a podobná slova („lehce / mírně“)

V češtině stejný překlad „lehký/lehce“, v angličtině se rozlišuje

Lightly (příslovce) – jemně, zlehka, odlehčeně (bez použití síly či tlaku)

- 11.1 – „...touched Konstantinos's elbow lightly...“ (lehce / jemně se dotkl Konstantinova lokte)
- 11.3 – „...said lightly, almost as a joke.“ (řekl lehce / odlehčeně, napůl v žertu)

Slightly (příslovce) – mírně, nepatrně, trochu (o kousek)

- 4.3 – „...kept his head slightly bowed...“ (měl hlavu mírně skloněnou)
- 6.3 – „...canines leaned slightly forward...“ (špičáky nakloněné mírně dopředu)
- 12.8 – „...shoulders slightly hunched...“ (ramena mírně shrbená)
- 14.1 – „...the door opened slightly.“ (dveře se mírně pootevřely)
- 17.3 – „...tilted his head slightly...“ (mírně naklonil hlavu)

Slight (přídavné jméno) – mírný, nepatrný, drobný

- 3.1 – „...with a slight accent...“ (s mírným přízvukem)
- 6.3 – „...the slight overbite...“ (mírný předkus)
- 12.6 – „...with a slight hint of a smile...“ (s mírným / nepatrným náznakem úsměvu)

even

a) Částice (Particle) – zdůrazňovací

Překládáme nejčastěji jako *dokonce*, *dokonce i* a v záporu *ani*, *aniž*, *vůbec*

- 1.2 – "even an ethnic Greek" (dokonce i)
- 1.6 – "even after thirteen years" (dokonce i po...) / "I didn't even know..." (ani jsem nevěděl)
- 3.3 – "he didn't even notice" (ani si nevšiml)
- 4.3 – "Even in the clothes most plain..." (dokonce i v...) / "Even serious gentlemen..." (dokonce i)
- 4.5 – "and even led him out to this bar" (a dokonce ho odvedl)
- 4.7 – "without even handing me..." (aniž by mi vůbec dal)
- 4.9 – "A brat, even." (dokonce i spratek)
- 6.3 – "Even the famous asymmetry..." (dokonce i)
- 7.2 – "I didn't even have time..." (ani jsem neměl čas)
- 8.1 – "Even with those bruises..." (dokonce i) / "without even looking..." (aniž by se na něj vůbec podíval)
- 9.3 – "He hadn't even finished..." (ani nedokončil)
- 9.4 – "without even knowing how" (aniž by vůbec věděl jak)
- 11.4 – "I can't even get dressed?" (to se nesmím ani obléknout?) / "even every quiver..." (dokonce i každé zachvění)
- 12.1 – "preferred not even to look up." (raději ani nezvedl zrak)
- 13.7 – "didn't even have time" (neměl ani čas) / "even for this unconventional circle" (dokonce i pro...)
- 14.1 – "without even closing the cubicle" (aniž by vůbec zavřel)
- 14.5 – "didn't even look at him" (ani se na něj nepodíval)

- 14.6 – "not even going to light one?" (ani si ji nezapálíš?)
- 15.5 – "People won't even know" (lidi ani nebudou vědět) / "even with this tongue-twisting name" (dokonce i s tímto...) / "even Alex didn't know" (dokonce ani Alex nevěděl)
- 16.1 – "before anyone even spoke" (než vůbec někdo promluvil)
- 17.2 – "would even come for him" (jestli pro něj vůbec přijede)
- 17.5 – "It wasn't even ten minutes" (nebylo to ani 10 minut) / "don't even need words" (nepotřebují ani slova)

b) Příslowce (Adverb) – stupňování

Před 2. stupněm přídavného jména nebo příslovce k jeho dalšímu zesílení. Do češtiny ho překládáme slovem *ještě*.

- 12.1 – "This time even more slowly." (Tentokrát ještě pomaleji.)

c) Součást spojky (Conjunction) – přípustková

Spojka podřadná – překládáme jako *i když, i kdyby, přestože*

- 1.2 – "even though they had no customers..." (i když neměly žádné zákazníky)
- 4.9 – "Even though it was the truth..." (přestože to byla pravda)
- 5.3 – "even if he immediately hailed..." / a 3x "Even though he knew/understood..." (i kdyby si hned zavolal, ani kdyby si hned zavolal / i když věděl, přestože věděl)
- 12.1 – "even though what he himself had experienced..."
- 12.2 – "Even though dentist David was confused..."
- 12.6 – "Even though you were cold / your feet hurt..."
- 14.2 – "even though he had butterflies..."
- 14.6 – "even though they had wanted..."
- 16.1 – "even though that 'yes' could mean..."
- 17.1 – "even if he didn't..."
- 18.4 – "Even though they had their privacy..." / "even if he decided to leave..."

d) Další významy

V textu se neobjevují tyto významy:

- we are even – jsme si rovni
- an even surface – rovný, hladký povrch
- even numbers – sudá čísla (odd numbers – lichá čísla)
- at an even pace – rovnoměrným tempem.

VOCABULARY LIST

Na tomto seznamu najdeš seznam slov, obratů a frází z celého příběhu – u každého hesla je uvedeno, kde přesně se v příběhu nachází – díky tomu můžeš pochopit použití v různých kontextech. Hesla jsou seřazená podle pořadí, v jakém se v textu vyskytují.

gloom: 1.1, 14.3

scents: 1.1, 1.5

hint (a hint, hinted, hinting): 1.1, 4.4, 4.5, 4.8, 5.4, 7.2, 12.6, 13.6, 14.4, 19.2

VAT: 1.1

to swear: 1.1, 12.8, 19.2

must have earned: 1.2

to get rid of: 1.2, 17.2

to catch up on: 1.2

backlog: 1.2

hinges: 1.2

in his fifties: 1.3, 4.7

soaked: 1.3, 2.2, 10.1, 10.2, 10.3

confident: 1.3, 8.3., 14.2

clueless: 1.3

to shrug: 1.3, 1.6, 4.4, 4.7, 9.2, 10.1, 11.2, 11.5, 12.8, 13.6, 14.1, 15.3

to sneak in under some pretext: 1.3

beat ... black and blue: 1.3, 6.2, 7.1, 9.1

faggots (fags): 1.3

to kill two birds with one stone: 1.4

mess / messy: 1.4, 5.2, 7.3, 16.2

to wonder (no wonder): 1.4, 2.3, 4.9

renowned: 1.4

screen: 1.4, 4.1, 5.3, 12.8

basin (washbasin): 1.4, 2.1, 14.2

to frown (a frown): 1.4, 1.5, 8.4, 14.1, 15.4

dagger: 1.5

fresh as a daisy: 1.5

anyway: 1.5, 4.8, 12.8, 15.3

actually: 1.6, 3.1, 4.7, 5.1, 10.2, 12.4, 12.5, 12.7, 14.2, 15.1, 15.3, 15.5, 16.1, 19.3

for a split second: 1.6, 2.1, 7.1, 7.3 / jiný význam split: 6.1, 6.2, 7.1, 9.1

revolving door: 1.6, 4.7

pinboard: 1.6

out of habit: 1.7, 2.3

collarbone: 1.7, 8.3, 18.4

to vanish: 1.7, 5.2, 11.4

to fade (away): 1.7, 2.3, 13.7, 17.4, 17.5

underground: 1.7

to charm (a charm, charming): 2.1, 4.3, 4.6, 12.2, 17.1

ridiculous: 2.1, 17.5

necessary evil: 2.1

obviously: 2.1, 12.6, 13.1

to defuse a bomb: 2.1

punch: 2.2, 7.2, 7.3, 9.2

fake: 2.1, 2.2, 4.7, 9.3

to be / to look taken aback: 2.2, 3.1, 4.4, 15.3, 17.4

lad: 2.2, 3.1, 4.1, 4.3, 4.6, 5.1, 5.2, 8.3, 16.1

stray dog: 2.2

shelter: 2.2

fabric: 2.3, 10.1

walk somebody: 2.3, 4.4, 8.2, 8.4

to be conscious, consciously: 3.1, 3.3, 9.2

barely: 3.1, 4.2, 4.8, 5.4, 8.2

colossus: 3.1

grip (to grip): 3.1, 13.4, 13.5

sneakers: 3.2, 4.3, 9.2, 10.2, 14.3, 16.2

to sip (sipping, sipped, a sip): 2.3, 3.3, 13.6, 13.7, 14.2, 15.3

to let the cat out of the bag: 3.3, 6.2

nickname: 3.3

affection (affectionate): 3.3, 8.4

to toss (tossing, tossed): 3.3, 4.4, 9.1, 12.8

spring chicken: 3.3, 4.7

calm before the storm: 3.3

stuffy: 4.1, 19.1.

vultures: 4.1, 4.2, 4.3.

exhaust fumes: 4.1.

burden: 4.1, 9.3, 14.5.

trembling / tremble: 4.1, 7.2, 14.2, 15.2, 18.2, 19.2, 19.4

to text (text message, texting, texted): 4.1, 4.2, 4.6, 5.2, 5.4, 6.1.

my date: 4.2.

heart skips a beat (missed a beat): 4.2, 5.2, 7.1, 14.3.

tracksuit: 4.2.

to get a breath of fresh air: 4.2, 17.4

silk: 4.2, 13.1, 13.4, 17.3

out of the question: 4.2.

eventually: 4.2.
 to promise somebody the moon: 4.3
 intriguing: 4.3, 15.5.
 passing fancy: 4.3.
 inevitable: 4.3.
 heels: 4.3, 14.3,
 silly: 4.4, 4.5, 15.3.
 what on earth...: 4.4, 7.3, 15.3.
 who he is dealing with: 4.4.
 offended: 4.5.
 to tease (teased, teasing): 4.5, 10.3, 14.1.
 to seduce (seducing, seductive): 4.5, 8.3, 12.7.
 quickie: 4.5.
 brand new: 4.5, 18.2.
 cross: 4.6, 5.4, 9.1, 12.3.
 to hail a cab (hailed a cab): 4.6, 5.3.
 to get away with (anything): 4.6.
 striking: 4.6, 15.1.
 mind you: 4.7, 14.5.
 (not) to jinx something: 4.7.
 certificate of completion: 4.7.
 doing the maths: 4.7
 old geezer: 4.8, 17.3
 to pick up: 4.8
 well-off: 2.2, 4.8
 in his prime: 4.8.
 late thirty-something: 4.8.
 beating around the bush: 4.8.
 brat: 4.8, 4.9.
 lowlife: 4.9
 to tar somebody with the same brush: 4.9, 6.4
 paycheque: 4.9
 willing: 4.9, 10.2, 11.4, 12.7, 13.6, 19.3
 whim: 4.9
 infatuated: 4.9

 checkmate: 5.1
 to be jealous (jealousy): 5.1, 5.3, 7.1, 8.1
 fling: 5.1, 8.2
 drilling: 5.1
 temptation: 5.1, 5.2, 5.4

to pave the way (to sin): 5.1
the closer... the more...: 5.2, 13.3
to mess up: 5.2 / to mess around: 16.2
cowardly: 5.2
spacious: 5.2, 12.4, 18.1
pang: 5.3, 6.4, 8.1
fight (to fight, fought): 5.3, 6.4 / jiný význam 7.2, 8.4, 9.1, 10.2
beyond repair: 5.3
to cost an arm and a leg: 5.3, 14.5
to blurt out (blurted out): 5.4, 7.3, 11.3, 14.5, 16.4, 18.1
to jerk (jerked): 5.4, 8.3, 14.1, 16.3
I reckon: 5.4
a pawn on a chessboard: 5.4
mate: 5.5, 14.5.

hear a pin drop: 6.1
subconsciously: 6.1
back and forth: 6.1, 12.1, 12.3, 12.4, 12.8
relief (relieved): 3.3, 6.1, 11.4, 12.6, 17.1
bite the bullet: 6.1
split lip: 6.1, 6.2, 7.1, 9.1
surgery: 6.1, 10.1, 10.2, 10.3, 17.3, 18.3
it will pass: 6.2
hardly: 6.2, 11.1, 15.3
bloke: 6.2, 15.4, 15.5
concussion: 6.2
stiletto heels, stilettos: 6.2, 9.2, 10.2, 10.3, 11.4, 11.6, 13.4, 14.2, 17.3, 17.5, 9.3.
anxiously: 6.3
dry cleaner's tag: 6.3
to strain (straining): 6.3
flawless: 6.3
canines: 6.3
incisors: 6.3
overbite: 6.3
to manage: 6.4, 12.2, 17.2
to steer clear of: 6.4
a storm was brewing: 6.4

defeat: 7.1
ointment: 7.1, 7.3
rustling (to rustle): 7.1, 12.6, 14.1

pyjama bottoms: 7.1
cheekbone: 7.1, 9.2
bold: 7.2, 8.1, 13.5
Tube: 7.2
recklessly: 7.2
to make up for something: 7.3
to rattle (rattled): 7.3
mugged (mugging): 7.4, 8.4, 9.1, 13.1, 18.1
residence permit: 7.4
an excuse: 7.4
nobility: 7.4
a dump / to dump: 7.4, 18.1

effeminate: 8.1, 9.1
to curl up: 8.1, 12.2
banish: 8.1
eating out of someone's hand: 8.1
to cherish (cherished): 8.2
safe bet: 8.2
blast from the past: 8.2
prominent: 8.3
hollow: 8.3
vividly: 8.3
to flutter (fluttered): 8.3
belong with: 8.3
to endure (endured): 8.4
to brand (branded): 8.4
ammunition: 8.4

fringe: 9.1
unconsciously: 9.1
to spoil somebody (spoiled): 9.1
come to terms with: 9.1, 13.2
kryptonite: 9.2
on cloud nine: 9.2
to be into boys / girls: 9.2, 15.2
enchanted: 9.2
to run something through fingers: 8.1, 9.3, 13.1, 13.2
to fasten (fastened): 9.4
clasp: 9.4
necklace: 9.3, 9.4

pendant: 9.4
match (matching): 9.4, 17.4 / jiný význam 16.2

to put up with: 10.2, 19.3
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Thanks for reading my story!

ABOUT ME

My name is Katka, and I've been writing stories ever since I was 14. Back then, my stories were a secret shared only with my closest friends. Some of my short stories in Czech were published as entries in writing competitions.

Každou knížku v angličtině vytvářím od začátku do konce sama podle zkušeností s českými a slovenskými samouky. Záměrně v ní opakuji výrazy i gramatické struktury, které možná i tobě dělají největší potíže. Nechávám je v různých situacích vracet a díky tomu si je můžeš při čtení opravdu osvojit a začít je používat v praxi.

Název tohoto příběhu si mé postavy vymyslely samy... vžívám se do nich a ony do mě, jediné tak to je autentické a opravdu silné nejen jako zážitek, ale hlavně jako tvůj přirozený zdroj zlepšování v angličtině. Protože tvůj dospělý mozek nepotřebuje seznamy slovíček, potřebuje zápletku, děj a pulzující příběh, který prostě chceš dočíst.

Nejsem jen autorka, ale i lektorka angličtiny. A přesně proto vím, co lidem při čtení reálně dělá problém — a co jim pomáhá se zlepšit.

Pokud máš jakékoli potíže se čtením této nebo jakékoli jiné knížky, přestože tvůj level je zhruba B1, tak to znamená, že ti k tvým teoretickým znalostem chybí praktické dovednosti.

Ráda ti pomůžu k přemýšlení v angličtině. Stačí se připojit k mému "GENIÁLNÍMU PŘÍBĚHU" – informace máš v mailu.

Těším se!

Katka Havlová

