

Kateryna Aksonova. CHRISTMAS SPECIAL.



November 2014.

CHARACTERS:

CAROL - editor, woman near 60.

WILHELM - writer, man over 50.

OCTAVIA - translator, woman over 30.

JULIAN - translator, man near 40.

Scene 1.

Big library in publishing house. Book's posters, few tables, chairs. Decorated Christmas tree. Holiday's illumination. Door to office.

Sound of joyful party off-stage.

Enters CAROL. After her goes JULIAN.

When they enter, sounds of party is fade out and we hear carol "God bless you merry gentleman".

CAROL: Here you are!

JULIAN: I'm glad.

CAROL: Truly? Julian, are you still excited about this annual ritual.

JULIAN: Carol, as long as you are going to notify about something special.

CAROL: Certainly. About your new contract.

JULIAN: Did you enjoy my translation?

CAROL: By all means, it's delightful. Not to translate word for word, but to preserve the general style and force of the language. (Cicero)

JULIAN: And?

CAROL: This year we will have a Christmas Special.

JULIAN: Sorry? I didn't get it.

CAROL: This year we have two finalists.

JULIAN: You gave this text to someone else.

CAROL: I wasn't planning. It's wonderful. A drop of competition don't upset no one.

JULIAN: I believe I will hear your traditional speech and...

CAROL: This year we have changes.

JULIAN: I trailed.

CAROL: Don't be pessimistic.

JULIAN: If I am here alone and you have two finalists. I understand... I won.

CAROL: Don't be so optimistic.

JULIAN: Tell me what to think.

CAROL: Just wait a little. Keep Christmas in your own way, and let me keep it in mine. (Dickens)

JULIAN: Fair. I will wait.

CAROL: Don't make such a face. You are not a little boy.

JULIAN: What face?

CAROL: This year not me, but another person choose the prizewinner.

JULIAN: Who?

CAROL: Be patient. I told you more than I should. Wait here.

Carol exits. For few moments we again hear joyful party off-stage.

Scene 2.

JULIAN: Wait here. Yes. Lovely. Once upon a time - of all the good days in the year, on Christmas Eve. (Dickens) I don't know what to think about my next contract.

How Carol agreed to have a contest? Whose idea it was?

I have to be one and only interpreter of this text. Readers wait for my words. My audience. Carol knows it. Why now she has doubts?

How could she translate this text better than me? All my works are just peace of art, I never told them about my professional doubts.

It's not my first work with Wilhelm's texts. They words: astonished, gorgeous. It could be compare to original work. Words sounded the same way as Wilhelm wrote them. The translator has to do consciously what the author did instinctively. (Richard Reveal)

I used to heard all Carol's usual words. I want to have my new contract before Christmas and go on holidays.

Where I was wrong? In text, possible. Maybe, Carol believes that audience is sick of me now. I heard that, read that. Our Julian is always in projects with big money, no matter if someone want him there or not. How I make me worse than I am? Publishers believe that my name brings money to every text. I spent years to made my reputation. And now, when I realise what I can, they tired of me.

Perhaps it will be part of advertising campaign. Carol is smart. If I win in contest, critics will shut up. Why I think about that?

I made my job. Authors believe in me. Why I tremble? I wiped what is real competition. I can't even permit an intention that I could lose to somebody else.

Scene 3.

Enter Carol and Octavia.

CAROL: Octavia, did you meet our star, Julian, before?

OCTAVIA: Yes. I saw you. Saw him.

JULIAN: I don't remember when we were introduced to each other. No matter, nice to see you again.

CAROL: Now you both know why you are here.

JULIAN: Seriously?

CAROL: Solemnly.

JULIAN: It is even not her language.

CAROL: Everything changes, like I said.

OCTAVIA: Sorry. If you both don't mind. What's going on?

CAROL: Marley was dead: to begin with. (Dickens)

OCTAVIA: Pardon me.

JULIAN: Quiet.

CAROL: If we were not perfectly convinced that Hamlet's Father died before the play began, there would be nothing more remarkable in his taking a stroll at night, in an easterly wind, upon his own ramparts, than there would be in any other middle-aged gentleman rashly turning out after dark in a breezy spot—say Saint Paul's Churchyard for instance—literally to astonish his son's weak mind. (Dickens)

OCTAVIA: Must I be scared?

CAROL: Marley was dead, like our contest. And we... you are here to appreciate my decision. Not my... We have two finalists for this text. And I congratulate you both. I wanted to tell who is the winner. But I host Christmas Special for you.

Carol's phone rings.

CAROL: Oh, yes, really. Now I come. Wait for me.

Carol exits.

Scene 4.

OCTAVIA: What was that? Must I be scared?

JULIAN: I know Carol for a long time. It's her routine Christmas Speech.

OCTAVIA: Usual?

JULIAN: Yes.

OCTAVIA: What the dickens..? I'll retire to Bedlam.(Dickens)

JULIAN: Exactly. Charles Dickens. A Christmas Carol.

OCTAVIA: Why?

JULIAN: Because it's Christmas.

OCTAVIA: Fine. What is to wait next? Ghost of my previous Christmas, or my former works?

JULIAN: I am here tonight to warn you that you have yet a chance and hope of escaping my fate.(Dickens) Yes, it's her habitual speech when she announces the deal.

OCTAVIA: But if we both are here...

JULIAN: Don't even think about that. We will have another explanation.

OCTAVIA: What about don't think? It's my first Christmas party at this publishing house.

JULIAN: Enjoy it.

OCTAVIA: Relish, like you.

JULIAN: Me? I am devastated. It was my contract and now...

OCTAVIA: What? Are you asking for support from me? You know where to find me.

JULIAN: I am afraid to think about...

OCTAVIA: That winner is me.

JULIAN (loud): In your dreams.

OCTAVIA(shocked): In my dreams? Why I'm here? Believe in it.

JULIAN: It's not your language.

OCTAVIA: Sorry, I forgot to asked permission from you.

Scene 5.

Enter Carol and Wilhelm.

CAROL: Shame to quarrel upon Christmas Day!(Dickens)

JULIAN: It's just. Oh, my God!

OCTAVIA: It couldn't be... Wilhelm!

WILHELM: Strange.

JULIAN: What?

WILHELM: I get accustomed that here all call me William.

JULIAN: It was such a pleasure to translate your text.

OCTAVIA: I am glad to meet you in person.

WILHELM: Relax, today is Christmas Party. I suppose you are Octavia, and you are Julian. Nice to meet you both.

CAROL: How do you like my Christmas Special?

JULIAN: Astonished.

OCTAVIA: Surprising.

WILHELM: I hope it is fascinating experience.

CAROL: Our Wilhelm was so impressed of texts which did both of you. No. Writer tell it better.

WILHELM: Absolutely, thank you. I read both texts. I liked them.

Usually I work with submitted translations, but this time I wanted to try and read work which I don't expect. I admired your words, Octavia, that you just wanted to translate text after you read it.

I have enough time to made my choice. Now I don't want to spoil your party. Here are letters for both. You'll receive them after Christmas. Hope you'll accept my writer's decision.

Wilhelm reaches two letters out of his pocket and offers them to Carol.

WILHELM: They will be safe in your hands.

CAROL: Intriguing. Such a honour. One moment.

Carol takes letters, opens door to office, leaves letters inside room. Then closes the door.

Wilhelm smiles, Julian and Octavia unblinking look at the door.

CAROL: I am as light as a feather, I am as happy as an angel, I am as merry as a schoolboy. Girl. I am as giddy as a drunken man. A merry Christmas to everybody! A happy New Year to all the world! (Dickens) Now we go to celebrate. Come on. All of you.

Sound of "Carol of the Bells" off-stage.

WILHELM: Beautiful carol.

CAROL: You noticed, thank you.

WILHELM: Sometimes you could find inspiration in everything.

CAROL: Octavia, Julian, come on. Wake up. It's beginning of the party, not the

end.

Carol and Wilhelm exit, after them slowly, unwillingly go Octavia and Julian.

Scene 6.

Carol and Octavia come back. Sounds of party backstage.

OCTAVIA: I'm so sorry to annoy you.

CAROL: Not a problem. Headache is a bad companion on party.

OCTAVIA: I could manage myself.

CAROL: Sit and wait.

OCTAVIA: Thank you.

Carol opens door of office, enters in it, after few seconds she exits back with glass of water and pills.

CAROL: It will help.

OCTAVIA: Thanks.

Octavia drinks water and pill.

CAROL: Stay here for few minutes. And return to the party.

Carol goes from stage, than suddenly stops.

CAROL: How stupid of me. I forgot phone.

Carol enters to office, than exits from it and closes door with card, which takes with herself.

CAROL: I hope you will feel better.

OCTAVIA: I will.

Carol smiles and exits. Octavia looks at the door of the office.

Scene 7.

OCTAVIA: What to do? Go out from the party now, unnoticed? It's hard for me such contest. Julian has a name, even fans. And it's my first effort on this language.

Not bad, if Wilhelm chose my interpretation. Was it good enough to become a winner?

Yes, it's writer's pity. Wilhelm didn't want to upset me. And now I have a reason why announcement is after Christmas. Hope for merry Christmas, any bad news. After holidays life again become ordinary and for me will be more comfortable to receive "No".

Fine, I'll wait few more seconds. And than I leave.

I heard, they congratulated. And Julian, he didn't stop them. They even don't read his manuscript, but think it would be fantastic, as regularly.

Indifferently as always, with stupid mistakes. Carol adores Julian. He is best translator in country, she never told him about misprint in books.

And me? I'm stranger to this place. I feel like invader in dream kingdom.
I'll go. I'll sent text to Carol. No. She will stop me. I write a note about leaving
and put it in her door.

Octavia tries to find a piece of paper or pen.

OCTAVIA: Strange thing. Not a pen or a paper. Maybe in Carol's office I'll find something.

Octavia goes to office door and tries to open it.
Door is locked.

Scene 8.

On stage rushes Julian.

JULIAN: I knew it.

OCTAVIA: What? It's you. You frightened me.

JULIAN: Your plan was silly and simple.

OCTAVIA: My plan?

JULIAN: Yes. When I heard from Carol about your headache, I understand everything in a moment.

OCTAVIA: I'm glad. Than you have this.

JULIAN: What?

OCTAVIA: Pen and paper.

JULIAN: Why?

OCTAVIA: If you know my plan, you realise that I need pen and paper to leave note to Carol about my departure.

JULIAN: Note for Carol? And you think I'll believe you.

OCTAVIA: What I do here? Your idea.

JULIAN: You try to enter to the office.

OCTAVIA: Did someone tell you that you are genius?

JULIAN: All the time.

OCTAVIA: Yes. You can see obvious thing. Of course, I try to enter to the office. In library I didn't find a pen or paper. I told you that.

JULIAN: And I don't trust you.

OCTAVIA: Fine. You can look around yourself.

JULIAN: I know what you really need in this office.

OCTAVIA: Tell me. I give up.

JULIAN: Wilhelm's letters. You stay here, pretended that you had a headache and planned to read the letter, to know who is the winner.

OCTAVIA: You have sick imagination.

JULIAN: Don't deny.

OCTAVIA: Stop. If you know about my villainous plan, why you came here. Why you didn't warn Carol?

JULIAN: Because I want...

OCTAVIA: To know the answer. If I have criminal mind, you will receive your letter.

JULIAN: I don't even think about it.

OCTAVIA: Why are you here?

JULIAN: Not everyone had bad notions.

OCTAVIA: I follow your example.

JULIAN: And?
OCTAVIA: What?
JULIAN: What is in the letters?
OCTAVIA: Are you mad?
JULIAN: I am but mad north-north-west. When the wind is southerly, I know a hawk from a handsaw.
OCTAVIA: Door is locked, prince of Denmark.
JULIAN: Really?
OCTAVIA: Try yourself.

Julian tries to open the door.

JULIAN: Locked. But we could...
OCTAVIA: That way you win all your contests.
JULIAN: I was never before in such position.
OCTAVIA: Do you need a stress-manager?
JULIAN: Better a needle.
OCTAVIA: What?
JULIAN: Needle, to open the door.
OCTAVIA: It's locked with card. So...
JULIAN: I caught you. You noticed how door was locked.
OCTAVIA: I translated a lot of mystery novels. I just pay attention for such things.
JULIAN: You don't mind.
OCTAVIA: What?
JULIAN: To know the answer.
OCTAVIA: You could ask Wilhelm.
JULIAN: How it would look like? And you?
OCTAVIA: Ask Wilhelm. Easy!
JULIAN: Yes?
OCTAVIA: It is more normal than to break into the office.
JULIAN: You could be right.
OCTAVIA: Could be?
JULIAN: Or I'll try harder?
OCTAVIA: The Grinch got a wonderful, awful idea! (Dr.Seuss)
JULIAN: Are you afraid?
OCTAVIA: Did that stop the Old Grinch..? (Dr.Seuss)
JULIAN: You remember about childhood or you have such associations because of my green shirt.
OCTAVIA: I have no idea. Maybe both.
JULIAN: If you don't want this, stop me!
OCTAVIA: Call the police?
JULIAN: I wait for lack of understanding from you.

Scene 9.

Enters Wilhelm. Julian quickly moves away from the office door. Octavia sits on the corner of the table.

WILHELM: Sorry, I don't want to interrupt your secludedness.
OCTAVIA: It's not a problem.
JULIAN: Yes, just friend's chat.

WILHELM: I'm glad that you both could communicate placidly with each other.

JULIAN: Habit.

WILHELM: Could I sit with you? One more question about my next book and I can't be polite longer.

OCTAVIA: Exasperated.

WILHELM: Extremely. They think that writer need the same amount of time to write a novel, like reader to read.

JULIAN: The same is with translators. All the time publishing house insist to be faster. I answer them - at least we need the same amount of time as writer.

WILHELM: Yes. Time from first draft to final.

OCTAVIA: You believe in revising.

WILHELM: With all my heart. Because of this I asked a first draft of your translation.

OCTAVIA: It was the strangest wish from author.

JULIAN: And you make it come true. Even with such amount of childish mistakes.

Octavia looks astonished at Julian, he doesn't notice it.

WILHELM: Strange way of work. But when I see your final draft. Sometimes in wrong way you find correct decision.

OCTAVIA: It was unfinished...

WILHELM: I know about it. But changes which you made were incredible.

OCTAVIA: Translate without fear. Proofread without mercy.

WILHELM: Great.

OCTAVIA: Because of my changes you chose my work?

JULIAN: Did you mean to final opposition?

WILHELM: You want the answer to the same question, Julian.

JULIAN: Almost.

WILHELM: Julian, your work is professional. You know where to put every word, every semicolon.

JULIAN: Is it bad?

WILHELM: Books are like women, Julian.

JULIAN: Wordy.

WILHELM: They all are different.

OCTAVIA: But Julian uses his predictable charm every time.

WILHELM: I really think that you both spend time lovely without me.

JULIAN: Please stay. It is such a pleasure.

OCTAVIA: Such a honour.

WILHELM: Maybe. But you, interpreters, give my words to the whole world.

Like said José Saramago: writers create national literatures with their language, but world literature is written by translators.

JULIAN: Not all writers agree with him.

OCTAVIA: Most quotes about translators are disapproving.

WILHELM: Never think about that.

JULIAN: Nothing which is harmonized by the bond of the Muse can be changed from its own to another language without destroying its sweetness. (Dante)

OCTAVIA: Translation is the art of failure. (Umberto Eco)

JULIAN: A translator can be good, but can never be right. (David Mitchell)

OCTAVIA: All translations seems to me to be simply an attempt to accomplish an impossible task. (W. Humboldt) JULIAN: A major difficulty in translation is that a

word in one language seldom has a precise equivalent in another one. (A. Shopenhauer)

OCTAVIA: Humor is the first gift to perish in a foreign language. (Virginia Wolf)

JULIAN: Poetry translation is like playing a piano sonata on a trombone. (Nataly Kelly)

OCTAVIA: Poetry is what gets lost in translation. (Robert Frost)

WILHELM: Fantastic. You objectively grasp all problems which you meet in your work.

JULIAN: We used to. When we hit, no one remembers, when we miss, no one forgets.

WILHELM: Julian, you can't be such modest man.

OCTAVIA: It is not his sin. Julian's photos on books fairs bigger than photo of author who he translated.

JULIAN: It is not my choice.

OCTAVIA: But I never heard that you were against it.

Wilhelm's phone rings.

WILHELM: Sorry. It's Carol. I need to come back, before she starts a rescue operation. It was nice to talk with you without noise.

Wilhelm exits.

Scene 10.

JULIAN: You haven't courage to ask if you are the winner.

OCTAVIA: How could you?

JULIAN: What?

OCTAVIA: You had read my translation.

JULIAN: Is it a problem?

OCTAVIA: Yes. You knew about my work.

JULIAN: Stop. You said about revising to Wilhelm.

OCTAVIA: I believe in power of revising and editing.

JULIAN: Unquestionably.

OCTAVIA: Absolutely. "Am I or I am not, I want to ask."

JULIAN: What's the hell.

OCTAVIA: I believe that is how sounded first effort.

JULIAN: And after revising?

OCTAVIA: To be, or not to be, that is the question.

JULIAN: You really see world in different colours.

OCTAVIA: You know about my text!

JULIAN: Like you know about mine.

OCTAVIA: I heard about that when I finished half of work.

JULIAN: Everyone knew before.

OCTAVIA: I hadn't any idea that you will work with that text.

JULIAN: Why?

OCTAVIA: This work is not for you.

JULIAN: What do you mean?

OCTAVIA: Text is interesting.

JULIAN: What?

OCTAVIA: All your previous works were absolutely predictable.

JULIAN: Predictable?

OCTAVIA: Yes. You will find new text with which would be a lot of advertisement, even prizes at translating contests.

JULIAN: I think you have "but" part.

OCTAVIA: But nobody will reread your book.

JULIAN: What do you know! All my interpretations are best-sellers.

OCTAVIA: Have you see at least one person who said that reread your book constantly. Till book is tore to pieces after use.

JULIAN: You are envious.

OCTAVIA: And you analysed my work and pretended that it didn't happen. As my text was unexpected to you.

JULIAN: What I had to do? You never worked with that language. You didn't exist in that field before.

OCTAVIA: I worked with another languages.

JULIAN: Than why you came to my territory.

OCTAVIA: Your?

JULIAN: I wait for answer.

OCTAVIA: Fine. In my publishing house were closed two languages with which I worked.

JULIAN: Closed? Why?

OCTAVIA: Out of date.

JULIAN: For Haven's Sake it wasn't Old Greek?

OCTAVIA: You tell me that.

JULIAN: And how it feel when your work cancelled.

OCTAVIA: The same as to Duke of Norfolk:

A heavy sentence, my most sovereign liege,
And all unlook'd for from your highness' mouth:

A dearer merit, not so deep a maim

As to be cast forth in the common air,

Have I deserved at your highness' hands.

The language I have learn'd these forty years,

My native English, now I must forego:

And now my tongue's use is to me no more

Than an unstringed viol or a harp,

Or like a cunning instrument cased up,

Or, being open, put into his hands

That knows no touch to tune the harmony:

Within my mouth you have engaol'd my tongue,

Doubly portcullis'd with my teeth and lips;

And dull unfeeling barren ignorance

Is made my gaoler to attend on me.

I am too old to fawn upon a nurse,

Too far in years to be a pupil now:

What is thy sentence then but speechless death,

Which robs my tongue from breathing native breath?

JULIAN: Forty? You look younger.

OCTAVIA: I'm younger. But it is how it was written by Bard.

JULIAN: And you decided to find a new home here.

OCTAVIA: Why not?

JULIAN: Do you honestly believe that you could have a chance?

OCTAVIA: Like everyone.

JULIAN: You know that is my meadow.

OCTAVIA: We have a free country. Are you afraid of me?

JULIAN: I?

OCTAVIA: Yes, you terrified that I will win this contest and because of this you don't open the office.

JULIAN: I'll open that office and you'll see that I am victor.

OCTAVIA: Then try again.

JULIAN: How?

OCTAVIA: In detective story which I translated... Man opened the door with Christmas card.

JULIAN: Unusual! You read carefully.

OCTAVIA: Of course.

JULIAN: Than you know what to do.

Julian takes few postcards from the pocket.

JULIAN: Sufficient?

OCTAVIA: Hope so.

Octavia takes postcards.

OCTAVIA: If you don't mind I'll look inside them.

JULIAN: You even could read them aloud.

OCTAVIA: You are overt.

JULIAN: I always throw them away without glance.

OCTAVIA: You destroy girls' dreams.

JULIAN: Girls'?

OCTAVIA: You know, you are popular among women.

JULIAN: It's their problem. Not mine.

OCTAVIA: Signature from translator, not everyone have such privilege.

JULIAN: Read or open the door.

OCTAVIA: If tonight some big fat man kidnaps and throws you in to the sack, then please stay calm. I have asked Santa for a sweet like you. Merry Christmas, dear! Put you in a sack... Not a bad idea at all. Next. The main reason Santa is so jolly is because he knows where all the bad girls live. At the end she puts her address.

JULIAN: Lovely.

OCTAVIA: E-mail.

JULIAN: That's all?

OCTAVIA: One more. You are all that I want this Christmas! No actually, I couldn't mind a car, diamonds and some cash too!

JULIAN: What?

OCTAVIA: It's your proofreader. She knows what she says.

JULIAN: And your Christmas cards are all with the same text. Christmas has been cancelled! And it's your fault because I told Santa you had been good and he died laughing!

OCTAVIA: I will go.

JULIAN: Under no circumstances. You want to know the answer.

OCTAVIA: Not as much as you.

JULIAN: And what you will do?

OCTAVIA: With what? Answer?

JULIAN: All this women.

OCTAVIA: Choose the one without whom your life is senseless.

Julian furiously puts cards between lock and door, nothing changes. He pushes door harder.

OCTAVIA: You could simply break it.

JULIAN: Be quiet.

Scene 11.

Enters Carol.

OCTAVIA: Carol! How could you give Julian my text?

CAROL: It's my business!

OCTAVIA: Competitor knew about my work.

CAROL: Nothing to talk about. I give it to him.

OCTAVIA: Why?

CAROL: Happy, happy Christmas, that can win us back to the delusions of our childish days; that can recall to the old man the pleasures of his youth; that can transport the sailor and the traveller, thousands of miles away, back to his own fire-side and his quiet home! (Dickens, The Pickwick Papers)

OCTAVIA: Fine. We will talk after Christmas.

CAROL: If it would be necessary.

Julian closes by himself door to office.

JULIAN: Wilhelm made his choice.

CAROL: What you have there?

Carol takes postcard out of office door, opens it.

CAROL: You are all that I want this Christmas! No actually, I couldn't mind a car, diamonds and some cash too! Your proofreader, Julian. Why not? She is right. If you want to spend end of party there I will put sign "don't disturb" on door. And, Julian, I didn't like your joke with postcard. See you both next year.

Carol slowly exits, crumples postcard in her hand.

Scene 12.

OCTAVIA: Terrifying, I lost my job.

JULIAN: You could be wrong.

OCTAVIA: For Carol is you are more important. I know, I read. Interpretation which you wait for decade. Nobody needs my presence.

JULIAN: You could win, and if you win, Carol won't do anything against Wilhelm's will.

OCTAVIA: I'll give you my chance.

JULIAN: What?

OCTAVIA: Be honest with yourself. I don't need your answer. If what is you need in whole world is only that text... You could leave it to yourself.

JULIAN: Stupid generosity.

OCTAVIA: For you it is life challenge. Professional test.

JULIAN: And you?

OCTAVIA: I will survive. I have all my life to live.

JULIAN: With your self-defeating.

OCTAVIA: It was my first work on that language. I could wait for another occasion.

JULIAN: I don't need your sop. Will you devastate your work?

OCTAVIA: Never. I will finish it, wait.

JULIAN: For what?

OCTAVIA: When you interpretation will see light of the day, perfect paper, flawless binding... Everyone will buy your book, put it on shelf and never read it second time.

JULIAN: And your dream?

OCTAVIA: I will find another publishing house. My book will be at paperback, without advertisement company. Written in language, which people will understand. And they will read my work and quote it.

JULIAN: You are...

OCTAVIA: I have my hopes.

Quietly starts "Carol of the Bells".

JULIAN: You did it on purpose.

OCTAVIA: What?

JULIAN: You choose the same work with which I work.

OCTAVIA: At least you think that I am strategic.

JULIAN: How it happen?

OCTAVIA: I read a book and I liked it. Start to translate.

JULIAN: Without contract?

OCTAVIA: My stupidity.

JULIAN: And when you knew about me.

OCTAVIA: When everybody made stake. Who will win? Unknown interpreter or famous one.

JULIAN: And what did you do?

OCTAVIA: Cried, but I can't stop my work. I read all that I could find about you. It was awful experience.

JULIAN: Awful?

OCTAVIA: How little about text and how much about you. In their eyes you are more talented than writer who put it on paper.

JULIAN: You read everything that I did.

OCTAVIA: Not all. Sorry, I don't want to read book at the end of which main hero is dead.

JULIAN: It's literature.

OCTAVIA: I know. Because of it I didn't read all your translations. But flick through all annotations.

JULIAN: And you think that you can triumph.

OCTAVIA: I don't know.

JULIAN: Why you have a challenge?

OCTAVIA: To try myself.

JULIAN: Could it be some way to stop all this thinking about Wilhelm's decision?

Julian again tries the door.

Suddenly all lights fades out, except light garland on Christmas tree.

Sound of the "Carol of the Bells" louder.

OCTAVIA: Something is with the light.

JULIAN: Door, it's open.

OCTAVIA: What to do?

JULIAN: To know the truth. Are you with me?

OCTAVIA: Of course, I don't trust you.

Octavia and Julian enter into office.

Sound of "Carol of the Bells" is fades out. Again lights are on stage.

Scene 13.

Octavia and Julian come back to the library. Each of them have in hand envelope and paper. They are shocked. They sit on chairs near table.

OCTAVIA: Unbelievable.

JULIAN: Unbearable.

OCTAVIA: When you know the answer it should be better.

JULIAN: Most of the time, but not in this case.

OCTAVIA: Give me your letter.

JULIAN: Here you are. (gives her the paper) But if you reread it hundred times, nothing will change.

OCTAVIA: At least I have shot.

JULIAN: How?

OCTAVIA (reads): It was great opportunity... Chance which happened not to everyone... I hope your common work... Best results... Not equal, but supplement...

JULIAN: Did you find a new, secret text?

OCTAVIA: I wish to.

JULIAN: It's first time in my career.

OCTAVIA: Why he wrote this?

JULIAN: Read attentively: Best results... Supplement...

OCTAVIA: Not equal...

JULIAN: Yes.

OCTAVIA: We have to put this letters back to office.

JULIAN: What for?

OCTAVIA: We shouldn't made this.

JULIAN: Do you believe in Christmas miracle?

OCTAVIA: Which wonder?

JULIAN: If we put this papers back... When we next time see them... There will be different words... Words which we hope to read.

OCTAVIA: I don't know, now it is nightmare.

JULIAN: Christmas Special for both of us.

OCTAVIA: Exactly.

JULIAN: Are these the shadows of the things that Will be, or are they shadows of things that May be, only? (Dickens)

OCTAVIA: I don't know.

JULIAN: We can't falsify them. Wilhelm will tell Carol.

OCTAVIA: Bastard.

JULIAN: What!

OCTAVIA: I was dismayed. I even don't think about another end.

JULIAN: Writer's will.

OCTAVIA: As usual.

JULIAN: We put this letters back and go home.

OCTAVIA: Oh, yes. Holidays.

JULIAN: What would you answer?

OCTAVIA: Sorry?

JULIAN: You skim the proposal. What would be your answer?

OCTAVIA: I never think about this scenario.

JULIAN: So do I.

OCTAVIA: What will you say?

JULIAN: I...

OCTAVIA: Yes.

JULIAN: I would say...

Scene 14.

Enters Wilhelm, attentively looks at both.

Octavia and Julian jump up from their chairs, hide letters behind their backs.

WILHELM: Yes, security man told me that you are still here.

JULIAN: Can we help you?

WILHELM: Something happened?

OCTAVIA: Just Christmas after party.

WILHELM: Like I see on your faces you just read my letters.

JULIAN: Letters?

OCTAVIA: Which you write to us!

WILHELM: Give me that papers.

Octavia and Julian give to Wilhelm papers. Wilhelm looks at letters hastily.

WILHELM: I am impressed. You changed letters to make sure what exactly is written there.

JULIAN: Why?

WILHELM: Because it is my text and I choose interpreter by myself.

OCTAVIA: Why both?

WILHELM: I want to stop you.

OCTAVIA: Me?

WILHELM: Both of you.

JULIAN: Halt from what.

WILHELM: You were so involved in contest between yourself that you start to forget that more important is my text, not your ambitions.

OCTAVIA: If we made a mistake... Why then...

WILHELM: I give you a chance.

JULIAN: I thought about verdict.

WILHELM: I choose here.

OCTAVIA: We noticed.

WILHELM: Julian, you have your background.

JULIAN: My name in profession.

WILHELM: Octavia has a sharp glance at text.

JULIAN: It wasn't her language.

WILHELM: If I make decision I know about everything.

OCTAVIA: Why you want this?

WILHELM: I read a lot of interpretation. I have long experience in that. You both amazed me. And I saw that you could be strong team.

JULIAN: And if you are wrong?

WILHELM: Me?

OCTAVIA: Yes.

JULIAN: If together...

OCTAVIA: Start from the beginning all work.

JULIAN: Like nothing happened.

WILHELM: Why not? If it will be better.

OCTAVIA: Will be?

WILHELM: Together you could make a text, which would look like I write it. If I write on foreign language. Not equal, but very close to original work.

JULIAN: And if we don't work together.

WILHELM: Forget about egoism and silly fears. May you be happy in the life you have chosen! (Dickens)

OCTAVIA: For you it is easy to say.

JULIAN: It's not your life.

WILHELM: By the way, you don't lose anything. You always could stay enemies.

Wilhelm turns to go away. Then stops.

WILHELM: Entirely forgot. My Christmas Special.

Wilhelm claps in hands, sound of "Auld Lang Syne". From the ceiling begins to drop a snow.

Wilhelm goes away.

Octavia and Julian stay astonished, look at each other and the snow.

Curtain slowly closes. Song "Auld Lang Syne" is louder, till the full close of the curtain snow falls.

CURTAIN.

More about play:

Play planned as holiday story, but it ends how it ends.

Daily events in Ukraine are very sad, mostly tragic. I tried to be optimistic, but depression and pessimistic thoughts won. I can't write the same as I used to.

I found theme which will be joyful. Christmas, New Year, time for merrymaking in all world. Time for miracles, pleasant surprises. I decided to write splendid Christmas story. Play with happy end, not like in Ibsen's Doll's House.

I strove. And first thing which occurred to mind was final line "You always could stay enemies." Not good ending for Christmas miracle. Never mind, I wanted to discover what are beginning and middle of play which conclusion are such words.

I had story. My experience in translation became useful. I receive strange, sad story. Why not? In Ukraine will be sad Christmas, eyes full of tears. Pain is difficult to forget.

I just can't write something artificial. This play have to be written in that way. When on streets of my home town I see military forces with weapons which go to war... One thought is in my head "God! Let them return alive."

I start to face everything in new way. Unforgivable is only death, with everything else you could cope and forgive.

Enemies, it sounds really as bad end. I don't think so. Enemy is person who never disappoint you. Enemy will stay certainly with you. Sometimes enemy is the only person to whom you could trust.

Heartbreaking. In Ukraine we know that friends of our country don't hold their words. They promised that they will help in difficult times. But when it's hard we are alone and we lose. Don't fear the enemy that attacks you, but the fake friend that hugs you.

When you require help, you need it now. Better - yesterday. After managing your problems yourself you can't forgive the one who had opportunity to help but didn't want to do it. Than I made one step forward. Always forgive your enemies, nothing annoys them much. Oscar Wild.

I wanted to write about play. Yes, another play in English. It was relaxing to find music for it. "Auld Lang Syne", "Carols of the Bell", "God bless you merry gentleman".

In text of "Auld Lang Syne" I liked: And have a drink on me. It is frank goodbye for my play.

Characters will survive, they know what to wait from life. They can fight with problems. I think they could have parallel ways in life. Or they have possibility to be together, and begin with: have a drink on me.

I always believe in happy ends. Contra spem spero.

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