

## **Katerina Aksonova. Puppeteer's curse.**



Puppeteer's curse.

Katerina Aksonova

CHARACTERS:

OLIVER - private detective.

VALERIE - Oliver's ex-wife.

TONY - Valerie's co-worker.

EMILY - Oliver's client.

*Scene 1.*

*Living room in bachelor flat. Enters Oliver, in T-shirt and pyjama's trousers. In his hand is packet of feeding for fishes and little landing net. Oliver comes to the aquarium, puts landing net near aquarium, opens packet with fish feeding and smells it.*

OLIVER: Disgustingly awful. What I really need, or my fishes need it more.

I think I will smell every packet of fish food to the end of my days.

Marvellous, yes, all papers wrote "marvellous" investigation. What a creative mind, he put marijuana in that packets. And new assistant sold it to me. Smashing chance, poor fishes. Hope they reached fishes heaven.

No, police is past. Now I am private detective, and dead bodies which I saw daily are my fishes.

*Oliver takes little landing net and searches with it inside aquarium.*

OLIVER: Yellow dead. Why they always died after Jayne's cleaning? Are they innocent witnesses or fish didn't stand clean air?

I'm so tired from adultery. I have so many photos of naked and half-naked men and women that my dearest Valerie will be glad, she always knew that I'm sick.

Again I remember about my ex-wife. It is really connected with last visit to café. It is not food, it is poison. How she cooked! One thing about which I'm sorry since she left me.

Yes, dead bodies. Again my fish will find her rest in the garden. I will paint one more fish on the door of my garage. Women think that is sweet part of

me, which loves nature. If they knew why I painted this fishes. They won't like it.

*Sound of doorbell.*

OLIVER: What? I told Mary, emergency clients only if I agreed to see them at home.

Woman in tears, she needs to know if her husband has an affair. Mary always helps them, every time she recognized her story. It could wait till tomorrow!

*Oliver exits, little landing net is still in his hand.*

*Scene 2.*

*Enters Valerie, woman older than Oliver, still beautiful. Nice dress, smart haircut. Nervous, but used to this room.*

*After her enters Oliver, confused. Little landing net is in his hand.*

OLIVER: May I help you?

VALERIE: At first put this poor fish somewhere. You have spots from water all over floor, Oliver.

OLIVER: I was going to...

VALERIE: They didn't ask you. No one?

OLIVER: Who? What?

VALERIE: About fishes on the garage door. Your women.

OLIVER: They said it is sweet.

VALERIE: Ugly.

OLIVER: You always was against my way of live, Valerie.

VALERIE: Against praise dead fish.

OLIVER: I said the same.

VALERIE: I came here not for argue.

OLIVER: If you forgot, bedroom is second door on the left.

VALERIE: Will you ever change?

OLIVER: The day when I will change you will return to me. Thanks, no. I protect myself and my way of life.

VALERIE: You know me for a long time.

OLIVER: Admit it.

VALERIE: In my whole life I never was superstitious.

OLIVER: You live longer than me. Who knows what was before I was born?

VALERIE: Nine years!

OLIVER: Like I said, could happened everything before I was born.

VALERIE: When I die, my last thought would be that I made one right decision.

OLIVER: What? Plastic surgery?

VALERIE: No. I was right when I left you.

OLIVER: Congratulations. You have my approval.

VALERIE: I came here to hire you for a job.

OLIVER: Your lovely boy is cheat on you!

VALERIE: I believed in police. You know, it was the main point which attracted me in you.

OLIVER: I knew it!

VALERIE: But they didn't take such cases.

OLIVER: Which?

VALERIE: We all cursed.

OLIVER: Who we?

VALERIE: All who worked in studio.

OLIVER: Puppet studio?

VALERIE: Yes.

OLIVER: Marionettes want revenge on you.

VALERIE: Puppet cursed all of us.

OLIVER: Now puppets want they money back or want to go into the human theatre.

VALERIE: Two of us already dead in one month.

OLIVER: Are you serious?

VALERIE: If I came to you.

OLIVER: I will be the last person whose help you'll need.

VALERIE: I still think the same. But only you could solve this plot.

OLIVER: Find out what occurred in reality.

VALERIE: No. Investigate my death.

OLIVER: Stop. Don't bring drama in your life. You look fine, even beautiful. If you don't mind when I say so.

VALERIE: I don't know how it will take place, but it will happen. We all are cursed. Only you could help.

OLIVER: Why me?

VALERIE: You will find out, because you'll want to prove that it wasn't you.

OLIVER: Me? Kill you? Why?

VALERIE: All suspects in cases are the closest people. And you are still everything to me.

*Valerie kisses Oliver, than goes out. Stops for a moment.*

VALERIE: You will need more paint on garage door.

*Valerie exits.*

*Scene 3.*

*Oliver puts little landing net on the table.*

OLIVER: Stubborn woman. Came here, said dreadful things and went away.

You will be the first suspect. Me? Yes. Now I go and find her, before someone else...

I made one correct choice – I left you. Bitch. It was me, me. I left you. Not you left me. Women never left me in life.

Yes, if I didn't count Valerie. It is all because of her terrible character. I don't mind if somebody will kill her. Or curse her.

Now I'll put on my trousers and go to studio. Cursed, murdered. I don't care. I am not the biggest mistake in her life...

*Exits from stage.*

OLIVER (*out of stage*): I came here to hire you for a job! She arrived! I didn't agree. She never listened to my words, it was only her life.

*Oliver returns, in changed clothes, buttons his shirt.*

OLIVER: I need to know why I have to investigate it. I want to see this

place. Only after it I could make a decision. Do you hear me, Valerie?

*Ring of the door bell.*

OLIVER: I knew that you will return. You always return, like boomerang.

*Oliver exits.*

*Scene 4.*

*Enters Oliver, after him enters Valerie.*

VALERIE: I was wrong.

OLIVER: Hallelujah! You said it aloud.

VALERIE: You never will agree to investigate until you don't see the place where it happened.

OLIVER: You are smart. Wise of age.

VALERIE: Understanding of upcoming death.

OLIVER: I don't recognize you. Whimper girl.

VALERIE: I don't care what you say.

OLIVER: Yes, in this you all. Don't bothered. Only you, your problems, your life and now your death. Compliments, all world is near your feet.

VALERIE: Before, I think that you are fun.

OLIVER: And now?

VALERIE: Cynical and selfish.

OLIVER: Many thanks.

VALERIE: Welcome. I need your help.

OLIVER: Did you forget that I will be the first suspect?

VALERIE: Maybe. You will know everything and find an exit.

OLIVER: You are giving me a favour.

VALERIE: Last present in the memory of our past.

OLIVER: Valerie, for Heavens sake.

VALERIE: I think you need answers.

OLIVER: I have questions.

VALERIE: We received toy, puppet, glow puppet. No return address. Mike, he saw it first, opened the box. Charity gift to our Karl.

OLIVER: Mike is dead.

VALERIE: Yes.

OLIVER: How?

VALERIE: He drown drank in swimming pool.

OLIVER: His swimming pool?

VALERIE: No, swimming pool of his mistress.

OLIVER: Maybe it wasn't a puppet. Jealous husband.

VALERIE: He is in China.

OLIVER: Flights.

VALERIE: Car accident, broke his leg. In hospital was operation. He was under anaesthesia.

OLIVER: Lover, she.

VALERIE: No. She was in another town, her friend proved.

OLIVER: And she hadn't a chance.

VALERIE: She was at the party. Photos from every second.

OLIVER: Who find him?

VALERIE: Neighbours.

OLIVER: How?

VALERIE: Their son throw ball in the swimming pool. And not, Oliver, boy didn't kill him. Mike was already dead.

OLIVER: Pity. Such a beautiful version.



VALERIE: And Karl. He was alone, worked till night, like always. Scissors in the chest.

OLIVER: Impressive. Where was you?

VALERIE: What?

OLIVER: You could tell me that I will be main suspect in your death and I can't ask where were you.

VALERIE: Damn you, Oliver. I was on flee market.

OLIVER: In the evening.

VALERIE: I didn't return back in the town, I stayed with one of the owners. She is my old friend.

OLIVER: I knew it!

VALERIE: She has cameras of video-observing in the house .

OLIVER: Why?

VALERIE: In her collection are dolls which cost thousands.

OLIVER: I think you told me everything what I need.

VALERIE: Are you ready?

OLIVER: Yes. And I don't bring with myself a gun.

VALERIE: You still fight against temptation.

OLIVER: Go!

VALERIE: As you say.

*Oliver and Valerie exit.*

*Blackout.*

*Scene 5.*

*Puppet's master workshop. Lot of unfinished and broken toys and puppets, many tools from carpenter's workshop. Few tables, drawing board.*

*Enter Oliver and Valerie.*

OLIVER: I never understand this place.

VALERIE: Sorry.

OLIVER: From the first time when I came here.

VALERIE: It's my work place. Like yours was police.

OLIVER: I remember. But here you know...

VALERIE: Have no idea.

OLIVER: You never alone even when all people are far away.

VALERIE: You are afraid of puppets. We lived several years together and you never told me. Poor Karl had to be dead, for your opportunity to tell such truth to me.

OLIVER: I'm not scared.

VALERIE: What then?

OLIVER: You talk, everyone here talk with them like with alive.

VALERIE: You would be glad if someone told, it could be one of toys.

OLIVER: No. But you give them soul.

VALERIE: And they kill.

OLIVER: They became alive to all of you and now you told me about curse of puppet.

VALERIE: Puppet's master, who made him.

OLIVER: What's the difference?

VALERIE: Master was human.

OLIVER: You believe that you will be next.

VALERIE: Of course, Tony was last who touched toy.

OLIVER: And we are here.

VALERIE: Yes. I'll show you everything and than I have to finish my work.

OLIVER: Before killer will finish you.

VALERIE: I missed your optimistic mind.

OLIVER: Where is that killer toy?

VALERIE: I will give you. It's old. Please, don't destroy him.

OLIVER: Him?

VALERIE: Of course, him. It's Punch.

OLIVER: Bring.

VALERIE: I will look if he is ready for that.

OLIVER: You were alarmed of murderer. Nothing happen to your Punch. He is already dead. Was, always.

VALERIE: Toys are immortal!

OLIVER: Bring him here or I'll go away.

VALERIE: You were always jealous of my puppets.

OLIVER: Ridiculous.

VALERIE: No. You told me that I spend more time with them than with you.

OLIVER: It was truth.

VALERIE: God Siva could fell in love with the beautiful puppet of his wife Parvati. I work with damaged or not finished of them. I was fidelity to you.

OLIVER: And Karl?

VALERIE: Never. He was...

OLIVER: I know, magician who could bring life in wooden puppet. Give me that doll. Maybe I'll prove that he is our killer.

*Valerie exits to another room.*

*Scene 6.*

OLIVER: Toy master. She is adult. I know, any children. But dolls. Her eyes are still lights up when she talks about puppets.

Of course, if didn't happen something terrible with her beloved Karl she won't remember about me.

I am happy. Not happy that someone is dead, but happy that she still believes that I could find answer to all mysteries.

Police did it work, but she likes to check everything. Or wants to tell me her story. Maybe, she has suspects. Because I don't believe that she could kill Karl. Especially that Mike in the swimming pool. And of course, Valerie never puts shadow of suspect on her precious puppets.

*Scene 7.*

*Enters Valerie, she brings box with herself, carefully puts in on table.*

OLIVER: Is it?

VALERIE: Yes. I told you that it's unique doll.

OLIVER: I remember. Give it to me.

*Valerie opens box and cautiously gives Oliver puppet. Puppet is old, has half smashed face.*

*Oliver takes out of his pocket little flash light and light with it inside puppet.*

VALERIE: What are you doing?

OLIVER: You told me unambiguously that doll could kill. So I need to check if there is poisoned needle with cyanide inside him.

VALERIE: It's not a problem for you that Karl was killed by scissors.

OLIVER: We have to notice every detail.

VALERIE: This Punch was last about whom Karl wrote official certificate.

OLIVER: And that doll killed him.

VALERIE: Perhaps it was suicide.

OLIVER: With scissors?

VALERIE: His hands was on them.

OLIVER: Don't you think that he wanted to pull them out of himself?

VALERIE: Look here.

*Valerie gives Oliver paper. He quickly reads.*

VALERIE: Now you understand... What does this meant.

OLIVER: Yes. It costs a fortune.

VALERIE: You are Barbarian.

OLIVER: I just read. It could be that Punch who first said "to be or not to be".

VALERIE: I'm glad that you listened when I told you about "War of Theatres".

OLIVER: I have no choice. Listen to you or not to have a food. May I?

*Oliver quickly puts on his hand doll. Speaks in tiny voice.*

OLIVER: ***Alas, poor Yorick!***

*Doll bows head. Turns to Valerie.*

***I knew him, Horatio:***

*Doll waves hands, punch itself on head.*

***a fellow of infinite jest, of most excellent fancy:***

*Oliver puts doll on his shoulder.*

***he hath borne me on his back a thousand times;***

*Doll turns quickly from Oliver's face.*

***and now, how abhorred in my imagination it is! my gorge rims at it.***

*Doll strokes on Oliver's lips, than kisses.*

***Here hung those lips that I have kissed I know not how oft.***

*Doll lifts up his hands above.*

***Where be your gibes now? Your gambols? your songs? your flashes of merriment, that were wont to set the table on a roar?***

*Waves hands in different directions. Then suddenly closes Oliver's mouth with his hand.*

***Not one now, to mock your own grinning? quite chap-fallen?***

*Doll gives deep bow.*

*Valerie applauds.*

*Oliver gives deep bow.*

*Valerie applauds.*

*Oliver and doll simultaneously bow.*

VALERIE: Now give Yorick here.

OLIVER: Yorick? I read like a Hamlet.

VALERIE: You'll agree with me that he looks more like someone who was taken out of the grave, don't you?

OLIVER: As you say.

*Oliver takes away doll.*

VALERIE: You don't believe me.

OLIVER: I was in his head. It is any brain inside.

VALERIE: Your soul mate. And you are dangerous to other people.

OLIVER: Was it a propose?

VALERIE: Don't even think.

OLIVER: Not here. I need more facts. Why suicide?

VALERIE: You read what Karl wrote.

OLIVER: It could be PUNCHINELLO from Naples, was brought as gift.

VALERIE: Of course not. I showed you designs made from birds' feathers constructed by Dionissio Minaggio, the Governor of Milan's garden. It was 1618. Do you remember?

OLIVER: When I listen to you I feel myself like at University and want only one thing.

VALERIE: Which?

OLIVER: Go to sleep.

VALERIE: Go to hell, Oliver.

OLIVER: Punchinello never has been humpbacked.

VALERIE: Didn't love to fight.

OLIVER: And to my pity not wife-beater.

VALERIE: Why on Earth you said such cruel things?

OLIVER: To have back your attention. I don't want a puppet's history, I want to know about murderer.

VALERIE: Without that you don't understand a point.

OLIVER: Fine. I'm listening to you.

VALERIE: I think our master Karl was wrong.

OLIVER: At least.

VALERIE: He dated this puppet before 1600.

OLIVER: Yes?

VALERIE: And if we believe that Punchinello first visited England with the Fiorilli's troupe in 1673.

OLIVER: Are we believe?

VALERIE: Shut up and listen.

OLIVER: Like always. All my marriage. Shut up and listen.

VALERIE: He was wrong.

OLIVER: Who?

VALERIE: Master. Karl.

OLIVER: And...

VALERIE: Why he was wrong? How? It never occurred to him.

OLIVER: Karl was very precious.

VALERIE: More than that.

OLIVER: And he wrote that this puppet looks like, sorry I can't remember who.



VALERIE: Richard Tarleton. *"He was a short, thick-set fellow, with curly hair, a squint, a comically flattened nose, and slightly humpbacked."*

OLIVER: It could be he as model for that puppet. Doll also doesn't look best.

VALERIE: And he died in 1588.

OLIVER: Karl prepared story.

VALERIE: Yes. It was rather peculiar.

OLIVER: And what you think about that puppet.

VALERIE: Me?

OLIVER: You worked with them for years. What you can say about it?

VALERIE: He is old. But not before 1600. He was destroyed. But I think more from people hand than by time. And his clothes, it was changed several times. It couldn't be original fabric.

OLIVER: Yours version.

VALERIE: He is old enough. Perhaps he could take part on Bartholomew Fair in Smithfield.

OLIVER: Age.

VALERIE: Perhaps eighteenth century puppet.

OLIVER: Rare doll.

VALERIE: In that condition...

OLIVER: He didn't cost a fortune.

VALERIE: Absolutely. I don't know.

OLIVER: What?

VALERIE: Time to time in our studio emerges puppets, which probably were in confiscation of puppet showman. It could be connected. They cost a lot. Not glow-puppets.

OLIVER: Confiscated?

VALERIE: Yes. In 1723 John Harris, his puppets were confiscated and described. Forty dressed and eight undressed figures.

OLIVER: You think Karl could thought this Punch is one of them.

VALERIE: Never in life, there were marionettes. Personally I checked 30

dolls which could be from Harris' collection.

OLIVER: And?

VALERIE: Nice try. Nothing matched. But...

OLIVER: What?

VALERIE: Some of them which I, or Karl rejected, I saw in private collections.

OLIVER: As originals.

VALERIE: Valuable originals.

OLIVER: Did you tell Karl?

VALERIE: Of course.

OLIVER: And he?

VALERIE: He said that he'll check it.

OLIVER: And results?

VALERIE: I never asked him.

OLIVER: You don't sure about puppet.

VALERIE: It could be Punchinello. But he never will cost so much. In open auction...

OLIVER: Private collectors.

VALERIE: Some of them... People think it's good place to put money.

OLIVER: In doll with empty head. Glove-puppet, marionette. You can't just throw it away.

VALERIE: Thank God Karl is dead and can't hear you.

OLIVER: It's puppet.

VALERIE: It's history. There are still people who believe in every word from Payne Collier's "Punch and Judy".

OLIVER: I must be shocked.

VALERIE: I was wrong when I ask you for help. Tony is right, Mike died because of accident, not because of curse of that doll. And Karl?

OLIVER: Yes, Karl.

VALERIE: Police was right. Suicide with scissors. He was wrong, he wanted to earn money with this forgery.

OLIVER: All years I try to understand you. Every time I miss a point.

VALERIE: Forget.

OLIVER: We don't know to whom he tried to sell this story.

VALERIE: It couldn't be... Everyone know such things.

OLIVER: Don't be so sure.

VALERIE: Money, or puppet's curse.

OLIVER: Karl was wrong and puppet killed him.

VALERIE: I... Somebody is coming.

*Scene 8.*

*Enters Tony.*

TONY: Valerie, you are here!

VALERIE: Tony, it's Oliver, my ex-husband.

TONY: I remember you. Nice to meet you again.

OLIVER: Perhaps.

TONY: I just can't sleep after everything... with Karl.

OLIVER: I know. Do you believe that puppet killed him?

TONY: Of course. Not look at me like that. Not literally. But... Valerie, did you told him.

VALERIE: About mistake of Karl? Yes.

TONY: It never happens to him.

OLIVER: Do you think he could have problems with money?

TONY: We are puppeteers not oil sheikhs. We have difficulties with money.

OLIVER: Did it arise before?

VALERIE: I don't know.

TONY: No. I never heard about that.

VALERIE: Tony also did expertise for toys.

TONY: Yes. Always Karl was best.

OLIVER: And never was wrong.

TONY: Are you disagree with that?

OLIVER: You both knew him better. Four in that studio.

VALERIE: Yes. We are not a factory.

TONY: Two are dead and you think that one of us has something to do with that.

OLIVER: Who will earn studio?

VALERIE: We don't know.

TONY: Karl hadn't wife or children, all his life was dedicated to puppetry.

OLIVER: And he died, like lived among them. Misfortune that they can't talk, could be priceless witnesses.

VALERIE: Oliver, have compassion.

OLIVER: Sorry, I shocked you, Tony. I use to think aloud.

TONY: I understand, when work with puppet, alone, start to speak with it.

OLIVER: Did you touch him?

TONY: Who?

OLIVER: Punch. This doll.

TONY: Of course, it was interesting. Maybe he was one about whom wrote Payne Collier.

VALERIE: Do you have more questions, Oliver?

OLIVER: Tony, do you think something was connected to this doll.

TONY: I don't understand.

OLIVER: That puppet could kill.

TONY: Of course, it could destroy Karl's name.

OLIVER: Did you read his papers about Punch?

TONY: Yes.

OLIVER: What do you think?

TONY: I already told Valerie. He needed money, I don't know for what. When it didn't work or he was unmasked, his reputation was devastated.

OLIVER: And he chose to kill himself, he can't live with blemish.

TONY: As we all know.

OLIVER: Valerie, if you need me...

VALERIE: Go home and sleep well. I have to complete my work.

TONY: I just take my papers and go, I bought sleeping pills.

*Tony enters to another room, than exits with papers.*

OLIVER: Don't you want me to stay?

VALERIE: I'm here with puppets.

TONY: Bye, till tomorrow.

VALERIE: Bye.

OLIVER: Bye.

*Tony and Oliver exit.*

*Scene 9.*

VALERIE: Karl made a mistake. Suicide with scissors. What was wrong? It was before. Karl wouldn't mind. Tony have to tell and now I remember.

*Sound of knock to the door.*

VALERIE: Oliver has idea and decided to return. I'm coming, Oliver.

*Valerie goes from the stage.*

*Blackout.*

*Scene 10.*

*Oliver's house.*

*Enter Oliver and Emily.*

EMILY: Do you know what time is it?

OLIVER: Did you wait to ask me that?

EMILY: Half past eleven.

OLIVER: You knew it yourself.

EMILY: I waited for you.

OLIVER: I have unscheduled work.

EMILY: I understand. But half past eleven.

OLIVER: Your husband won't be nervous that his wife not in bed for that time.

EMILY: He is away from town. And it's your work to know it.

OLIVER: Emily. Please stop for the moment. Emily. If it's your real name.

EMILY: Real, as cash which you received from me.

OLIVER: One moment. I feel thirsty.

EMILY: I won't drink, I drive a car.

OLIVER: How do you know about whisky?

EMILY: Dear God, you won't proposed to me an orange juice.

OLIVER: Of course. You are observant. Why do you need me?

EMILY: For prove.

OLIVER: Your husband's photo.

EMILY: Yes.

OLIVER: Look yourself. I just need to find it.

EMILY: I have it on the phone.

*Emily looks on phone screen.*

EMILY: What I suppose to see?

OLIVER: His back.

EMILY: I think so.

OLIVER: He is taller, don't you think.

EMILY: I didn't know her hight.

OLIVER: But you saw husband every day near his car.

EMILY: This car was taken as rent.

OLIVER: Next. His haircut.

EMILY: Looks like his.

OLIVER: If didn't mention that he has haircut the day before shoot. And here hairs a little bit longer.

EMILY: I received it on that day.

OLIVER: Next, dear judge. His shape of ear.

EMILY: What?

OLIVER: It's individual, like fingerprints. With your habit to observe...

EMILY: It still could be him.

OLIVER: Fine. Last but not least. Have your husband ever button buttons of his sleeves without special occasion.

EMILY: Never. I proposed him to have little magnets, that he could look more accurate.

OLIVER: It's not your husband with another woman.

EMILY: Damn you.

OLIVER: Sorry. It's interesting reaction about husband fidelity.

EMILY: I already started process of divorce.

OLIVER: Is he rich?

EMILY: I am. You already checked it.

OLIVER: Yes. But every woman needs faithful husband.

EMILY: What I do now?

OLIVER: What do you want?

EMILY: I want a divorce.

OLIVER: Than you came to proper place.

EMILY: What?

OLIVER: I didn't only research your photo, I also made few mine. Just a second.

*Oliver takes out from table envelope and gives to Emily. Emily opens it and looks through photos.*

EMILY: Bastard.

OLIVER: Do you still love him?

EMILY: I knew that I can't forget this earrings in hotel.

OLIVER: I also have testimonies from different people.

*Blackout.*

*Scene 11.*

*Oliver's house. Sound of doorbell.*

OLIVER: Go away.



*Sound of doorbell unstoppable.*

OLIVER: What I did to you?

*Oliver stands up, exits.*

*Enter Oliver and Emily.*

EMILY: I'm so sorry.

OLIVER: You could buy me another doorbell.

EMILY: About your wife, Valerie.

OLIVER: Ex-wife. How do you know?

EMILY: Camera on neighbour's house.

OLIVER: Sorry. I think too much whisky are inside me.

EMILY: Take an aspirin. Police visited me.

OLIVER: Are you my alibi?

EMILY: Yes.

OLIVER: Take a seat.

EMILY: What happened?

OLIVER: You have to be in another place with another man.

EMILY: I could decide it myself.

OLIVER: As I remember your life became a hell.

EMILY: It could wait for a while. How she was killed?

OLIVER: In puppet's studio. She opens a door.

EMILY: She knew killer, but he didn't have a key.

OLIVER: He?

EMILY: Like I heard first was man. So I supposed.

OLIVER: Why?

EMILY: Because I don't know if I made murder spontaneously... How I could return and kill with cold head second time.

OLIVER: You think man could do it.

EMILY: I think it could did the one for whom it will be important.

OLIVER: Why you came to me?

EMILY: Pardon me?

OLIVER: Why you came to me with your husband infidelity? You knew everything from the beginning. You could manage with this story yourself.

EMILY: I received first foto. I knew before that time. I needed time to made a settlement. For doubts I chose to visit private investigator.

OLIVER: It would look like person who cares.

EMILY: Yes.

OLIVER: Your husband know.

EMILY: I changed all keys.

OLIVER: Keys!

EMILY: Sorry?

OLIVER: You know that I'm main suspect in murder of my wife.

EMILY: Police told me.

OLIVER: And you came here.

EMILY: They didn't tell me why you killed first victim.

OLIVER: Karl and my wife have an affair.

EMILY: Really?

OLIVER: I have no idea. It's connection for police to have two murders by one person. And one accident.

EMILY: What?

OLIVER: There are three dead people. Two man and my wife.

EMILY: Are they all killed in puppet studio?

OLIVER: No, first drawn in swimming pool. Karl was killed with scissors

in the chest. Valerie with chisel in the neck.

EMILY: Killer took what was near hand.

OLIVER: Yes. Two spontaneous murders which haven't any connection. They work at one place, and were killed in one place.

EMILY: Was stolen something?

OLIVER: Nobody needs broken or smashed old toys.

EMILY: They knew something.

OLIVER: Police think it could be suicide.

EMILY: With chisel in the neck?

OLIVER: No. Karl. First victim, he made professional mistake.

EMILY: Is there still such persons who care?

OLIVER: Karl supposed to be last one of them.

EMILY: Keys. What about?

OLIVER: I have keys from that studio. They always were here and I'll find them.

*Oliver rummage in drawers of table, shows keys.*

OLIVER: Thank God.

EMILY: You know what this mean.

OLIVER: Yes. I could check place of murder myself.

EMILY: Not the best idea. I thought about that you have no motive to enter openly, if you could use keys and kill her in every moment that you wish.

OLIVER: Thank you.

EMILY: Why you start to jealous your ex-wife now?

OLIVER: According to police, I argued with my girlfriend.

EMILY: And wanted to kill you ex-wife lover.

OLIVER: Why not?

EMILY: Yes. You had free evening.

OLIVER: You don't believe that I'm a killer.

EMILY: Are you disappointed?

OLIVER: I don't know.

EMILY: Fight?

OLIVER: No. Both victims didn't struggle.

EMILY: They didn't afraid of killer.

OLIVER: Or underestimate killer.

EMILY: I hope you didn't go to that place and check everything.

OLIVER: Why you care?

EMILY: I don't know. But officially, I worry because you will be witness at my divorce court.

OLIVER: Pleasant inviting.

EMILY: Of course, if you won't kill someone else.

OLIVER: A bit of suspicious.

EMILY: I just want to make you happy about that.

*Sound of doorbell.*

OLIVER: Police? Did they find something?

EMILY: Did you kill someone else?

OLIVER: I'll open the door and we will know.

*Oliver exits.*

*Scene 12.*

*Enters Tony with Oliver.*

TONY: Sorry, it's late, but... I didn't know that you are not alone.

OLIVER: She is my client and already goes away.

EMILY: He always tell that to strangers. I'm Emily. I think you don't ask me to go away if you asked me to spend this night with you, Oliver.

TONY: Tony. I was working. Did you hear that terrible story about Valerie?

EMILY: Oh, yes. I'm his alibi.

TONY: I understand.

OLIVER: Did you want to tell me something, Tony?

TONY: They closed our puppet studio till the end of investigation. We... I have there unfinished projects. Don't you know, Oliver, how long it could last?

OLIVER: Better ask police.

TONY: They said till the end of investigation. Any exact dates.

EMILY: They always said so. Didn't you upset about murders?

TONY: Terrible. They were part of my family. I used to live in big family. Doctor gave me some pills, and I feel myself calm and dumb.

EMILY: Then you better go home.

TONY: What do you think about Valerie's death, Oliver?

OLIVER: Could be coincident. You know. Valerie's character... she could...

TONY: Twisted in something to make clear Karl's prestige.

OLIVER: Yes. Is Punch on his place?

TONY: Yes. I checked. I also thought that it could be because of him.

OLIVER: He didn't cost a fortune.

TONY: He is not cheap either. Burglary to have him, without any price.

OLIVER: You better go home. Police will ask you over and over again. You'll be drained of that story. I'll check studio by myself. Everything will be all right.

TONY: Yes. You know better. Bye, sorry to interrupt. Night.

*Tony exits.*

*Scene 13.*

OLIVER: What was that?

EMILY: I thought he is our main suspect, one who is left alive.

OLIVER: He is.

EMILY: Than how I could leave you alone with him.

OLIVER: It's not your business.

EMILY: He saw me, and I told that be all night here. If he prefer to kill impulsively, he won't kill both.

OLIVER: Pure logic. You also have to go to bed.

EMILY: Fine. I'll stay.

OLIVER: In your bed. In your home. I'm a big boy.

EMILY: You have to promise me that you won't go at that setting.

OLIVER: You are my client. Not vice versa.

EMILY: I wait.

OLIVER: I didn't go. I promise. See you next time on the court. Bye.

EMILY: You give me a word.

OLIVER: I show you a way out.

EMILY: Stupid man. You earn this death.

*Emily exits.*

*Scene 14.*

OLIVER: What she could know? I will try to find new evidences. There are thousands of puppet pieces, maybe some of them are also valuable. Killer just can't find it. Also he didn't or she didn't kill every day. I have a chance to check everything.

Keys it's a good gift from Valerie. She frequently forgot them.

Of course I need to check all documents. Too much certificates gave Karl for dolls to be such a poor man. I asked only at few shops, every week he send new toy and every time with history. He wasn't a gambler. Where he could put all money? Yes, Tony is main suspect. He could inherit all business. But what he will do without Karl's name and Valerie's knowledge about puppets.

And main question, from where Karl had so many valuable toys. He didn't make them personally. Or did he? In that case Karl should be the killer, not the victim. I'll go and find out. I'm not planning to pay attention to the words of my clients.

Do you hear me, Emily? I'm big boy and some battles I could win alone. Like always won.

*Oliver exits.*

*Blackout.*

*Scene 15.*

*Puppet's master studio.*

*Oliver has keys in hand, Tony has knife.*

OLIVER: I knew that it was you, Tony.

TONY: I have a knife and you want to talk.

OLIVER: Maybe it's our final opportunity.

TONY: Last wish.

OLIVER: Could be.

TONY: Accepted. What you want to know? Your curiosity bring you here.

OLIVER: Why you killed Karl?

TONY: You think it wasn't me who killed Valerie.

OLIVER: Oh, no. I didn't underestimate you. It was you who killed my ex-wife. And I know why you kill her. She started to ask questions. Than she went to me. We argued, you know that I was great target as suspect in her murder. Why Karl?

TONY: You saw his work.

OLIVER: Yes they were amazing.

TONY: Alive. That word they said every time. Alive. And what I made – toys. His puppets were alive. I was near him every day. Hand in hand we made all that puppets, I learned from him. They saw them and say: It was made by Karl, it is alive.

OLIVER: Salieri's complex, Antonio.

TONY: You could say that. He also was composer.

OLIVER: But near him was genius.

TONY: They forgive him everything.

OLIVER: Like yours false stories about toys.

TONY: They said that could happened to everyone.

OLIVER: But Karl knew that it wasn't his fault. Money.

TONY: Yes.

OLIVER: He started digging.

TONY: Too deep. Too fast.

OLIVER: After he knew how many deals you made to sale toys.

TONY: I told him that could give him half of money.

OLIVER: He contradict.

TONY: Karl said that my toys dead because I can't give part of my soul. I haven't a soul.

OLIVER: And you kill him



TONY: I want him just shut up.

OLIVER: Then you was frightened about what you did.

TONY: Just shut up.

OLIVER: And you tell Valerie about curse of puppet. You can't stop that deal.

TONY: Greatest deal among all which I had.

OLIVER: Shakespeare's time Punch.

TONY: Two millions.

OLIVER: And you kill two people.

TONY: Curse of doll.

OLIVER: You wanted to destroy Karl, his work, everything.

TONY: And now I'll kill you.

OLIVER: Too late.

*Backstage "Police, open the door!"*

OLIVER: Not closed!

*Blackout.*

*Scene 16.*

*Oliver's house.*

*Oliver and Emily sit in armchairs.*

OLIVER: I owe you my gratitude.

EMILY: If you have to.

OLIVER: I really appreciate your help and that you called police.

EMILY: I'm glad that they came on time. They save me from the role of inexperienced hero.

OLIVER: When did you guess?

EMILY: About Tony. Just had doubts. I was sure about you.

OLIVER: Me?

EMILY: Yes. When you saw that keys I knew, you will try to find a prove and scare off the murderer. And when I saw Tony.

OLIVER: Did you see?

EMILY: Yes. I was follow you in my car.

OLIVER: I was imperceptible.

EMILY: I noticed. I checked address of puppet's studio and drove to it directly.

OLIVER: I believed that I am not such predictable person.

EMILY: Oliver, are you disappointed that police save you?

OLIVER: Emily, you saved me, not the police.

EMILY: You will forget about it, soon.

OLIVER: Never. Did you hear that I am also cursed with that puppetry studio?

EMILY: How?

OLIVER: Last will of Valerie.

EMILY: I didn't understand. She worked there.

OLIVER: Yes, and when Karl first time noticed mistake of Tony he changed owner, everything had Valerie.

EMILY: Did Tony know?

OLIVER: For my opinion, not. And her will was everything to me, like in mine everything to her.

EMILY: Real love.

OLIVER: We both were poor at that moment.

EMILY: Tony, because of this killed her.

OLIVER: No, she asked too many questions. And believed that every

Karl's opinion is unmistakable.

EMILY: What you will do with that inherit?

OLIVER: I don't know. It's not my style of life. I understand nothing with it. And that Punch – two people are dead, one is in the prison. Like for me it's a lot for a little doll.

EMILY: That Punch lived longer than all his owners.

OLIVER: This is also scares me. I prefer real people.

EMILY: What would do Valerie at your place?

OLIVER: I think celebrated my death and give away my belongings.

EMILY: I asked about puppetry studio.

OLIVER: Oh! She'll find someone who likes puppets like she or Karl and made everything that work of her life will last.

EMILY: You could do that for her.

OLIVER: She could approve you.

EMILY: Me?

OLIVER: As my wife.

EMILY: Didn't you forget something?

OLIVER: Your divorce.

EMILY: Primary.

OLIVER: We could wait if you want to wait.

EMILY: I will think about it.

OLIVER: I'm in no rush.

EMILY: Cheers!

OLIVER: Cheers!

EMILY: And one last thing.

OLIVER: Yes.

EMILY: You need to paint one more fish on door of your garage.

OLIVER: It's not woman or client...

EMILY: I know. I just saw another dead fish on the top of aquarium. Most

of them could be alive if you frequently changed water in the goldfish bowl.

OLIVER: You have observant eye for details.

*Oliver rises his glass, Emily rises her glass.*

*CURTAIN.*



More about play:

Some plays need only one week from idea to finished draft, another take months or years.

Idea of that story was written at 7.12.2009. It have to be a mystery novel. Like always with me, I didn't remember all the story. It was written long ago. Just draft, everything what I remembered was name of story "Murder of puppet master". I know that my life would be easy if at first I read what I wrote years ago, before start to write new, but in that case I lose feeling of surprise from my previous work. I changed absolutely all connections in play, one thing that stayed the same - beginning with aquarium.

Dead fishes is my repeated image. Doctor Freud, I have an explanation for that. In elementary school we have in class room aquarium. I was quiet girl, (yes, I was), diligent and teacher decided that I could take care of aquarium and not destroy it. Little landing net with dead gold fishes was my daily nightmare. It supposed to brought love to nature or made person a necrophiliac. I think because of this I haven't any pets at home and don't like herbariums. So don't be scared, dead fish is not a symbol, it's just hard past of pedagogics' experiment.

Back to play. Someday I'll write that story which I didn't finished before. Now I made new one. More about puppetry and less about curse. I start to write it on 16.10.2014, personal problems forced me to stop and at March 2015 I finished play. Of course, idea about Yorik came only after I wrote "Actor plays Hamlet".

At first I wanted to have classical Punch. I didn't manage to buy one. I found pattern on-line and changed my mind.



It would be my toy, exclusively made. If it deserves Yorik's soliloquy, it merits individuality. Hamlet is always in my mind. So I made toy pathetic and formal. Not look like character of Commedia dell Arte. But his face need to be scary enough to acquaint him as Yorik.



I read few frightening stories and books about marionettes which came alive and try to kill everybody. It was long ago. So I want to make some mystery, not the horror.

Story of Pinocchio was adapted for Russian language and it was popular story of Burattini (Буратино). His father was Karl, I knew which name will have owner. Victim, puppet maker in hands of whom puppets became alive not on the stage, because his story is story of fairy-tale.

I have adoration to puppet's theatre. Of course, I played with dolls, but also have table theatre from paper. It has script written in book, but I liked to invent my own. Now I have props, mannequins and it is my work. I never think it will be my path.

Information about dates and dolls I took from The History of the English Puppet theatre by George Speaight w.archive.org. It have to sound reliable, even inside invented story.

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