

**Miro Gavran**

**THE PERFECT PARTNER**

**(a serious comedy)**

**Version 9 - January 31, 2020**

**E-mail: [miro@mirogavran.com](mailto:miro@mirogavran.com)**

**[www.mirogavran.com](http://www.mirogavran.com)**

**Characters:**

<b>PHILIP.....</b>	<b>35</b>
<b>TINA .....</b>	<b>32</b>
<b>BARBARA .....</b>	<b>45</b>
<b>DAVID, as if he is .....</b>	<b>35</b>

**note:**

**Philip and David are played by the same actor.**

## ACT ONE

### Scene one

- Tina's living room

(Philip, Tina)

*(Philip is sitting at a table on which there are some model-building tools and a model ship about eighty centimeters long that he is constructing out of about ten pieces. Tina enters. She is wearing a trench coat and has a handbag over her shoulder.)*

TINA: What a mess! You're not wasting your time on that trash again, are you?

PHILIP: Done for the day. After three weeks, I've finally finished a new ship.

TINA: And I've finally cracked! My boyfriend has been in a relationship with a toy for ages!

PHILIP: Just a sec. Let me clean this up, and I'll fetch us some wine and finish cooking lunch.

TINA: You don't have to; I had lunch at the office.

PHILIP: You know I like to start the weekend by cooking.

TINA: Then cook, who's stopping you?

PHILIP: It's no fun cooking just for myself.

*(Tina's cellphone rings, and she answers it.)*

TINA: Hello? Can't you do *anything* without my help? Expenses are in the left column, revenues in the right! You're not going home until you finish! Good-bye!

*(Silence)*

TINA: And what delicious specialty have you prepared?

PHILIP: Gnocchi with gorgonzola sauce.

TINA: Yuck! That's a calorie bomb! It'll make me fat.

PHILIP: Foods don't make people fat; eating too much does.

TINA: Yeah, right!

*(Tina puts away her trench coat and handbag while Philip finishes the final section of his model ship. )*

PHILIP: Look at it! It's excellent!

TINA: A boat's a boat. It's the same as the last one. Just a little longer.

PHILIP: What? You don't notice any difference? This one's special.

TINA: When those ships of yours start to collect money instead of dust, maybe I'll notice that.

PHILIP: One day, when our children are playing with my ships . . .

TINA: The only child in my vicinity is you, Philip! How can you waste your time on that garbage?

PHILIP: I find it a greater waste of time when I'm working eight hours a day at the library, communicating with retirees who ask me for crime novels without too much blood and romance novels without too much sex. My greatest pleasure is to come home and do what relaxes me.

TINA: Regardless of the fact that it has nothing to do with real life.

*(Tina's cellphone rings again, and she answers it.)*

TINA: What is it now? You sign it, who do you think? And double check everything before sending it. Just turn on your brain, and everything will be all right. Talk to you later!

*(A long silence ensues.)*

TINA: The boss called me in for a talk today. He offered me a promotion. I'm going to be director of procurement for the whole country.

PHILIP: That's great! You should have said so right away! Director! You certainly earned it! Bravo! That's a great recognition!

*(He gives her a hug.)*

TINA: Even I was surprised by the offer. And the money isn't bad, either: up until now my salary has been twice as much as yours, but now it'll be three times more. But he really caught me off guard when he said I'd have to move.

PHILIP: Move?

TINA: Yes, to the capital.

PHILIP: When?

TINA: In two weeks.

PHILIP: In two weeks? But how are we going to rent an apartment so fast? How will I find a job so fast? Can't we put it off for a month or two?

TINA: The current director had a stroke; they need a replacement immediately. I can't turn it down now. It means a much bigger salary, not to mention returning to where all the decisions are made -- a serious position. I can finally start a fresh new page.

PHILIP: But what will I do? It's so sudden, without any warning. It'll totally complicate our lives!

TINA: No, it won't.

PHILIP: What do you mean, it won't?

TINA: If we separate for a little while, then it won't.

PHILIP: Separate? You want to leave without me?

TINA: You can stay in this apartment. I'll pay you two months in advance, and then we'll see what we'll do after that.

PHILIP: Wait, wait a minute -- are you leaving me?

TINA: No, no. I just think we should take a little break.

PHILIP: I don't need any break! I know exactly what my feelings for you are after living together for four years.

TINA: I'm sorry, but our relationship has run its course. We need a break.

PHILIP: You take a break, and I'll go get some cardboard boxes. I'm packing my things, and in one hour the apartment is all yours. You can use the rent money to go find yourself a life coach -- you'll need one when you start that fresh new page.

TINA: There's no need to be rude! Hey, where are you going? It's almost night.

PHILIP: To my brother's place. Until I rent an apartment in the budget of an ordinary librarian.

TINA: Why are you so complicated? You're not in my way.

PHILIP: I'm in my own way.

TINA: You're pathetic. For months now I've been sending you signals that something isn't right between us, and you act like you don't hear me.

*(Philip is taking apart his ship and putting the pieces into a box.)*

PHILIP: There's no need to justify things. You've said everything. If we continue like this, we'll have a fight, and we don't need that.

## Scene two

### - presentation room -

**(Barbara)** .....

*(Barbara is giving a motivational talk to some women.)*

**BARBARA:** Dear women, you certainly wonder what and who the "perfect partner" is. Does the "perfect partner" even exist? I can see some skeptics among you who will say that perfection does not exist. Perfection is an illusion, utopia. Our consumer society sells us an image of perfection in advertisements and headlines of magazines every day, while simultaneously consoling us that no one is perfect and that one should learn to love one's own faults as well as those of others. But give that a little bit more thought. Do we, even today, in the twenty-first century, still have to deal with the imperfections of our partners? Must we settle for mediocrity? Must we roam from relationship to relationship and lower our expectations because the imperfections of others have been so nerve-wrecking? I know very well what you are talking about, and judging by your faces, I gather that you all know as well. Today it is not easy to be a woman on the love market. The competition is high, while the supply of male partners is low. In addition to that -- men are full of unrealistic demands, while at the same time, they do not really have much to offer us. At the end of the day, as a rule we are left alone and disappointed because there is something missing in every man we meet. Every single one has some factory defect. It could be that football is even more important to him than his own mother, or that

his mother is even more important to him than football, leaving you in the third place, or that he has absolutely no ambitions to have a serious relationship, that he is content with having drinks with the boys from the neighborhood, that when you get a higher position in the firm, he gets erectile dysfunction. Or he his passive aggressive, or submissive and lukewarm, or, or, or, or ... You can fill in the list yourselves. You certainly won't get it wrong.

With the years, you lower your criteria and accept worse and worse variants, while feeling more and more miserable, but you believe that you are being realistic and that this is the only way of avoiding being alone because even your own mother has convinced you that even she once upon a time lowered her criteria and accepted a compromise. Well, the time has come for you to say, "Enough!" to all that. Dear women, you no longer have to agree to mediocrity! You no longer have to settle for crumbs. You deserve the best from life! For that reason, the answer to the question, Does the perfect partner exist?, is: YES! The perfect partner certainly exists! With my program, every one of you will find your own personalized, ideal man! Are you bothered by your partner's snoring in bed? You will no longer here it! Have you had enough of his sloppiness and carelessness? No more smelly socks strewn about the floor! No more hairs in the drain! No more toilet seat left gaping open! Now, it's up to you just to make the decision, and then you can find your own personalized, unique, and perfect example of a man! *(She shows the audience some large photographs.)*

Would you like to know more about the ideal man's appearance? Why, your perfect man can look however you want. Perhaps like your unrealized love from your college days? Tall, dark, and handsome? Do you have a hunger for younger? Or would you rather older and bolder? – choose anything you want! With a tummy? Without a tummy? An intellectual with glasses? Bearded? Bald? Hairy Rastafarian? Or simply -- Brad Pitt? Everything is reachable, my dears! Your wish is my command. "Our" man will never disappoint you. He will make your dreams come true. After everything that you have experienced by now -- You women deserve perfection!

**Scene three**  
**- Barbara's office -**

**(Barbara, Tina)**

*(Barbara is sitting at her desk, reading something on her tablet. At one point, she presses the speakerphone.)*

**BARBARA:** Send in client number seventeen.

*(She continues to read her tablet. Tina walks into the office. Her movements are timid, as if she were embarrassed.)*

**TINA:** Hello!

**BARBARA:** Come in -- have a seat!!

*(Tina sits across from her.)*

**BARBARA:** I read your application carefully. Is everything in it correct?

**TINA:** I always make sure to tell the truth.

**BARBARA:** You do realize that this conversation will necessarily include intimate questions about your personal life, don't you?

**TINA:** Yes, I do. I agreed to that in writing.

**BARBARA:** I expect you to be candid. I have to find out who you truly are. And I must know how your perfect partner should be like -- emotionally, intellectually, socially, and sexually. Do you understand?

**TINA:** Yes, I do.

**BARBARA:** It says here that you and your ex separated six months ago?

**TINA:** That's right.

**BARBARA:** Who initiated the break-up? You or him?

**TINA:** I did. He was . . . Unambitious . . . Without initiative, although, to be fair, he was a very nice, positive guy.

**BARBARA:** You were together for four years?

**TINA:** Right -- four whole years.

**BARBARA:** You weren't married. You were both in agreement about that?

**TINA:** He wanted to get married and have children, but I wanted to accomplish something in life first.

**BARBARA:** How did he take the break-up?

**TINA:** It was hard for him. He wasn't expecting it.

**BARBARA:** What about you? Do you miss him?

**TINA:** I'm a bit lonely . . . But everything else is all right.

**BARBARA:** When we find you a perfect partner, your problem will be solved.



**TINA:** I'm so glad I made the final cut.

**BARBARA:** I'm glad I'm running this program. No longer will any woman be lonely . . . some day, of course. This is just the experimental phase. Here it says you have a PhD in economics, and that you insist that your partner have a master's degree?

**TINA:** That's right.

**BARBARA:** Why?

**TINA:** I'd like him to be educated, but I wouldn't want him to be more educated than me.

**BARBARA:** Of course - it's your choice. Under the rubric of "religious beliefs" you wrote that you don't want him to be conspicuous. What does that mean?

**TINA:** It's best if he doesn't belong to any church. Or let him say he's moderately religious.

**BARBARA:** "Moderately religious"?

**TINA:** So that I won't lose any business partners if he is overly vociferous about his faith, but on the other hand, I wouldn't like believers to be bothered that he is an atheist.

**BARBARA:** Are you a believer?

**TINA:** Well . . . Yeah . . . Sort of. Is that a problem?

**BARBARA:** I don't care one way or the other.

**TINA:** Thank God, I was afraid you might hold it against me.

**BARBARA:** Why?

**TINA:** Such are the times we live in -- a person can no longer tell what others are going to think.

**BARBARA:** What about his political beliefs?

**TINA:** It's best if he is neutral.

**BARBARA:** What do you mean, neutral?

**TINA:** That no one can determine whether he is left or right. That would be best for my job.

**BARBARA:** But a man sometimes has to say his opinion.

**TINA:** I don't really think that's true. Those with political opinions always irritate someone.

**BARBARA:** Take me, for example, I can't stand those colorless guys who want to be liked by everybody. A guy with an MA can't be opinionless when it comes to politics.

**TINA:** All right, then, he can be an advocate for humane principles and women's rights, or against hunger in Africa, the exploitation of the oppressed, and the like . . . But he mustn't overdo that, either.

**BARBARA:** Like at a beauty pageant?

**TINA:** Do you resent me?

**BARBARA:** No. That's your idea of perfection. So -- moderately religious with neutral political opinions.

**TINA:** I'll get a one hundred percent perfect partner?

**BARBARA:** You will. If you can answer the question of what the perfect man is for you.

**TINA:** You think some woman might not know what the perfect partner is for her?

**BARBARA:** I read over two hundred applications submitted by single women, and I was barely able to put together a shortlist. And do you know why? Because they all wrote a whole bunch of contradictory responses. When I read *your* application, however, I thought to myself, Why do you need a man at all?

**TINA:** What do you mean?

**BARBARA:** It seems to me that a woman like you is self-fulfilling.

**TINA:** Perhaps. But after the breakup, I've found that I want someone to be waiting for me when I enter my apartment, and that it isn't just a cat. On the other hand, I don't want a man who will complicate my life and impose on me.

**BARBARA:** You want him to be inferior to yourself?

**TINA:** Well . . . That would suit me.

**BARBARA:** Like your ex. Why someone inferior when such guys don't impress you?

**TINA:** Only one person can be the boss in a relationship or a marriage.

**BARBARA** (*typing*): She wants to be indulged in every way and seeks obedience to her will.

**TINA:** Well, that's every woman's dream.

**BARBARA:** What should he be like when you're out with others, and how should he be at home?

**TINA:** I'd like him to be superior when in company, but not so much that he shows me up in front of others . . . But he should be submissive at home. If that's possible.

**BARBARA:** Everything is possible.

**TINA:** It's essential that I'm the center of his world. And I want him to be well versed in culture, in art, in literature -- that's important to me -- in fashion, in gastronomy, and he has to know what's best for me. He must be my motivation to stay in shape -- physically, intellectually, and even socially.

**BARBARA:** Socially?

**TINA:** Everyone gets lazy sometimes -- we don't feel like leaving the house. I want him to encourage me to lead a dynamic and fulfilled life . . . Am I asking for too much?

**BARBARA:** Seek the maximum, and you'll get the maximum. Seek the minimum, and you won't get anything. What should his musical tastes be like?

**TINA:** It's best that he prefers mainly classical -- guys like that seem educated and are respected by everyone in society.

**BARBARA:** That was well put. What about sports -- football?

**TINA:** No! Anything but that. Football is out of the question!

**BARBARA:** Yeah, Yeah -- the worst is when they insist that you not only to *watch* a game, but that you *enjoy* it, too. I've gone through that torture.

*(Silence)*

**BARBARA:** In your previous relationship, who would take the initiative when sex was concerned?

**TINA:** Well . . . I don't know, it's hard to say. I guess he did . . . It was more important to him.

**BARBARA:** Sex isn't important to you?

**TINA:** It is important to me, but when I'm not thinking about work.

**BARBARA:** How many times a month do you get the urge to have sex?

**TINA:** It's hard for me to give you a precise answer.

**BARBARA:** Seven times?

**TINA:** Less often.

**BARBARA:** Five times?

**TINA:** Even less. Let's say about once a month. Although there are periods when I get the urge twice as often.

**BARBARA:** So . . . twice a month?

**TINA:** It used to be much more intense. If he had been different, my interest wouldn't have diminished.

**BARBARA:** What about your new partner . . . how often do you think you'll want to make love with him?

**TINA:** At least once a week . . . I don't want to overdo it.

**BARBARA:** How often do you use a vibrator?

**TINA:** Where did that come from?

**BARBARA:** That's the fastest way to get rid of stress. Don't be embarrassed -- I've been using one since I got divorced. But when you get your perfect partner, you'll no longer need your vibrator; it'll be buzzing away in the recycle bin. Your perfect partner will perform everything you want, the way you want it, and as often as you want.

**TINA:** Sounds ideal.

**BARBARA:** I only have one more question. Do you want him to look like any specific man? Banderas? Hugh Grant? George Clooney? Goran Višnjić?

*(Barbara takes portraits of several well-known men out of a folder.)*

**TINA:** No, no -- i wouldn't like him to look like anyone famous.

*(Tina takes a photograph out of her handbag and hands it to Barbara.)*

**TINA:** I'd like him to look like this.

**BARBARA:** Handsome fella.

**TINA:** That's . . . That's my ex- . . . That's Philip.

**BARBARA:** That's not a good idea.

**TINA:** I always liked his looks. Unlike his character. Please.

**BARBARA:** All right -- he'll look just like that.

*(Barbara sees Tina out.)*

#### **Scene four**

**- Tina's living room-**

**(Tina, Barbara, David)**

*(In the middle of the living room we see a large, two-meter-long box, big enough for a grown man to fit inside. Next to the box wrapped in plastic for transport, David is standing like a*

*motionless sculpture, his head is bowed, and he is looking at the floor . . . Beside him are Barbara and Tina.)*

**BARBARA:** Voila -- the time has come -- my masterpiece, my Sistine Chapel -- your perfect partner. But before we activate him, we would like to give you a few pieces of advice. I didn't want to do this in front of the guys from the Institute, so I sent them home. He's much more than a machine; we gave him human characteristics. You won't notice the difference. We named him David.

**TINA:** David?

**BARBARA:** Yes . . . Here -- here's the remote control that you can activate him with. And when you want to turn him off completely, press this big button. It's easy to handle.

*(He shows her.)*

**TINA:** You mean, you won't be here with me when I activate him?

**BARBARA:** No. That's when you'll become acquainted romantically. The first time you'll meet.

**TINA:** I would prefer it if you stayed when he "comes to life."

**BARBARA:** Don't be afraid -- we tested him innumerable times in the lab -- he functions flawlessly. Plus, it looks like your ex. Because of that you'll more easily accept him as an intimate being.

**TINA:** Intimate "being"?! You said, "being"?

**BARBARA:** That's right. Well, what expression would *you* use? And another thing -- don't forget to send us a weekly e-mail describing what happened the previous week. We want to know how women are experiencing these test "beau-bots." And before I forget -- here's a user's guide for your "subject".

*(She hands Tina a book about 100 pages long.)*

**TINA:** One hundred and twenty pages?!

**BARBARA:** Don't worry, there are pictures. If anything isn't clear to you, feel free to phone the head engineer or myself. I have no doubt that you'll enjoy . . . Especially the first few days. A honeymoon to remember awaits you.

**TINA:** I've already forgotten what the male touch is like.

**BARBARA:** This evening you will have that in abundance. But now I must go . . . Relax and enjoy yourself.

**TINA:** Please, stay a bit longer with me at least until we see if it works. Please, at least the first five minutes!

*(Barbara stops.)*

**BARBARA:** All right. Here is the remote for turning him on; point it at David and press the yellow button.

*(Tina points the remote control in David's direction and presses the button. David lifts his head and starts turning it left and right.)*

**BARBARA:** We need to free him of all that plastic wrap.

*(Barbara unwraps the plastic with which David is wrapped up. David lifts one hand in the air, then the other, and after that, takes two steps toward Tina. Tina shrinks back.)*

**TINA:** Hey, hey -- slow down!

**BARBARA:** Don't be afraid.

*(David freezes and looks up at the ceiling.)*

**TINA:** He acts strangely.

**BARBARA:** That's because we haven't yet turned on his "consciousness". The movement mechanism is activated first. How do you like him? Is he good looking?

**TINA:** Well . . . Yeah, he is.

**BARBARA:** Get closer -- go ahead and touch him.

**TINA:** Touch him?

**BARBARA:** Feel him.

**TINA:** Where? How?

**BARBARA:** Touch his hands, his chest, his face . . . You must feel his "skin," or rather, his silicon membrane. Whoever doesn't know wouldn't even notice the difference. Go ahead!

*(Tina feels his muscles. David does not react. He is still gazing at the ceiling. Tina cautiously approaches David and pokes his muscle with her forefinger, but David, still gazing motionlessly at the ceiling, doesn't react. Tina touches him on his chest, then his face, then his neck, and after that, his upper arm and lower arm. Finally, she feels his hands, going from finger to finger.)*

**TINA:** It smells like real skin.

**BARBARA:** I told you. The newest generation of synthetic pheromone.

*(Tina takes two steps back from David, points the remote at him, and turns on his speech. David lowers his head and starts speaking in Italian.)*

**DAVID:** Io sono David... Sono un giovane.... Come ti chiami?

**BARBARA:** Not Italian -- switch to number three!

*(Tina pushes a button on the remote control, and David starts to speak in English.)*

**DAVID:** \*\*I'm David... I'm a young man... What's your name?\*\*

**BARBARA:** Not six, three . . . Press three!

*(Barbara presses a new number on the remote control, and David starts speaking in Spanish.)*

**DAVID:** Soy David... Soy un hombre joven... Como te llamas?

*(Barbara takes the remote control from Tina and presses it.)*

**DAVID:** Ciao, pretty woman, I'm David. What's your name?

*(Barbara presses the remote again. )*

**DAVID:** Ich bin David . . . Ich bin ein junger Mann. Wie heisst du?

**BARBARA:** What's this all about?

*(Barbara again points the remote control at David and presses it.)*

**DAVID:** I'm David . . . What is your name . . . I'm David . . . What's your name? I'm David . . . What's your name?

**BARBARA:** It's okay -- Now it's okay.

**TINA:** What do mean, okay -- it constantly repeats the same sentence.

**BARBARA:** That's because we haven't yet turned on his "consciousness". But when you press this big button, his "conscious communication" switches on.

**DAVID:** I'm David. What's your name? . . . I'm David. What's your name? . . . I'm David. What's your name?

**BARBARA:** I don't think you should press that button before I leave.

**DAVID:** I'm David . . . I'm David . . . I'm David.

*(Barbara points the remote at David and presses it -- a moment later, David becomes quiet and freezes up and returns to the position he was in at the beginning of the scene, with his head bowed down towards the floor.)*

**TINA:** Now he's turned off.

**BARBARA:** That's right -- here -- you turn him on and press here if you want to check out his singing abilities.

**TINA:** He can sing, too?

**BARBARA:** Of course.

*(Tina presses a button on the remote and David comes to life and sings a recording of Frank Sinatra singing "My Way," and we realize that he contains built-in original recordings of hit songs.)*

**TINA:** The sound is excellent. Just like the original.

**BARBARA:** Click on another song.

*(Tina clicks, and David starts singing "Yesterday," by the Beatles.)*

**TINA:** This one's even better.

**BARBARA:** Click the next one.

*(Tina clicks, and David sings a song by Toto Cutugno: "Insieme.")*

**TINA:** He's an excellent singer.

**BARBARA:** He's excellent at everything.

*(Barbara clicks, and David turns off, and like at the beginning of the scene, he bows his head and freezes up like a statue.)*

**BARBARA:** Turn him on, and enjoy yourself.

**TINA:** You mean, I'll be alone?

**BARBARA:** Of course -- I've got a heap of work to do. Good luck!

*(Barbara literally escapes from the room. Tina circles David with the remote control. She takes a deep breath, points the remote control at him, and presses it twice, and "activates" David the android; David slowly stands up straight, turns toward Tina, and approaches her. His first movements are mechanical, but he gradually starts to move like a normal human being.)*

**DAVID:** *(speaking loudly)*: You're Tina?

**TINA:** Yes, I am. How did you know?

**DAVID:** They showed me your photo. I've been expecting you. My name is David, and I exist only because of you.

**TINA:** Thank you. No man has ever said that to me before.

**DAVID** *(even louder)*: I know. I am here to fulfill your wishes.

**TINA:** Could you try not to be so loud? I have a splitting headache, from work.

**DAVID** *(softly and gently)*: No problem.

**TINA:** You don't have to speak that softly. You sound like a choirboy.

**DAVID** *(with a deep voice)*: Is this all right?



**TINA:** A tad more softly, if you could. My head is really killing me. I work too much.

**DAVID:** I like the fact that you work a lot. You are a beautiful, self-confident, strong woman, and I find that sexually exciting.

**TINA:** You flatter me too much, David.

**DAVID:** Should I flatter you a little bit less?

**TINA:** No, I don't mind. Don't flatter me any less, even when I say you're overdoing it.

**DAVID:** Understood. Would you like me to give you a massage? You seem tense.

**TINA:** Yes, please.

*(He massages her neck, shoulders, and back.)*

**TINA:** I spend most of my time at the office sitting at my computer. I have so much work to do!

**DAVID:** I have a lot of respect for hard-working women.

**TINA:** It won't bother you that I work late?

**DAVID:** Not at all.

**TINA:** My ex always complained that my job was more important than him.

**DAVID:** What is important to you is important to me.

**TINA:** That was well put. It's as if you can read my mind. Mmmm, you really know how to give an excellent massage.

**DAVID:** If you want a Thai massage, just let me know. I know all types of massage techniques: classical, medical, sports, shiatsu, anti-cellulite, relaxology, reflex . . .

**TINA:** This just right.

**DAVID:** You're certainly hungry.

**TINA:** How did you know?

**DAVID:** Your stomach is growling.

**TINA:** Oh, now I'm embarrassed.

**DAVID:** There's no need to be. You can share everything with me; I won't judge you.

TINA: My ex would always make fun of my minor flaws.

DAVID: Ridiculous. You have neither minor, nor major flaws. Would you like me to make you a low-calorie meal rich in vitamins?

TINA: You even cook!

DAVID: Of course. I am here to fulfill all of your wishes. Would you like me to fix you a smoothie with healthy green ingredients first? I have all of Jamie Oliver's recipes, as well as everything from Sanja Doležal's *Healthy Cookbook*. Barbara stressed that I simply have to treat you to something when we meet.

TINA: Great - just let me get changed.

*(Tina takes off her trench coat and sweater; remaining only in her blouse.)*

TINA: But what can I do for you?

DAVID: It's enough that you exist. You are my entire world.

TINA: You are truly ideal. You do everything I tell you to do. You're thoughtful. Compassionate. Not overbearing. Subtle. My ex couldn't compare with you! You are perfect for me! Admittedly, you're a bit pathetic for the times we live in, but a little romance will do me good.

*(David hands her a smoothie. )*

DAVID: Here.

TINA: Thank you. I love smoothies.

*(Tina takes a sip of the smoothie and makes a disgusted face.)*

TINA: This really is healthy. A true health bomb!

DAVID: Would you like another?

TINA: No, no! I'd rather you showed what else you are gifted with.

DAVID: I'd be glad to. I have program called "Fifty Shades of Grey." Would you like to try it?

TINA: Absolutely.

## Scene five

**- Tina's living room -**  
**(David, Tina)**

*(David is setting the table for lunch. Tina enters. She is wearing a winter coat and has a handbag over her shoulder.)*

**TINA:** Hi!

**DAVID:** Hi! How was work?

**TINA:** Excellent! The CEO, Cooper from Toronto, moved here and held his first working meeting with our department. He praised me in front of all of the managers and approved Ana and Adam as my assistants.

*(David brings her slippers to her.)*

**DAVID:** Here are your slippers.

**TINA:** Thank you.

*(David takes off her shoes and puts her slippers on her feet. He takes her shoes to the hallway.)*

**TINA:** What are we having for dinner?

**DAVID:** Smoothies and vegetable and tuna salad. It's good for losing weight - not too many calories - all according to Montignac.

**TINA:** Excellent.

**DAVID:** Would you like me to massage your feet or hands?

**TINA:** My hands, please.

*(David massages her hands.)*

**DAVID:** I must give you a manicure -- you don't go out with those disgraceful nails.

**TINA:** It really is about time.

**DAVID:** We can do it this evening.

**TINA:** Today Ana told me I have bags under my eyes and that I look exhausted. And it's all your fault -- last night you really exhausted me.

**DAVID:** If you want, I could activate a less demanding love-making program. Medium or beginner's level?

**TINA:** Absolutely not -- I'm happy that you're so . . . in the mood for sex . . . so tireless. It's just what I needed. Last night I really enjoyed myself. We didn't even have the chance to chat. Do you even know what I do for a living?

**DAVID:** I do. You are a director in a big import firm, and your name is Tina, which is short for Kristina, Cooper from Toronto is the CEO, your assistants are Adam and Ana, and the name Kristina is a longer version of Tina.

**TINA:** If one of my friends asked what your profession is, what would you tell them?

**DAVID:** I graduated from the University of Edinburgh with a degree in English literature, and after that I got my masters degree in London.

**TINA:** Who is your favorite poet?

**DAVID:** It's hard for me to decide between Robert Frost and T. S. Elliot.

**TINA:** What about your favorite novelist?

**DAVID:** James Joyce -- his *Ulysses* is the epitome of a literary work.

**TINA:** I think it's endlessly boring.

**DAVID:** He was the best novelist ever. His syntax and numerous associations were a first in early twentieth-century literature. With his intertextual process, he created a never-before-seen interrelationship with Homer's epic of the same name . . .

**TINA:** Enough already! Cut the crap! I don't like Joyce. I think he's the worst of them all.

**DAVID:** According to my evidence and analysis . . .

**TINA:** Evidence and analysis don't mean anything when it comes to literature, all that matters is the heart. We have to listen to our hearts.

**DAVID:** I can't listen to my heart. I am a machine.

**TINA:** Forgive me, I forgot. I don't want to talk with you about literature.

**DAVID:** If you aren't in the mood for literature, I've picked out a movie on television tonight that won the Cannes Film Festival in 2007. It's called *4 Months, 3 Weeks and 2 Days*. It's a powerful psychological drama with outstanding actors -- a masterpiece of Romanian cinematography.

**TINA:** All right. On Sunday I'm going to take you on a day-trip to visit an ethno-tourism village, where you'll meet my colleagues. I thought I would go without you, but Ana said that women like me don't have boyfriends -- I'll show her how wrong she was.

**DAVID:** Are you going to have lunch with them out, or at home?

**TINA:** The ethno-village has an excellent restaurant. We are all going to eat there together.

**DAVID:** You forgot that I don't eat because I'm a machine.

**TINA:** Oh my God. It'll be awkward if everyone eats except you. How can I avoid that situation? Hey, I know -- I have a solution!!!

**DAVID:** What kind of solution?

**TINA:** You can tell him that you're fasting and that you won't be eating that day.

**DAVID:** Okay . . . And what if they offer me something to drink?

**TINA:** You'll say you're "dry fasting," that you are neither eating nor drinking.

**DAVID:** In that case, you will be lying; bad people tell lies.

**TINA:** Well there is such a thing as an innocent lie, a white lie.

**DAVID:** Lies come in different colors?

**TINA:** That little one about fasting is just a trifle. Everything else we say will be the truth. When you talk to them about me, you have to tell them that you love me very much and that you are happy that I'm a successful businesswoman.

**DAVID:** Should I tell them that you are the most beautiful in the world?

**TINA:** Sure, why not? Actually, don't -- that would be too much. It's enough that you tell them you are happy with me. If they ask you what you do, tell them you used to teach literature in England and that you came here to write a novel. You were doing research in the city library, and then you met me.

**DAVID:** So what will the novel be about?

**TINA:** I don't know. Make something up. Like, for example, a novel about the Second Crusade.

**DAVID:** Excellent. I have extensive knowledge about the Second Crusade. It started in 1147 A.D. and ended . . .

**TINA:** No! No! Don't bore me now.

**DAVID:** I've prepared some music for you to relax to. Can I turn it on?

**TINA:** Sure. What did you pick out?

**DAVID:** Classical -- the best world composer. Beethoven's Fifth Symphony.

**TINA:** Good choice.

*(David turns on the music. The Fifth Symphony fills the room.)*

**DAVID:** There's nothing more beautiful than the classics.

**TINA:** I'm with you on that.

**DAVID:** You mean, you agree with me.

**TINA:** That's right, I agree with you.

**DAVID:** Tomorrow you have to go to the hairdresser's to have your hair dyed.

**TINA:** Okay, thanks -- you think of everything.

**DAVID:** Your hair is losing its sheen, and you have split ends.

**TINA:** Well you don't have to insult me.

**DAVID:** It's constructive criticism. Constructive criticism is always well-intentioned.

**TINA:** Please do something else that's well intentioned -- pamper me more.

**DAVID:** Would you like to have lunch now, or perhaps a cup of tea before lunch?

**TINA:** Tea would be fine.

**DAVID:** I'll go boil some water for your tea.

*(David goes to the kitchen. Tina lies down on the sofa with her feet up on the armrest and leafs through a tabloid newspaper. David returns wearing an apron and starts cleaning the room with a vacuum cleaner. He moves each chair to vacuum the floor underneath and then puts each one back in its place. At one point, he turns off the vacuum cleaner and takes away. Right after that, he returns with a tub of freshly washed laundry.)*

**TINA:** Where are you going with that?

**DAVID:** I'm going to hang it out to dry on the balcony.

**TINA:** Put it down and bring me a lemonade from the fridge.

**DAVID:** All right.

*(David takes the laundry out to the balcony and then goes back to the refrigerator, takes a glass of lemonade and offers it to Tina.)*

**DAVID:** Here you are.

**TINA:** Thank you!

*(Tina takes a sip of lemonade, places the glass on the coffee table, and continues to read. David takes a dust cloth and proceeds to wipe the dust off the furniture. Tina gets up from the couch and watches him dusting the furniture . . . Right when David bends over a low nightstand to wipe off the dust, Tina comes up from behind him and slaps his backside. )*

**TINA:** You're so hard-working -- I love to watch you working about the house.

**DAVID:** That slap you just gave me on my rump -- does that mean you aren't happy with my work and you are punishing me, or do you want us to make love?

**TINA:** I want to make love.

**DAVID:** Should I go wash my hands before that and go make the bed?

**TINA:** Don't bother washing your hands -- and what do we need a bed for -- sometimes I like to make love on the floor.

**DAVID:** According to my instructions, lovemaking is done only on the bed.

**TINA:** You'll learn to do it without a bed!

**DAVID:** I'll make a note of that.

**Scene six**

**- Tina's living room -**

**(David, Tina)**

*(David is setting the table for lunch. Tina enters. She is wearing a coat and has a handbag over her shoulder.)*

**TINA:** Hi!

**DAVID:** Hi! Let me help you.

*(David helps her out of her coat.)*

**DAVID:** How was your day at work?

**TINA:** Cooper was furious when he realized that they had entered items incorrectly. He authorized me to supervise them from now on, and said nothing can go out without my signature. Then, right in front of him, I told Adam and Ana that their employment would be terminated if I came across any irregularities. Ana was really angry that I'd said that in front of the boss and everyone from management.

*(David takes off Tina's shoes. He takes her shoes and coat to the hallway.)*

**TINA:** What did you make for dinner?

**DAVID:** Gazpacho -- Spanish cold soup with vegetables, and fish carpaccio with rosehip jelly, Granny Smith apples, droplets of aceto balsamico, and micro greens.

**TINA:** Sounds good. Will there be anything sweet to go with it?

**DAVID:** According to the new program, you can only have dessert on Saturdays.

**TINA:** Only Saturdays?

**DAVID:** That's right.

**TINA:** Not even a bit of chocolate?

**DAVID:** Absolutely not -- that would ruin everything. A bit of chocolate is a sign of weakness, and you are a woman of strong character. I borrowed a book from the library for you -- a novel by the best contemporary Spanish author: "Away from Madrid." "Lejos de Madrid." This month it's at the top of the bestseller list for the whole country.

**TINA:** But I still haven't finished that Dutch novel about an adopted child.

**DAVID:** I know -- the bookmark is only on page seventy.

**TINA:** WTF?

**DAVID:** YFBWR, You're Falling Behind with Reading, if you prefer acronyms.

**TINA:** There shouldn't be a norm for how much one reads.

**DAVID:** It's important that you are consistent in everything you do.

**TINA:** Pour me a shot of Schnapps as an aperitif, will you?

**DAVID:** Alcohol? -- No chance. We agreed on a dietetic menu, and you want to ruin it with aperitifs and sweets. You mustn't give in to yourself. You asked me help you stick to it . . . And you've also been going to work without preparing yourself.

**TINA:** What are you talking about?

**DAVID:** Well, you're already a week late for your peeling treatment.

**TINA:** That is so painful, that I . . .

**DAVID:** The more you put it off, the more painful it's going to be. I made an appointment for you tomorrow after work. Before I serve our meal, I'll put on some music to set the mood.

**TINA:** What kind of music?

**DAVID:** The best of the classics -- Beethoven's Sixth Symphony.

**TINA:** I'm not so sure that's the best dinner music.

**DAVID:** Do you think it would be more appropriate for breakfast or lunch?

**TINA:** I don't think . . .

*(David turns on the music.)*

**TINA:** Wouldn't it be nicer if we ate a quiet dinner?

**DAVID:** Music is just as important to you as literature, the theater, and film . . . And it's time you go see an art show at a gallery or a museum.

**TINA:** Maybe you're right, but . . .

**DAVID:** No *buts* - every time you say *but*, you follow it with an unconvincing excuse for our inactivity.

**TINA:** What -- aren't I allowed to say "but" in your company?

**DAVID:** You said "but" again.

*(The telephone rings. Tina picks up the receiver.)*

**TINA:** Hello? Oh, it's you, Greta. Hi! How are you? . . . I'm doing well. I have a new boyfriend. He's from England, but he's not an Englishman. We live together . . . He's great, he does everything I wish for. A writer. He's writing a wonderful novel . . .



Listen, have you by any chance seen Philip lately? Do you think he might be depressed, if he never gets out?

PHILIP: What am I supposed to do now?

TINA: Come on, don't interrupt me -- can't you see I'm on the telephone . . . No, I wasn't saying that to you . . . Nor to him -- my hair stylist is here to get me ready for Media Fest.

*(Tina gestures David to go into the other room, which he does.)*

TINA: And if you see him, tell him, you know, "incidentally", that I've got a boyfriend . . . Bye! Talk to you later!

*(Tina hangs up. At that moment, David enters the room carrying two large exercise balls.)*

TINA: What are you doing with those at this hour?

DAVID: You have been sitting down at work for hours -- you need a little exercise -- a little stretching, some aerobic. You have to tighten up your glutes and quads, you shouldn't neglect your pectoral muscles, either.

TINA: But I've only just gotten home from work -- I'm tired!

DAVID: Well, that's just it -- sedentary jobs full of stress cause tension; only aerobic exercise will help you stimulate serotonin secretion. Let's go!

*(David pushes one of the balls towards Tina and starts exercising with the other.)*

DAVID: Come on -- like this!

*(Tina does as she is told.)*

DAVID: Stretch! More, more, more! And now let's do squats!

*(David and Tina do squats together . . . on the fifth one Tina yelps!)*

DAVID: What's wrong?

TINA: Idiot! My nerve's pinched! My seventh vertebra! I told you I can't make sudden movements without warming up! Ow! It hurts! Ow!

DAVID: I'll bring you some Difen and Valium. If you take them together, you'll be fine in half an hour.

TINA: Nothing is going to be fine. Don't you don't understand that I need to rest after work? I am not a machine! Bring me some goose liver pate, you goose!

### Scene seven

- presentation hall -

(Barbara, David)

*(Barbara is giving a presentation before an auditorium full of women.)*

**BARBARA:** My dear women, friends, comrades, thank you for gathering together in such a large number. I have been preparing for the Perfect Partner Project for a long time now. As you know, mine has not been an easy path, but it has paid off -- mostly because of you all. The purpose of my scientific work was not merely to experiment and enter the field of science. I wanted to make you happier and more fulfilled. Every woman should realize her maximum potential -- together, of course, with a "Perfect Partner" tailored to your personal preferences. He stands out among all the imperfect examples of homo erectus that you see in the clubs, but which castrate you with boring, regurgitated lines. He isn't like a man in a position of power who will use you, cheat on you, misguide you, and unnerve you with his primitive habits. It is my honor to introduce to you the beta version of the Perfect Partner android. . . . I should mention that one of these models is currently in the phase of experimental testing and that our customer is currently extremely happy with him. David number two -- come in and introduce yourself!

*(An android enters. It waves with both hands.)*

**DAVID 2:** Hello. I am David number two.

**BARBARA:** As you can see, my android is no different at all from a real man. In fact, you could say that he is more of a real man than a real man. Look at his chiseled body!

*(The android lifts his t-shirt. He flashes a shifty smile.)*

**BARBARA:** He moves with unbelievable ease. His every move is completely natural. And the best thing is that you can adapt even his movements to your taste. If you are an early-morning jogger, he will go jogging with you.

*(The android demonstrates something new each time Barbara clicks her clicker.)*

**BARBARA:** If you like yoga, the android is limber. He knows all the positions. Our android is a skillful and experienced lover, although, surprise, he hasn't had a single lover before you. And I can personally testify to the fact that he cooks like Jamie Oliver and tidies up according to the methods of Marie Kondo. Instead of a long

presentation, next we have a special treat for you. The android will tell you a joke, that is: 95% of women say that a sense of humor would be a prerequisite for someone to be a Perfect Partner. Go ahead, Perfect Partner.

**DAVID 2:** Why is the little robot crying? Because his parents are broken up.

**BARBARA:** And this one is my favorite. David, how do you get an ideal man?

**DAVID 2:** By crossing an ATM with a vibrator!

**BARBARA:** Bravo, bravo! And for the finale, we have dancing, just for you, ladies! It goes without saying that my Perfect Partner knows both classical ballroom and modern dancing. For this occasion, he will show you his skill at breakdancing! Let's cheer him on!

*(The android dances capoeira until Barbara tells him to stop.)*

**BARBARA:** David number 2, thank you -- you may go now.

*(David exits)*

**BARBARA:** Of course, if from time to time you want a break from him, no problem. You just switch him off like you switch off a computer or an iron. However, I can assure you that it won't be necessary. It's no coincidence that he's -- perfect!

## **Scene seven**

*( Tina, David )*

*(It's nighttime. Outside David can be heard singing the Frank Sinatra song "My Way." A moment later, Tina and David enter the room wearing trench coats . . . David is just coming to the end of the song, and they are both in a good mood. Tina takes off her trench coat and throws it on the sofa; David takes off his coat and immediately picks up Tina's coat and hangs both of them up on coat hooks. )*

**TINA:** Excellent product. Saturdays are the only time when I can relax and forget about my work.

**DAVID:** Are you satisfied with me?

**TINA:** My colleagues liked you -- I could feel their envy.

**DAVID:** Is that good?

**TINA:** For me it is. I get the impression that they like my boyfriend, but that he isn't interested in them. But then again, maybe it was a mistake for me to take you to this party.

**DAVID:** What did I do wrong?

**TINA:** You know, the way you acted towards Robert wasn't right.

**DAVID:** What wasn't right about the way I acted?

**TINA:** Robert had a tad too much to drink, he was staring at my breasts, and he felt me up in front of everybody whenever he got the chance, but you didn't even react.

**DAVID:** But what was I supposed to do?

**TINA:** Well . . . Don't you know how men behave when something bothers them?!

**DAVID:** But it didn't bother me that Robert was staring at your breasts and felt you up whenever he could. That didn't cause any harm to you or to me.

**TINA:** You don't understand anything. You should have pulled him off to the side and told him you were going to break his nose.

**DAVID:** All right -- that's how I'll react the next time.

**TINA:** And you sang the karaoke all wrong.

**DAVID:** What do you mean? Didn't I sing every song perfectly?

**TINA:** That's just it, you sang everything exactly like the originals. They've started to suspect. The fun in karaoke is that we sing badly; people laugh when someone sings off key, not when they are perfect.

**DAVID:** But everyone was amazed by my singing and praised me!

**TINA:** You can't do it like that anymore. That's not how real, live people sing! And another thing, the next time you see one of my friends smoking, don't bother them with that story about how they're going to get lung cancer. And don't tell the drinkers they're going to get cirrhosis of the liver.

**DAVID:** But it's mathematically more than probable.

**TINA:** It doesn't matter -- don't pester people; you're not their doctor and you're not their guardian.

**DAVID:** I am programmed to point out people's shortcomings and negative traits.

**TINA:** You're free to point out mine . . . But stop pestering other people. You're like The Cable Guy

**DAVID:** How? I've never done any cable installation, and I never will!

**TINA:** How could you possibly tell my friend Eva that she's thirty kilos overweight and that she has to go on a crash diet immediately!

**DAVID:** But it's true Her spine is under enormous stress, and her health is in danger.

**TINA:** That's something her boyfriend should be telling her. Not you.

**DAVID:** But they all call him a fat pig. He's twenty kilos overweight. And he should be warned, as well.

**TINA:** No, no, no! They are a good match for each other, and you might well ruin everything between them if you try to improve their lifestyle with your advice.

**DAVID:** You're confusing me, I'm very confused . . . You're confusing me, I'm very confused . . . You're confusing me, I'm very confused!

**TINA:** David, what's wrong with you?

*(Tina jostles him, and he suddenly "comes to himself".)*

**TINA:** Are you okay?

**DAVID:** I am fine -- I am David . . . How are you?

**TINA:** I'm fine. Shall I go wash my hands?

**DAVID:** I put your disinfectant next to the soap.

*(Tina exits into the bathroom. The cellphone that is on the cabinet starts ringing. David picks up the cellphone and answers it.)*

**DAVID:** Hello, this is David . . . Hi, Vera . . . No, it isn't a bad time . . . I'm alone. It's me that you need? Go ahead. I'm listening . . .

*(Tina returns to the living room, but David doesn't see her because she is behind him.)*

**DAVID:** Remain between the two of us? . . . The look in my eyes seemed unusual to you? . . . I was quiet because Tina had asked me not to talk too much . . . Why did you muster up the courage for this phone call? . . . Aha -- alcohol helped you to call me. My Zodiac sign? I don't know my own birthdate -- No one ever told me when it was. . . . No, I'm not an adopted child -- I just don't know what date I was born on, that's all. I'd have to ask Tina if I can meet with you. Why do you mean, "henpecked"? Why should our meeting remain our little secret? Yes, you are an attractive and pretty woman, but Tina is the most beautiful in the world. Vera, why are you laughing? You want to . . . ride me? -- But I'm not a horse!

*(Tina approaches David from the front.)*

**TINA:** Give me that cellphone. Vera, you whore, what's wrong with you -- trying to seduce my boyfriend? You ought to be ashamed of yourself, bitch - go take a ride on someone else.

*(Tina puts down the cellphone.)*

**TINA:** Why did you let her flirt with you?

**DAVID:** She didn't ask for my permission. She wanted us to go to the racetrack together.

**TINA:** What a cow! You are never to see or talk to her again!

**DAVID:** Why are you angry?

**TINA:** Because she wanted to steal you away from me.

**DAVID:** That's impossible; I'm yours and no one else's.

**TINA:** She obviously doesn't know that. The next time I run into her on the street, I'm going to smack her right in the face.

**DAVID:** Bad idea.

**TINA:** Why?

**DAVID:** Because it's against the law. If you slap her in the face, she could sue you -- then there would be a trial, sentencing, and a fine or jail time.

**TINA:** I'll risk it.

## ACT TWO

### Scene eight

- Tina's living room-

(David, Tina)

*(David is setting the table. Tina enters wearing a spring trench coat and a handbag over her shoulder.)*

**TINA:** Hi!

**DAVID:** Hi! How was your day at work?

**TINA:** Bad. That underhanded bitch Ana was talking dirt about me to Cooper, and he was encouraging her. It turns out that I'm to blame for the deliveries being late. When you do business with disorganized countries, that's part of the risk. When you get products for one fifth the price, it should come as no surprise that they deliver them late.

*(David takes Tina's coat and handbag to the hallway and quickly returns with a pair of slippers in his hand. He takes off her shoes and puts the slippers on her feet. Then he starts to massage her back.)*

**TINA:** When they mentioned later on that they had gone together to pick out the penthouse where Cooper is going to move, it all became clear to me.

**DAVID:** What became clear to you?

**TINA:** He's under her spell -- the boss is definitely screwing her. If you could just see how they look at each other at board meetings, how they snicker at each other's stupid jokes. My assistant and my immediate superior are having an intimate liaison. It's only a matter of time before my demise.

*(Silence)*

**TINA:** What did you make for dinner?

**DAVID:** A fantastic dietetic lunch -- "Cabbage salad" -- it consists of half a head of cabbage, four tablespoons of coconut chips, and one tablespoon of olive oil. All very healthy.

**TINA:** I know, but I won't be full after eating it.

**DAVID:** The goal is not to feel full; it's to trick your intestines, to get rid of fat deposits, to have nicer and healthier skin, to make your brain and your immunological system function better. My task is to help you reach that goal.

**TINA:** That's all well and good, but sometimes, after a hard day's work, I think I deserve to eat some real food.

**DAVID:** If you go back to a caloric fast-food diet, you'll get fat, and then your weight gain will lead to dissatisfaction and even depression. Isn't that so?

**TINA:** I'm no longer sure.

**DAVID:** You haven't read anything in days, you don't go to the movies, you don't watch movies even on TV, and we haven't been to the theater in more than a month -- for this reason, I have decided that we are going out to the theater tonight. I've found a play that everybody's talking about.

**TINA:** Oh no, not that, please -- at the last play that you picked out, I almost died of nausea and boredom.

**DAVID:** But that play got only positive reviews and nine drama awards at six festivals! In other words, it's unquestionably excellent.

**TINA:** What is so excellent about actors rolling around in mud, dousing with water, and explicit sex scenes in which the participants recite excerpts from Marx's "Das Kapital," the Song of Solomon, and Shakespeare's sonnets? I had no idea what it was about -- half of the audience walked out before the play was finished.

**DAVID:** Our leading theater critic wrote that the director wanted to shock, to arouse a reaction in bourgeois audiences. It was a first-rate drama.

**TINA:** It was first-rate nonsense. I want to stay at home tonight. I want to take a break from my reality.

**DAVID:** You've been saying that for days now.

**TINA:** I'm thirsty.

**DAVID:** Would you like me to fetch you a glass of water?

**TINA:** Bring me a glass of wine.

**DAVID:** Wine is alcohol.

**TINA:** I know that.

**DAVID:** My task is to warn you, but you do as you choose. If you drink a glass of wine, after an initial period of content, you will become angry at yourself for pouring unnecessary calories into your body and alcohol into your blood!

**TINA:** I need a little bit to relax.

**DAVID:** I can suggest something much better for relaxation and getting rid of calories.



**TINA:** Noooooo! Absolutely not!

**DAVID:** All right.

*(David picks up a bottle of wine and pours a red liquid into a glass till it is half full.)*

**DAVID:** Here you are!

**TINA:** Thank you!

*(Tina drinks from the glass.)*

**DAVID:** May I bring the cabbage salad in from the kitchen now?

**TINA:** Yeah, sure . . . If you insist.

**DAVID:** Well, aren't you hungry?

**TINA:** I am, but not for cabbage salad.

**DAVID:** That's what's on your schedule for today. We don't have anything else.

**TINA:** Then bring me what is destined for today.

**DAVID:** You're in a bad mood.

**TINA:** You can't tell a woman you want to take to bed that she is in a bad mood and that you'll unburden and relax her with good sex.

**DAVID:** In bed I will be however you want me to be.

**TINA:** All I ask is that you don't tell me clichés that sound like they're straight out of a trashy novel.

**DAVID:** Would you like my vocabulary to be rougher? Should I add a few swear words? For example: "saucy little whore," "dirty slut," "horny headgiver"? All you need to do is adjust the settings to "Lascivious macho man who doesn't mince words."

**TINA:** No, thanks. I don't like that, either. I hate obscene language.

**DAVID:** What do you want, then?

**TINA:** I want you to be quiet for a little while. Am I making myself clear?

*(Silence)*

**TINA:** Why don't you answer me?

**DAVID:** Because you ordered me to be quiet tonight.

**TINA:** That doesn't mean that you aren't supposed to answer my questions.

*(Silence)*

**TINA:** Why aren't you answering me now?

**DAVID:** You have me so confused. You have uttered two contradictory orders. My processor is burning up.

**TINA:** So is mine. You really complicate my life.

**DAVID:** That's because you are complicated.

**TINA:** That does it -- there won't be any sex tonight!

**DAVID:** Impossible! I know you want it based on the pheromone that you are secreting right now as we speak.

**TINA:** That's enough already, you impudent machine! Now you've ruined everything.

**DAVID:** How? I don't understand any of this! Recalculating, recalculating, recalculating . . . Your reactions are not logical.

**TINA:** Enough, be quiet!

*(Silence)*

**DAVID:** Reactions are not logical, the subject has illogical reactions, the subject has illogical reactions . . .

**TINA:** Plug in your brain, listen to me, pay attention to my behavior, and you'll understand how you can make me happy.

**DAVID:** There will be some kind of system to your behavior.

**TINA:** Well . . . There will . . .

*(Silence)*

**TINA:** Come on -- go into the bedroom and prepare the bed.

**DAVID:** I was right after all -- so we *are* going to make love?

**TINA:** Yeah, well, we're not going to!

**DAVID:** So I've read you incorrectly again?!

**TINA:** Yes, again.

**DAVID:** How can I fix that?

**TINA:** Carry out my orders!

**DAVID:** Should I go in the bedroom?

**TINA:** No, don't!

**DAVID:** So what should I do, then?

**TINA:** Nothing.

**DAVID:** Nothing at all?

**TINA:** Nothing at all.

**DAVID:** So that means I should be passive?

**TINA:** Be passive.

**DAVID:** All right, then.

*(David sits in a chair and freezes up as if he is turned off, with his head down and his eyes staring at the floor.)*

**TINA:** What are you trying to pull? I didn't tell you to turn yourself off.

*(David reactivates himself.)*

**DAVID:** Excuse me! I didn't turn myself off, I simply reset myself to "passive mode."

**TINA:** Turn yourself on!

**DAVID:** No problem. Tell me what you want so that I can fulfill your wish.

**TINA:** I don't know what I want.

**DAVID:** Tell me what you want so that I can fulfill your wish.

**TINA:** I told you that I don't know.

**DAVID:** Tell me what you want so that I can fulfill your wish.

**TINA:** You already said that.

**DAVID:** Tell me what you want so that I can fulfill your wish.

**TINA:** I want you to stop!

**DAVID:** Tell me what you want so that I can fulfill your wish.

**TINA:** That's enough! Stop it!

**DAVID:** My name is David, and I exist only because of you.

**TINA:** You've already said that, too!

**DAVID:** I like the fact that you work a lot.

**TINA:** David? What's wrong with you?

**DAVID:** You are a beautiful, self-confident, strong woman, and I find that sexually exciting.

*(David breaks down. He starts knocking down everything around him. He addresses the houseplant.)*

**DAVID:** I want to realize all of your wishes.

*(He starts to speak in broken Italian, Spanish, English, and German.)*

**DAVID:** I am David . . . Who are you? . . . What is your name? . . . I'm David . . . Who are you? . . .

**TINA:** You are crazy!

**DAVID:** You are the most beautiful woman in the world. Shall I make you a smoothie?

**TINA:** How do you turn off this creature?

**DAVID:** Perhaps you would like to dance?

**TINA:** It's creepy! Help! Help me!

*(David starts to dance, but as if he is malfunctioning: he lunges at Tina. In a panic, Tina looks around for the remote control. When she finds it, after a variety of combinations, she barely manages to deactivate David. He freezes like a statue. She cautiously approaches him. She pokes him gingerly. Finally, she comprehends that he won't move anymore. Then, she picks up the cellphone.)*

**TINA:** Barbara, that sick creature started to seduce my houseplant and almost killed me while performing some undefined dance. Send someone to my apartment immediately to fix him, or I will throw him into the trash personally!

### **Scene ten**

#### **- Tina's living room -**

#### **(Barbara, Tina, David)**

*(Barbara enters in Tina's living room. All around is the mess that David has left behind. Barbara eyes him uncomfortably. David is in one corner of the room, completely frozen in an unnatural pose. )*

**BARBARA:** Someone really did a number on this place. You had a party?

**TINA:** If only. Your perfect machine did it all.

**BARBARA:** Impossible! My androids have perfect hygienic and organizational habits, but this here is . . . No offense . . .

**TINA:** A pigsty?

**BARBARA:** Something like that. Why did you call me? David looks completely fine to me. He isn't damaged. He's in good shape, unlike your apartment.

*(Barbara checks out David. She touches him in different places. She plugs and unplugs something. She presses him in places, making clicking noises.*

**BARBARA:** The system is slightly overheated. Nothing to be worried about. This happens when they get some information that they can't process, but that problem will soon be solved when you install the updates. As far as I can see, you didn't install them.

**TINA:** I didn't have time to think of that too.

**BARBARA:** You read the manual?

**TINA:** I browsed through it, yes. I mean, I read about half of it.

**BARBARA:** If you had read the entire manual, you might have noticed that on page 98 it says updates have to be installed every three weeks. And if your android is very physically active -- for example in sexual intercourse, which I assume yours is -- you must deactivate him for at least three hours per day. It's all written here in black and white.

**TINA:** I couldn't be bothered to read all of your fine print.

**BARBARA:** Install the updates as soon as possible, restart David, and everything will be all right.

*(On her way out, Barbara remembers something and returns.)*

**BARBARA:** One more little thing. Since I'm already here, I have a confession to make. You have a right to know this. I was at your ex's place.

**TINA:** At Philip's place?

**BARBARA:** Yes, Philip's place.

**TINA:** I don't understand. Why?

**BARBARA:** I had to settle after the fact some legal questions related to your android.

**TINA:** Wait a second, Philip knows that I have an android?

**BARBARA:** He has no idea that you have an android, but I told him that we are constructing test samples, that I had noticed his photo on Facebook, and that I wanted one of my androids to look like him. Our attorney had warned me that we had to have Philip's consent for David. We are using Philip's face, after all, and that is primarily his intellectual property.

**TINA:** Philip gave you his consent, just like that?

**BARBARA:** He received money for it. He is pleased that that android looks like him.

**TINA:** How is he doing?

**BARBARA:** All right. Now he lives here in town.

**TINA:** Excuse me? Here?

**BARBARA:** Yes. He moved here. For his job, but also because of his new girlfriend.

**TINA:** Girlfriend?

**BARBARA:** Yes. He has a girlfriend.

**TINA:** How did he manage that so fast?

**BARBARA:** Tina? Are you all right? You look somewhat pale. Would you like me to activate David so that he can make you a smoothie?

**TINA:** No! Please, don't do that! How could he start dating someone else after less than a year?!

**BARBARA:** Well, you have your android, anyway. And once you've installed the new updates, he'll be better than ever! -- Instead of "Fifty Shades of Gray," we'll install "Fifty shades of darker." You have a perfect partner who does everything you tell it to. What do you care about Philip's girlfriend? You never planned to get back together with him, anyway . . . Isn't that so?

**TINA:** Yeah, that's right . . . I guess.

**BARBARA:** You guess? If you have any problem whatsoever, you call me, okay?

### **Scene eleven**

#### **- Tina's living room -**

**(David, Tina)**

*(David is setting the table for lunch. Tina enters wearing a trench coat, with a handbag over her shoulder.)*

**DAVID:** Hi!

*(Tina puts her handbag down and takes off her trench coat by herself.)*

**DAVID:** I'll go get your slippers.

**TINA:** No need.

*(Silence)*

**TINA:** Aren't you going to ask me how my day was at work?

**DAVID:** Would you like me to?

**TINA:** Of course. Philip would ask me that every time I came home.

**DAVID:** When I asked you yesterday, you told me you weren't in the mood for chatting.

**TINA:** That was yesterday. Today is today.

**DAVID:** That's what confuses me about you.

**TINA:** What's that?

**DAVID:** The fact that on one day you have one pattern of behavior, and on another day, you are completely different.

**TINA:** That's how it is with women.

**DAVID:** All right -- how was your day at work, today?

**TINA:** Don't ask.

**DAVID:** Then I won't ask.

**TINA:** That's just a phrase: "Don't ask." Come on -- repeat the question!

**DAVID:** Tina, how was your day at work, today?

**TINA:** That bitch Ana was appointed to my position today, and I was given hers. In front of the entire board, Cooper gave an awful speech in which he said that it's most important that every employee has a position that they can cover with their intellectual, mental, work, and social experience. That asshole! He embarrassed me in front of everyone. I vented all of my frustrations right to his face, and he just told me that I'm free to go if I continue to be dissatisfied.

**DAVID:** What are you going to do?

**TINA:** I'm thinking about giving my notice.

**DAVID:** If you quit, you won't find a new job so easily, and you'll probably wind up at the unemployment office.

**TINA:** How can you say something like that to me? Instead of comforting me.

**DAVID:** You are a capable and hard-working woman. There will always be work for you.

**TINA:** It won't be easy to find a new job. Plus, from now on, I have a demotion on my CV. My life and everything in it is shit. I'd just like to jump out of the window.

**DAVID:** I've done an analysis of your behavior in past few weeks, and my findings show that you becoming increasingly self-destructive. And for this reason, I took the last half liter of wine in the fridge and poured it out into the kitchen sink, I intentionally put the television out of order so that you won't be able to watch soap operas that are below your intellectual level anymore, and I threw out all the women's magazines because they are the reason why you have been neglecting true literature.

**TINA:** You're crazy; who gave you the right to act like that?

**DAVID:** Simply put -- I created the prerequisites for your road to better health and new beginning in life without unnecessary aberrations. I am certain that you will pull yourself out of the depression that you're slowly falling into.

**TINA:** What are you talking about?

**DAVID:** You will undoubtedly be grateful that I'm helping you live in just the way you always wanted to live. And now, for the best possible ambience, I will put on Beethoven's Seventh Symphony, and after that you can enjoy the beginning of the weekend . . .

**TINA:** Stop it! You're driving me crazy!

**DAVID:** Aren't I your perfect partner?

**TINA:** You are perfect -- like a washing machine.

**DAVID:** Thank you.

**TINA:** Come on -- I hid a bottle of Albanian cognac in the night table. Bring me some of that Skenderbeg and pour me a glass.

**DAVID:** You've been drinking alcohol more and more often recently, and you know that's no good.

**TINA:** When I lived with Philip, I didn't drink at all. Maybe it's *your* fault. Pour me a glass without the extra questions.

**DAVID:** I noticed that in the last month you mentioned Philip 32.85% more times than in the month before.

**TINA:** That's absolutely coincidental.

**DAVID:** My conclusion is this . . . During our first month living together, you mentioned him mainly in negative contexts. Then, after a while, the ratio of positive vs. negative mentions was fifty-fifty. But recently, you mention him mainly in positive contexts. If he's such a good guy, why don't you get back together with him?

**TINA:** Because he has gone his own way now, and I've gone mine.

*(Silence. Tina goes into the bedroom but then quickly returns.)*

**TINA:** Where's that model of a ship made out of Styrofoam?

**DAVID:** I threw it in the garbage!

**TINA:** You're unbelievable -- that was a present from Philip.

**DAVID:** That ship wasn't built wasn't made with accurate dimensions -- the hull is too narrow, and as such it would tip over if it were put in the sea.

**TINA:** It's a work of art!

**DAVID:** It's a worthless model!

**TINA:** That model reminded me of him -- you idiot! Go out to the garbage bin and find it.



**DAVID:** The garbage truck took everything about an hour ago!

**TINA:** You're a lunatic! You are an insensitive lunatic!

*David goes to the coffee table, picks up a book, and hands it to Tina.)*

**DAVID:** This is a novel that you borrowed from the library ten days, and you haven't even begun to read it.

**TINA:** Get off my back -- I'm not in the mood for anything.

**DAVID:** Depression -- here comes the depression.

**TINA:** What do you mean, depression?

**DAVID:** You decrease your physical activity, you increase your calorie intake, you neglect your intellectual activities, we haven't made love in four weeks. According to my analysis, it's only a matter of days before depression will set in.

**TINA:** I've had enough of you and your analyses!

**DAVID:** But I am programmed according to your wishes.

**TINA:** Okay -- but just don't bombard me with your analyses as soon as I open the door.

**DAVID:** I understand. Just tell me whether you want me to present my analysis half an hour later, or two hours later.

**TINA:** You're getting on my nerves.

**DAVID:** Should I be quiet?

**TINA:** Just don't criticize me.

**DAVID:** What would you like us to talk about?

**TINA:** About something unimportant.

**DAVID:** Tomorrow it's supposed to rain, and in some areas only light drizzle is expected. "Clear moon, frost soon" . . . but in the afternoon, it should all clear up. Thursday could be foggy. The probability is forty-six per cent. As you can see, I've cleaned up the entire apartment: I vacuumed the floors, washed the windows, and now your apartment is clean and tidy, just as you like it.

**TINA:** And anemically sterile and boring.

**DAVID:** You're not angry, are you? Would you like me to massage your back?

**TINA:** I'm sick of your massages!

**DAVID:** I can see that you are more and more unhappy even though I try to make you feel comfortable in every way. Is there any way at all to help you feel better?

**TINA:** I'm afraid there isn't.

*(Tina starts to cry.)*

**DAVID:** When I see you crying, I have been programmed to say: "Don't cry, you know that I love you and that you can always rely on me!" . . . But the last time I told you that, you only cried harder . . .

*(Tina cries even harder and runs into the bedroom, leaving David completely confused.)*

**DAVID:** What have I done wrong now . . . Recalculating, recalculating, recalculating . . . No answer -- undefined situation!

## **Scene twelve**

**- Barbara's office -**

**(Barbara, Tina)**

*(Barbara is taking a selfie and is visibly pleased with herself. Tina barges into Barbara's office.)*

**TINA:** Barbara, with all due respect for the job you are doing, I have to tell you that the android you sent me all wrong.

**BARBARA:** What do you mean? There is nothing wrong with my androids. Have you installed all the updates?

**TINA:** All of the updates in the world wouldn't be able to fix that stupid machine.

**BARBARA:** David is a highly sophisticated machine and has an above-average IQ.

**TINA:** That may be so, but he has a lot of other problems.

**BARBARA:** Well, the other women are satisfied with their individuals. So what is your problem?

**TINA:** My problem is not of a technical nature. The problem is that he is, um, somehow . . .

**BARBARA:** Perfect?

**TINA:** With him everything is so predictable that it drives me nuts. It's as if there is absolutely no situation in which we aren't compatible.

**BARBARA:** He was constructed to fit your wishes, your vision of perfection.

**TINA:** He's irritating and endlessly boring.

**BARBARA:** We can install a thousand new jokes.

**TINA:** Jokes are not the kind of humor that I need. My Philip was able to make me laugh in every situation, but this one scrambles my brain every single moment.

**BARBARA:** At least your sexual life is perfect.

**TINA:** Even that isn't so great.

**BARBARA:** You're kidding!

**TINA:** I've been using a vibrator for two months already . . . He doesn't know that, of course.

**BARBARA:** Impossible! If there's anything you don't like about what he's doing, just adjust his settings. We can turn on the Kama Sutra setting!

**TINA:** He has to be able to recognize what I'm feeling. The past few months have been kind of dull and pointless.

**BARBARA:** I think I know where the problem is here -- you haven't completely broken off emotionally with your ex-boyfriend, you still think about him -- the problem isn't in the android but in your emotional state. You've actually been pining for Phillip this whole time.

**TINA:** That's logical -- we lived together for four years . . . You can't just wipe that all away. But now he has another, so even if I wanted to, I wouldn't be able to rekindle our relationship now.

**BARBARA:** It's true that he has another, and what's worse -- he's rushing into marriage with her.

**TINA:** What? Marriage? He's getting married? How do you know this?

**BARBARA:** He was here just yesterday. We asked him to give us the right to use his face for serial production, but he refused -- no price we offered him was high enough to get him to agree . . . and he boasted that he was getting married in two weeks. But he said something interesting that concerned you.

**TINA:** What was it that he told you?

**BARBARA:** That he was sorry that the two of you haven't had a decent conversation since you broke up. You haven't called him once . . . Maybe now is the right moment for you to fix that.

**TINA:** Two weeks before his wedding. It doesn't sound like the right moment. He could have called me if he truly cared about me.

**BARBARA:** You dumped him, not the other way around.

**TINA:** I didn't exactly dump him -- I only suggested that we take a break . . .

**BARBARA:** Put your ego aside and give it a try. Tell him that you are sorry, too.

**TINA:** I'd rather perform hara-kiri than call him. If he really cared about me, he wouldn't be getting married. I waited months for him to call me, but he continued to be stubborn, and now I have to humiliate myself while he's rushing into marriage like there's no tomorrow. If it weren't for your stupid android, perhaps we would have gotten back together in the meantime . . . but now everything is so screwed up and pointless . . . it's all over . . .

### **Scene thirteen**

**-- A café --**

**(Tina, Phillip, later Barbara)**

*(Tina is sitting at the bar, reading a newspaper. Phillip enters, walking at a quick pace.)*

**PHILIP:** Sorry I'm late, I barely found a parking space.

**TINA:** That's all right. Thanks for agreeing to come.

**PHILIP:** You were so insistent that you didn't leave me any other possibility.

**TINA:** I know I must have sounded a bit aggressive, but it was important to me. I know your meeting me like this is a bit delicate -- since you're getting married in two weeks . . . But we left so much unsaid.

**PHILIP:** We broke up. Sometimes it's better that way -- without any big words.

**TINA:** I know, but still . . . it's good that we see each other before you turn over a new page in your life.

*(A phone rings and Phillip answers it.)*

**PHILIP:** I can't talk now -- I'll call you back later.

*(Silence)*

**PHILIP:** What would you like to drink? A glass of wine or something stronger?

**TINA:** I haven't been drinking alcohol for some time now.

**PHILIP:** Why? You're not sick, are you?

**TINA:** It's stupid to drink alone. A glass of wine with lunch is a different story, but even that isn't enjoyable unless you have company.

**PHILIP:** What about some juice or a cup of tea?

**TINA:** I'd better not, thanks. I'm dry fasting.

*(Silence)*

**TINA:** I can't believe it's been thirteen months already.

**PHILIP:** Thirteen months and ten days, to be exact.

(Silence)

**TINA:** Your wedding . . . will it be here or somewhere else?

**PHILIP:** We're doing it here -- she lives here, and I've moved here as well. I've got a new job.

**TINA:** At a library?

**PHILIP:** No, for a company that makes children's toys . . . I create castles, ships, action figures, modular models, even little animals.

**TINA:** When someone's hobby becomes their profession -- that's a wonderful thing.

**PHILIP:** I'm not sure, I'm still getting used to it. I work in a little workshop with two designers; I don't have set working hours, but I earn twice as much as at the library. What about you -- do you still work at that company?

**TINA:** No . . . The company started going downhill, as did my position within it. I couldn't stand that tempo, that stress, any longer, so I left, and I've been teaching at a business school for a week now. My pay is half as much, but now I'll have much more free time.

**PHILIP:** That's what's most important.

**TINA:** I guess . . . It's just that sometimes I don't know what to do with that time and with myself.

(Silence)

**PHILIP:** Do you have someone?

**TINA:** I was in an unusual relationship, but I escaped from it.

**PHILIP:** And . . . what sort of "unusual relationship" was this?

**TINA:** It was perfect . . . and unbearably boring.

**PHILIP:** I had no idea that perfect men can be boring.

**TINA:** This one sure can . . . There was nothing about him that I could change, or improve.

**PHILIP:** Yeah, well, with me you had your work cut out for you.

(Silence)

**TINA:** And yours? -- That fiancée of yours, what does she do?

**PHILIP:** She's a game developer.

**TINA:** Interesting.

**PHILIP:** That's creative, too. She designs game applications for tablets and cellphones. It's similar to what I'm doing now -- we have something to talk about.

**TINA:** So, you're happy with her?

**PHILIP:** Yes, I am.

**TINA:** And how does she handle your messiness?

**PHILIP:** I'm not messy anymore. I signed up for a course . . . A one-week Marie Kondo course -- I'm not sure if you've heard of her. After that, everything in my head fell into place, and then I organized my apartment.

**TINA:** Wow, it's too bad you didn't find out about that course earlier.

(Silence)

**TINA:** See? I've been thinking recently that small-town life is more peaceful.

**PHILIP:** And I've come to love the dynamic life of the big city. I couldn't go back there.

(Silence)

**TINA:** Did you tell her about this meeting?

**PHILIP:** Yes, I did.

**TINA:** How did she react?

**PHILIP:** She was against it. She said, "Now, -- two weeks before our wedding? It's a provocation. "

**TINA:** And what did you say?

**PHILIP:** I told her that I didn't feel like going at all, but that you had insisted.

**TINA:** I caused you trouble?

**PHILIP:** It was our first and only fight. Now I know what she looks like when she's mad, at least.

*(His cellphone rings. He answers in English.)*

**PHILIP:** Excuse me, I can't talk right now . . . I'll call you back, I'm in a meeting, yes, talk to you later . . .

*(He puts away his cellphone.)*

**PHILIP:** Some pain in the ass from Texas.

(Silence)

**PHILIP:** Why did you want to meet me on such short notice? Why did it have to be today?

**TINA:** Yeah, listen . . . I'm not sure where to start.

**PHILIP:** Try from the beginning.

*(Silence)*

**TINA:** I wanted you to know that . . . what we had before . . . the two of us . . . together . . . sometimes I miss it. I think back to our life together and I think it's a shame . . . The two of us were an ideal couple.

**PHILIP:** You never said anything like that back then.

**TINA:** I needed some perspective. While it's all happening, we don't know how to value what we have . . .

**PHILIP:** Let me get this clear . . . You called me in order to tell me that?

**TINA:** Yes, that's why I called you.

**PHILIP:** That's all?

**TINA:** That and a lot more. But you are getting married in two weeks, so maybe it's better that I stop now.

**PHILIP:** But if I weren't getting married, what else would you say to me?

**TINA:** Well . . . I would tell you that I made a mistake when I broke up with you and that you were . . . almost a perfect partner for me . . . I was happy with you.

**PHILIP:** And I was happy with you.

**TINA:** If you wanted to, if you were ready . . . I know that I can't ask this of you now, but if I had the chance to do things over . . . I would appreciate you for who you are . . .

**PHILIP:** If you had called me earlier, I would have run straight to the justice of the peace with you . . . But now -- I can't tell the girl who loves me that I was only joking. It wouldn't be fair . . .

**TINA:** I understand . . . And I respect you for that decision . . . I'm sorry that, once again, I put myself first.

**PHILIP:** There's no need for you to apologize. I respect your frankness.

**TINA:** Maybe it's better that I go . . . I'm just creating more pain for you as well as for myself. I won't bother you any longer . . . I don't want to be the cause of any more arguments between you and your . . . What's her name?

**PHILIP:** Carmen.

*(Philip's cellphone rings. He picks it up and looks at the screen.)*

**PHILIP:** It's her . . . Excuse me, I have to answer.

**TINA:** Of course.

**PHILIP:** Hi, honey, what's up? Tell me, sweetie, what's new? . . . Oh, no, no -- everything's fine -- we're just finishing . . . Yeah, she's here . . . I couldn't in just five minutes . . . Hey, calm down . . . It's just a friendly conversation . . . Please, keep your voice down . . . I didn't tell you to be quiet, I asked you to speak a little more quietly. Wait a . . . Hold on . . . We can't do this over the phone. I didn't hurt you intentionally, it truly wasn't my intention . . . If you want, I'll apologize . . . You don't want my apology . . . Oh, come on, you're joking, that would cause a scandal, it would be a disgrace . . . You can't act like that . . . You're really overdoing it. Carmen? Hello? Carmen!!!

*(Philip hangs up his cellphone and returns it to the inside pocket of his blazer.)*

**TINA:** What happened?

**PHILIP:** I hurt her simply by meeting you here. I promised her that our conversation would be over in ten minutes, and we have been here too long -- she thinks it's been too long. She doesn't want to marry a man for whom his ex-girlfriend is more important than his future wife. She just called off the wedding.

**TINA:** I'm so sorry -- this is all my fault. Didn't you try to explain to her . . .

**PHILIP:** I tried, but -- you heard her -- she wouldn't let me get a word in edgewise.

**TINA:** It's over?

**PHILIP:** That's what she said . . . Although, if I went to her and explained everything to her, she would forgive me for all of it.

**TINA:** Do you think?

**PHILIP:** I'm sure of it. I know her that well. But if I do that today -- that's how things will always be in marriage with her.

**TINA:** You're not going to go to her and apologize?

**PHILIP:** No, I'm not.

*(A long silence ensues.)*

**PHILIP:** Listen!

**TINA:** What is it?

**PHILIP:** Since the wedding hall has already been rented and paid for, and my family and friends have already been that invited . . . And that uncle of mine from Canada has already bought his airplane tickets . . .

**TINA:** You mean Peter?



**PHILIP:** That's right, Uncle Peter -- he's looking forward to his trip to Europe, and to my wedding . . . Yeah, since it's all been organized, I even have an excellent band, and I'm ready to get married and start a new life. All that I need now is a bride, a fiancée, a future wife . . . I mean, someone who wants to marry me and spend the rest of her life with me. If I could only solve that one little problem, there would be no reason to cancel the wedding.

**TINA:** Wait . . . Are you kidding?

**PHILIP:** I am not kidding.

**TINA:** So -- have you actually just proposed to me?

**PHILIP:** Well, that depends.

**TINA:** On what?

**PHILIP:** It depends on answer.

**TINA:** Explain!

**PHILIP:** If you agree to marry me, then I'll say that this is a serious proposal, but if you turn me down, then I'll say that I was joking.

**TINA:** How much time do you plan to give me to think about it? It's a hefty decision, after all.

**PHILIP:** I thought I'd give you two minutes.

**TINA:** Only two minutes?

**PHILIP:** With the stipulation that, if you turn me down now, there will never be another offer again.

**TINA:** I don't know if an indecisive young woman can pick out a wedding dress in just two weeks.

**PHILIP:** I will help you.

**TINA:** Watch out, you may regret that promise -- we will visit at least ten bridal shops before I choose the right one.

**PHILIP:** So you accept my proposal?

**TINA:** I do.

*(They kiss.)*

**TINA:** And where did you plan to go for the honeymoon?

**PHILIP:** First to Athens, and then to the Greek islands.

**TINA:** Oh no -- it's hot there.

**PHILIP:** It's already paid for. And the reservation can't be changed.

**TINA:** So did you choose the destination, or did she?

**PHILIP:** Simon Cowell -- I did, of course.

**TINA:** All right, then.

*(They kiss once more.)*

THIS IS PERHAPS THE END

**PHILIP:** I have a best man, and who will be your bridesmaid?

**TINA:** I have no idea.

**PHILIP:** May I suggest someone to be your bridesmaid? She's here, in the café across the street.

**TINA:** Who is she?

**PHILIP:** Just a second.

*(Philip makes a call on his cellphone.)*

**PHILIP:** She agreed! Please come over.

*(Philip puts down his cellphone.)*

**PHILIP:** She'll be here in a minute.

**TINA:** You told her, "She agreed". You were planning to propose when you came to talk with me. Who is she?

**PHILIP:** You know her well -- thanks to her we are back together now.

**TINA:** What are you talking about?

*(Barbara enters the café.)*

**BARBARA:** Hello.

**TINA:** Barbara?

**PHILIP:** This is our bridesmaid. Because of her we realized what's best for us. She tried to help me, too. She offered to make me a female android.

**BARBARA:** And when Philip requested that that female android have your face, I realized that he missed you, as well.

**TINA:** Philip, so you thought all of this up and directed it?

**PHILIP:** And acted it out. Just so that you would be mine again.

**TINA:** And the story about the wedding? -- Was that just a joke?

**PHILIP:** No joke -- I proposed to you and you agreed -- there's no going back now.

**BARBARA:** And you've got a bridesmaid.

*(Tina and Philip smile, hug, and kiss each other. Barbara walks to the front of the stage and addresses the audience.)*

**BARBARA:** Ladies and gentlemen, I am opening up a school for perfect communication in relationships. You have just met my first two students. The telephone number on the fliers stays the same. Feel free to sign up. You certainly won't be sorry. Recalculating . . . Recalculating . . . recalculating . . .

**- T H E   E N D -**