



# *A NOD* *to the Wise*

**Relationship Noir**  
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**INTERMEDIATE**



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# 1. Unbelievable Peter

## 1.1

I almost did it. I wanted to put my head on his shoulder and wait to see how long he would bear it. What he would say. What he would do. But the jumping of the train has postponed the moment of truth and because of the long intervals at which I find the courage, perhaps forever. My head moved just a little towards him, and at that moment, the jumping of the train threw me in the opposite direction. And the opportunity was gone. Just how many more of these opportunities will I have? How much longer can I wait?

So far, I have only fallen on him on the escalator. It was winter, freezing temperatures, so unfortunately no heat went through the thick clothes. But it was a good time to let him know I was a great girl. Smart and kind. Ready to share. In the spring, I'll surprise him with my sexy body, but there's time for that. I don't want **one-night stands**. I want this handsome guy to come back to me.

So far, just my hands in thick gloves and a scarf up to my chin. **Even though** I had already tried to put my hand on his cheek for a second during our conversation about cold hands; **it did no good**, because it was only a moment, and besides, my hand was icy, and his face was frozen. Today I wanted to approach him with a clear signal.

one-night stands – známosti na jednu noc  
even though – ačkoli (although)  
it did no good – nebylo to k ničemu



## 1.2

With an invitation: don't fight it! How many more opportunities like this will there be? How many more guys like him will I meet? I'll be forty this year.

I must add a **thumb-down** in my diary again today for another wasted day without a man. Ever since I met Peter, I have turned down all the invitations for dates, but there's no point. I have tried twice and was thinking of Peter. I'll do it tomorrow. I'll tell him what I want from him. I have always said what I want, why am I so afraid of what he'll say? Do I care about him or am I just not as confident as I was a few years ago?

I have never wanted a man all to myself. I just need a half of him. And that's exactly what I learned from men – they don't want to give everything. And I don't want them to.

Sometimes I think Peter will fall in love with me, not a crazy kind of love, just an easy, nice, and quiet love without being nervous. But sometimes I think it won't come. That he won't feel it. I'll just be a woman on a train for him and that's all. And in that case, it would be better not to wait anymore and just do it, and in the worst case, just find another object.

It shouldn't be hard because there are a lot of married men between thirty and forty, not too short, not too tall, every morning on the train. Why don't I just put my head on one of their shoulders? No – I don't know why, but only *he* inspires me to hang on him and kiss him. Only Peter. My friend's husband.

I can't sleep. Two in the morning. It's in my head. Should I, or shouldn't I do it? Why don't I start dating one of those men who are trying to date me? Why am I instead hanging on **the one-and-only**? Haven't I grown up yet?

thumb-down – place dolů, negativní hodnocení  
the one-and-only – ten jediný



### 1.3

Peter has a family of his own and he certainly shows no signals of displeasure, no provocative looks. He obviously doesn't want another woman in his life, so why did I decide to destroy his peaceful world?

Why don't I live in my own world and why don't I start **dating** one of those reasonably tall handsome men – someone who has already made up his mind and accepted the idea of finding a quiet and honest lover?

For three long months now, my only company has been my coming 40th birthday, and it's really hard. And I feel crazy. I can't go on like this. I'll tell Peter tomorrow morning that... what? I'll find someone else tomorrow. On the train, on the street, at lunch. But urgently. Otherwise, I'll have to admit that I'm in love with Peter.

Six in the morning. I didn't sleep at all. I have fought **tooth and nail** against the truth. I fell in love with him for real. That's the only right answer to all my questions so far. That's why I'm so attached to him and refuse everyone else. That's why I'm so careful. If he were to refuse me, it would be the end of our mornings together. And I'd rather spend that morning half hour in the false hope day after day with him; than alone, refused, and disappointed, with the 40th birthday on my back. What is the point of my body trained by jogging or my flat stomach? **What's the point** of my gorgeous firm breasts? **There's no point!**

Because the guy, the man whose aura will not let me rest, prefers the woman at home. He doesn't mind at all that; that she has been exhausted by the daily boring work with their two little boys. She is his wife. And I'm nobody's wife.

dating somebody – randit s někým

tooth and nail – zuby nehty

What is the point? – Jaký to má smysl? K čemu to je?

There's no point! – Nemá to žádný smysl! Je to k ničemu!





#### 1.4

I need to find someone else. Someone in my category. I don't want to get married, and I don't want to find a man for love and family, for good and bad days. But I don't want to go looking for some guys to have sex with anymore. I want a nice, handsome man who comes once a week to hug me. It can't be Peter.

I'll go back to Mark. I'll be on the train with Peter in an hour, but now only to look at him with no interest. If I'm in love with him, I can't fight it. It wouldn't be fair. To him. To me.

He put his hand down on my knee. See how simple it is – stop fixating on one sharp chin, open your eyes and **open your mind**. It was just a moment, when asking whether my pants were made of real leather. But suddenly there was the heat. Not burning yet, but the signal was sent. I could really feel it.

I can't believe it. Just when I decided to give him up after a sleepless night. I don't want to start dating a married guy I'm probably really in love with. That would be a catastrophe.

I just wanted to have fun with him. Look into his brown eyes and make love with him. That's what I wanted. And then take a shower and know that when I leave the bathroom, he'll be gone until the next time. A reliable routine for a nice and easy relationship based on sex. That's what I wanted. That's what I want. But without the emotions. He put his hand down on my knee for a moment to get the answer whether my pants were leather. It would be better if he didn't do that. The signal was sent but it wasn't received.

I glanced out the window and suddenly remembered Richard, his hands, his fingers. The eyes. And his age. Could I still get his number out of the old phone records?

open your mind – otevři svou mysl

## READING TIP

Pokud byla první kapitola poněkud oříšek:

- Nejdříve přečtěte celý odstavec nebo celou sekci – nezasekněte se na slovíčku.
- Po přečtení odstavce si poznačte a vyhledejte slova, která brání v porozumění.
- Pokud odstavec pochopíte, nehledejte zbytečně neznámá slovíčka. Pochopíte je časem, nezdržujte se jejich hledáním, pokud to nebrání v pochopení děje.

GOOD LUCK!







## 2. Ginger Sidney

### 2.1

**Gingers** were never my type. I couldn't follow his speech at all. He was confident, had a firm voice, a direct look, red hair, and eyes so blue that I just wanted to be in bed with him. **For goodness' sake!** I'm at work, I can't think about sex right now!

I still can't believe it was exactly the same in reality as it was in my imagination. But that was a totally crazy week. I'm calling it 'goodbye to 30' because I'm not going to experience anything like that again in my life after forty, and I don't really want to. His girlfriend was abroad. Six nights that Sidney spent in my bed. With him, I forgot all about my worries.

He was just thirty, had the car of his dreams and was looking for destinations near and far when I suggested that he could **combine pleasant with useful** and **give me a lift** home. 'And driving you home will be the useful part or the pleasant?' He asked. And so, we went.

He didn't kiss very well, which surprised me; he should have hot lips and a tongue that would fill my mouth softly. But his kiss was very sharp and his tongue dry. Even though he pushed it almost all the way down my throat, I felt like we were not touching inside at all. But everything else was amazing, although I can't speak of technique. I don't know why, there was something about it... It represented why a man and a woman want each other, why they need to do it again and again. I don't think he had many women, but I didn't want to teach him anything. I wanted to return him to his sweetheart without any change. I enjoyed it. It was a perfect goodbye to 30!

ginger – zrzaavý, zrzek, zrzka (i zázvor)

For goodness' sake! – něco jako "propánajána"

to combine pleasant with useful – spojit příjemné s užitečným

to give somebody a lift – někoho svézt autem

## 2.2

Our morning meetings have changed a little. Now it is Peter, who actively starts every conversation. We talk friendly, as before. I don't blame him anymore. The last week when Sidney drove me to work, did me good.

I realised that I would ask more of Peter than I was allowed to ask. That it would never be enough for me to have it with him like with Mark or with Sidney.

With every other guy, the time-limited relationship was an advantage. But I'd like to have Peter completely. Maybe. Maybe not, who knows. He would probably **get on my nerves** about something too. But I'm really stupid, almost forty, in love with a handsome guy, my friend's husband, a father of two kids. I have never really wanted to go that far. I decided to stop.

I'm going to try and find Richard's phone number today. We have never dated; we have both been playing the game for too long. If I call him now and he comes, I'll win the old fight. Well, not really. It was never a fight between us. We both wanted it. None of us just wanted start. On the other hand, I was just thinking that starting would be nice. I have been running my life too seriously for too long.

Yes, I'm emotionally broken but on the outside I'm a normal sensible woman, single **by choice**. But if I call Richard, I'll be right back where I am, perhaps richer for a new sexual experience, but it will put my 40th birthday not a single day away, and it won't bring me closer to a peaceful, nice and easy relationship.

to get on my nerves – jít mi na nervy  
by choice – z vlastního rozhodnutí



### 2.3

I feel that the comfortable relationship which I want so much, I can have with the one and only, and I cannot allow it. But maybe I could only be happy with someone I really love. That would be a catastrophe because I don't want to fall in love, it's too late for that. I just want to be happy. And I want Peter. I really do!

Peter doesn't take the usual train in the morning. I hope that this is true: **out of sight, out of mind**. I don't really know him. Of course, I know that he is not just a sweetheart, and that dealing with normal problems with him is probably difficult. I can see a little bit of hysteria in the corner of his mouth. I can imagine that he shouts at the children at home when he needs a moment of peace. But this is just my imagination, I don't really know anything about that. All I know is that I like him. I loved him from the first moment. I was supposed to understand that it wasn't just physical. But I didn't. He hasn't been on our train since Monday.

I found Richard's number. It's not available. Mark is divorced, so he is out of my repertoire. I just want a guy with his own home, a place where he likes it. I'm almost forty, and I'm not looking for love for the rest of my life. I'm just looking for a man! I should have a lot of choice; I have what guys want and I don't hide it. I tolerate imperfections. But men have gone. They have disappeared. There's only one left; intelligent, handsome, in relationship, happily married, just the ideal man. For me. And I refused him. Am I stupid?

out of sight, out of mind – sejde z očí, sejde z mysli

## 2.4

Day five. He's definitely not out of my mind. I miss him. But it's not just Peter who is not going today. Nobody is going anywhere because there are no trains.

This was one of the opportunities which I have been waiting for – to spend more time with him when he cannot go away, waiting for a train, and enjoying his company. Instead, I'm standing here alone, sad that I'm going to miss an important meeting, that my ankles hurt in these heels which aren't made for **tap dancing** on the platform for hours. Enough. I give up. I'll try to wave at a passing car and either hitchhike or go home. I'm going to hide under my blanket like a little girl and try to sleep. I have to get Peter from my head. I just have to stop thinking about him and start acting like an adult again. I have to start feeling like an adult again.

The last attempt to get to work, I wave at an old green Volvo **station wagon**. It's passing me, but no... It has stopped. I run to the passenger's door, register the empty child seat in the back. Within ten minutes of driving, I know everything about him. He doesn't have a ring. He says: "I live" not "we live". Elegant casual outfit, a kind smile, and beautiful straight teeth. Big hands. Yeah, this guy knows what he wants. I also say: "I live" and "I often go in this direction". He says he works most evenings; the signal has been sent. I don't ask what his name is. I know the **license plate** of his car, which I instinctively remember every time when I get into a stranger's car. I politely refuse his invitation for a cup of coffee, perhaps next time. The signal has been received.

tap dancing – stepování

station wagon – kombík

license plate – poznávací značka





### 3. Bitter Betrayal

#### 3.1

I stopped thinking about my 40th birthday. I feel beautiful. Peter still doesn't take our train. Good. Maybe he takes an earlier train. Or a later one. He doesn't want to meet me, **so much the better**.

I met the man with the Volvo in Tesco's yesterday. He had a basket almost full of stuff, his kids are probably coming for the weekend. I didn't ask. He was already paying when I came, we just smiled at each other. I had a chance to notice how tall he was. I think that standing on my tiptoes it would be ok. He is a little taller than I like, but I forgive him because of his beautiful teeth. Because of his smile which allows me to see those teeth.

I often imagined where and how we might meet **by chance**, but I wasn't ready. I was shocked, unable to do any normal shopping and just walked through the aisles, watching the food on the shelves, and pushing the empty cart. When I realized how I was behaving, I took my cart to the exit and got out without buying anything. I'm going for a walk.

Life is amazing, I can still live these moments like I did when I was twenty. I don't have to hide my feelings; I can be excited with every new man as long as I like it and until I meet a new man again. I'm still myself, and that's the best. Both my sisters are ideal mothers. They would have to finish shopping and run home to their families. I can forget about the shopping for an hour or three days. I can go for a walk and think about the cookies which Mr. Volvo would like to have in the morning with his coffee in bed.

so much the better – (čím dál) tím líp

by chance – náhodou

### 3.2

One of my sisters recently told me that I was silly. That I should grow up. That I am not responsible. Well, yes, she's right. So what? It's better not to have kids if I don't want them and not to marry a man who can't make me happy all the time. Instead, I am free and get the best from every man. Is that silly? I don't mind. I'm happy, at peace with myself, at peace with the risk of my lifestyle. Which my sister, always arguing with her husband who had more free time in the past week, definitely isn't.

A blow to the head. Peter. I can't even think about it. I tried Richard's number again. Without wanting to talk to him, just an attempt to **let off steam**. There's still no answer.

It was quite a successful day. I did a lot of work and secured my living again for some time. Still, I'm nervous. I feel like a fool. Because of Peter. Like a **blow to the head**. I met him at the **town hall** when I went to get my new passport. He was changing his driver's license. He just said that he didn't take the train anymore because he lives somewhere else. But I see Jane almost every day in their garden. Once a month she pays a babysitter, and we go out together. She didn't tell me that Peter moved out! Of course, I never asked her about him, and the last time we met was three weeks ago. But I cannot believe that she didn't know anything and that she was surprised. I don't believe that. Jane had problems with him and said nothing. And Peter moved out.

to let off steam – upustit páru, uvolnit se

a blow to the head – rána do hlavy (šok)

town hall – radnice, městský úřad





### 3.3

I can't understand. I feel like a fool. Because of a friend who didn't tell me that she was in trouble, because of Peter who didn't tell me that... No, I cannot stop thinking about him. And when I met him just now, it broke my heart. Because I'm hopelessly in love with my friend's husband, father of two kids.

I was approaching him slowly because I didn't want to shock him. I wanted to put my head on his shoulder, my darling, a man who probably had another woman all this time! Taking the shower didn't help. I lie naked on the bed and cry. After a long time, I'm crying again. I feel like he did it to me. He hurt me!

I must go on. **No matter** how sad I am. Go to work. Without crying, if possible.

At today's meeting, which Sidney attended again, I wasn't thinking how good it was with him. I could hear his confident speech and see his blue eyes. Otherwise, nothing. I didn't even think about his sexy body trained by surfing, covered with red hair, which I liked so much. At the end of the meeting, when everyone started shaking hands, I noticed the ginger hair showing from under the sleeves of his shirt and I remembered the moments, when we made love. Then he took my hand saying thank you, and I thought for a moment that he was thanking me for the sex and not for the work I was doing for their company. But he didn't look me in the eye again. Just a brief glance, a smile out of the corner of his mouth. He was no **Don Juan**. Maybe he only did it once. The first and maybe the last time. With me. And it took him a lot of effort to deal with it. He's a nice, honest guy. Not like Peter, that **Judas**.

no matter – bez ohledu / nezáleží...

Don Juan – svůdník

Judas – Jidáš, zrádce





## 4. My First Johnny

### 4.1

I almost forgot how short Martin is. He's not even **five foot five**, well below my limit of ideal male height. He's really cute, but I'm definitely not attracted to him. He knows that. I like him. He's a handsome man, or rather a miniature of a handsome man. If he was in a poster and I couldn't compare his size with regular objects, I could let him enter my imagination. But not in the real world. When he sometimes tries it on me, I laugh. But he is ok with it. He smiles at me and says: maybe next time.

Today he called me and said that there was a new person moving in the ground floor apartment in our house which he owns. He asked me to open the flat for the movers who were going to bring some furniture and a carpet. Well, why not, I would do anything for Martin. He has rented me a beautiful flat at a great price, I'll happily help him.

I woke up later than usual. There was still enough time to do my work. It's better to stay in bed little longer than to go to work on a crowded city train. I am working from home today.

Around ten o'clock, I was interrupted by the ringing of the phone. Unknown number, it's the movers. They're here. It's not a good time at all. I'm trying to complete my sentence quickly, hopefully I'll remember what I wanted to write next. I took my keys and the keys to the downstairs apartment and ran out the front door.

five foot five = 5'5" = 168 cm

## 4.2

A guy with no shirt, just **overalls** and a pair of sandals, was already opening the car and when he turned around, I was shocked and looked at him with my mouth wide open. He made two quick steps towards me as if he wanted to hug me and then paused. 'What a surprise' he just said, and I closed my mouth. His hair was longer than before and he had an earring in his ear, but it was him. And on a chain around his neck, he had my ring with snakes and lilies. I got it from my grandmother who found it hidden in the old drawer.

I made the ring a symbol of my virginity, and when Johnny and I first made love at sixteen, I gave it to him, and I said that I belonged to him. But after a few weeks, I realized I didn't really want to belong to anyone. And I broke up with him. And then I never saw him again. For over 20 years. I had almost forgotten that there was a Johnny, my first boyfriend. And now he was here.

I'm looking for the last guy of my life, for a safe, nice and easy love affair, and life brings to me my first lover. I took the furniture and said goodbye to him. I didn't say anything about the ring. I suppose that he just liked it. Nobody is so crazy to think that a woman still belongs to him after more than twenty years. It was a symbol not only of my virginity, but also his; so maybe during those long years he remembered only what it symbolized – the transformation of a boy into a man.

overalls – lacláče, overal, montérky

### 4.3

I signed the papers, he jumped in the car, I waved at him again and he was gone. I forgot about him as quickly as I had twenty-three years ago. I sat down to my work and without much effort continued the work which I had to stop an hour ago when my phone rang. Wait! I have his phone number now! I reached for my mobile phone and deleted the whole history of calls. **That's it.** And life can go on.

In the afternoon I finished my work and spent the rest of the day in meditation. It was a wonderful day; I was very pleased with myself. Until Peter knocked on my door that evening. What!?

He came to take the keys to the downstairs apartment. He's going to live there to be closer to the kids! He misses them so much – for God's sake, find someone else who is interested! I gave him the keys, and I wanted to close the door, but he stopped me. I wondered what else he wanted from me. He said that he understood that I was Jane's friend and that I would be on her side, but that he.... I quickly shut the door. Asshole! I was lucky when my attempt to put my head on his shoulder a few months ago was spoiled by jumping of the train. I was lucky to escape. Poor bastard. And I cried a few nights for him. It's over now. Thank God.

That's it. – A je to. A to je všechno.





#### 4.4

I wanted to call Richard, but when I deleted the whole call history from my phone a few days ago, I didn't save his number and now it was lost forever. Peter lives right below me now. I try to avoid him as much as possible. He looks devastated. If we meet on a train, we don't talk. Fortunately, my job now rarely requires me to go by train in the morning, I usually work afternoons and evenings now.

I never heard from Jane again. I don't call her; we agreed that she would always call when she found a babysitter for the night. She didn't tell me what happened. I don't know what to say. And I don't even know if I want her crying on my shoulder that the bastard cheated on her. He cheated on me too. Metaphorically, but I was hurt – and I can't cry on anyone's shoulder. I had to deal with it myself. I'm almost forty. I can't believe what has happened to me in the last few months. I had long-term relationships in the past and now I just wanted to find another relationship. And instead, I fell in love, had my heart broken, met my first love again, had a crazy week with a guy ten years younger than me and I had dinner with Michael a few times.

Instead of the Volvo he now drives a Mercedes **convertible**. His ex-wife moved to Austria with the kids. We're not lovers. Michael is a friend. A real friend. We're exactly the same. We want the same things in life. We do almost the same job. We even have the same cleaning lady. And we don't have much time for each other.

convertible – kabriolet



#### 4.5

My 40th birthday is approaching quickly. I don't know why I have thought that I have to solve my life by 40. Why did I think that? Nothing important is going to happen on my 40th birthday. It will be a day like any other and I won't exactly be a year older, I'll just be a day older, like I'm always a day older than yesterday. The morning train is full of sexy happy dads, and I like chatting with them every now and then, flirting.

My 40th birthday is coming. We will celebrate it with Michael in Cuba. He's the best friend. And his birthday is the same day as mine. We see each other when we both have time, which is rarely. In the morning, he likes to go back to his house. I have that casual relationship with him which I wanted. I have found my peace, and there has been no change at all.

Jane has taken Peter into her arms. He has moved back, but whenever I see him, he gives me that broken look. As if I dragged him away from his family and then left him. I played no part in it. I was emotionally deep in it, but I only touched his freezing face with my icy hand once, so physically our relationship was really cold!

You can't talk about heat with Michael either. It's warm. We are like a married couple who have been together for years and nothing can surprise them. We made this conclusion after knowing each other for a few months. It's like we have been together since always and could stay that way forever. When we make love, it's not wild. Temporary passion, temporary harmony. Friendship, peace, and happiness. Our 40th birthday is on December 24th.



## 5. Selfish Michael

### 5.1

I think I have been happy for too long. Since I was young, I have been trying to keep my life in balance and fit into the grey average. I can see the bearded grandpa, or maybe the spaghetti monster, just a materialized idea of God, looking at the world statistics every Sunday when he's resting after work, and as soon as someone gets more happiness, he sends something bad to us. On Monday. That's probably why most people hate Mondays.

I guess I was out of average for a long time and that's why my flat is ruined. A pipe broke in the wall when I was on a **business trip**, and when Martin got inside the apartment, it was too late to save anything. The things that mattered to me. But **what the hell**, it's just material things, maybe my God wants me to rise above it and start enjoying real, essential values again.

When I returned to my destroyed apartment, I wanted to cry. Martin had taken care of everything, as the owner of the house and my close friend he had the keys to my apartment, he had called me and started to fix up the mess, he had already arranged for the renovation, but I still felt terribly sorry for it – the apartment is all I have. I mean I don't own it, I'm renting it, but it was my home. I loved it. It was my **heaven on earth**. And now I have nothing. I have nowhere to go. But yeah, I do – It's just... Not where I would like to go under any other circumstances.

business trip – služební cesta

What the hell! – Sakra! K čertu!

heaven on earth – nebe na zemi, ráj na zemi



## 5.2

Martin offered me the small apartment on the ground floor, no one had lived there since Peter had moved out. However, I probably couldn't live in an apartment with a window only **three feet** above the ground, I would be afraid. And **on top of that** – maybe I should say especially – I couldn't stay in an apartment where Peter once lived.

Even though nothing actually happened between us, I just couldn't forget what he had meant to me. When Martin mentioned the apartment on the ground floor, my pulse went faster. I refused his generous offer, but I wasn't refusing the apartment, I was refusing Peter, and my feelings for him.

But the worst part is that I'm here anyway, and I couldn't leave the memory of Peter behind the door. It was here with me, in the small room, in every corner, sitting behind my neck, getting in my way all the time. And I don't know whose fault it is. If it is my fault or God's, or if it was Michael's fault, because he was a selfish asshole.

He never said he loved me. So, he wasn't responsible for me. I don't blame him. I wasn't looking for love, I was looking for peace. And with Michael, I got it, and for a long time, I was happy. Only the flooded apartment showed me who he really was. Maybe that was my God's goal – maybe he didn't want to destroy my apartment. Maybe he just wanted to show me the person who I trusted. Who I shared my life with. My partner. My friend. My soulmate.

three feet = cca 1 metr

on top of that – navíc ke všemu





### 5.3

In short: whatever my God wanted, he started by flooding my apartment, taking a friend away from me, taking peace away from me, and now, perhaps, taking the logical sense from me. I have been thinking about it a lot, and this time I refuse to admit that I love Peter. God is just testing me. If my character is strong. If I capitulate. But I won't.

I know it's just a memory. I know it was only platonic. It was crazy, and I should laugh about it today. Why am I crying then? It's clearly Michael's fault. He left me and refused to help me. No, that would be unfair. He never promised me anything. He wasn't responsible for me. He is just a selfish man who doesn't care about anyone else.

Your apartment is flooded, oh no, that's terrible. What are you going to do? Where are you going to go? I couldn't believe my ears. Where am I going to, my friend? Where am I going to, you bastard? Don't worry, I'm not going to your place. **Shove your house up your ass!** We're not partners. I wanted a relationship without crazy love, but for God's sake, I didn't mean completely without emotions! With no respect. And I guess I didn't say that loud enough in the beginning. And I was wrong. I was living in an illusion which I didn't share with anyone. I didn't know that there wasn't a friend next to me in bed. It was an enemy. I want to cry again.

Shove (something) up your ass! \* – Strč si (to) *kamsi*

#### 5.4

I have never wanted a man all to myself. If he didn't belong to another woman, it was important that he at least belonged to himself. Michael was brilliant, smart, and intelligent, reserved, and careful. I needed him. And he turned his back on me. I didn't say that I wanted to change our relationship. That I wanted him all to myself, that I was going to control him from now on. **Hell**, I just said my flat was in ruins! And he turned his back on me.

He didn't give me a single word of excuse because when I really needed something, I became a problem.

And so here I am, in Peter's little apartment, on my third day. I'm crying and drinking. I'm crying for a friend. **I feel sorry for myself.** I'm crying for the love which I felt, and for a man who wasn't worth it. I know I couldn't have Peter. But it was nice to dream of him. Nicer than what I dream of now.

Hell! –Krucí, ksakru, doprčíc

I feel sorry for *somebody* – Je mi *někoho* líto; lituju ho.





## 6. My Older Sister

### 6.1

A bitter, angry alcoholic. I really didn't want to be like this. I think I'm ok now. The alcohol has deleted the pain, and when I go back to my renovated apartment in a few weeks, I'll be myself again. I'm forty years old. I stopped drinking after three days, I stopped crying. I have a headache and I feel sick. I'm starting a new life. A new life. If you don't belong to anybody, then nobody cares. No one worries about you. And nobody helps you. That part of my life is definitely behind me.

I want... I have learned something, and I know I want someone to care about me. Even at the cost of belonging to him. My God has allowed me to date Michael, a nice quiet guy – and I'm now walking away from him, with my heart broken. My God allowed it, taught me a lesson. No, you can't have a relationship without love. Without infatuation and passion, perhaps. But not without love. I was wrong. But how am I supposed to start looking for love now? I have no idea how to do that. I have spent my whole life laughing at it. And when it came, like last year with Peter, I wasted it. I didn't want it. And now I do.

I'd rather be in love than empty like this. No, God didn't punish me for my happiness. My God has been giving me signs for a long time, and because I was blind to them, he kicked me very hard. **Serves me right.**

serves somebody right – dobře někomu tak



## 6.2

A few days before that business trip finished with my ruined apartment, I was already thinking about our relationship. I liked that sex with Michael was calm, and it satisfied my physical existence in this world. No extravagance, and not much emotion, what else would you discover after forty? It was good, but it was just a natural act between a man and a woman as Mother Nature had arranged it.

Lately, we have stopped making each other happy. No, that's not accurate, I'm not saying sex was bad, we just stopped doing it altogether. Sex wasn't bad. There just was no sex at all. When I realized that we weren't attracted to each other, I hoped it was just temporary. I didn't think it was over. Until I had a problem. Until I was dangerous for his private life. But I had never seen this wall between us before. And I hit it at full speed and broke my neck.

Today I learned that starting a new life is much **easier said than done**. What would that life be like? And what will be the new roles for others? Should I completely stop thinking that with a new partner it will also be about sex? I don't know where to start. Like Martin, for instance. The perfect miniature of a man... He's nice, funny, smart and rich. And he likes me. And I like him. But he's too short. And now I'm asking, does that mean I'm too ignorant? Should I rise above it? Or do I have the right to be myself? Do I have to be attracted to my new man, my partner? Can I be totally not attracted to him? Starting a new life is much harder than I thought. How do I say what will be new and what will stay the same?

easier said than done – snáz řekne než udělá

### 6.3

Starting a new life is a big project and I must divide it into small parts.

I'd like to put punish the responsible person at the top of the list. But I can't blame Michael forever. He didn't promise me anything. It's just me... I expected more from him than he was willing to give. It's my fault, I have been so concentrated on keeping all the men away from my body, or more accurately, from my feelings, that I have forgotten to look after myself in the same way. I involved my feelings in my relationship with Michael, which was a mistake. Just mine. And I have already got a good punishment. So, I'm **ticking the first item on my to-do list as done**. What's next?

My God is crazy. My sister called me. The oldest. She said her husband was cheating on her. Why is she telling me? Because I'm an expert on married men? Sure not. Surprise, surprise! She's calling me because I'm her sister. She needs to talk to someone, and she thought I would understand her best. So, it's because I'm an expert on married men, right? Oh no, why am I being sarcastic? She's calling me because I'm not married and I'm not going to take it personally. A married woman would give her advice based on her life and her guy. But she doesn't want advice. She wants somebody to listen. And she wants support. And what am I supposed to say? Dear sister, if you want to be with him, be with him, and if you want to kick him out, kick him out!

to tick something as done – odškrtnout něco jako hotové  
to-do-list – seznam úkolů

#### 6.4

It's not that simple – she's defending herself. I get it. Should I tell her it's going to be ok? Is that what she wants to hear? But she already has her theory. What if he met a woman like me – who doesn't want to take him, but just wants to borrow him?

Oh my god! Being on my side of the triangle is fine but not being on the wife's side. I would immediately leave a man if he cheated on me.

Actually, I really did it with Peter. It was all only in my head, and even that was enough.

It's always nice to be the one who is getting the attention, but it's never nice to be the one who is being cheated on. I know that now. And so should my sister. Don't you think I should find someone too? She asks at the end. A-ha! That's the point! I have to laugh. My sister wants me to confirm that she has the right to have a lover, too.

But how am I supposed to start a new life, a better life? Starting a new life is much harder than I thought. There is nothing you can take in your hand, tear to pieces and burn. Starting a new life means changing your attitude. It's necessary to prioritize your values.

And that's not easy.





## 7. My New Life

### 7.1

My priority number one: I'm not going to lie. A pipe broke in the wall and I'm dealing with deep philosophical questions.

A few days ago, I was invited to a social event. In fact, I was invited a long time ago, it only took place a few days ago. I was supposed to go with Michael, but when things got so bad between us, I decided not to go. Not that I couldn't go without him, but I didn't want to go alone. I thought I had already started a new life when I shut the door in Peter's face.

Michael was supposed to be the partner for the rest of my life. I wanted to show – gentlemen, I'm not free anymore. Those of you who had me, congratulations; **bad luck** to the rest of you. But now I must admit to myself, with my priority number one, that I am free. And nobody cares. And it hurts so much. And I don't want to show that! But I went to the party anyway.

I don't really want to think about it. I don't think I have done anything bad. Just a small, private affair. I'm afraid this is not the right way to start a new life. I met Sidney there. I was so embarrassed. Suddenly, for the first time in my life, it bothered me that I was in the company of a man who had seen me naked. And not only seen. God, I really started a new life. I really changed my attitude because I was very shy and tried to hide in the crowd.

bad luck – smůla





## 7.2

About an hour later, he stood next to me at the bar. He took off his jacket and pushed his sleeves up. I didn't want to look at his arms and at the same time, I wanted to look. On his other side stood a beautiful young lady, his girlfriend. He ordered their cocktails and then turned to me. As if by accident, but I was too old to be convinced. But that gesture wasn't supposed to convince me. It was supposed to convince her. He didn't have much experience; he was no Casanova.

I don't think she was convinced either. Or maybe for a moment, but as soon as he introduced us, his beautiful Lucille stopped smiling. She took her cocktail, grabbed Sidney by the elbow and dragged him away. It was all clear to me. The fool told her about us and what he was doing while she was away last year. Perhaps he didn't tell her it was me, but her instinct told her.

A moment later, I noticed that they were arguing. They were standing at the far end of the hall. I didn't hear a word but still I understood what was going on. After all the wild gestures, she finally allowed him to hug her. One more kiss on that sweet little nose of hers. And they were good again. Well, that's what it looks like when you belong to someone and that someone loves you back and cares for and about you. And I'd like to experience that as well. But this ginger prince already has his princess.



### 7.3

The first sign which I missed came much earlier, almost as if the signs were coming from the beginning, as if I should never be with Michael. But it was just little things. The first big one came in the form of a forgotten makeup bag. Perhaps at the beginning, my God intended "**a nod to the wise**" and when I ignored it, he had to do the "**rod to otherwise**" part.

I spent the whole day with Michael at his house. He was working on something, and I was helping him. We have similar jobs, in the same field, and I had a lot of experience with the particular thing. He made a great lunch; we made love in the garden in the afternoon. Michael doesn't like company, and you can't see most of his property from anywhere. In the evening, we went to the theatre and then **he drove me home**. Quite simple.

I never spent the night at his place. I put my casual clothes which I was wearing during the day into my bag, and I put on my evening clothes; and when he **dropped me off** in the evening, I had the bag with me. But I left my makeup bag in his bathroom. I didn't look for it because it only contained the makeup for the theatre. Dark eye shadows, **mascara**, **lip gloss**; in short, nothing that I use every day.

A nod to the wise, rod to otherwise = Chytrému napověz, houpého trkni  
to drive somebody somewhere – někoho někam odvézt / svézt  
to drop somebody off – někoho někde vysadit (dovézt ho někam)  
lip gloss – lesk na rty  
mascara – řasenka



#### 7.4

Michael didn't call me for a couple of days. I was busy and we didn't usually call each other every day. But a week passed, and he didn't let me know how he was doing with the project. I was worried that something happened. I could call him myself, but I somehow expected that he would call and tell me about the results. I thought that he owed it to me for my help. At least he could let me know. But he didn't, and that was the first sign which I ignored. In the end, I called him.

Everything was fine, he was just busy, and his kids were coming for the weekend. That was the third sign, **by the way**, but I realised that much later.

That evening he came to me and put the bag on the coffee table when I wasn't looking. He didn't say anything about it. I brought us something to drink and pushed the bag away and made some space for the glasses. Damn, what a mess, I thought. Michael didn't speak for a long time. I was thinking that his work didn't go well. And that he was angry at me because of that.

I wanted to ask him when he said: "Didn't you miss it?"

I was shocked, because my first thought was that he was talking about sex; asking how much I missed him. I couldn't believe that he was asking me something like that.

"What do you mean?" I asked.

He pointed to the bag. I looked at him, not understanding, and then I realized that I had probably left it at his place and that he had just brought it.

"Oh... Not at all, it's an evening makeup, I didn't even notice that it wasn't here, thanks."

He asked about the makeup bag, not the sex. I was happy. But it would be better if I wasn't happy. I was supposed to grab him by his collar and kick him out of the door.

by the way - mimochodem

## 7.5

I woke up in the night.

**Bang!** Eyes wide open. Suddenly I understood. By leaving my little bag in his house, I showed that I wanted to share his space. That I would come back. That we belong together. I should apologize to him. I can see what he thought about it. I can understand why he was upset and shocked.

In the morning, when he was leaving, I thanked him for the bag once again. "It would be embarrassing if I had to call all my lovers and ask them about the bag."

He smiled finally. "You're a great woman," he said and kissed me, something he had never done before on his way out. I was glad that I was able to explain it. That I didn't want to move into his house. But I ignored this sign, again. And I ignored also the fact that the kids were staying with him for the weekend.

That was the second sign. His kids are too young to come for the weekend. But I missed that sign, too. I must admit that my God was trying really hard, and that I deserved the flooded apartment. I had to open my eyes. Michael's ex-wife wanted to get back together with him. She started bringing his kids. And he didn't tell me. And when I was in my ruined apartment, hoping that he'd lend me one of his many rooms, he turned his back to me. Because his whole family had already moved back in with him. While I was away on a business trip, he changed his life. Quietly in secret. Without a word. Selfish bastard!

Bang! – Bum!





## 8. Tony of the Past

### 8.1

My priority number two: I won't be naïve anymore. I pushed this task to the top of my list of priorities when I found out that Michael doesn't want me in his life. I found out because he didn't tell me. I learned it **by accident**. I don't want to think about it anymore. In short, I won't be naïve in my new life. I won't be stupid.

When they finally renovated my apartment and I started picking out new furniture, I complained to Martin that I couldn't move back. He immediately had an offer for me. At first, I thought that he was suggesting the two of us living together, so I stopped listening and just smiled politely. I was shocked when he said that he could rent the house. Excuse me? What house? Then I understood that he was buying a house which was being sold by a divorcing couple. They wanted **to pay off the mortgage** and then rent two separate apartments. The lady with the kids would move in here instead of me, because this place is big enough for three people. I would stay downstairs, and Martin would rent the house. I was terrified.

I understand that he could rent my place for a better price than the small amount which I'm paying him, I hope that he's not just going to kick me out. I'll pay him a reasonable market price from now on! But it's not about the money. It's about the lady with the kids. He wants her to live here. He smiled at me. I understood. This apartment was for his favourite girl. It didn't go very well with me. A divorcing lady with kids will accept his generous offer. I'm starting a new life. This part is definitely over. But I'm not staying in that little apartment. Because that's where Peter is still living. His ghost and my memories of his lovely brown eyes. And memories of my pain.

by accident – omylem, náhodou (shodou nějakých okolností)

to pay off the mortgage – splatit hypotéku



## 8.2

I received another invitation from Tony. This gentleman is really great. We worked together in the same company a few years ago. I hate to admit it, but it's been twenty years since that moment.

Twenty years ago, we were colleagues. And about three years ago, I started working as an external consultant for his new company. I would say that he hired me because of our old friendship. Michael tried to work for them several times, but he was unlucky, I was already there. He laughed about it and said that he didn't believe that I was better than him. And that it was obvious that the owner preferred beautiful women.

Now I think, perhaps that was another sign. Michael was serious, he would never admit that I was better than him at anything. In Tony's defence, I must say that he **wasn't like that**. In fact, he's quite strict, and doesn't pay attention to attractive women when he is working. I believe that he chose me because he knows me, he can trust me, he knows what to expect from me. It wasn't important that I was a woman. He was always very reserved.

Sometimes, twenty years ago, I even tried to provoke him a little, but I failed. But... when I worked hard all day, he invited me for a drink and then we ended up in his apartment. We talked about life into the night, went to bed almost in the morning, and made love. We never did it face to face, never looked each other in the eye. And then we continued to act as if nothing had happened.

I thought it was funny, I thought he just didn't know how to talk to me afterwards. But one day I realized that this was his style. Knowing that we had sex was enough for him. Next time it was just like that again. Actually, it was like that every time.

(not) to be like that – (ne)být takový (jak někdo řekl)

### 8.3

I was twenty, he was a little older. I enjoyed this secret relationship. From then until now, I have always wanted it **like that** with every man. Strong when we were alone and casual among other people. That's how I have always wanted my love life.

And after the last meeting with Sidney and his beauty at the previous party, I think that I got a little drunk and started discussing our past with Tony. I also blamed him that I had met so many bastards in the last year. But Tony's just great, he was nice and called me the next day. He asked if I was ok and if **I was in a better mood**.

And now he sent me another invitation with his signature. I'm seriously thinking about going abroad. For a year or two, **get out of** this world full of guys who have seen me naked. I just can't start a new life here.

like that – takhle (jak bylo řečeno, popsáno)

to be in a better mood – mít lepší náladu

to get out of (somewhere) – vypadnou (odněkud)







## 9. My New Neighbour

### 9.1

Going away was a good idea. Three months in South America with a bunch of enthusiasts who got together via Facebook. Almost everyone on this adventure was dealing with a similar life crisis like me. An interesting mix of European nationalities, with the same motivation and a common goal: to have fun, see a little bit of the world, take our minds off our problems. In the end, I just saw a little bit of the world.

I didn't have much fun. We mostly dealt with quite difficult situations, and when it wasn't a question of survival, then it was about basic human needs; and when external factors were in the balance, we had to solve personal problems. Anyway, I learned a lot in the process. To be tolerant. More patient. I learned to trust others because more than once my life depended on it. To spend **day by day** with different people, to respect their opinions, their right to their own mistakes. But I didn't manage to forget my problems.

I guess I have **got over** the episode with Michael. He was a friend, but he didn't honestly say that he was changing his life and his relationship with me. Thanks to the long trip, I can already accept his right to be who he is.

I have also been thinking about the God signs all along. If perhaps there were more of them in my life. How many have I ignored? And what was it supposed to teach me? Did the flooded apartment mean "move out"?

day by day – den za dnem

to get over something – něco překonat, vyrovnat se s tím

## 9.2

Martin rented my old apartment to his new favourite. I went abroad because I couldn't live in the apartment after Peter, and I didn't know what else to do. I needed a break. **Keep emotional distance.** Time and space distance, too. But I hadn't found any answers on my journey, and the last few days before my return, I was thinking more and more about Peter and how my fantasies would hurt when I enter his apartment again. I really couldn't forget it, not even after three months on the other side of the world. I carried it with me everywhere, in my head. In my heart.

I was absolutely devastated and didn't want to return home. I decided to delay the horrible moment a little longer and I flew with Rachel and Nick to Frankfurt. I wanted to continue to Prague two days later. They let me stay in Nick's apartment and they went to Rachel's. They had a wonderful trip. They wanted to get married, but they really wanted to **get to know each other** well before they started living together. They wanted to see if they could be together day by day, deal with crisis, if they could tolerate each other, respect each other. See if they'd still love each other afterwards. They were amazing together, and now they're getting married. Meanwhile, after a long flight and thanks to crossing several time zones, I was so tired, and I fell into Nick's bed. I slept most of my short break in Frankfurt.

to keep distance – držet si odstup

to get to know each other – vzájemně se poznat



### 9.3

A few hours before my flight to Prague I was so nervous and called Martin. **What does my apartment look like?** Am I going to have another shock like last time? When he said that everything was ok, I was even more terrified. Martin, I don't want to go back to this stupid city. Do you have a free flat in Prague? Or anywhere else? I really can't handle it, and don't ask me why. I almost cried. It was too much.

Martin said that he'd arrange it. He's so... he's so reliable, he's always where he's supposed to be, and he always does the right thing. He picked me up at the airport and drove me to another apartment. I was very lucky because while I was away, he bought two new apartments in Prague. One of them is still empty. With furniture! He said that I can get my things from the little apartment **any time**. What an absolutely perfect man! And a friend. Isn't this another sign which I have been ignoring?

I can definitely breathe here. Nice apartment in a nice place. Nothing exactly beautiful, but new, clean, and most importantly with furniture that reminds me of nothing at all. I don't know how long I'll stay here, but I'll probably stay here for a while.

I'm making coffee and waiting for a visitor. I have been following my list of priorities since my return. First, I'm **not lying any more**. Not even to myself. I guess that's why I can breathe easier. I try not to ignore the signs of my God. I'm so easily in love. Smiling. No more sleepless nights, no more headaches, no more heartache.

What does it look like? – Jak to vypadá?

any time – kdykoli

not doing something any more – něco už nedělat



#### 9.4

Martin changed my whole life during that short journey from the airport. He helped me start again from where it was still nice and where I made it complicated with my own stupidity. Or maybe with my impulsivity. When he brought me here, I was completely transformed.

When I went to the old apartment, I was completely calm. I checked all the corners, but there were no ghosts of the past. It was just an ugly apartment with a window **three feet** above the ground facing the parking lot. I put my things into a few boxes, just clothes, a laptop, folders of personal papers, a couple of books, two mugs. I left the rest of my stuff there, so that it was easier for Martin to rent the place. Just In case he meets another guy like Peter. Another poor divorced husband.

I also try not to be naïve. When I want to do something, I do it. I say what's on my mind. My God gives me signs, but I must live my life. That's why I have my new love. New? Well... I'm honest. I say to him that I care about him. I show that I enjoy belonging to him. I'm not sure if traveling through a strange world with strangers, or my **guardian angel** helped me do that. But I have managed to start a new life.

I have the same job, I meet the same people, I work for Tony, and I even meet Sidney. He married the beautiful Lucille, and he still looks away when we meet. I don't even think about the fact that we saw each other naked. I have started my new life. Thank you, my personal God!

three feet = cca 1 metr

guardian angel – anděl strážný



## 9.5

My priority number three: I'll listen better. I will not form opinions until I know more about the situation. I promise!

On the way back from the airport, I listened to Martin's story. A story about love. About his darling Jane. She has two kids and is getting divorced now.

She made a mistake when she married that loser, she only wanted to keep the family for the kids, but what life is that – without love, sleeping with a guy that does not attract her, spending time with him when she doesn't love him, lying and cheating?

So, he convinced his dear Jane to leave her husband, to get divorced, to sell the house and move with the kids into my old place. And Martin rented one of his new apartments to the poor loser. And that loser is now my neighbour.

I'm expecting him in a minute. We're going slowly, but we're going for the same goal. I refused to waste this sign. I was worried that maybe he wouldn't want a relationship when his marriage had just finished. When his wife cheated on him and then left him. When he is getting divorced and leaves his two kids far away with a strange man. I thought he'd give up, at least for a while, on all women.



## 9.6

And then I put number three on my list of priorities: listen better, don't form opinions too quickly. He said that he wanted and needed to belong to someone. He wants to trust someone again. That his marriage hadn't worked for a couple of years before the final **breakup**. That's why he moved away from Jane last year – not to live with another woman, but because Jane had a lover. I promise I'll never again form opinions too quickly!

Knocking on the door.

One last look in the mirror. Those leather pants still look good on me. If Peter can't remember if they're really leather, he can try and find out again today. I hope he will.

breakup – rozchod (ve vztahu)



**BONUS**

**THE MISSING SIGN**



## 10. Johnny's Silver Ring

### 10.1

I am a simple man. I work hard with my hands, moving heavy furniture for people who have enough money to pay for it. I don't complain about my life. But I have my memories. For more than twenty years, I have been wearing a silver chain around my neck. And on this chain, there is a silver ring with snakes and lilies. It originally belonged to my first love. Her name was Maggie.

She gave it to me when we were sixteen, right after we made love for the very first time. I still remember that day perfectly. She told me she belonged to me. But just a few weeks later, she broke my young heart. She realized she didn't want to belong to anyone, and she broke up with me. I was devastated.

However, I never took the ring off. It wasn't just a memory of a broken teenage heart. For me, it became a powerful symbol of my transformation from a boy into a man. A daily reminder of the most passionate and confusing time of my life. I honestly never expected to see Maggie again. She was just a beautiful ghost from my distant past.

But life has a very strange sense of humour. Last week, my boss sent me to a regular job. We were supposed to bring some furniture and a heavy carpet to a ground-floor apartment. I parked the van, wearing just my work overalls and a pair of sandals because it was a terribly hot day. The **landlord** told us on the phone that a lady from the upstairs apartment would bring us the keys.

landlord – pan domácí / pronajímatel





## 10.2

I was busy opening the back of the van when I heard quick footsteps. I turned around, and I felt like someone had physically hit me in the chest. I was completely shocked. My mouth was wide open. It was her. It was Maggie.

She looked a bit older, of course, but she was still as beautiful and incredibly independent as she was at sixteen. I made two quick steps towards her. For a crazy second, my instincts told me to hug her tightly. But then I paused.

"What a surprise," I said. My voice was shaking a little bit. She stared at me. I saw her eyes drop to my bare chest. She was looking exactly at the silver ring with snakes and lilies hanging on my neck. I knew she recognized it immediately. I waited for her to say something about it. To ask why I still had it after all those years. But she didn't say a single word about the ring.

She just took the furniture, signed the delivery papers, and acted like a polite professional. I suppose she thought I just liked the ring as a piece of jewellery. She said goodbye, I jumped into the van, and she waved at me. As I drove away, I realized that some things never change. Maggie still doesn't want to belong to anyone. But seeing her one last time gave me the peace I didn't know I needed. I smiled, touched the ring, and finally let her go.



## 11. Martin's Secret Love

### 11.1

I have always known that I am not exactly the classic symbol of male beauty. I am just five foot five, which is definitely below the ideal limit for most women. My good friend, who rents a beautiful apartment from me, always smiles and calls me a cute miniature of a man. She likes me, but she is not attracted to me at all. I accepted that a long time ago. However, I am a very successful, intelligent, and rich man. And I have a lot of love and respect to give.

Everything changed on a rainy afternoon last year. Jane came to my house to visit her friend. She was standing in the hallway, looking completely exhausted and sad. She was carrying a heavy bag and **struggling** with her wet umbrella. I immediately offered her my help. We started talking. She told me she was married to Peter and had two little boys, but I could see the deep sadness in her eyes. She was emotionally empty. Her husband was a handsome guy, but he didn't give her the attention and passion she desperately needed.

I invited her to my private office on the ground floor for a quick cup of coffee. We talked for an hour. I listened to her carefully, without judging. For the first time in years, somebody actually cared about her feelings. When she was leaving, she gave me a shy smile that totally broke my heart. I knew it was complicated. She was a married woman, a mother. But I was hopelessly in love. I decided to fight for her, no matter what.

to struggle with something – potýkat se, zápasit (s něčím)



## 11.2

Our secret love affair started slowly, but soon it became an absolute necessity for both of us. Jane felt alive again. I treated her like a real princess, not just a babysitter or a maid. However, we had to be extremely careful. Jane often told her husband Peter that she was going out with her single friend. She paid a babysitter, but instead of going to a restaurant with her friend, she came directly to my place. We spent those stolen hours in absolute harmony, making love and planning our future together.

I hated lying, and I felt a bit guilty, especially when I knew her husband. But Jane's marriage was dead long before I entered the picture. They lived like two strangers. I gave her the courage to dream again. We sent each other hundreds of romantic messages every day. It was our beautiful, secret world.

But one Tuesday, a total catastrophe happened. Jane accidentally left her tablet on the kitchen table at home, and Peter found our secret conversation. He read my messages. The bitter betrayal was finally revealed. Jane called me, crying and completely devastated. Peter packed his clothes and moved out of their house immediately. Ironically, because he wanted to stay close to his kids and his wife's friend, he rented a terrible ground-floor apartment from me! I became the landlord of the man whose wife I was secretly sleeping with. The universe has a very dark sense of humour.



## 12. Peter's Confession

### 12.1

I'm standing in front of her door and I'm about to knock.

It is exactly like that evening a few months ago, when she slammed the door right in my face and called me an asshole. But today, everything is different. I am finally getting divorced. My marriage with Jane had not worked for a couple of years before the final breakup. It was dead long before I found out that she had a lover.

I take a deep breath. I hope she will open her mind and give me a second chance. Because I have been secretly in love with this woman since last winter.

-

It all started on the escalator. It was winter, freezing temperatures, and she suddenly fell on me. Unfortunately, we were both wearing thick winter clothes, so I couldn't feel much heat. But she looked so beautiful and funny. I knew she was a great girl, smart and kind. I wanted to tell her that my life at home was an illusion and a disaster.

I was looking forward to seeing her every morning on the train. Once, she tried to put her icy hand on my cheek when we were talking about cold hands. I was frozen, not just from the cold weather, but from the shock. I wanted to hug her, but I couldn't. I was still a married man, a father of two little boys. I had to be careful.



## 12.2

Then came the spring day when I finally found the courage. I wanted to send her a clear signal that I was interested. She was wearing those sexy pants, and I couldn't stop looking at them. I put my hand down on her knee and asked whether her pants were made of real leather. I felt the sudden heat.

But she just glanced out the window and later stopped taking our train completely. I thought she didn't want a complicated guy like me. I felt devastated. And then, when I finally moved out of my house to be closer to my kids and knocked on her door to get the keys, she didn't even want to listen to my story.

Now, I am her new neighbour again.

I need to explain what actually happened with Jane and why our marriage ended. For a long time, we were just like two strangers living in the same house. We didn't share a bed, we didn't talk much, except about our two little boys. I loved my sons more than anything in the world, but my relationship with my wife was completely empty. I felt so lonely and emotionally exhausted.

During those dark times, I thought about the woman from the train every day. She was so full of life, independent, and incredibly beautiful. She was a symbol of freedom for me.



### 12.3

Then, one day in the spring, everything changed. I came home early from work. It was supposed to be a normal Tuesday afternoon, but I found out the ugly truth. Jane wasn't just unhappy with me; she had someone else. A secret lover. I found his romantic messages on her tablet which she had accidentally left on the kitchen table. It was a huge shock, like a bitter betrayal, but honestly, it was also a massive **relief**. It finally gave me the courage to leave. I didn't want to live in a lie anymore.

I quickly packed my clothes, kissed my sleeping boys goodbye, and moved out. At first, I rented a cheap, ugly room on the other side of the city. I was far away from my kids and completely miserable.

A few weeks later, I met her by chance at the town hall. She looked beautiful, but I didn't have the courage to tell her the truth about my marriage. I just told her I lived somewhere else now. However, I desperately wanted to be closer to my sons. So, when I found out that there was an empty ground-floor apartment nearby, I rented it immediately. It was a dark place, but it was in the same house where *she* lived. I secretly hoped I could finally explain everything to her.

But my plan completely failed on the very first day. When I arrived to officially move into the dark ground-floor apartment, I needed the keys. The owner told me to pick them up from the lady upstairs. My heart started beating so fast when I walked up the stairs. This was my big opportunity. I was no longer a married man who couldn't look at another woman. I was an almost free man, ready to explain my feelings. I knocked on her door and waited.

relief - úleva

#### 12.4

When she opened the door, she looked absolutely **stunning**, but her eyes were cold. I tried to smile. I told her that I came to take the keys to the downstairs apartment because I was going to live there to be closer to my kids. I also wanted to explain my situation. I wanted to tell her that I knew she was Jane's friend and that she would probably be on her side, but that I wasn't the bad guy. I wanted to say that Jane had cheated on me, and that my marriage was a disaster long before that.

But before I could finish my sentence, she looked at me with pure anger. She didn't want to hear my story. She didn't care about my pain or my broken heart. She quickly shut the door right in my face. She probably thought I was an arrogant bastard who had left his poor wife and children. I stood there in the silent hallway, feeling totally devastated. The door was closed, and my hopes were ruined. I went down to my dark apartment, sat on the old carpet, and realized how hopelessly alone I really was.

The next few months were an absolute nightmare. I lived in that cold, dark ground-floor apartment, just three feet below her kingdom. Every time I heard her steps above my head, my heart beat faster. But I knew I couldn't go upstairs. She had made it very clear that she hated me. To make things much worse, she started dating someone else. A tall, serious guy who drove a shiny Mercedes convertible. Whenever he parked his expensive car in front of our house, I felt a physical pain in my chest. He was everything I wasn't at that moment: successful, confident, and completely free. I watched them from my small window, hiding behind the curtains like a jealous ghost. They looked like a perfect couple, sharing a peaceful harmony.

stunning – nádherný, ohromující



## 12.5

I tried to focus only on my two little boys. They were my only joy in this terrible life crisis. Jane and I officially started the divorce process. It was slow and extremely painful. Sometimes Jane asked me to come over to her house to help with the boys, or we spent time together as a family for their sake. I think the fascinating woman from upstairs saw me there a few times and thought Jane and I were getting back together. But that was a complete illusion. My marriage was dead. I was just a desperate father trying to survive. I honestly thought I would never be happy again. I had lost my wife, my home, and the only woman who sparked true passion in my lonely soul. I was almost ready to capitulate.

Then, a sudden miracle happened. My landlord, Martin, called me with a very unexpected offer. He nervously told me that Jane – my soon-to-be ex-wife – was actually his secret sweetheart! I was totally shocked but also amazed. Because of this crazy situation, Martin felt a bit guilty. He told me he had just bought two completely new apartments in another building in Prague, and he offered me one of them. I quickly accepted his generous offer. I desperately wanted to be far away from the house where Jane's best friend lived and where everything reminded me of my broken heart. I packed my few things and moved out of that depressing ground-floor place.





## 12.6

The new apartment was nice, bright, and modern. I lived there peacefully for several months.

But the biggest and most unbelievable shock came much later. I was coming back from work, and I saw a **familiar** woman walking towards the door exactly next to mine. She was wearing those sexy leather pants. I couldn't believe my eyes. It was her! The universe finally gave me a second opportunity. My guardian angel must have planned this perfectly.

-

So, here I am today. Standing in front of her door, just like I did a few months ago. But this time, I am not a married man escaping from his problems. I am a free man, and I know exactly what my priorities are. I am taking a deep breath. I am raising my hand. I am knocking on the door. Please, open your mind and let me in.

familiar - povědomý, známý



## **AMENDMENTS**

Relationship Vocabulary

Proper Names

UK/US Vocabulary & Spelling

Imperial vs. Metric System

Záporné předpony

B2+ Vocabulary List

Who is who Cheat-sheet

About me & My support for you



# RELATIONSHIP VOCABULARY

## Vztahový slovníček – pozitivní emoce

|                    |                    |                |                  |
|--------------------|--------------------|----------------|------------------|
| affection          | náklonnost         | hug            | obejmout         |
| attraction         | přitažlivost       | infatuation    | zamilovanost     |
| to be attracted to | přitahovat někoho  | love           | láska            |
| care               | péče               | love affair    | aférka, známost  |
| closeness          | blízkost           | lover          | milenec, milenka |
| comfort            | utěšování          | loyalty        | věrnost          |
| commitment         | závazek            | married        | vdaná / ženatý   |
| darling            | drahoušek          | miss           | chybět           |
| date               | rande              | passion        | touha            |
| dating somebody    | chodit s někým     | platonic       | platonický       |
| devotion           | oddanost           | protection     | ochrana          |
| falling in love    | zamilovat se       | reconciliation | usmíření         |
| making love        | milovat se (sex)   | relationship   | vztah            |
| feel               | cítit              | respect        | respektovat      |
| flirting           | flirt (flirtování) | soulmate       | spřízněná duše   |
| forgive            | odpustit           | sweetheart     | miláček          |
| friendship         | přátelství         | friendship     | přátelství       |



# RELATIONSHIP VOCABULARY

## Vztahový slovníček – negativní emoce

|                      |                      |
|----------------------|----------------------|
| anger                | hněv                 |
| argument             | hádky                |
| betray               | zradit               |
| betrayal             | zrada                |
| break up / breakup   | rozejít se / rozchod |
| cheating on somebody | někoho podvádět      |
| divorce              | rozevést se / rozvod |
| fear                 | strach               |
| jealousy             | žárlivost            |
| to be jealous        | žárlit               |
| lie                  | lež                  |
| mistress             | milenka ženáče       |
| one night stand      | partner na 1 noc     |
| pain                 | bolest               |
| rejection            | odmítnutí            |



## PROPER NAMES

### Vlastní jména

Names of people usually don't translate or rewrite.

|                          |                |
|--------------------------|----------------|
| Jane                     | Jana           |
| Mark                     | Marek          |
| Michael                  | Michal         |
| Peter                    | Petr           |
| Johnny                   | Honza          |
| Lucille                  | Lucka, Lucinka |
| Tony, Anthony            | Tonda, Antonín |
| Sydney                   | Zdeněk         |
| Judith                   | Jitka          |
| Faith                    | Věra           |
| Frederick, Fred, Freddie | Bedřich        |
| Andrew, Andy             | Ondřej         |
| Henry                    | Jindřich       |
| Henriette                | Jindřiška      |
| William, Bill            | Vilém          |
| Florence                 | Květa          |
| Georgia                  | Jiřina         |



## UK/US VOCABULARY

| US English       | UK English            |                      |
|------------------|-----------------------|----------------------|
| apartment        | flat                  | byt                  |
| cart             | trolley               | nákupní vozík        |
| cell phone       | mobile phone / mobile | mobilní telefon      |
| city hall        | town hall             | radnice / úřad       |
| closet           | wardrobe              | šatní skříň          |
| cookie           | biscuit               | sušenka              |
| driver's license | driving licence       | řidičák              |
| first floor      | ground floor          | přízemí              |
| license plate    | number plate          | poznávací značka/SPZ |
| movie            | film                  | film                 |
| pants            | trousers              | kalhoty              |
| parking lot      | car park              | parkoviště           |
| sidewalk         | pavement              | chodník              |
| station wagon    | estate car            | kombík               |
| sweater          | jumper                | svetr                |
| vacation         | holiday               | dovolená             |
| yard             | garden                | zahrada              |

## UK/US SPELLING

| US English          | UK English            |
|---------------------|-----------------------|
| center              | centre                |
| color               | colour                |
| favorite            | favourite             |
| jewelry             | jewellery             |
| neighbor            | neighbour             |
| organize            | organise              |
| program             | programme             |
| recognize           | recognise             |
| traveling, traveled | travelling, travelled |



## Imperial vs. Metric System

### Length and distance (délka a vzdálenost)

1 inch = 2.5 centimetres

1 foot = 30 centimetres

1 mile = 1.6 kilometres

### Expressing people's height

 5 foot 5 inches = 168 cm

 6 foot 6 inches = 180 cm

### Volume (objem)

1 pint = 0,568 l = velké pivo

half pint = malé pivo

glass of wine = 175 ml

large glass of wine = 250 ml



# Záporné předpony

Tyto předpony dávají slovům opačný význam

## **UN-**

unknown, unshaven, unavailable, unable, unfair, unlucky, unfortunately, unbelievable

## **IM-**

imperfection= not perfect, impersonal = not personal, impossible = not possible

## **IN-**

incompetent, indefinitely

## **DIS-**

disbelief, disappear, displeasure

## **IR-**

irresistible, irregular





## B2+ VOCABULARY LIST

CEFR level B2+ and some of unlisted\*

| WORD              | SECTION                 | your notes |
|-------------------|-------------------------|------------|
| ass/hole*         | 4.3, 5.2, 5.3           |            |
| attract/ed to     | 4.1, 6.2, 9.5           |            |
| bastard(s)*       | 4.3, 4.4, 5.3, 7.5, 8.3 |            |
| capitulate        | 5.3                     |            |
| cart              | 3.1                     |            |
| courage           | 1.1                     |            |
| crisis            | 9.1, 9.2                |            |
| damn*             | 7.4                     |            |
| date(d) / dating  | 1.2, 1.3, 1.4, 2.2, 6.1 |            |
| devastated        | 4.4                     |            |
| emotion(s)        | 1.4, 5.3, 6.2           |            |
| emotional(ly)     | 2.2, 4.5, 9.2           |            |
| factors           | 9.1                     |            |
| fantasies         | 9.2                     |            |
| flirting          | 4.5                     |            |
| guardian          | 9.4                     |            |
| heaven            | 5.1                     |            |
| hell              | 5.1, 5.4                |            |
| hopelessly        | 3.3                     |            |
| cheated/-ing (on) | 4.4, 6.3, 6.4, 9.5      |            |
| ignored /-ing     | 7.3, 7.4, 7.5, 9.1, 9.3 |            |
| imperfections     | 2.3                     |            |
| infatuation       | 6.1                     |            |
| inspires          | 1.2                     |            |
| metaphorically    | 4.4                     |            |



|                       |                         |  |
|-----------------------|-------------------------|--|
| miniature             | 6.2                     |  |
| naïve                 | 8.1, 9.4                |  |
| naked                 | 3.3, 7.1, 8.3. 9.4      |  |
| passion               | 4.5, 6.1                |  |
| philosophical         | 7.1                     |  |
| physical(ly)          | 2.3, 4.5, 6.2           |  |
| platonic              | 5.3                     |  |
| prioritize            | 6.4                     |  |
| priority / priorities | 7.1, 8.1, 9.3, 9.5, 9.6 |  |
| process               | 9.1                     |  |
| provoke               | 8.2                     |  |
| pulse                 | 5.2                     |  |
| reality               | 2.1                     |  |
| renovation            | 5.1                     |  |
| renovated             | 6.1, 8.1                |  |
| repertoire            | 2.3                     |  |
| ruined / in ruins     | 5.1, 5.4, 6.2, 7.5      |  |
| sarcastic             | 6.3                     |  |
| sleepless             | 1.4, 9.3                |  |
| soulmate              | 5.2                     |  |
| stupidity             | 9.4                     |  |
| survival              | 9.1                     |  |
| sweetheart            | 2.1, 2.3                |  |
| theory                | 6.4                     |  |
| tolerate              | 2.3, 9.2                |  |
| triangle              | 6.4                     |  |

# WHO IS WHO CHEATSHEET



Maggie



Johnny



Martin



Michael



Peter



Sidney



Tony

## Why Read Beyond Words?

Pro náročnou ženu je pokročilý jazyk symbolem statusu a svobody.

Angličtina v mém podání není předmět k učení, ale prostor k bytí. Vedu vás k sebevědomému používání jazyka, který odpovídá vaší inteligenci a životní úrovni. Mým cílem je, aby vaše angličtina byla stejně kultivovaná, sebevědomá a hluboká, jako jste vy sama.

Psaní pro mě není řemeslo, je to způsob, jakým rozkrývám svět.

Jako autorka osmi titulů, od lehkých "Life Stories" až po syrovou psychologickou sérii "Secrets", budu prostor, kde se napětí setkává s intelektem. Nechci vás jen pobavit. Chci, abyste při čtení mých knih zapomněla, že čtete v cizím jazyce, a začala jste ten příběh skutečně žít. Moje tvorba je mostem mezi vzdělávací literaturou a psychologickým thrillerem.

Vím, že život se neodehrává v učebnicových dialogích. Skutečný život se děje v tichu mezi slovy, v maskách, které si nasazujeme, a v odvaze je sundat. Jsem pozorovatelkou lidských osudů a fascinuje mě psychologie a dynamika vztahů, o které se často jen šeptá. Věřím v integritu, hloubku a v to, že zralost je tou největší devizou, kterou jako žena a tvůrce mám.

Název povídky vychází ze rčení "Chytrému napověz, hloupého trkni". V angličtině se tento idiom nepoužívá tak často jako v češtině, takže na středně pokročilé úrovni není tak známý, jako některé rozšířenější. Přesto "A nod to the wise, rod to otherwise" dává v tomto příběhu perfektní smysl.

*Kateřina Havlová*

Thanks for reading my story!

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