

Katerina Aksonova. RETIRED SPIES.



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CHARACTERS:

CLOTILDA - old woman, Leonard's wife, Bartholomew's mother.

LEONARD - old man, Clotilda's husband, Bartholomew's father.

BARTHOLOMEW - man near 40 years old, Clotilda's and Leonard's son.

Scene 1.



On the stage is cottage in the mountains. Two apple trees are outside cottage.

CLOTILDA and LEONARD go out of cottage.

Clotilda wears long blue dress. Leonard wears black trousers and checked sleeveless shirt, glasses on his head.



Inside cottage is kitchen.

CLOTILDA: I think you could prepare all.

LEONARD: Bartholomew promised to be on time.

CLOTILDA: Of course, but for him work is more important than picnic in parent's new house.

LEONARD: Will you tell about that day always?

CLOTILDA: You meant that my son didn't come on my birthday. Yes.

LEONARD: He had a work.

CLOTILDA: I already told about that.

LEONARD: Do you prefer him jobless?

CLOTILDA: You said a truly stupid thing.

LEONARD: Then don't grumble.

Sound of helicopter.

CLOTILDA: Again is rescue operation in mountains.

LEONARD: He could be more secretive.

CLOTILDA: Who?

LEONARD: Alpinist.

CLOTILDA: Better we'll wait him inside.

LEONARD: As you say.

Clotilda and Leonard come back into cottage. Door closed.

Scene 2.



Enters BARTHOLOMEW. He wears black trousers and white with flowers sleeveless shirt. Beard, whiskers, moustache.

Bartholomew rings on the door, sound of doorbell and dog's bark.

BARTHOLOMEW: I hope they didn't hear helicopter. Strange, they told me nothing about the dog.

Scene 3.

Door opens. Clotilda and Leonard embrace hard Bartholomew.

LEONARD: What I told you?

CLOTILDA: I always knew that Bartholomew will come.

BARTHOLOMEW: Yes. I tried and managed to do this.

CLOTILDA: Yes, we won't mention about my birthday.

BARTHOLOMEW: Mum!



CLOTILDA: Come inside!

LEONARD: You must be quieter.

BARTHOLOMEW: I was in a rush.

CLOTILDA: Fine, we accepted this explanation.

BARTHOLOMEW: You have a dog!

LEONARD: You wanted one, when you were a child.

BARTHOLOMEW: Yes.

CLOTILDA: And now we have doorbell with dog bark. From it is not a speck of dust.

All come inside house.

Scene 4.

Out of house enter Bartholomew and Leonard they carry an armchair.



BARTHOLOMEW: What did you do?

LEONARD: Me?

BARTHOLOMEW: Yes.

LEONARD: Armchair is for your mother. It would be cosy to her.

BARTHOLOMEW: Yes. Armchair at picnic.

LEONARD: Yes.

BARTHOLOMEW: Preparation for picnic.

LEONARD: Yes. I'm loving husband. If you didn't meet woman for whom you will want...

BARTHOLOMEW: I'm your son.

LEONARD: That mother's vase.

BARTHOLOMEW: Blue one.

LEONARD: Of course.

BARTHOLOMEW: And you try to smooth over your fault.

LEONARD: Mine? She put vase near my newspaper.

BARTHOLOMEW: Did she know?

LEONARD: Not yet.

BARTHOLOMEW: Will we put armchair near apple tree?

LEONARD: Yes.



Bartholomew and Leonard place armchair near apple tree.

BARTHOLOMEW: You could phone me.

LEONARD: Since when you can buy porcelain in Latin America.

BARTHOLOMEW: Celui qui cherche trouve. How do you know?

LEONARD: I watched the news. And this silly beard.

BARTHOLOMEW: It helps me look like macho.

LEONARD: I am glad, that at least you believe in that.

Scene 5.

From house enters Clotilda, she carries a chair.



CLOTILDA: Two men are at home and I have to do everything myself.

LEONARD: Why do you need that chair?

CLOTILDA: Where I ought to sit?

BARTHOLOMEW: Mother, I'll help you.



Bartholomew takes chair from Clotilda's hand.

CLOTILDA: Thank you, darling. (sits down in the armchair) You always remember about me. Armchair is in the garden, isn't it wonderful? That's my son.



LEONARD: Our son.

BARTHOLOMEW: Yes. And about armchair, it was father's idea.

CLOTILDA: Finally you start to think about me, Leonard.

LEONARD: I'll go and check in kitchen.

Leonard walks away. Bartholomew goes after Leonard.



CLOTILDA: Bardo, stay. I want to talk to you.
Leonard exits.

Scene 6.

CLOTILDA: Please, put this armchair a little bit to left and sit near me.
Bartholomew puts armchair and sits near Clotilda.



BARTHOLOMEW: What about you want to talk?
CLOTILDA: You know yourself.
BARTHOLOMEW: Oh, aren't I? Yes. About that bizarre red boots which I have to put on in the garden.
CLOTILDA: Boots are not eccentric.
BARTHOLOMEW: Didn't you hear? I said red.
CLOTILDA: I don't need mud inside my house.
BARTHOLOMEW: Magnificent.
CLOTILDA: I want to speak about your father.
BARTHOLOMEW: Do I know him?
CLOTILDA: Bartholomew!
BARTHOLOMEW: Yes. You had in mind my father, the one who is in kitchen now. Great.
CLOTILDA: Don't you think that your father...
BARTHOLOMEW: Yes?
CLOTILDA: Don't you think that he started going bald.
BARTHOLOMEW: What? No.
CLOTILDA: Look intently at him.
BARTHOLOMEW: You are wrong.
CLOTILDA: I realize it. I'm his wife and you could tell me all truth.

BARTHOLOMEW: Yes. You are right. Every time when I see him he has less hair.

CLOTILDA: I knew!

BARTHOLOMEW: May I go?

Bartholomew stands up and goes toward the house.



CLOTILDA: Bartholomew! Come back!

BARTHOLOMEW: Yes, Madam!

Bartholomew comes back and sits down in chair.



CLOTILDA: Your father is getting older.

BARTHOLOMEW: Yes, I heard that he is bald.

CLOTILDA: Yes, he is aged. But he is brainy.

BARTHOLOMEW: Did he, indeed?

CLOTILDA: You thought father didn't hear sound of helicopter, didn't you?

BARTHOLOMEW: Helicopter just passed by! And you are quick-witted.

CLOTILDA: Yes. I told him about rescue operation in mountains.

BARTHOLOMEW: I believed in you.

CLOTILDA: You look odd.

BARTHOLOMEW: Didn't you like my beard?

CLOTILDA: Latin America, I hope they believed that you are one of them.

BARTHOLOMEW: Not. Actually. I worked openly. You know - Secret Service we are here to save you.

CLOTILDA: Quietly. Father is not deaf.

BARTHOLOMEW: Yes, he is family treasure.

CLOTILDA: I know, but don't tell him that I admit that.

BARTHOLOMEW: You have my word.

CLOTILDA: Do you want to tell me something?

BARTHOLOMEW: Not. No. That meaningful glance. I didn't bring with me

señorita and we will not have little bambinos in near future.

CLOTILDA: Niños.

BARTHOLOMEW: You always were good at languages.

CLOTILDA: You are not planning to tell father.

BARTHOLOMEW: What about?

CLOTILDA: Our profession.

BARTHOLOMEW: And you?

CLOTILDA: To tell him after so many years! Don't be ridiculous. Why are you here?

BARTHOLOMEW: I hope that you are glad to see me.

CLOTILDA: It's obvious. But you came on helicopter. And government never approves such expenses. If only...

BARTHOLOMEW: Yes. If only. Country needs its best experts.

CLOTILDA: Again you ruin my picnic.

BARTHOLOMEW: No. World-saving could wait till late evening.

CLOTILDA: Heavens, my son said pleasant thing!

BARTHOLOMEW: Mum, I am all the time...

CLOTILDA: I knew better!

Scene 7.

Leonard enters from house, he carries a chair.



LEONARD: Clotilda, I think chickens need you more than me.

CLOTILDA: White meat have to be crunchy, not overdone.

LEONARD: You understand it better.

Clotilda walks toward house.



CLOTILDA: Bardo, will you come with me?
LEONARD: No, I want to show our son my garden.
BARTHOLOMEW: Yes, it will be interesting.
Clotilda exits.

Scene 8.

BARTHOLOMEW: Garden?



LEONARD: First what came to my mind. We need to talk.
BARTHOLOMEW: What about?
LEONARD: About your mum.
BARTHOLOMEW (aside): Hope not about that mother also lost her hair.
LEONARD: Your mother is getting older.
BARTHOLOMEW: Unbelievable.
LEONARD: But she is not stupid.
BARTHOLOMEW: I never think about her in that way.
LEONARD: Yes? And you came here on helicopter. She is not deaf.
BARTHOLOMEW: I hope that you invented something.
LEONARD: I needn't to do that. She told herself about rescue operation in mountains.
BARTHOLOMEW: I'm happy.
LEONARD: Why are you here?
BARTHOLOMEW: I hope you are delighted to see me.
LEONARD: You came on helicopter. And government never approves such expenses.
BARTHOLOMEW: If mother heard you now.
LEONARD: Are you going to tell her?
BARTHOLOMEW: About what?
LEONARD: Our profession.
BARTHOLOMEW: And you?
LEONARD: After so many years. Don't be ridiculous.
BARTHOLOMEW: The openness would be a gift for all of us.
LEONARD: I don't think so. Why you came?
BARTHOLOMEW: Country needs it's best experts.
LEONARD: Again you are ruining mother's picnic.
BARTHOLOMEW: Everything is not so dramatic. Protecting the humanity will wait till late evening.
LEONARD: Glad to hear.

Scene 9.

From house comes Clotilda, she carries big plate.



CLOTILDA: I saved chickens. I mean they will not fly again, but they are perfect to eat. Where I suppose to put that plate?

BARTHOLOMEW: Sit, mother, now we bring everything.

Bartholomew and Leonard enter into house then they come back with first coffee table.



LEONARD: Here we are.

CLOTILDA: Put table in this place.

Bartholomew and Leonard put coffee table in front of chairs, Clotilda puts plate on table.



CLOTILDA: Be careful! We need one more table. We'll have a lot of guests.
 Bartholomew and Leonard enter into house then they come back with second coffee table, which they put near first.



CLOTILDA: Set is lovely, isn't it?

LEONARD: I think we will need my unique drink.

Leonard enters into house then comes with jar, which he puts on second table.



CLOTILDA: Now we could talk!

BARTHOLOMEW: When come guests?

LEONARD: We have enough time.

CLOTILDA: Darling, your moustache unstuck.

BARTHOLOMEW: Thank you, mum.

LEONARD: I see rather bad without glasses.

CLOTILDA: Wear them!

LEONARD: I don't know where are my glasses.

BARTHOLOMEW: On your head.

LEONARD: Your mother never told me that.

CLOTILDA: You didn't listen to me.

BARTHOLOMEW: What's new?

LEONARD: I'm fine, thank you for asking.

CLOTILDA: Yes. Two days he goes without stick and everything is fine.

LEONARD: But I'm walking.

BARTHOLOMEW: Have you any news about that car incident?

CLOTILDA: You know my statement.

BARTHOLOMEW: Yes, father forgot his glasses.

LEONARD: Protest. They were with me.

CLOTILDA: On eyes?

BARTHOLOMEW: Yes.

LEONARD: Yes.

CLOTILDA: You are always together against me.

LEONARD: Clotilda!

CLOTILDA: Thank God, the same left leg.

BARTHOLOMEW: Pardon me.

CLOTILDA: The same leg which was wounded when your father was in army. Could be such a pity if he injured healthy leg.

LEONARD: I don't want to recall it.

CLOTILDA: And I want!

BARTHOLOMEW: Father!

LEONARD: Soldiers never talk about their scratches.

CLOTILDA: And soldier's wife talk. Thank God it was the same leg. All this years I was keeping that spare implant, which doctor gave him in military hospital. I am glad that come the day when it became useful.

BARTHOLOMEW: Mum!

CLOTILDA: I have in mind that implant helped in operation. Sorry I need to bring one more thing.



Clotilda enters into house.

Scene 10.

LEONARD: Clotilda absented herself and I remembered about one object.

BARTHOLOMEW: Do you need my help?

LEONARD: Relax, when you have such opportunity. And your moustache unstuck again.



BARTHOLOMEW: Thank you, dad.
 LEONARD: I will be in garage.
 Leonard exits.

Scene 11.

BARTHOLOMEW: It's enjoyable to be here. Fresh air. Father's favourite drink.



Bartholomew stands up and comes near table.

BARTHOLOMEW: I can't call this place home, too bad. But I am glad that parents live here. I don't know if they still interested in previous work. Maybe, using old spies wasn't a good idea. Parents look like normal retired people. Not like retired spies. Yes they talk with pleasure about awesome old times, but I don't think they need again such life. What's the hell?

Scene 12.

BARTHOLOMEW: What's the hell?
 Leonard enters and drags enormous hand grenade.



BARTHOLOMEW: Father, what's the hell?

LEONARD: Where?

BARTHOLOMEW: In your hands.

LEONARD: Pro A-IX-I 26-13-83. Dear, you absolutely need glasses if you didn't see it.

BARTHOLOMEW: I see. But I didn't believe my eyes.

LEONARD: You have to believe yourself. Sometimes the sole person to whom

you could trust is only yourself.

BARTHOLOMEW: What is it?

LEONARD: Lighter.

BARTHOLOMEW: Why?

LEONARD: Somebody will want to smoke.

BARTHOLOMEW: With that? And you know that mother is against cigarettes.

LEONARD: Yes. She approves only those which are in sugar jug in cupboard.

BARTHOLOMEW: Dad!

LEONARD: Sorry, I didn't suppose that it will be such a shock for you.

BARTHOLOMEW: Where did you get grenade?

LEONARD: Boys' gift at retirement party. And flame it's not everything that lighter makes.

BARTHOLOMEW: I can only conjecture about it.

LEONARD: You have to know what they tell behind your back, when you come for another bottle. It would be engaging.

BARTHOLOMEW: Daddy!

LEONARD: What? You don't validate. Fine. For you is essential to learn how to have fun in life. OK, I put gift back to garage.

BARTHOLOMEW: How it works?



LEONARD: Are you interested?

BARTHOLOMEW: Yes.

LEONARD: I live grenade here.

BARTHOLOMEW: No.

LEONARD: Next time. Fair.

Leonard takes hand-grenade away.



BARTHOLOMEW: I could help you.

LEONARD: No.

BARTHOLOMEW: You imply you don't want me to know code of garage.

LEONARD: We have to be cautious, they could torture you.

Leonard exits.

Scene 13.

BARTHOLOMEW: Yes, father is still in game. I hope mummy didn't fascinate in Secret Service no more.



Perhaps my bosses knew about my parents more than me. Who knows?
Boys' gift. Heaven!

Scene 14.

From house comes Clotilda with a knitting basket in hand.



CLOTILDA: I come back.

BARTHOLOMEW: Are you planning to knit?

CLOTILDA: Guests aren't arrive yet.

BARTHOLOMEW: I will help you.

Clotilda sits in armchair. Bartholomew puts basket on the table and starts to inspect it.



CLOTILDA: Are you interesting in knitting?

BARTHOLOMEW: Not. Only in portable listening device.

CLOTILDA: Lovely.

BARTHOLOMEW: Mother!

CLOTILDA: What? I need to know what this people will say about my chickens.

BARTHOLOMEW: Knitting basket on picnic looks strange.

CLOTILDA: We are new people and have different habits. Put basket near armchair.

BARTHOLOMEW: As you say.



Bartholomew puts knitting basket near armchair.

Scene 15.

Enters Leonard, he carries a bunch of grapes.



LEONARD: I thought that grapes are appropriately.

CLOTILDA: Yes, very refreshing.

Leonard puts grapes on the plate. Bartholomew goes toward house.



BARTHOLOMEW: I'll bring some goblets.

CLOTILDA: Thank you, darling.

BARTHOLOMEW: I need to drink, desperately.

Bartholomew enters into house.

Scene 16.

Leonard sits on chair near Clotilda.

LEONARD: I think we have to tell him.

CLOTILDA: Now?

LEONARD: Not necessary immediately. We could inform him later, after picnic.



CLOTILDA: You will wait till he will drank... and...

LEONARD: No. I just nervous that this news will spoil your party. Splendiferous, you bring portable listening device.

CLOTILDA: I need to know what this people will tell about my food.

LEONARD: Yes. And my distinctive drink.

CLOTILDA: Bartholomew will be furious when he know that we were lying to him.

LEONARD: Didn't tell all the truth!

CLOTILDA: Yes. He will be disappointed.

LEONARD: I think life will be easier for him.

CLOTILDA: Such news you never told on telephone.

LEONARD: I know.
CLOTILDA: Today he is relaxed.
LEONARD: I believe, we have to be resolute.
CLOTILDA: We signed all that papers.
LEONARD: No matter.
CLOTILDA: Yes, if our son needs us.
LEONARD: Yes.

Scene 17.

Enters Bartholomew.



BARTHOLOMEW: Goblets! Did I miss something?
Sound of many people voices outside stage.
Blackout.

Scene 18.

Bartholomew sits on chair, near him stand Leonard and Clotilda. They all are not sober. On the table are empty goblets. One chair is turned up.



CLOTILDA: We wanted to tell you, honestly.
BARTHOLOMEW: When?
LEONARD: On particular moment.
BARTHOLOMEW: All this years I played a fool. You were laughing behind my back.
CLOTILDA: No.
LEONARD: We never think about...

BARTHOLOMEW: To tell me.

CLOTILDA: Yes.

LEONARD: No.

BARTHOLOMEW: You thought that picnic is great opportunity to reveal story to me.

LEONARD: We aren't planning.

BARTHOLOMEW: You even not intend to tell.

CLOTILDA: We were worry about you.

BARTHOLOMEW: I didn't notice. Father, how it happened?

LEONARD: It was just an accident.

BARTHOLOMEW: Sorry?

LEONARD: Yes. I'm too old and I forgot about garage. And that young neighbour. It was just an accident. Little electric shock. Nothing to remember about.

BARTHOLOMEW: Did you tell this story to ambulance?

CLOTILDA: Of course. He never told the truth.

LEONARD: All sincerity.

CLOTILDA: No. You asked him to brought some vine from garage. I agree that he was stupid enough to believed to that. Your father is very revengeful.

LEONARD: No.

BARTHOLOMEW: Yes.

LEONARD: It just happened.

CLOTILDA: After lad told you that you look foolish in that old hippy T-shirt.

LEONARD: People differ in their tastes.

CLOTILDA: Eventually someone imagined that you look like hippy. When it was necessary you couldn't convinced no one.

LEONARD: Old story.

BARTHOLOMEW: Are you thinking that I'm talking about that neighbour?

CLOTILDA: About what else, darling.

BARTHOLOMEW: For how long secrets are only from me?

LEONARD: Did you ask about Secret Service?

BARTHOLOMEW: Yes. You have to confess.

CLOTILDA: Conversation will be long. So let's sit comfortable. Leonard sits on armchair you have injured leg. I sit on chair, near Bartholomew.

Clotilda sits on chair, Leonard sits in armchair.



BARTHOLOMEW: Is it only my opinion that it looks like trap?

LEONARD: How you could tell this.

BARTHOLOMEW: From previous experience.

CLOTILDA: What do you want to know?

BARTHOLOMEW: For how long you know about each other's work? I checked you never worked together.

CLOTILDA: Did you investigate your parents?

BARTHOLOMEW: Yes. Why it shocked you? I believe you tested your husband.

CLOTILDA: Me? Never.

LEONARD: Clotilda, we promised - no more lies.

CLOTILDA: I never scrutinized my husband. And you Leonard... Did you survey my past?

LEONARD: Of course. I have to know to whom I had married.

CLOTILDA: You men.

BARTHOLOMEW: Mother!

CLOTILDA: I told what I told.

LEONARD: Really?

CLOTILDA: Truly. Why I needed to verify my husband when I elucidated all about Leonard after our first date.

LEONARD: What?

CLOTILDA: You could be dangerous.

BARTHOLOMEW: Stop. Since when you tell everything to each other?

LEONARD: My car accident.

CLOTILDA: Yes, doctors were so pessimistic. And I think that he will die, so I tell him.

LEONARD: Yes, we had a difficult matter and now all cards are open.

BARTHOLOMEW: You could write me a postcard.

CLOTILDA: Which?

BARTHOLOMEW: Something like that: Dear son, we know everything. No more work as double agent. Lots of love, parents.

LEONARD: I told you that he will be fierce.

BARTHOLOMEW: Who? Me? Never. I'm tranquil. My bosses were right.

LEONARD: What about?

BARTHOLOMEW: New generation of spies don't prepare for your tactic.

CLOTILDA: Really? Did they say that?

LEONARD: Who?

BARTHOLOMEW: Commander Z.

CLOTILDA: Is he still alive?

BARTHOLOMEW: Strange. He asked the same question about you, mother.

CLOTILDA: Bastard. Thank God that you smashed that stupid vase, Leonard.

LEONARD: She never forgot about him.

CLOTILDA: Nonsense.

BARTHOLOMEW: Is it everything that you want to tell me?

LEONARD: I think so.

Sound of helicopter behind stage.

BARTHOLOMEW: Time to go. We should be ready.

LEONARD: We always prepared.

CLOTILDA: When our country needs us.

All stand up, chairs fall on stage. Clotilda takes knitting basket. Bartholomew makes one sip from goblet.



BARTHOLOMEW: Mummy, why you need those knitting?

LEONARD: She keeps in basket few spare guns.

BARTHOLOMEW: Mum!

CLOTILDA: Just in case.

Clotilda, Bartholomew, Leonard come near the proscenium. Sound of helicopter closer.



CURTAIN.

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