

## **Katerina Aksonova. Romeo and Juliet at couples therapy.**



### *Characters*

*ALYSSA - couple counsellor.*

*EWAN - Alyssa's husband.*

*JULIET - Romeo's wife, Alyssa's client.*

*ROMEO - Juliet's husband, Alyssa's client.*

### *Scene 1.*

*Office of couple counsellor. Big sofa with pillows, in front of it comfortable arm chair. Between sofa and armchair is tea-table. Lot of floor lamps, cosily, in the corner is folding screen. On walls are framed certificates, romantic pictures.*

*Enters Alyssa, notebook in hand, arranges books on tea-table.  
Turtle-neck sweater, above it vest, trousers, shoes with a low heel, glasses.*

ALYSSA: Ten minutes to go. They know where to find me. I hate such couples. Two meetings for every counsellor. Never do anything what was said, always looking for magic resolution. If with diploma of psychology they will give spell, now I wasn't discussing my future divorce with Ewan. Stop. Concentrate on clients.

*Scene 2.*

*Knock at the door.*

ALYSSA: Come in.

*Enters Ewan, casual style in clothes, tries to be calm.*

ALYSSA: What are you doing?

EWAN: Try to communicate.

ALYSSA: It's my office.

EWAN: I remember. You don't want to talk at home, children could hear, it would be uncomfortable for them. You can't speak at restaurant: a lot of strangers around, the same with park. You don't want to talk in our car, on the grounds that it's stupid.

ALYSSA: It is stupid. To sit in our car in garage at home or any place.

EWAN: Yes. So I came here, at your work. And you are couple counsellor, it's written on door. We could talk about our marriage here.

*Ewan sits on sofa.*

ALYSSA: It's for client.

EWAN: You want that I'll pay you. Fine, how much is your hour?

*Ewan pulls out wallet from pocket.*

ALYSSA: Are you completely mad?

EWAN: I need a consultation, I pay you for your time.

ALYSSA: For consultation you need to bring a spouse.

EWAN: Like I notice, you don't agree to come.

ALYSSA: Ewan.

EWAN: Alyssa, I came here, I try to do something. I can't deducate your position.

ALYSSA: It's my decision - divorce.

EWAN: Alyssa!

*Knock at the door.*

ALYSSA: Clients! You won't suppose to be here! (*loud*) One moment!  
(*whispers*) Hide!

EWAN: Where?

ALYSSA: Behind folding screen.

EWAN: It's dumb.

ALYSSA: I didn't invite you.

EWAN: Fine.

*Ewan goes behind folding screen.*

ALYSSA: Come in!

*Scene 3.*

*Enter Romeo and Juliet, wealthy young couple.*

ALYSSA: Come in.

JULIET: Are you Alyssa Taggart?

ALYSSA: Yes. But you could call me Alyssa. You are Mr and Mrs Collingwood.

JULIET: We are. I am Juliet and that's my... he is... I came with Romeo.

ALYSSA: Nice to meet you.

*Short discreet laughter, like creak from corner where is Ewan.*

ALYSSA: Take a seat.

ROMEO: Why four meetings? At previous consultant was first two.

ALYSSA: Romeo. I agree, it sounds strange. You see, I work in my method. First meeting with two of you. Second with your wife. Third...

ROMEO: Why second meeting with her?

ALYSSA: It could be you. If it's priority for you. Third meeting with your wife.

ROMEO: Why two meeting with her?

ALYSSA: I say more clear. First meeting with you both. Next one meeting with each of you, sequence is not crucial. Forth meeting again with both of you, and than you'll make decision about next step in therapy.

JULIET: Counselling.

ALYSSA: As you wish.

JULIET: For me it's reasonable.

ROMEO: For you everything reasonable if it not your money.

ALYSSA: First conflict is obvious. It's your money, Romeo.

ROMEO: Yes. And I like to spend it wisely.

ALYSSA: If you spend money for saving your marriage, it's pivotal part of your life.

ROMEO: Yes.

ALYSSA: Fine. We'll return to it later. Juliet, you conclude that saving your marriage isn't central part of your life, if only Romeo spends money on it.

ROMEO: She forced me. Juliet is bankrupt. For not forgetting about that I put in framed letter from the bank.

ALYSSA: What happened?

JULIET: Art gallery...

ROMEO: Trifles. She can't make money.

ALYSSA: Is it a problem for you?

ROMEO: Not at all. I realize that she is helpless with finances. Juliet was trying to prove that could succeed. It's not for her and failure catches her.

ALYSSA: You wife is poor, is that a problem.

ROMEO: Not a trouble I have money.

JULIET: You have, this is complication.

ALYSSA: Reveal me more about your feeling.

JULIET: I am ashamed after my attempts. Bank will give next credit only after two years.

ALYSSA: And for you is important that husband had money, that you said minute ago.

JULIET: I depend in everything on him.

ALYSSA: It's depressing you. Did he limits you in something?

ROMEO: I will give her money when she need them.

JULIET: When you suspect I need them. He doesn't want that I will be independent.

ALYSSA: Why you certain in it?

JULIET: He didn't put a signature for bank. They were agree not to make me a bankrupt, because of income of my partner.

ROMEO: You can't manage with one credit, why have next.

ALYSSA: Evident... Could we talk about your story? How did you became a couple?

JULIET: Like you see, we have strange names.

ALYSSA: I never judge people by name, nationality, colour of skin or sexual preferences.

ROMEO: We know each other from childhood. Our parents, her and mine are deeply affected about Shakespeare's work.

JULIET: They works in Shakespeare's society.

ALYSSA: And choose names from Shakespeare's work.

JULIET: Yes. My brother is Benedick, my sister is Desdemona.

*Short discreet laughter, like creak from corner where is Ewan.*

ROMEO: You have rats in office.

ALYSSA: No, just carpenter in the basement.

JULIET: Could he heard us?

ALYSSA: No. To my pity only we could hear him.

ROMEO: In my family we have Gertrude, my sister. And not forget about Macduff, our dog.

ALYSSA: Interesting.

JULIET: In school we were in school theatre...

ALYSSA: Let me guess, you played in Shakespeare's plays.

JULIET: You are right.

ROMEO: I was played Laertes, Juliet was playing Portia in the Merchant of Venice.

ALYSSA: I will wait for another director's decision.

ROMEO: I never forgive for that old idiot about not playing Hamlet. He said I have bad charisma.

ALYSSA: Perhaps, lack of charisma.

JULIET: Did you familiar with him?

ALYSSA: Worked with his daughter, painter.

ROMEO: I believed she moved in another town.

ALYSSA: I suggested her that. You were in the same theatre.

JULIET: Yes. But we know each other before. We stay together, against another kids.

ALYSSA: They mocked you both.

ROMEO: They were illiterate who wanted to judge Bard.

ALYSSA: For me is essential how you describe your feelings. What was after school?

ROMEO: We didn't see each other for six...

JULIET: Eight, actually.

ROMEO: Many years. When we met, we both were free. We accepted that we are perfect match and we married.

ALYSSA: Perfect match.

JULIET: Like brother and sister, only with sex.

ALYSSA: I get it. What became wrong.

ROMEO: Nothing.

ALYSSA: Why you are here?

JULIET: We want to save our marriage.

ALYSSA: You have problems in relationships.

ROMEO: Incomprehension.

JULIET: Everything just wrong.

ALYSSA: What exactly?

ROMEO: Our time for today ended. Next time.

JULIET: Better next time in one to one meeting. If we'll confess now, will be argue.

ROMEO: She will cry.

JULIET: You will be shouting.

ALYSSA: I'll wait one of you next time. In which order you chose

yourself.

ROMEO: Bye.

JULIET: Till next time.

*Romeo and Juliet exit.*

*Scene 4.*

ALYSSA: You could be quiet when I had clients, Ewan.

*Ewan enters from folding screen.*

EWAN: I put my fist in the mouth. It's stupid.

ALYSSA: You guess that I could lost licence if someone will notice that outsider was during my meeting with patient.

EWAN: They are mad. Listen: "*Romeo and Juliet at couples therapy.*" Poison was weak, blade was blunt. Their marriage anyway was doomed. "*For never was a story of more woe that this of Juliet and her Romeo*". (Shakespeare. *Romeo and Juliet.*)

ALYSSA: They try to do something.

EWAN: And that told me you.

ALYSSA: Don't compare our problems to them.

EWAN: How could I forget that we have a situation such unique which never mentioned in any of your books or lectures which you visit.

ALYSSA: I can't trust you in severe times.

EWAN: It's your obstacle, not mine.

ALYSSA: You live all life in a way that I can't wait for your help.

EWAN: You never hold-up until I'll have opportunity to do something.

ALYSSA: It was always too long and I solve myself. At the end I just stop waiting.

EWAN: With this decision you wanted a divorce.

ALYSSA: I want a separation. I don't believe that at least once you'll help me. Save me from the car without gasoline or remember to congratulate me with birthday. Nothing will change.

EWAN: You want split up.

ALYSSA: Relationship is two way street, I can't walk in your shoes to my direction.

EWAN: For you is not enough that I spend time with you. I have no idea what you want, I give you everything that I could.

ALYSSA: You give me what you chose to give.

EWAN: You chose me to proclaim daily about my disadvantages. When everyone praise me you illustrate few errors which I made.

ALYSSA: I mention this because it's truth. They won't say you, you'll slip on this mistakes and I want that you'll be invulnerable.

EWAN: Sometimes I just want to hear from you undeserved compliment and be for a second happy that my wife is proud of me. Now in your schedule next couple, I won't sit and wait when Danish Prince puts poison in my ear.

ALYSSA: Ewan. It was Claudius.

EWAN: Who cares. You remember where to find me, we live at the same address.

*Ewan exits.*

*Alyssa covers face with her hands.*

*Blackout.*

*Scene 5.*

*Enters Romeo.*

ALYSSA: Nice to see you again. You chose to visit first.

ROMEO: I have a working hours, so I need my time. Juliet could come any time.

ALYSSA: Why you didn't sign papers for bank?

ROMEO: I believe you made notes.

ALYSSA: I did.

ROMEO: For report, my answer still the same. I don't want that she'll become bankrupt again and banks never stop. I twice was bankrupt.

ALYSSA: And you are careful with money.

ROMEO: Careful, you could choose words. You didn't call me greedy.

ALYSSA: I spotted, you love Juliet and don't want that she will experience the same problems which had you, when earned and returned money.

ROMEO: Uh huh.

ALYSSA: I invented this excuse moment ago and you agreed to it wholeheartedly. What is true reason, that you didn't support your wife?

ROMEO: I have no idea, about what you are talking.

ALYSSA: You thought about that hundred times.

ROMEO: And now you'll inform me that according to Gottman Method we are sentenced to split up.

ALYSSA: Someone made a homework.

ROMEO: Alyssa, you are not first counsellor in our story.

ALYSSA: And you want a magic solution for suitable price. Without work.

ROMEO: I came here.

ALYSSA: You'll visit dozen of counsellors, advisers and nothing will help until you start to choose the truth.

ROMEO: Your fantasy is all about money.

ALYSSA: It was first subject about which you started to talk.

ROMEO: I told her, with lot of examples how hard in our world to earn

money with such speed that I do. After all listening she wanted to make it herself.

ALYSSA: Did you feel used after shared experience?

ROMEO: I don't want a mirror. I don't want a wife which always will be my competitor. I won't sleep with person who want win my game.

ALYSSA: Maybe, she wants some independence.

ROMEO: Yes. She will have money, she can afford everything herself. Than in her mind came thought that she deserves more and next step she'll find another man.

ALYSSA: Do you want dependence of you wife to feel safe that her love with be to you?

ROMEO: I'm not tyrant. Forget about money. How she treats me?

ALYSSA: Not how you want.

ROMEO: Right. I'm not blind, I see how woman look at me. They like that I am attractive.

ALYSSA: In this field you are confident.

ROMEO: I won't beg her to admit that she likes me. She accustomed to my presence. Like I nowhere have to go.

ALYSSA: Now you want to split up with her.

ROMEO: I want that she show me somehow her tenderness. That I felt her love daily, hourly. That I'll feel it's true. Her attention. She makes dinners, she decorates rooms. I don't need it. She spends time with everything to be away from me. She always busy. And when she did this, she is happy. Not with me.

ALYSSA: Have you ever told her that?

ROMEO: She cries that I didn't appreciate what she did for me.

*Knock at the door.*

ALYSSA: Wait a minute!

ROMEO: Another client. I see our time is finished. Till next time. Juliet will came tomorrow. Bye.

*Romeo exits.*

ALYSSA: See you.

*Scene 6.*

*Enters Ewan.*

ALYSSA: Is that you? You frightened my client.

EWAN: He had a lot of talking. Could be quiet for a diversity.

ALYSSA: What do you want?

EWAN: Not to talk to you. Now it's your lunch time, sacred hour of meditation above salad. I remember.

ALYSSA: Why you came?

EWAN: I lost spark plug for car here.

ALYSSA: Why on Earth it was in your pocket, when car is under window?

EWAN: Do you permit my searching?

ALYSSA: Bring me keys at bar. And you are acquainted that during lunch I consult owners of bar.

EWAN: And eat salad.

*Alyssa exits.*

*Scene 7.*

*Ewan quick starts to search through books on tea-table, reads titles and puts back.*

EWAN: If you don't want to help I'll find way to you using your knowledge. In some of this book have to be answer. "*Traipse inside women's mind for unapprehensive*" it could be what I'm looking for.

*Ewan tries to put book into his pocket, too big. At the end he puts book under the belt and cowers it with shirt.*

*Ewan exits.*

*Blackout.*

*Scene 8.*

*Alyssa and Juliet.*

JULIET: Romeo came first to declare why he wants to leave me.

ALYSSA: I predict if he agree for couple counselling it's not his intent.

JULIET: He said to me the same.

ALYSSA: Could be true.

JULIET: Do you think that my husband is attractive?

ALYSSA: What?

JULIET: He is handsome, you saw that.

ALYSSA: Why you asked me?

JULIET: I'm terribly afraid that he'll find someone else. All women like him.

ALYSSA: Did you tell him?

JULIET: What?

ALYSSA: That you think that he is good-looking.

JULIET: What for? I'm with him. I all day spend to invent how to surprise him at dinner, decorate our house. He knows that I like him. I adore to look at him, when he is near computer or watch TV, when all attention somewhere else. He is hunky. I like him.

ALYSSA: Did you demonstrate it to him?

JULIET: Why?

ALYSSA: Maybe for him is principal to feel loved?

JULIET: I can't stay all day and look in his gorgeous green eyes. He will realize that I am foolish. How often do you told you husband that you like him?

ALYSSA: Ewan? He is not that type of man.

JULIET: He is ugly.

ALYSSA: No. But not a Greek god.

JULIET: I see.

ALYSSA: I like his smile, sounds of his voice. If I'll hint that he is fanciable than he will think that I am crazy.

JULIET: Than you picture what I feel. And I marked that women likes him. But I have to be different, I try to catch him with my attention.

ALYSSA: Fine. What about money in your relationship?

JULIET: Dead end.

ALYSSA: You can't forgive him your bankruptcy.

JULIET: I did this for him.

ALYSSA: Lost your money?

JULIET: No. Tried to be equal to him. Tried to prove that I can be something significant, like he.

ALYSSA: Make your statement clear, please.

JULIET: All the time he repeats me a story how is he successful. I believed that it was reproach to my work. I tried to made my art a business. I can't, it's not my style. I could be happy when have one project a year or at week, but he was looking only for results in others. And I worked like damn to prove that I worth something, at first his attention.

ALYSSA: And now, when it hasn't such result as you wished...

JULIET: Amusingly, I still work with the same speed, I learned how to make it better.

ALYSSA: And you believe that have problems with Romeo?

JULIET: Mountains of difficulties.

ALYSSA: What you want to improve?

JULIET: We are perfect couple. Two of us were made for each other. Two parts of one soul, but we have bodies. Our bodies don't give us impression of whole. We grown from one field, but on different corners of it. Each one of us saw unfamiliar landscape and now all our battles are about that my or his view is correct.

ALYSSA: Wow! If you want to change profession, I could be your supervisor in work with couples.

JULIET: I can't fix my life. How I can made advice for others?

ALYSSA: What you told about your husband?

JULIET: I believed that he is most stubborn person on Earth. But he has what I need, I had what he need. We just look at opposite directions and don't see what we have in common. Each fixated on own thoughts. It's like I want green teapot, he had it, but propose me a blue iron and conversely. I realize that he had that green teapot, but he afraids it won't be interesting to me.

ALYSSA: Why you never told that husband?

JULIET: When I apprehend that problem - I perceive that I can't hear or catch what he wants from me. Yellow umbrella or red saucer. And I also can't help him and give what I have.

ALYSSA: And you went to couple consultants.

JULIET: Yes. All they wanted that we speak truth to each other. I can't do that on force.

ALYSSA: Why you affirm to me?

JULIET: Because you said that learned that your husband is not sexiast man alive and you still love him. When you are honest with me I could be straightforward with you and tell what I feel about green salt cellar.

*Blackout.*

*Scene 9.*

*Knock of the door.*

ALYSSA: Come in.

*Enters Ewan.*

EWAN: You are alone. Where are clients?

ALYSSA: Already go.

EWAN: Rejection of counselling.

ALYSSA: No. It works for them.

EWAN: Really? I also think about us. I even read a book.

ALYSSA: Was it you, who leave near office door "*Traipse inside women's mind for unapprehensive*"? I thought it was angry client and interpreted this like hidden threat.

EWAN: I hope we'll talk a lot. About what each of us waits from another. Someday we thought that we are perfect match.

ALYSSA: I also believe that you have green teapot and I could give you an yellow umbrella.

EWAN: I don't master what you mean. Is it good or bad?

ALYSSA: We could be more open with each other.

EWAN: I hope that you are mine, but I would like to know more about you.

ALYSSA: I promise we'll find out why we are perfect for each other.

EWAN: Why yellow umbrella?

ALYSSA: It's a long story.

EWAN: Than begin now.

*CURTAIN.*

More about play:

Idea of play came to my mind 7.08.2015. I rearranged books on shelf and another time saw a book of Shakespeare. I returned to thought about Romeo and Juliet, it can't be made as story with happy end like a tune. They will have usual problems in life and it won't be interesting.

Then came name of play "Romeo and Juliet at couples therapy". I hope it could be fun, with lot of quotations. But I need couple counsellor and have no idea how they work. When I try to find about that profession I saw an article about problems which had consultants in own life. Till I finished article, I had new concept of play.

Counsellor also have a personal story with ghost of divorce. That way I receive one more character - Ewan. And my aim was to make both couples capable to stay with partner - gave them hope. All work was just plotting and reading about marriage conflicts, which to my opinion, after reading are very similar. First - problems with money. Second - lack of sincere talking about what do you and your partner need from each other, results depend only of wish to see that.

I invented name of the book "Traipse inside women's mind for unapprehensive". I deeply sorry if for unexplained reason such book exist. I just wanted to create something promising and necessary for my hero.

In new concept became absolutely unnecessary quotes from play. But I made myself pleasure and had some fun with names from Bard's works.

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