

Kateryna Aksonova. Body in the basement.



CHARACTERS:

ADALARD - man over 70 years, rich.

BERNIA - woman near 60 years, owner of the hotel.

CARISSA - woman near 50 years, Edelmar's mother.

DAPHNE - woman near 50 years, Frederica's mother.

EDELMAR - Carissa's son.

FREDERICA - Daphne's daughter.

Scene 1.

Hotel lobby, looks like lodge in the country.

Enter Frederica and Bernia.

FREDERICA: I don't know how to thank you, Bernia.

BERNIA: I liked your plan. And never in my life I will miss it.

FREDERICA: You know him better than everyone.

BERNIA: Frederica, you are wrong. I was his first wife and after it... Your mother acquainted him longer.

FREDERICA: But you knew him before he became the one who is he now.

BERNIA: Niggard.

FREDERICA: Yes. I think he will agree that Edelmar is bad selection.

BERNIA: And give money to you.

FREDERICA: Tradition is everything for him.

BERNIA: Indeed.

FREDERICA: He never agrees to incest.

BERNIA: People could change.

FREDERICA: Not my father.

BERNIA: Adalard. Man who spoiled many women's life.

FREDERICA: And I found a way to stop him.

BERNIA: Fifteen percent are not bad for my involvement.

FREDERICA: I think you deserve it.

BERNIA: Not from him, from you.

FREDERICA: I am clever.

BERNIA: If everybody approved your plan.

FREDERICA: If he won't come.

BERNIA: Even Adalard will arrive to engagement of his daughter.

FREDERICA: And his son.

BERNIA: Oh yes, my bright girl. By the way, your fiancé, did he did everything.

FREDERICA: No telephones, no internet and he kills mobile connection.

BERNIA: What could be more pleasing than lonely house in the middle of the nowhere.

FREDERICA: I watch meteorological data. Snow will be for three days.

BERNIA: I had delightful Christmas with Adalard.

FREDERICA: Because of that he hates Christmas trees.

BERNIA: Does he?

FREDERICA: Of course. This was the reason why he agreed to come here.

BERNIA: Frederica, what are you talking about.

FREDERICA: Your advertisement. Hotel without Christmas all year long.

BERNIA: Bad memories.

FREDERICA: This time father also won't receive enjoyable recollections.

BERNIA: Watch the time. Adalard could enter any minute.

FREDERICA: I'll go and check cars. Make sure they all don't work.

BERNIA: Hurry up.

Frederica exits.

Scene 2.

BERNIA: Stupid girl, as her mother. Hope Adalard recognize me at once or better not.

It would be charming. Engagement. Marriage which will never occur. Frederica believes in understanding father's character. Why not? In her age, I had foolish dreams.

Bernia comes to big stuffed reindeer.

BERNIA: Today will be odd appointment, Adalard, you'll meet the man whose name you have. Rare opportunity to talk to real man, not stuffed reindeer. But Adalard is old, maybe I don't spot the difference.

Adalard's Christmas or Adalard's women. I don't know how better call this gathering.

I believe in my husband. All women to whom he wrecked life could have a room in my hotel. To be honest, for them we need a little village.

Frederica doesn't need more witnesses. Everybody know their lines. And when Adalard ring on that door, show will begin. I am glad, that the best things in life are free.

I wish Adalard doesn't recognize me or... I don't know.

Bernia exits.

Scene 3.

On stage come Carissa and Edelmar.

CARISSA: Where is Bernia?

EDELMAR: In the house, somewhere.

CARISSA: Edelmar, she has to be here.

EDELMAR: Possibly, in the kitchen.

CARISSA: Connection with all world?

EDELMAR: Any. I worked as professional.

CARISSA: Sorry. I just don't like.

EDELMAR: That it was Frederica's idea.

CARISSA: Of course. She is legitimate daughter.

EDELMAR: He could stop her.

CARISSA: Adalard has excellent health.

EDELMAR: How do you know, mother?

CARISSA: From the therapist.

EDELMAR: What?

CARISSA: What for do you think I spend time to check my health?

EDELMAR: I thought...

CARISSA: You waited for my death! After all I did for you!

EDELMAR: I had hypothesis that you want to know more about your well-being.

CARISSA: I am younger than Daphne.

EDELMAR: I heard this twenty times today.

CARISSA: Did you count?

EDELMAR: Mother!

CARISSA: We need Bernia. If Adalard see us at first. He holds a taxi.

EDELMAR: You really believe that he didn't recognize Bernia.

CARISSA: After so many years. Adalard didn't remember my favourite colour.

EDELMAR: And?

CARISSA: No. You don't recollect either.

EDELMAR: I never said that.

CARISSA: Tell!

EDELMAR: I will find Bernia.

CARISSA: Orange.

EDELMAR: I know.

CARISSA: No. Yellow.

EDELMAR: You change your mind constantly. What do you want from me?

CARISSA: Go and find Bernia.

EDELMAR: Yellow. Pink. What is the difference?

Edelmar goes away.

Scene 4.

Enters Daphne.

DAPHNE: Is everything ready?

CARISSA: My son did his part of job.

DAPHNE: Hope Frederica will complete this plan.

CARISSA: Don't you trust your daughter, Daphne.

DAPHNE: Carissa, in daughter I believe, but when I look at you, I remember that I never could be laid-back with Adalard.

CARISSA: You received big money after divorce.

DAPHNE: So do you. And you never married him.

CARISSA: You think Adalard will stop this terrible engagement story and give money.

DAPHNE: Hope so.

CARISSA: Have you any doubts?

DAPHNE: Me?

CARISSA: Maybe we need to appreciate something before it all begins.

DAPHNE: Know? Nothing. How about your secrets?

CARISSA: I haven't the faintest idea what to think about.

DAPHNE: Everything is ready.

CARISSA: Did you hear?

DAPHNE: Car!

CARISSA: Bernia!

DAPHNE: Where is she? Bernia!

Carissa and Daphne go away.

Scene 5.

Enters Adalard, looks around.

ADALARD: Is there anybody alive? Frederica even pay for taxi. Where is everybody?

I'm tired. Can't sleep without sleeping pills. Now I need warm bath and long rest. Frederica will wait till tomorrow.

Adalard takes out of his pocket bottle with pills and has one.

ADALARD: Lovely place. It looks like the hotel... Yes... Thirty... twenty years ago. With Bernia. Unforgivable Christmas.

Adalard comes near the stuffed reindeer.

ADALARD: Sterling work, like see my reflection in the mirror. Where is everybody?

Adalard rings the bell.

ADALARD: Hotel is cheap. Finally, Frederica started to count money. I need sleep. And without this pills, I can't.

Adalard takes out of his pocket bottle with pills and has one.

Scene 6.

Enters Bernia. She stops, looks attentively to Adalard, goes to him.

BERNIA: May I help you?

ADALARD: Are you the owner?

BERNIA: Yes. Do you need a room?

ADALARD: Mister Red. Room already reserved.

BERNIA: Your daughter is here. Do you want to call her immediately?

ADALARD: Never. I'm tired. I wish a much-needed sleep.

Adalard takes pill.

ADALARD: Without this pills... Nothing helps.
BERNIA: May I show your room?
ADALARD: Sure. Luggage I left near door.
BERNIA: Dark coffee and lemon juice in the morning.
ADALARD: As usual.
BERNIA: One moment.

Bernia makes little movement, pushes on the button.

ADALARD: Not bad service.
BERNIA: Sorry?
ADALARD: You know what I prefer at morning.
BERNIA: My duty.
ADALARD: Don't you remember, have I a sleeping pill?
BERNIA: Yes. You said that can't sleep without them.

Scene 7.

Enters Frederica.

FREDERICA: Father, I'm so happy that you came.
ADALARD: You asked.
BERNIA: I'll leave you for a moment.
ADALARD: I want to...
BERNIA: I just check your room.
FREDERICA: Of course, Bernia. I'll be with father.

Bernia exits.

Scene 8.

ADALARD: Bernia, is it name of that woman?
FREDERICA: Yes. But it's not important. I am glad to see you.
ADALARD: Where is the ring?
FREDERICA: I told him not to buy it until you see us together. At first, I want your bless.
ADALARD: Ring. Price tag on finger. I'm tired. I want to sleep. And without this pills. Nothing helps.

Adalard takes pill.

FREDERICA: Do you need a water?
ADALARD: I necessitate a rest.
FREDERICA: I want you to meet my fiancé.
ADALARD: Is your mother here?
FREDERICA: Certainly. And his mother.
ADALARD: And his father, I forgot his name.
FREDERICA: It's not significant. When you see him you'll feel that you know him for ages.
ADALARD: It could wait for tomorrow.
FREDERICA: Father!
ADALARD: Fine, bring him here.

FREDERICA: You will never forget this day.
ADALARD: It have to be notable for you. Not for me.

Frederica exits.

Scene 8.

ADALARD: Time is cruel for all of us. Bernia. I didn't see her for ages. Not even a blink. Did she recognize me?
Frederica chose this hotel. What about she thought? Oh, yes. Hotel without Christmas all year long. To make pleasure to me. She needs money, more money as long as I'm alive. For wedding, presents, house. Did Daphne tell her truth? I don't feel so.
Bernia, I saved this hotel after her husband's death. I don't see her children here. Yes. Children, her children.
You are deserve new life. I thought I was generous, when I gave her freedom. Old times.
Where is Frederica with fiancé? I need to take a pill before I go to bed. Sleepless nights are my destiny.
Did I drink a pill? Old times and old me. I will ask Frederica.

Scene 9.

Enters Carissa, too late notices Adalard and stays.

ADALARD: What the Hell you are doing here?
CARISSA: I am also glad to see you.
ADALARD: What are you doing in this place?
CARISSA: Don't be nervous.
ADALARD: You know why I left you, don't you?
CARISSA: I have no idea.
ADALARD: Every time when you had bad news for me, you started: Don't be nervous.
CARISSA: You are cruel to me.
ADALARD: I don't think so. You and your son live on my money.
CARISSA: Don't talk about Edelmar in that way.
ADALARD: Or?
CARISSA: I... I...
ADALARD: Tell him the fact.
CARISSA: What?
ADALARD: You know, I'm tired from you. I need to rest.

Adalard takes pill.

CARISSA: Heart?
ADALARD: Never. Sleeping pill.
CARISSA: Oh!
ADALARD: Minor disappoint. Now, go away I have a meeting here.
CARISSA: Enough. I don't obey your orders.

Scene 10.

Enter Frederica and Edelmar.

FREDERICA: Father, meet my fiancé, Edelmar.

ADALARD: What? Who? I don't approve.

FREDERICA: Father, we need your blessing.

ADALARD: Carissa, I believe that you don't listen to my orders no more.

FREDERICA: You already get to know Carissa, mother of Edelmar.

ADALARD: Like you see. Is Edelmar your choice?

EDELMAR: If you don't mind.

ADALARD: Me? Frederica, where is Daphne? She has to participate in this celebration.

FREDERICA: Mother will come soon.

ADALARD: Hope, Daphne will hurry.

CARISSA: Adalard, you understand that they want to marry each other.

ADALARD: Yes! They are adults and found a perfect match.

CARISSA: Exemplary!

ADALARD: Flawless!

CARISSA: Like brother and sister!

ADALARD: Did you hear what you say?

FREDERICA: Mother will be in a moment.

ADALARD: Everybody will listen my decision.

FREDERICA: Father!

ADALARD: Don't worry. I know what to do.

Scene 11.

Enters Daphne.

DAPHNE: You all here!

ADALARD: Wait for you.

DAPHNE: Adalard, you are gentleman, as always.

ADALARD: Frederica told me that she wants to marry that man - Edelmar.

FREDERICA: I do.

ADALARD: You will need money for wedding and everything.

FREDERICA: Yes.

ADALARD: I think Edelmar also hasn't plenty of money.

CARISSA: Close to your verdict.

ADALARD: Yes. I agree. I bless you. Congratulation to the newly wed.

Adalard shakes and than falls.

Scene 12.

Enters Bernia.

BERNIA: Room is ready, mister Red.

Bernia comes closer, sees frozen Carissa, Daphne, Edelmar, Frederica and Adalard on the floor.

BERNIA: Why he is on the floor?

EDELMAR: He fell.

BERNIA: Is he all right?
CARISSA: I think he is dead.
FREDERICA: What?
CARISSA: Do alive people look like him?
DAPHNE: We could call an ambulance.
FREDERICA: Police in that case.
CARISSA: We can't.
BERNIA: Why you killed him in my hotel?
EDELMAR: He just fell.
BERNIA: After what.
CARISSA: He blessed marriage.
BERNIA: What?
FREDERICA: Can we talk when father is not near our feet?
BERNIA: Your purpose.
EDELMAR: Left him somewhere. In the room.
CARISSA: We will have awful smell.
BERNIA: Basement. I have basement in hotel. I'll open the window, any whiff.
DAPHNE: And after it we will think what to tell police.
CARISSA: Go.

Bernia, Carissa, Daphne, Edelmar, Frederica slowly raise Adalard's body and carry out him from stage.

Scene 13.

Enter Bernia, Carissa, Daphne, Edelmar, Frederica.

BERNIA: It was your strategy, Frederica.
DAPHNE: My daughter never planned to kill Adalard.
CARISSA: He could die of happiness.
BERNIA: Yes. Satisfaction that two people find each other. Did I hear right, he blessed your marriage?
FREDERICA: True. And I think he already was sick or something, if he agreed to that.
EDELMAR: It is the strangest thing.
BERNIA: Maybe, for you. For me weird thing is that in basement of my hotel is body.
DAPHNE: We all had a bad day.
BERNIA: You'll go. And what I tell to police?
FREDERICA: Cars! We are here for few days.
EDELMAR: I try to find a connection with world.
CARISSA: Hope you call the ambulance, not the police at first.
EDELMAR: I'll go and check what I could do.
DAPHNE: When call the help, Edelmar, don't forget to sound surprised and shocked.
FREDERICA: I feel cold of death.
BERNIA: It's from basement.
FREDERICA: I know.
BERNIA: I open the window for not have smell here.
EDELMAR: I'll go and try mobile phone.

Edelmar leaves.

Scene 14.

FREDERICA: For how long do we will wait here?

BERNIA: It was your initiative.

FREDERICA: I thought, when father see me and Edelmar. He will comprehend everything and give money.

CARISSA: You'll have money after Adalard's death.

DAPHNE: Did you accuse my daughter in intention to kill Adalard?

CARISSA: I just try to think.

BERNIA: We need to discuss what to tell police.

DAPHNE: Why?

BERNIA: When two wife and one mistress with two children gathered together and man who connects them is dead, it is not good for our story.

CARISSA: We could pretend that it is just coincident.

FREDERICA: Police will never believe to us. I don't want to go to jail. I didn't want to kill father.

DAPHNE: Go to garage and look for car, Frederica.

FREDERICA: Why?

DAPHNE: Adalard could have been killed in a car incident.

FREDERICA: Mother!

DAPHNE: Go. And stay calm.

Frederica goes away.

Scene 15.

CARISSA: Daphne, car incident?

BERNIA: Taxi driver saw him alive.

DAPHNE: I know. But Frederica need to do something. She can't think clear.

CARISSA: And you have an idea?

DAPHNE: We need to find an exit.

BERNIA: Body is in my basement!

Sneezing backstage.

CARISSA: Edelmar already had a flu. I told him to put something on.

DAPHNE: We have problems which are more important.

BERNIA: I'll give Edelmar whisky and he will be all right.

DAPHNE: Incidental meeting.

CARISSA: It's hard to believe.

BERNIA: We could tell about engagement.

CARISSA: Never. Better we will tell that it was Adalard, who gathered us in one place.

BERNIA: Adalard?

DAPHNE: Why not? If he needed us, we don't know what for.

BERNIA: Absolutely stupid.

CARISSA: Do you have better idea?

BERNIA: Dumb, but could work. If he assembled us, he wanted to tell us something.

CARISSA: Hope he hadn't any important papers in his pockets.

DAPHNE: Go and check.

CARISSA: Where?
BERNIA: In basement.

Sneezing backstage.

CARISSA: Edelmar again.
BERNIA: We will hope that Adalard hadn't papers or what else could make all us guilty.
CARISSA: Frederica scared him and Adalard is dead.
DAPHNE: My daughter is innocent.
BERNIA: Of course, she was agree to marry Edelmar for Adalard's money.
CARISSA: It never happen.
BERNIA: Why he didn't stop them? Girls, don't be quiet or shy.
DAPHNE: What do you know?
CARISSA: You read his will!
BERNIA: I just know what you both did. And Adalard knew, now he is dead. It's relief for you. Who protected a secret?
CARISSA: Daphne.
DAPHNE: Look at yourself. You'll loose more.

Scene 16.

Enters Edelmar.

EDELMAR: Mother, tell them.
CARISSA: Honey, it's not important.
DAPHNE: It is.
BERNIA: Say.
CARISSA: Fine. When Frederica started everything... I checked Adalard's health, he hadn't any problems.
BERNIA: Is it all?
EDELMAR: Mother!
CARISSA: I don't want to inform them.
EDELMAR: I'll tell. It's our alibi.
CARISSA: You shouldn't.
EDELMAR: I'm not the son of Adalard.
BERNIA: If you want to impress us with something new, you missed the opportunity.
EDELMAR: How?
BERNIA: Daphne, what you say?
DAPHNE: Nothing.
EDELMAR: It doesn't help you. I saw his will.
CARISSA: Last will?
EDELMAR: Oh, yes.
DAPHNE: Frederica couldn't seduce a solicitor.
EDELMAR: She didn't know what he need.
CARISSA: It is not important for them.
EDELMAR: Better they will know from me, not read in internet.
BERNIA: Are you... Edelmar, it is your life. So, we won't have a lavender wedding. Back to body. What is in the will?

Sneezing backstage.

CARISSA: Frederica also has cold.

DAPHNE: What was in the will?

EDELMAR: You will be happy. All his money mister Adalard Red divided into three parts. And all suspects are here.

CARISSA: Adalard didn't give money to Frederica. Why?

BERNIA: Daphne will explain mystery to us.

DAPHNE: Use your brain, Carissa. Bernia knew the answer.

BERNIA: I favour to hear it from you.

DAPHNE: When I met Adalard, before that, I had love story. Which ends before...

EDELMAR: Before?

DAPHNE: Before Frederica was born. Adalard didn't mind, if...

Scene 17.

Enters Frederica.

DAPHNE: If Frederica will be as his daughter, but she won't receive money after Adalard's death.

FREDERICA: Mother!

DAPHNE: Darling, did you hear something?

FREDERICA: Much more than I wanted. Mother, why you didn't stop me.

CARISSA: Did you admit that you kill him?

FREDERICA: Me, not, never.

BERNIA: Police will know the truth.

FREDERICA: I didn't kill father. Him.

Sneezing backstage.

DAPHNE: Don't think about my daughter as criminal.

FREDERICA: Mother, you could warn me. He didn't care about my marriage because I'm not his daughter.

BERNIA: Don't be upset. Edelmarr is also not his son and prefer men.

DAPHNE: Bernia, you knew everything beforehand.

BERNIA: I wanted to see how you will lie.

CARISSA: What did you know?

BERNIA: Adalard couldn't be a father. We comprehend this. Our last Christmas. So he gave me a freedom.

DAPHNE: You want to make us guilty.

BERNIA: I didn't imagine that you will kill him.

Sneezing backstage.

CARISSA: God bless you, Edelmarr.

EDELMAR: It wasn't me.

DAPHNE: Frederica?

FREDERICA: I haven't a flu.

CARISSA: If nobody sneezing, it could be only...

BERNIA: Corpse don't sneeze.

EDELMAR: And alive people do.

FREDERICA: He was dead.

DAPHNE: How do you know?
CARISSA: He just fell up, and when we took him.
BERNIA: Did anyone check his pulse?
CARISSA: He resembled lifeless.
DAPHNE: Did you see many dead people?
EDELMAR: Somebody need to go and check.
FREDERICA: You'll go.
DAPHNE: It's just hallucination.

Sneezing backstage.

BERNIA: And we all heard that.
CARISSA: What to do?
BERNIA: Check if he is conscious or he will be dead because of frost-bitten.
FREDERICA: Better wait.
EDELMAR: Don't be foolish. We don't receive a penny. For us better when he is alive.

Scene 18.

Enters Adalard, sneezes.

ADALARD: Bernia, thank you for warm welcome.
BERNIA: I'll bring whisky.
ADALARD: And what my newly wed children. You could look more happy when your father is again in existence.
FREDERICA: You're not my father.
DAPHNE: Frederica!
ADALARD: I was really dead for long time, if you know all truth.
CARISSA: We just discussed...
ADALARD: What to tell to police.
BERNIA: Drink whisky. Nobody call the police if one of the guests...
ADALARD: Lays in the basement. With open window! You hadn't courage to made it yourself, waited for frost to finish your plan.
DAPHNE: You say terrible words.
ADALARD: All my life is in front of me. Thank all for unforgettable experience.
CARISSA: I can't stay here no more.
FREDERICA: Our cars are ready.
DAPHNE: I think this is the end.
ADALARD: Oh, yes.
EDELMAR: Do you call the police?
ADALARD: No. But from now, any money is from me. And my women, I'll change a will.
CARISSA: We will go.
DAPHNE: You couldn't do properly nothing, Adalard.
ADALARD: Sorry, Daphne, I won't die.
EDELMAR: How could you?
ADALARD: I begin to loose my temper. Bernia, I need a taxi.
BERNIA: Your word is rule for me.
CARISSA: Mindless end.
FREDERICA: I know.

Carissa, Daphne, Edelmar, Frederica go away, not look back at Adalard. Adalard waves to them.

Scene 19.

ADALARD: Where is my taxi?

BERNIA: Snow will be for three days.

ADALARD: I need a taxi!

BERNIA: You need a warm bed and more whisky.

ADALARD: It was you who left the window.

BERNIA: It helps, don't grumble.

ADALARD: And you quit your hotel for babysitting me.

BERNIA: Hotel? It closed for Christmas.

ADALARD: Since when?

BERNIA: From now.

ADALARD: I'm still angry with you.

BERNIA: When it stops me?

ADALARD: Never. I want to ask you one question.

BERNIA: My ears are open.

ADALARD: This stuffed reindeer.

BERNIA: What about Adalard?

ADALARD: I knew that you didn't forget me.

BERNIA: Did you give me a chance for that?

ADALARD: What for?

Bernia and Adalard exit from stage.

CURTAIN.

November - December 2014.

More about play.

Mystery theatrical play, I'm proud that I did it.

Mystery is difficult genre. I know, I wrote several novels few years ago in Russian. They never were published. I found a curious problem in contemporary stories. When I finished revising of 300 pages draft, gadgets changed. I made adaptation. Few more months and everything became new. With disappointment I put novels in the box.

When I understand that it's problem for everyone, I start to find an exit. No matter if it is novel or TV-serial, after two years from production it looks like recent vintage. World is changing, so you have to adapt clues. And it looks like typewriting machine connected to the laser printer. Life is quicker than book ready for print.

It's reality with which I have to leave. My fantasy novels on Ukrainian and Russian are as fresh as were written and quietly wait for time when my English would be good enough. At least to my opinion.

English I don't stop improve and try to use every new word or idiom which I learned.

I tried to translate from Ukrainian my first play "Unfinished letters"

"Недописані листи.

This is an excerpt.

Scene 17.

“My love, you have such wonderful eyes. I think they are blue as sky. Grey as abyss above which I stay, when you are not near me. Your eyes are green as forest in which you searched for and found me.

I like how you screw up your eyes, when you want to amuse. You widely open eyes, when you are amazed, like child.

Your eyes scare me, when they don't look at me. I am confused, useless, I am pathetic.

But when your inquiring glance meets my pleadingly look, I feel relaxed.

You know about that all now, dearly beloved...”

I think it hasn't enough tenderness in English. And now I haven't mood to revise play about unrequited love. Man chose the one who loves only in films with happy ends. Life is complicated, but always gave themes to write. I still look for which play to write next. Maybe I will use a coin, if won't meet Morpheus with two pills. Yes, my favourable film is Matrix.

Theatre has different rules. So I would like to find new life for my stories in future plays.

Obviously from the name and characters of “Body in the basement” is my attachment to work of Agatha Christie. I like mystery, read them and write them. I can't regret one of my passions.

I create this story to feel how is to write that sort of play.

I think I used all important moments: lonely house in snow, rich man, people who don't like him and Christmas miracle in the end.

Hope you enjoy reading.

Many happy returns to all!

Thank you!



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