

Protected by Writers Guild of America West

OUTPLAY ANOTHER

James Grant

Original script

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Chapter 1

NAT. STREET - EVENING

A man walks down the street and enters a bar.

INT. BAR - EVENING

Eric enters the bar. This is a pretty young guy. He is of average height. He has bony shoulders. His face has slightly tanned skin and his head has neatly trimmed hair. He is wearing a wrinkled beach shirt that is slightly unbuttoned. A light black jacket is visible under the shirt. He is also wearing dark trousers and hiking boots.

The room has warm, even yellow, lighting. The long bar counter is much lighter because there are several lamps with warm light above it. The light bulbs themselves are gold in color.

Around the bar there are many round tables for different people. In general, the lighting throughout the room is discreet and nothing irritates the eyes.

In addition, the bar is very warm and sometimes even hot. The place was quite lively, but also a little quiet. All the people were talking in their places and this did not bother anyone.

The room smells pleasantly of coffee, freshly baked bread, wine, citrus fruits, sweet pastries, cocoa and fruit cocktails.

Eric approaches the bar. He carefully looks left and right and reaches the bar counter. Gerald works there.

This is a man who is a little older than Eric. He is short in stature but has a strong build. He has a slightly oval face with curly wheat-colored hair.

He's wearing a blue long-sleeve T-shirt and classic jeans.

Eric approaches the bartender. Gerald lifts his head up and meets Eric, who is above. Eric notices that behind Gerald there is a design that looks like a ship's rudder. This drawing is "The Eightfold Path".

Eric sits down at the bar. Look at Gerald.

GERALD

What will you drink?

ERIC

Probably some kind of fruit juice.

GERALD

Are you going to go somewhere else after the bar if you don't drink?

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ERIC

Yes, I'm planning to meet one friend after the bar. Moreover, I drank quite a lot of beer and I was already quite tired of it.

GERALD

As for me, drinking is still better, because it's easier to cope with problems.

ERIC

Yes?

GERALD

That's why people come here. And in general, if you drink bourbon or whiskey, for example, you can meet different people in different settings. This is really cool!

ERIC

That's right.

GERALD

Sometimes this is really necessary, because without the help of people it is simply impossible to do something. Moreover, to get closer to a person, you can use any alcohol.

ERIC

If you listen to me, then booze is the solution to all problems.

GERALD

I didn't say that.

ERIC

It seemed so to me. In any case, this is absolutely no reason to drink. Moreover, if you drink a lot of different drinks, then, of course, you can feel better, but this is temporary, because this is how our body works. But, of course, the liver, heart and brain will get worse over time.

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GERALD

In general, you are right. But this only happens if you drink a lot. Well, do you think that if you drink fruit juice instead of conventional cider, it will be better?

ERIC

Certainly. You probably understand that different fruit juices contain many useful vitamins that return you to the state in which you feel good. At least that's what happens to me. Your mood improves and, in general, your body becomes better. And in any case, any juice tastes very pleasant and afterwards there is a feeling of freshness that everyone wants to feel again. That's why everyone wants to drink juice so much. I would also advise you to drink it.

GERALD

No, thank you, otherwise I'll gain more extra pounds. And this has a very serious impact on health. We are already watching our calories, but in this case we will gain even more, and completely unnecessary ones. In addition, diabetes can develop quite quickly.

ERIC

You're exaggerating a bit here, of course.

GERALD

Are you serious?

Gerald pours fruit juice for Eric.

ERIC

Absolutely. And even more so, if you try to repeat the good state after the first glass of cider that you offer, then the second and subsequent receptions will come closer. This is very difficult to refuse.

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GERALD

So yes, but a person must have measures so that he cannot drink anymore.

ERIC

By the way, it's a little strange that we forget that under beer, wine, and so on, we cannot be more dexterous. We can no longer move or drive normally. This results in more accidents and injuries.

GERALD

Have you personally had any injuries due to drinking?

ERIC

Yes, it was. I once got poisoned from rye whiskey while on a boat while on vacation in Boston. I don't advise anyone to repeat what happened to me.

GERALD

Yes, this is certainly not very good. But I also can't drink the same juices.

ERIC

Why? Did you get poisoned too?

GERALD

Fortunately, no, but if you drink these juices, the fiber that is present in whole fruits is still lost in their production. In fact, this is what reduces its digestive benefit. I drank these natural juices and it looked so disgusting that I just stopped drinking them.

ERIC

Wait. Do you really think that drinking is better in this regard?

GERALD

You see, when a person has a lot of work, in order not to fall into depression or other serious mental illnesses, you need to be able to rest and relax. Wine, of course, is very suitable for this, for example, if consumed in moderation.

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ERIC

What are your problems? I think you talked about this.

GERALD

Yes, this is just not a very simple period. A common relationship crisis that everyone has.

ERIC

It's clear.

Eric looks around. There is no CCTV camera in the bar.

ERIC

It feels like there is no danger in such a crowd.

GERALD

From whom?

ERIC

I mean in general.

GERALD

Even in a cafe where there are a lot of people, it is not always as safe as it seems. There are scammers everywhere. Moreover, in any place where there are quite a lot of people, there is a person who is somehow closed and you need to find him earlier, because this person is clearly up to something bad.

ERIC

Really? I thought that if there was even a small crowd, one person would be able to help you or see the threat. Therefore, it is best to be in the crowd, because help will come quite quickly.

Eric taps his fingers on the table.

GERALD

Okay, drink your juice and don't think about anything. Everything will be fine.

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Eric drinks some juice. Then he stops.

ERIC

Now I definitely won't be able to drink juice normally.

GERALD

Come on! I didn't say anything serious. But you understand. I'm a bartender and I keep an eye on this.

ERIC

I understand you on this. But it's still somehow strange.

GERALD

What exactly?

ERIC

In any bad situation, some person from a small crowd can save you. If something happens, a person from the crowd will see the problem and will definitely help you.

GERALD

Are you so sure about this?

ERIC

Yes, how else!

GERALD

What if no one really helps you? What will you do?

ERIC

Then you will have to act on your own. There is nothing else left to do.

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GERALD

Yes, that's the only thing left to do. But you know what? In a large crowd there may be people who have done something very bad in life, and in a small crowd there may be people who are impersonating others. The hardest thing in a crowd is to find those who are not what they seem. Because in the worst case, the consequences can be disastrous.

ERIC

This, of course, is all very scary, but I hope that this will not happen in this bar.

GERALD

I guarantee it.

The bartender wipes the glass and looks at Eric.

GERALD

Was it a hard day?

ERIC

In principle, like everyone else, but I won't complain. Although, you know, I would play billiards if there is one.

GERALD

No, but they play a lot anyway. However, they never win. Let's see what happens.

ERIC

How was your day?

GERALD

Not bad, but one client makes the evening difficult.

ERIC

What happened?

GERALD

A client came with woolen gloves and I had a small attack. I can't stand this stupid fur.

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ERIC

So you can take pills if you know about allergies. You have them, right?

GERALD

Of course I did! But nothing helps me. What did you think?

ERIC

Nothing like that. I just asked.

The bartender notices blood near Eric's finger.

GERALD

What kind of blood do you have near the ring?

ERIC

Nothing. Moreover, it is none of your business. I'm not asking you why you have a ring in your ear.

GERALD

Let me give you a napkin.

Gerald gives him a napkin with a knife wrapped in it. Eric looks at the napkin and says nothing.

Chapter 2

Gerald looks at Eric.

GERALD

Where do you work?

ERIC

I worked as a tester in one company.

GERALD

What am I doing now? No longer need a tester?

ERIC

I was fired due to some circumstances that I am not ready to talk about.

Gerald notices that Eric is pursing his lips, as if holding himself back from something.

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GERALD

You know, I was fired too, but somehow I became a bartender.

ERIC

How did you get fired?

GERALD

I was told that I couldn't do my job. But I had problems that I'm not proud of.

ERIC

You know. I'll drink to you!

Eric picked up the glass of juice and drank it.

GERALD

Do you have a family?

ERIC

Fortunately, not yet. You know yourself, there are a lot of problems with them! I'm basically like Jimmy Shannon!

GERALD

Yes, it happens. But usually this only happens in difficult times. However, I heard that some aspiring businessman's wife even left him. Something with the money. Always the same problems. Only a third of November has passed, and already something is wrong.

ERIC

By the way, do you have a family? Otherwise you look too cheerful and active!

GERALD

Seriously? This means I maintain my image well.

ERIC

What image?

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GERALD

I would tell you but it would reveal me.

ERIC

So do you have a family?

GERALD

Yes, wife. But now we have some difficulties. It started off very well though. Yes, and they developed well too. She and I even swam with dolphins. At least there was something in common! And they say that opposites attract.

ERIC

Who told you that opposites attract? This is complete nonsense! There must be transparency and work everywhere.

GERALD

And what do you suggest?

ERIC

Don't know. Work on your relationships. This is your life, not mine.

GERALD

It's clear. Will you have some more juice?

ERIC

Yes, go ahead.

Gerald pours Eric more juice.

ERIC

Fortunately. I don't have such problems.

GERALD

What are you talking about?

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ERIC

Usually, when a person has a family, he cannot do something freely and this can limit his banal imagination. Personally, I wouldn't want to limit my imagination. It allows me to think a lot about everything. Why do I need a family then if it will limit all this?

GERALD

Of course, you are exaggerating a little.

ERIC

Is it true?

GERALD

Almost. But family can be very supportive in those moments when you are in any danger. It can be anything, physical and mental. Who else should I turn to when I understand that you can't cope on your own? Then your family will be able to help you at any time and for free.

ERIC

Yes, but don't forget that everyone is different and everyone has their own personal requirements.

GERALD

This is how it is with all people. Family is a little different.

ERIC

Are you sure?

GERALD

Yes, families are already close people and problems are solved much faster.

ERIC

But do not forget that in this case a person has a lot of quarrels precisely because of this. Personally, I wouldn't want to constantly quarrel over various trifles. Moreover, there are already enough problems.

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GERALD

Do you argue with people that often?

ERIC

I wouldn't say that.

GERALD

How would you say it?

ERIC

Don't know. But I, like any other person, argue with colleagues and with some random people, but in general I don't want to argue because it gives me a headache. And when I have a headache, I feel worse. Why do I need this?

GERALD

I think that a person needs this, because thanks to the family, you can communicate more with people, so that your life in general will be safer. You can also teach children the most basic norms, values, and interesting skills. It is unlikely that an ordinary person without a family will do this consciously for himself. But it's very difficult to live without it.

ERIC

What, a free person can't do this?

GERALD

Name at least one person or acquaintance who did this consciously when he was free?

ERIC

Don't know. But do you know what's most unpleasant?

GERALD

What then? Need to work on your relationship?

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ERIC

This is understandable, although few people follow it. My point is that in a relationship you can break up with a person, but this can be very difficult to go through and I don't understand why I need to maintain a relationship so that this doesn't happen. Why can't I just not get into this relationship? Then my psyche will be intact.

GERALD

I can tell you that it is only your choice.

ERIC

That's good.

GERALD

By the way, if you don't drink now, why not?

ERIC

I already told you. I drank it a lot. It has become simply uninteresting. Moreover, I combined it with various spicy dishes. This is a pretty good ratio. I advise you to try it.

GERALD

In that case, I can only admire you. Few people know how to stop drinking. And if they don't stop, then because of intoxication or the success of something, they always think that everyone wants to be friends and cooperate with them. But they still understand that this is a wolf in sheep's clothing.

ERIC

Stop flattering me! Why do you need this? Anyone can do it if they want, they just have to want it.

GERALD

Perhaps you're right.

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ERIC

Do you ask all your guests about their relationship with booze?

A guest sits at the bar counter and waits in line. Gerald doesn't pay attention to him.

GERALD

No, but it's just interesting. For example, I didn't drink much, but I can highlight some of my favorite types: milk beer, potato vodka, Mexican pulque and Latin American chicha.

ERIC

When did you have time to try all this?

GERALD

The army doesn't try anything.

ERIC

I would not like to do military service. This doesn't suit me. Everyone constantly tells me what to do. Moreover, I have asthma.

GERALD

This won't hurt you in any way. Maybe.

Eric drinks some juice again.

GERALD

If you don't have a family, then maybe you have traveled somewhere?

ERIC

Yes, I was recently sunbathing on the shores of Los Angeles. I even bought a shirt there. But sometimes you somehow don't want to fly somewhere.

GERALD

Why? Did you not like something?

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ERIC

I wouldn't say that. Sometimes it's quite expensive. Even if you don't take into account various tours, the costs of transport, accommodation, food and entertainment will already reduce your wallet. Even though I spend a little, it's painful to look at. But I no longer understand why waste time on this when I can do the same in my city.

GERALD

By the way, where are you from?

ERIC

I'm from Nebraska. What about you?

GERALD

I'm local. From Vermont. How can I contact you?

ERIC

Call me Eric.

GERALD

Then I'm Gerald.

ERIC

Nice to meet you.

GERALD

Mutually.

ERIC

By the way, have you traveled anywhere? You are married and have probably traveled somewhere.

GERALD

Yes, we loved going to France. Especially in Limoges.

ERIC

Why Limoges?

GERALD

They make beautiful porcelain there. That's when I started collecting porcelain. Especially the incredible bernardaud.

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ERIC

Probably broke a lot of things if you're married. Usually, in a quarrel, glass or something similar comes to hand.

GERALD

Yes, we argued. And the last time, too, because of an ordinary trifle. But it wasn't because of the porcelain.

(sighs)

In any case, then I just wasn't in the mood.

ERIC

When was this, if not a secret?

GERALD

I think around September 19th. That was my worst day.

ERIC

You know, I think this happens to everyone. But in any case, I'll drink with you. By the way, have you flown anywhere else?

GERALD

Not yet, but we were planning to go to Argentina.

ERIC

And why fly so far. Don't we have our own places?

GERALD

Why? Of course there is. I would say that it is useful because you can learn new cultures, traditions and customs.

ERIC

And how much have you learned?

GERALD

Decent. But it's interesting.

ERIC

And do you have to go somewhere for this?

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GERALD

This is much better and more efficient. Moreover, if you study such cultures, it will be difficult to deceive you, and you will know more.

ERIC

It is unlikely that this can be achieved with the help of such travel. I could find out about this myself. Therefore, you shouldn't fly somewhere for this. Just one continuous stress.

GERALD

What bad thing happened to you while traveling?

ERIC

You probably know that all these constant flights and time zone changes simply exhaust tabbies. And I'm not even talking about unexpected situations. I wouldn't risk it over this.

GERALD

I think taking risks pays off because when you travel you get into different situations that you haven't seen before. Therefore, you can learn to solve these problems. And in this way you can begin to understand other people.

ERIC

I know these people. And how can I understand them if they are from a different culture?

GERALD

Even better, even better.

ERIC

I understand that sometimes, of course, you need to travel, but in some countries it is quite dangerous to do so. In that case, why would I fly there if I know that something bad will happen there?

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GERALD

Don't think about bad things. On the contrary, you can take a break from your work and just relax. This is very good for mental health, especially now. This is, in principle, what travel is for.

ERIC

What if I'm already in another country and I understand that it will be dangerous?

GERALD

Then, probably, study nature, explore places and in general, you can easily do a lot of interesting things. This is good for yourself and your safety, because you will understand nature better.

ERIC

How do you think I will understand nature better?

GERALD

You will know which plant is poisonous or what you can eat to improve your mood. In any case, you will understand what you can do.

ERIC

Okay, I got you.

Eric looks at the ceiling.

Gerald looks down at Eric's hands.

GERALD

I still don't understand. What's wrong with your blood around the ring? Are you hurt or something worse? And it's strange that you got blood in this place, because, as I remember in the army, when someone beat someone, the blood could not remain in this place. They thought they were lucky in some way, but that's not the point. You need to appreciate the opportunity. That's it.

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ERIC

Have you ever thought that when looking at the starry sky, you constantly meet the coldest stars? They are also called red dwarfs.

GERALD

Sometimes I really thought that in the starry sky everything is shown and obvious, but no one notices such things literally a meter away from them. And then they wonder why they fell into a trap.

Gerald puts his hands on his hips.

ERIC

You were right about the trap. I was recently fired because they said I somehow stole money from another person. I was told that I had hacked someone electronically. Of course, I understand that I am a talented person, but that's not the point.

Eric notices a POS terminal for card payments near Gerald.

GERALD

When was this?

ERIC

I don't know, maybe November 20th. But it was really very strange.

GERALD

A lot of strange things have been happening lately. But what else do we have to do?

ERIC

Just drink.

Eric drinks some juice again.

Chapter 3

Eric looks around the room.

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ERIC

You have an interesting design here. All so restrained and defiant at the same time. I had a similar one at university. Just fewer cameras. Although it is strange that they were not in the alley. Probably the same designers worked on this. They need to work somewhere.

GERALD

It's unlikely that it was them. Moreover, this design is not too complicated. I'm certainly no expert, but there's a certain style here rather than design prowess. I don't know what this style is called, but it's clearly not the designer's idea.

ERIC

You are so good at design. Who did you work for?

GERALD

Do you really need to work in this field to understand design?

ERIC

Almost, but I was just asking.

GERALD

I worked as a game designer in one company. And there I did any design. The design here is interesting, but the style has long since changed. By the way, what did you study for? Is it also related to design?

ERIC

No. It was a university of physics and mathematics. Although I think that designers also practiced there. And there was a beautiful building there.

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GERALD

And that's why you started talking about design? Don't think I'm pressuring you, but the design and style of this bar is very basic. At least as far as I know. Then a completely ordinary question arises: what exactly did they want to know about me by asking a question about the design of this room?

ERIC

You know, I couldn't even imagine that there could be such an elegant guy like you, for example, in a bar. I always see people who dress well, stylishly and tastefully. But I can't stand those people who not only don't know how to dress, but just look terrible.

GERALD

That's why you paid attention to me, like I'm somehow special? I am not Söze or Kaiser. It's too banal. Don't get me wrong, but out of many of my guests, none have ever asked questions about design. I would also understand if you really looked very cool, strong and tasteful. But you, in my personal opinion, don't look so beautiful. Why did you start talking about design? Or is it not just a matter of design?

ERIC

You might be surprised, but it really comes down to design. You see, perhaps you know that there are people, looking at whom you can understand that he is not just some random person, but really a person. Therefore, I was simply surprised that you work in such a rather cozy place.

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GERALD

If this is so, and I think this is so, because someone would already begin to make excuses, then excuse me for such criticism, because I have never met people who would talk so persistently about me. I have a feeling that you suspect me of something. But I hope it's just my imagination.

ERIC

Okay, I didn't want you to get so angry because I just wanted to say that I was thinking about you. Pour me another and I'll drink at your wonderful place.

GERALD

Yes please. I would be glad to meet you again, if this is possible, of course.

Gerald puts his hands on his hips. A new guest comes up and Gerald pours him a drink.

ERIC

By the way, you said that you worked as a game designer. So, did you get fired or what?

GERALD

Yes, it so happened that I was in a terrible mood. You understand, different things happen in relationships. But this time it was longer and more serious.

ERIC

Why couldn't you hire a family psychologist or something like that? That's probably what they do in such situations, isn't it? I just don't understand. Either this is stupidity, or I just wasn't in a relationship.

GERALD

Yes, you've just never been in a relationship and have no idea what it is. So, if I were you, I wouldn't say anything if I don't know.

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ERIC

Okay, but still, why were you fired?
Were you doing your job poorly?

GERALD

Someone complained to me that I wasn't
doing my job well and they decided to
fire me.

ERIC

Is this why they get fired?

GERALD

I don't know, but at that time we were
creating one application and we were
competing with another company. Due to
my bad mood, I was unable to do my job
well and another department stated that
the application would not be ready on
time. Then I was fired.

ERIC

Sorry to hear this. Do you happen to
remember what date it was?

GERALD

I remember it very well. It was a
terrible September 26th. But I wonder:
what were you doing on that very autumn
day?

ERIC

I don't really remember, but most
likely I was busy with work.

GERALD

By the way, what do you actually do? If
you don't have a wife, then you
probably have a lot of time, unless of
course you are into something very
interesting. But you probably make
money somehow. Am I right?

ERIC

Yes, I try different products and get
paid very well for it. But you know,
I'm not the most special person you
know. That's why I don't need this
flattery.

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GERALD

Okay, but I was just asking. By the way, why don't you have a wife? I'm not insisting, but if you have a job and you look great, then what's the problem? Or do you just not want a family?

ERIC

Don't know. Of course, I tried to get into a relationship, but for some reason I couldn't keep it. Something always didn't work out. And this has always irritated me. Of course, I could accept it, but I still can't accept it.

GERALD

You know. I don't even know what to tell you. You have problems starting a relationship, but I have problems continuing it. Therefore, I think that we have the same situation. So I hope everything goes well for you.

Eric taps his fingers on the table and takes a closer look at it.

ERIC

How long has it been since you washed this table?

GERALD

Daily.

ERIC

It's clear.

GERALD

Is there something you're not happy with?

ERIC

Almost.

GERALD

Then the rag is over there. Take it and wipe it if it bothers you.

ERIC

Come on. I just asked.

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GERALD

And I simply answered. What bothers you?

ERIC

I wouldn't want to touch the germs. Moreover, you know, if there is chemistry on the table, then it's easy to get infected and you can easily be accused of it.

GERALD

It won't save you. Germs are everywhere.

ERIC

Even if I wash this table many times?

GERALD

Yes. Can you imagine? When I collect porcelain, I also wash it periodically. So be it. We have to do it. So I advise you to get used to it.

ERIC

What is the point of collecting porcelain?

GERALD

What's unclear here? This is a beautiful object that brings pleasure both visually and physically. I don't know what you like. For example, I like porcelain for its impeccable shape. I don't understand those people who can't think of this.

ERIC

As you can see, you have met such a person.

GERALD

You can't escape germs anyway.

ERIC

Are you already protecting them?

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GERALD

You know, this sounds strange in every sense. Moreover, there are microbes in me and in you too. Just deal with it.

ERIC

And if I don't want to, can you just wipe this table?

GERALD

I have already wiped it and if you are not satisfied with this, then you can take a rag and wipe the table yourself.

ERIC

But this is your job. Isn't it?

GERALD

Yes, but I wiped the table and there are already fewer germs here.

ERIC

I really hope so.

GERALD

Hope.

ERIC

But you know, there are a lot of stars and microbes.

GERALD

But there are many more stars than microbes. Right?

ERIC

Certainly! The number of stars is approximately 200 billion trillion.

GERALD

How many microbes then?

ERIC

Somewhere around 1.5 million.

Eric looks around the room.

ERIC

It's a pity, of course, that you don't have billiards here.

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GERALD

What's so special about this billiards?
Moreover, he, like the cameras, is
clearly superfluous here.

ERIC

It is quite interesting, because you
need to carefully think about where to
aim. And this is a very calm game in
which you need to calculate your
actions.

GERALD

With such advertising I wanted to play
billiards myself.

ERIC

Don't thank me. But do you know what I
like most about billiards?

GERALD

What, besides the rules of the game?

ERIC

Even if you play with the most
disgusting people, no one will dare to
stop you from making your move.

GERALD

Where does this confidence come from?
Have you already had a similar
experience?

ERIC

Fortunately, there wasn't. But imagine
a situation where someone crossed your
path. It would seem that there is
something wrong here. But it is
precisely because of this that your
whole life goes in a different
direction. Then you play pool with the
supposed culprits and you keep a close
eye on them.

GERALD

And what can be achieved in this way,
in your opinion?

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ERIC

There are many things, but first of all, this is an opportunity to check whether this person has done something bad, because of which your whole life has gone in a different direction.

GERALD

If you find out that your assumption was confirmed, what will you do?

ERIC

You know, that's another story.

GERALD

Why?

ERIC

Because I know exactly who this person is and I can understand how to put pressure on him. Well, after that I will be able to attract the people I need to put this scoundrel in his place. Then I will regain my confidence. Everything is very simple and ingenious.

GERALD

Yes, but what if he knows about it too?

ERIC

Perhaps, but it will be like a game of chess, don't you agree?

GERALD

Absolutely. Should I pour you some more?

ERIC

Yes, that would be nice.

Eric drinks the juice again.

ERIC

But really. Billiards is a rather unique game that can be played by everyone at almost the same level.

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GERALD

But for this you need to understand the rules of the game, right?

ERIC

In fact, yes, but it's not about the rules at all. The point is tension, long wait and relief of the first tension.

GERALD

Is this what you do instead of traveling?

ERIC

Yes, this can replace any trip. Tension and relaxation in one bottle. Very convenient.

GERALD

I think it's a little boring.

ERIC

You may be bored. But this is terribly interesting for knowledgeable, educated people.

GERALD

That's why I said that, for me personally, it's boring.

ERIC

Well then, this is clearly not my problem.

GERALD

This is not a problem, but a fact.

Another client approaches. Gerald pours it for him. Eric notices that there is an air freshener behind Gerald.

Gerald begins to sneeze and blush. Then Gerald gasps. The client quickly gets up from his chair and is about to approach the bartender.

GERALD

No need. You have some wool with you, right?

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ERIC

Yes, possible.

The client takes out a red handkerchief to help Gerald.

GERALD

No. No need to help. Everything is fine.

ERIC

Can I help you?

GERALD

No, nothing terrible, but thanks. This allergy will go away soon. This is nothing yet. Others have it much worse.

ERIC

I don't care what others have. I'm only asking about you.

GERALD

I'm really fine. The only thing is that stupid smell of wool is driving me crazy.

ERIC

This smell is quite normal. At least for me. But, for sure, with your allergies everything is different.

GERALD

This does not depend on allergies. You may think so, but in reality this smell is simply terrible. Maybe you just don't feel it. How do I know?

ERIC

OK. I understand you.

Eric wipes the table with his finger.

ERIC

You will never understand where and how many microbes are located. Could you do this?

GERALD

You can just take a microscope and check it out.

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ERIC

This is understandable, but I won't be able to say the exact number of microbes in any place.

GERALD

Yes, but you probably don't need it.

ERIC

Maybe it's not necessary. But germs resemble a very elaborate crime.

GERALD

Perhaps, but why?

ERIC

I don't know, but each such microbe is a very small piece of evidence. If you collect a lot of such evidence, you can gradually solve the crime. This is still not Orton's game. A little different.

GERALD

Yes, but didn't you think that everything is not so simple? Even if you put it all together, you can't directly accuse anyone of anything.

ERIC

Yes, that's the problem. This evidence, like microbes, takes a very long time to collect.

GERALD

What evidence are you talking about?

ERIC

I was accused of stealing data and money from someone else's account! But I don't understand how this could happen! I didn't do anything!

GERALD

Wait. When did you realize that you had been deceived?

ERIC

Don't know. But I didn't give the card to anyone.

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GERALD

Maybe you accidentally left it somewhere and someone used it? Could this be possible?

ERIC

I have no idea. I don't leave my bank card anywhere.

GERALD

But maybe you went somewhere and something could have happened there?

ERIC

Probably just a cafe. But for this to happen in a cafe. I don't even know.

GERALD

It is possible that you lost it and someone quickly used it. By the way, approximately when was this?

ERIC

Somewhere on October 16th. But even if so, what can you do with the card? Is it that easy to hack it?

GERALD

I'm afraid so. I know of cases where hacker attacks were carried out and all they needed was a laptop.

ERIC

This could certainly be done by a professional.

GERALD

Don't know. But they clearly did this for a reason.

ERIC

But why me? What did I do wrong?

GERALD

Why are you talking to me like I did it?

ERIC

Don't know. Sorry. Just emotions. But I see you are quite good at this.

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Eric squinted because he was under the lamplight and Gerald was in the shadows.

GERALD

What? In hacks? I have no idea how this works. Just think about it. If I could steal other people's data and money, I wouldn't even work here. At least they pay well, but still.

ERIC

Yes, basically illogical.

Gerald pours Erica another drink.

GERALD

When I was in the military, it really was like a world of microbes.

ERIC

Why?

GERALD

Discipline is very much like a gene, and unity is like a vital bacterium that keeps the army alive. A company is like a cell, soldiers are like microbes, each with its own function, interacting within this organism, subject to the strict laws of hierarchy. It's quite difficult to explain, but I know it.

ERIC

How long did you serve?

GERALD

Well, it's been a few years.

Eric senses something and takes out his inhaler. He breathes deeply into it and feels better.

GERALD

Maybe call an ambulance?

ERIC

No, it's not worth it. But it's quite unpleasant, I tell you.

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GERALD

I readily believe it, but some of my guests get so drunk that they still have to call an ambulance. So, I can do it.

ERIC

By the way, do you have lemon?

GERALD

Yes. Why do you need it?

ERIC

I just wanted something sour.

Gerald takes out a whole yellow lemon and gives it to Eric.

ERIC

Do you have a knife to cut it?

GERALD

Yes, sure.

Gerald gives a knife wrapped in a napkin to Eric.

ERIC

Why is the knife wrapped in a napkin?

Eric unfolds the napkin.

GERALD

It's necessary.

Gerald sees the knife and quickly steps back.

ERIC

What's wrong with you? Is there something wrong with this knife?

GERALD

No, it's not the knife.

ERIC

What then? Was someone killed with this knife?

GERALD

(with fear in his eyes)

No, no, just him.

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Gerald abruptly pours himself a glass of cognac and drinks it.

GERALD

He's terrible. So I wrapped it up so I couldn't see it.

ERIC

So you still see him. What is the logic then?

GERALD

I don't want to see him. Yes, and a fork too.

ERIC

This is somehow abnormal.

GERALD

Yes, I know. But what can I do about it?

ERIC

Try going to a psychologist.

GERALD

I already went, but they themselves need psychologists.

Eric cuts a yellow lemon. He starts picking at it with a knife and is in no hurry to eat it.

When he cuts a piece, he is in no hurry to try it. Eric slowly looks at Gerald and holds his gaze.

There is some kind of comedy on TV.

ERIC

What's so special about this movie? I don't understand.

GERALD

They watch anything. Maybe they don't even understand. Don't you like the movie?

ERIC

This particular one, no. He's kind of stupid. Or maybe I'm the only one who thinks so.

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GERALD

I think there is nothing special here.
Rather, everything is too simple here.

ERIC

Really?

GERALD

Why do people like watching movies in general? For the colorfulness? For acting work? No, everything is much simpler. I think there are three main things at work here. The first is plot logic. The second is emotions. Everyone wants emotions. That's why everyone loves to watch the dumbest shit so much. Bright, colorful emotions. Well, the third point is the production or technical part. This includes actors, music and the beauty of the frame.

ERIC

Did you come up with this yourself or read it?

GERALD

Yes, I came up with it myself. It's not difficult if you just watch. Moreover, I didn't look at everything here.

ERIC

And have you told many people about this?

GERALD

Only some. What's so strange about this?

ERIC

Nothing, but you don't have any education in the field of cinema.

GERALD

Is this necessary?

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ERIC

Is this some kind of joke? Of course it should be. Do you think anyone can seriously talk about cinema without knowing the theory about it?

GERALD

Yes, you don't need special education for this.

ERIC

I don't think so.

GERALD

Why?

ERIC

What if everything you said is wrong? It turns out that you are lying to people's faces?

GERALD

You can lie all this time without it. But, if I understand how it works, I can tell you. Sometimes they lie when the opportunities simply don't match. What should people do then, other than just lie sometimes?

ERIC

It is precisely because of people like this that our people cannot get a quality education. They are lied to all the time.

Eric drinks some juice again.

GERALD

Well, after all, cinema is an interesting, but complex thing. You're right that we need to understand it. But it's also useful to understand this.

ERIC

You see. You already understand everything. But what is the problem with reading theory? Or I don't know what else is going on there. For me, cinema is the most boring part of life.

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GERALD

It's not just a matter of theory. While you read one, another appears. It's like with data. You pass it one way, then the other, and so on. An inexperienced person will not understand anything and will give up everything. Perhaps that is why such a person will find the movie boring.

ERIC

I've watched a lot of movies and I don't understand the point at all. Therefore, there is no need to say that I don't understand something there.

GERALD

I thought that you should understand a little how it works and then you can understand what real cinema is. You can at least watch decent films and understand that this is real art.

ERIC

I told you that I have already watched many films and still do not understand their meaning. Maybe this is very interesting for you, but for me it is unbearably boring.

GERALD

Okay, the topic is closed.

ERIC

By the way, what data were you talking about?

GERALD

Yes, absolutely any. Money, personal information. Yes, and banal mathematical numbers and much more.

ERIC

Why did you start with money and personal data?

GERALD

What's wrong with that?

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ERIC

No one would start with money and data.
But not you.

GERALD

What are you getting at?

Gerald fixes his gaze on Eric and stares at him for five long seconds.

ERIC

I'm just kidding! You should have seen your face. So scared, as if you knew something.

GERALD

No one has ever tortured me like that before. But you tried too.

Gerald steps back with a smile.

ERIC

Yes, it just got kind of boring. Pour me some more.

GERALD

Certainly.

The bartender pours more juice into Eric's glass. Eric calmly drinks the juice and takes his time. He senses something and suddenly takes an inhaler out of his pocket. He tries to breathe quickly and deeply.

GERALD

Should I still call an ambulance?

ERIC

No, it's not worth it. I'm just a little tired. Yes, and I'm already tired of it.

GERALD

I don't envy you.

ERIC

Better shut up.

GERALD

Fine.

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Eric takes out a small chocolate with a Swiss flag on it.

ERIC

Damn, I need something spicy now. Do you have anything spicy?

GERALD

No, this bar only serves drinks and food, like lemon for example. Should you be eating spicy food now?

ERIC

Who are you to decide?

GERALD

Nobody. Just decided to ask. It's quite strange to eat spicy foods after such a state.

ERIC

For me, spicy foods are medicine. So now I miss it.

GERALD

I'll think about it. Maybe we'll put it on the menu.

ERIC

Yes, this will be real progress. Trust me. Everyone will also come to you for the spicy food.

GERALD

Isn't it dangerous to eat spicy foods?

ERIC

Absolutely not. But you need to eat carefully, because some people's bodies are simply not used to it. But I'm okay with this. At least I ate so much spicy food and nothing bad happened.

GERALD

You are either lucky or have good genes.

ERIC

Or perhaps both. Why don't you eat spicy food?

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GERALD

It's kind of strange.

ERIC

What's strange about this?

GERALD

I want to eat good food and not feel hot inside.

ERIC

But you drank a lot.

GERALD

No on a permanent basis. But spicy dishes are different. I just can't taste them beyond the spiciness itself.

ERIC

But it also helps for prevention.

GERALD

Yes, that's exactly what it's for. And also for the exotic. But no more.

ERIC

I understand you. But you should still try something spicy sometime.

GERALD

Maybe I'll try.

Eric drinks some juice.

ERIC

By the way, remember what you said about dolphins?

GERALD

What exactly?

ERIC

I think you said that you and your wife swam with them.

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GERALD

Yes, it was in Tennessee. There was a wonderful dolphinarium there. And we were lucky that we could swim a little with a dolphin for extra money.

ERIC

And how was it?

GERALD

We really enjoyed it and then went swimming in another state. You always want to be around such creatures.

ERIC

So you didn't answer the question.

GERALD

What are you talking about?

ERIC

What's so special about dolphins?

GERALD

They have a unique appearance. This is probably the first thing that comes to mind.

ERIC

But every creature has a unique appearance. This is the same as saying that nature is beautiful.

GERALD

So nature really is beautiful.

ERIC

Because it's nature. She can't help but be beautiful. Wherever people don't touch her, or they take very good care of her, she is incredibly beautiful. In my own way, of course.

GERALD

Essentially, you are right, but the dolphin is indeed very unique.

ERIC

For example?

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GERALD

Dolphin is a mammal.

ERIC

Come on! Are you serious? I didn't know that.

GERALD

Well, now you know.

ERIC

But you know that they are not smart and do not come to the rescue?

GERALD

Maybe. At least that didn't happen to me.

ERIC

It's good that it wasn't, otherwise you'll still be swimming with a murderer.

GERALD

You say that as if a dolphin is the most terrible creature.

ERIC

Not terrible, but hypocritical. He pretends to be kind, but in reality he is just a predator.

GERALD

Are you sure about this?

ERIC

I guess.

GERALD

So guess what.

Eric notices that there are bottles of liquor lined up behind Gerald. There are several brands.

ERIC

You know, your knowledge is quite good, but it seems to me that the color needs to be repainted. Make it darker and more subdued. I think this will only be beneficial.

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GERALD

Are you unhappy with the color or the building itself?

ERIC

The color can be repainted, but the building needs to be changed. Then your atmosphere will be different. Understand?

GERALD

No, I don't understand you. Everything is beautiful here and on the street too. I pour it for you and you feel good. Is it true? It's a good atmosphere.

ERIC

No, you apparently didn't understand me. It's good here. I agree with this.

GERALD

Then what are we talking about if everything is fine?!

ERIC

You need to change your style and then there will be more people. Well, or you can, for example, repaint some buildings from pink to orange. Then the area as a whole will look better.

GERALD

We are satisfied with the number of visitors. And our area is not bad. At least as far as I know.

ERIC

It's unlikely you have enough. You don't even have billiards.

GERALD

Why do you need billiards? Are you that good at playing it?

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ERIC

I don't know if it's good or not, but I always play it. It feels weird not playing it. An excellent game where you need to carefully monitor everything and not make mistakes. It's especially good to take a break when you've been hurt by someone. Nobody likes this. Me too. So something needs to be done.

GERALD

You can say that about anything. For example, I collect porcelain and I can also say that it is beautiful. It's a pleasure to do them. I don't understand who doesn't do the same.

ERIC

How can you compare your china to a fine billiard table? These are completely different things, aren't they? In billiards you follow and participate in the process yourself, but in porcelain what's wrong?

GERALD

In this collection, you observe different objects, their movements and imagine that they are real. This develops the imagination very well.

ERIC

Who are you even collecting?

GERALD

Animals, people and ordinary kitchen service. There are many options and it's easy to choose something interesting.

ERIC

Never tried this.

GERALD

Try it. Maybe you'll like it. You seem to live alone, don't you?

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ERIC

Yes, and it's very convenient, because no one bothers you. I can go anywhere and no one will tell me anything. This is cool, isn't it?

GERALD

What about family and children? Have you thought about this?

ERIC

Of course, I thought, but to be honest, I was tired of all these endless questions about family and children. I just want to live for myself as long as it takes, and then I will decide. Moreover, it is very difficult with everyone with whom I have met at least a little. Everyone wants different things, but I want different things.

GERALD

Yes, if there are such difficulties with relationships, then all you want is to somehow take revenge on everyone and hurt them. Although these are rather emotions, still, sometimes starting something new is incredibly difficult.

Eric looks at his glass of juice.

ERIC

You know, sometimes you don't know who is behind everything and monitoring the situation. I really want to know this.

GERALD

What are you talking about? Are you following someone in this bar or am I missing something? Anyway, I hope I'm not Andrew Leddis.

ERIC

No, what are you talking about? Just a theory. Either way, you never know who you're talking to.

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GERALD

I know. I'm talking to you. Everyone else is minding their own business. So what are you talking about?

ERIC

I say this because that couple is very reminiscent of a scene from some movie where a detective is investigating a crime and wants to find out the truth from the person. But the victim always has to do something to return to his normal position. The most interesting thing is that from here we will not know who is real and who is not.

GERALD

You need to go straight to detectives.

ERIC

Yes, what are we talking about? I'm just guessing.

GERALD

I understand, but nothing happens in a vacuum.

ERIC

Perhaps, but it got a little boring.

GERALD

Yes, this happened to me sometimes at work, but my colleagues knew how to have fun.

ERIC

Were you that friendly team?

GERALD

I wouldn't say so, but they were pretty nice people.

ERIC

It is still worth looking for such people.

GERALD

Surely you have people with whom you speak well and they understand you. I would be surprised if there weren't.

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ERIC

No, why did you even get that? Of course, I have some people who are pretty good, but I'm not such a good person that I have many good friends.

GERALD

I just assumed.

ERIC

And in this case, I simply answered you.

Gerald takes out a glass and puts it down. There are fingerprints on the glass. Eric notices the glass being put aside.

ERIC

Why didn't you like him?

GERALD

It smells bad. It's horrible.

ERIC

Then just wash it.

GERALD

Crap. How did I not think of this before! That's not the point at all.

ERIC

What then?

GERALD

I'd rather not touch it at all.

ERIC

You probably have other glasses. Then take them.

GERALD

That's it, I've already changed my mind.

Eric looks around the room.

ERIC

There are some nice buildings in your area, but I think you need to add something a little more colorful. Some paints.

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GERALD

Why did you decide that? Have you inspected every building?

ERIC

Not me, but one of my friends. He likes to ask different people.

GERALD

What is he asking?

ERIC

The last time he wanted to know the details of the scam. I thought someone was changing the email address.

GERALD

What kind of scam is this?

ERIC

It doesn't matter. But he walked in the area.

GERALD

When was this?

ERIC

Somewhere from November 27 to December 10.

GERALD

Such an exact date. What is this for?

ERIC

He really likes to write down dates. It's more convenient for him.

GERALD

Then it's clear. It turns out that he told you that the buildings are not bright enough. And you believed him.

ERIC

He walked around the area and told us what could be changed. Therefore, when I walked now, I also saw this and agreed with him.

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A fight between two men is shown live on TV. One of the men looks a lot like Eric.

Gerald looks at Eric and his blood near the ring. Eric decides to take a white napkin from his pocket and wipes away the blood near his finger.

GERALD

And what does this mean?

Chapter 4

The bartender looks at Eric suspiciously.

ERIC

It was just an accident. I didn't want to touch him. Moreover, as usual, someone will definitely take a photo of us.

Eric taps his fingers on the table.

GERALD

What actually happened? Why did you hit him with your fist? You could even kill him.

ERIC

He thought that I was the culprit for his problems. He somehow recognized my face and wanted to hit me, but I was faster. He literally came out of nowhere. I didn't even notice him. Perhaps that's why he was offended.

GERALD

What did you do to him?

ERIC

He didn't explain it, but he had proof that I was the same person.

GERALD

All this is of course very strange.

ERIC

Yes, but it's good that I was able to get away from him.

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Gerald took the ring out from under the bar and placed it on the table. Eric noticed that Gerald's finger, where the ring was, was a little blue.

ERIC

Damn, can you clean this up? I don't want to see this. It's just terrible.

GERALD

What? Why?

ERIC

Where did it even come from?

GERALD

This is my ring. Golden. I took it off for a while. There is a slight stagnation in the relationship now.

ERIC

I'm not interested in what's going on in your relationship. Can you just remove it?

GERALD

Why doesn't it suit you?

ERIC

This gold color is just disgusting. I'm going to throw up.

Eric turns away and breathes quickly.

GERALD

Okay, I'll remove it if you want. I didn't think you didn't like gold.

ERIC

No, it's not about love. It's just terrible and drives me crazy in a bad way.

GERALD

Does this color really have that effect?

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ERIC

I think so, because when I graduated from university, some teachers also noticed this. Moreover, then I really thought that I would have a good job.

GERALD

But you had a job.

ERIC

Yes, until I got fired. I never felt unemployed.

GERALD

I was also unemployed, but this gives me a little freedom.

ERIC

Essentially yes, so I once went to a cafe and surprisingly found a man with a similar problem.

GERALD

What problem are you talking about?

ERIC

That man stated that his money and account information had disappeared. And I thought it looked like me.

GERALD

Remind me. When was this?

ERIC

Probably November 22 or 24. Although, most likely November 23rd.

GERALD

Couldn't you go back to work if it wasn't your fault?

ERIC

Of course I did it! It was exactly November 24th. But they simply didn't want to take me back because the charges were serious!

GERALD

And how long did you wait? A week?

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ERIC

No, I just need one day. Well, then I realized that the situation was really serious.

Eric looks at the ring again.

ERIC

By the way, where did you get that ring? Are you married?

GERALD

You didn't like it.

ERIC

Yes, but it's just interesting.

GERALD

OK. It was to Hawaii. We went there on vacation. It was quite warm and sunny there. We even bought red Hawaiian shirts there. It was very comfortable and beautiful.

ERIC

And you decided to propose to her?

GERALD

Yes, with such conditions I simply had to do it!

ERIC

Did you buy rings there too?

GERALD

Yes, we are very lucky. Moreover, there we were able to swim with dolphins.

ERIC

Did you and your wife swim?

GERALD

Yes, but I started it. Swimming with dolphins is a pleasure because they literally feel you. We even bypassed a small ban, but we didn't do anything terrible.

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ERIC

I present. Although, to be honest, no.
But that's your business.

Gerald puts his hands on his hips again. A guest approaches and Gerald pours him whiskey.

After this, Gerald becomes ill and begins to blush.

Gerald drinks maple liqueur and feels better.

ERIC

How are you? Is everything gone?

GERALD

Yes, more or less it seems. But acting classes were much easier.

ERIC

What are you talking about? Are you faking it now? And I believed you!

GERALD

No, it was for real. But what I mean is that back then I gave less energy than I do now. Well, probably when I lost my job.

ERIC

Why didn't you become an actor? At least in advertising.

GERALD

I'm not an actor.

ERIC

But I took acting classes. Something doesn't add up.

GERALD

They advised me to take acting classes, saying that I had talent for it. I went there. But I didn't finish them.

ERIC

So you can finish. Right?

GERALD

Yes, I probably could. But you won't have time with this work.

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ERIC

When you were unemployed, what did you do?

GERALD

I was looking for odd jobs. Sometimes it worked, sometimes it didn't. But I always took them out because paper money is harder to spend.

ERIC

I thought you were going somewhere. And it turns out you were paid online.

GERALD

Yes, very convenient.

ERIC

By the way, remind me. When was this?

GERALD

I remember that the first payment was exactly on October 3rd. And the last one is probably October 14th.

ERIC

You are so good at counting numbers.

GERALD

Yes, I did this in the army because I kept time when it was very boring.

ERIC

By the way, why don't you have a watch?

GERALD

It's inconvenient. And a smartphone is enough for me.

ERIC

By the way, I forgot to ask. How long have you been working here?

GERALD

I got hired around December 15th. So I'm completely new here.

ERIC

Have you worked as a bartender before?

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GERALD

Mostly no, but I just worked part-time.

ERIC

You look like a very good bartender.

GERALD

Thank you, of course, but I'm just getting started. But I still learn quite quickly.

Eric drinks some juice.

ERIC

But you know... People with allergies lie more often than ordinary people.

GERALD

Are you hinting at me?

ERIC

There's only one person here with allergies.

GERALD

I don't do this on purpose.

ERIC

I just said. I'm not talking about you.

GERALD

It seemed to me that you were directly hinting at me. Or am I wrong?

ERIC

Not really. I just don't understand people like this. They can feign their allergies whenever it is convenient for them.

GERALD

But I wasn't pretending now.

ERIC

I'm just saying that this is the power of such people.

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GERALD

Yes, especially when you're blushing
and can't breathe.

ERIC

But nothing bad happened to you.

GERALD

What if it happened?

ERIC

Then this is very bad.

GERALD

Here. Imagine that I have had this
since birth.

ERIC

This is even worse.

Eric notices a purple ring on Gerald's ear.

ERIC

Where did you get that ring on your
ear?

GERALD

I somehow decided to change the image a
little and it seemed to me that it
suited me.

ERIC

The ring itself looks good, but in my
opinion it doesn't suit you at all.
Have you asked anyone about what it
looks like on themselves?

GERALD

No, I didn't ask because everyone would
start saying that it wasn't right for
me.

ERIC

Perhaps they are right. I don't think
this suits you.

GERALD

And I think it's none of your business.

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ERIC

You're right here. This is clearly none of your business. Moreover, it's probably quite painful.

GERALD

It's somehow strange to criticize me for a ring, when you yourself don't have a haircut, but an incomprehensibly cut hair. And it doesn't hurt at all.

ERIC

I have a completely normal hairstyle. At least no one can tell me. And your ring even looks like you hung it up by force. It hurts me to watch this.

GERALD

Then don't look. Moreover, other people point it out to you. But just now you were talking about your wife?

ERIC

Yes, because I live alone for myself, I can look however I want. This is wonderful!

GERALD

Yes, enjoy it while you can.

ERIC

And I will do this as long as I am free.

GERALD

I think you can do this.

ERIC

Why is this?

GERALD

Don't know. But it's clear from you that you can do what you want.

ERIC

Why all of a sudden such flattery? What have I done to you?

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GERALD

Nothing. But I said what I saw.

ERIC

Granted, but it sounds somehow unnatural. You're not going to pretend that you understand physics. Someone will check anyway.

GERALD

And you seem to be pretending.

ERIC

But I don't need it. I understand physics. At least at the Olympic level.

GERALD

Have you taken the Physics Olympiad?

ERIC

Yes, and quite successfully. Third place. I think this is a good result.

GERALD

Yes, this is just a wonderful result!

ERIC

By the way, about the result. What kind of design have you done at your job?

GERALD

What are you talking about?

ERIC

At work, did you share the design of a game, application or something else?

GERALD

It was the design of the application and its mechanics.

ERIC

Why were you fired then?

GERALD

Some colleagues didn't like the mechanics and said that I didn't work well.

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ERIC

Did he just say that?

GERALD

He meant a colleague from my department. But it was me who did this.

ERIC

And what could he not like?

Eric takes out his smartphone and looks at himself.

GERALD

Don't know. The button was good. It was possible to change the color. Moreover, some people like gold.

ERIC

Did you add gold color to it?

GERALD

Yes, why not.

ERIC

Don't know. To me this is a terrible color. You shouldn't add it.

GERALD

But I added it anyway.

Kevin turns on the lamp, which lights up. First it turns on blue, and then yellow.

Kevin examines a four-leaf clover. When he turns on the light, he throws the clover off the table.

Kevin sits two meters away at a small table.

He has a tired face. There is a small bruise on the cheek. He is also sitting in a formal suit. Kevin's costume has a ladybug icon on it.

KEVIN

He said that you shouldn't do this.

Gerald takes a closer look at Kevin.

GERALD

(to Eric)

Wait. But he beat you up in that alley!

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KEVIN

Yes, that's right.

Chapter 5

Gerald looks at Kevin in surprise.

GERALD

Who are you? And what happened in that alley?

KEVIN

This is a little difficult to explain, but it will take a little time. I'll tell you everything, but not right away.

GERALD

(carelessly spreads his hands)
But he beat you! And you won't do anything!?

KEVIN

No, because that's not the point at all. It was, of course, quite painful, but it has already passed. Moreover, he apologized.

GERALD

(points his head at Eric's ring)
Well, what happened there? Is this why he's bleeding near his ring?

KEVIN

Don't know. Maybe. I didn't really notice, but the ring hurts.

ERIC

There was a slight misunderstanding. But now he's fine.

GERALD

So what happened? Can you say it normally?

ERIC

It turned out that the company he worked for had made some incredible applications. I thought the app was really cool, even though it was a lot of white.

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KEVIN

I wouldn't say the app is that unique, but we did work really hard on it. Still, it was in vain. We understood that many wanted to stop us. Maybe because of envy, or maybe because of competition. But we didn't expect this at all.

Gerald takes out several red and pink napkins in turn and places them in a pile.

GERALD

Can you remind me approximately what date this was?

KEVIN

I think it was September 27th. I still remember how, after the app was released, they sent me a lot of reviews and suggestions by email. I didn't think it would be a mistake.

GERALD

Damn, I think that's when I got fired.

KEVIN

Then I'm very sorry. This happens to everyone. You never know what will happen in the next week or even month.

GERALD

You don't regret anything. But if I were in your place, I would do the same. Although, I would have brains.

Eric drinks some juice again and watches Gerald and Kevin talk.

GERALD

So why did he hit you? You fought there! Is this really a mere coincidence?

ERIC

Everything was not as simple as it seems.

GERALD

This is what I want to find out!

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KEVIN

It all started in the second half of October. We managed to make a cool application and celebrated our victory. Then during this period I saw that someone had hacked my account.

GERALD

How exactly was your account hacked?

KEVIN

Don't know. But they sent me a lot of letters. I opened them and there were various proposals for cooperation. This was probably the problem.

ERIC

But the files are somehow checked. And how can you steal data from outside? Is this even possible?

GERALD

Only a professional could do this. But at a distance it is, of course, strong. But what happened to you because of this incident?

KEVIN

My money and information about my startup company were stolen!

GERALD

(not understanding)

Wait. You didn't say that the company belongs to you.

KEVIN

Now you know.

ERIC

But is this really why you lost everything? How is this possible? This is a start-up business after all! Weren't you afraid of losing him?

KEVIN

Of course it's scary. But I was just wrong. But apparently someone took advantage of my mistake.

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GERALD

It's unlikely that anyone did this on purpose. Either way, it looks like it was well thought out.

ERIC

Yes, the only question is: who.

GERALD

This is what I don't know anymore. What date did this happen?

KEVIN

First, on October 17, I noticed it was missing. I wanted to return everything, but until the end of the month I couldn't even do anything.

ERIC

What did the wife say?

KEVIN

Not all is well with her either. After that incident, our relationship deteriorated greatly. I understood that we would have a crisis, but at such a time.

ERIC

This happens to everyone.

KEVIN

Yes, but she decided to move on and even left me.

Kevin puts the wedding ring on his other finger.

GERALD

Are you sure about this?

KEVIN

Yes, I still haven't written anything or even called. She had never gotten to this point.

ERIC

When was this?

KEVIN

Don't know. But the quarrel happened around November 11th. Then she left and hasn't spoken to me yet.

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GERALD

In any case, I think everything will be fine.

Gerald looks at Kevin.

GERALD

Will you have some juice?

KEVIN

No, thanks.

Gerald thinks for a moment.

GERALD

But didn't you really try to return everything?

KEVIN

Of course I tried. I went to court, but they needed the data that was stolen from me. I was just trapped! This devil almost destroyed me.

ERIC

When was this?

KEVIN

(raises his hands aggressively)
What kind of questions about dates?
What, are you both detectives? Although you know, sometimes these games don't end well. And only the last one wins.

ERIC

No, I'm just wondering when that was.

KEVIN

Maybe...
(puts hand to forehead)
November 15.

GERALD

And what did you do after the trial?
You didn't leave everything as it is, did you?

KEVIN

I began to analyze the hacking and transfer of my money and data.

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ERIC

So what did you do? Did you analyze everything yourself?

KEVIN

Of course not. I hired specialists. And in the end they realized that the transfer was going to an address named Eric.

GERALD

Wait. Then you realized that Eric stole your data!?

ERIC

Then yes, but not everything is so simple. In any case, after two days, I left the company.

GERALD

Why did you leave? You just confirmed your guilt!

ERIC

No, because I didn't do that.

GERALD

Who did it?

ERIC

I think you know this very well.

GERALD

How do I know!?

ERIC

I left around November 17th. I just realized that someone had set me up. My good colleagues wrote to me about this suspicion because I was an asset to the team. And then I, at least for a while, ran away from the company. This was the very next day.

GERALD

So it turns out that you both have already agreed on something? Or what?

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KEVIN

Yes, but not all at once. In any case, we have already talked about everything. It remains only to solve one small issue.

GERALD

Which?

Chapter 6

Gerald looked at Eric and Kevin.

GERALD

So I didn't understand. What have you already agreed on?

ERIC

More on this a little later. It's worth clearing up a few things.

KEVIN

Yes, there's no way without it.

GERALD

Okay, let's go. What to expect?

ERIC

I, like Kevin, decided to check the traces of the money transfer. I found a specialist who could do this. He traced the transfer of money from the first account, which was mine, to some random online wallet.

GERALD

And whose wallet was it?

ERIC

Don't know. But maybe you know?

GERALD

No, where from? Although, maybe I do know. Can you tell me what date it was?

KEVIN

He said November 26th.

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GERALD

So. Who did this online wallet belong to?

ERIC

And this is the most interesting moment. The specialist and I walked through this area and began watching all the video cameras.

GERALD

And how long have you been doing this?

ERIC

Actually, not very long. Somewhere from December 11 to December 13.

GERALD

Yes, really not very long.

KEVIN

Remind me, where were you at that time?

GERALD

So, it seems like I already worked as a bartender.

ERIC

So you said that you started working on December 15th.

GERALD

I was a little mistaken.

KEVIN

Two days is a decent amount of time.

GERALD

So what did you end up finding with your specialist?

ERIC

I wouldn't say right away because I'm not sure. But we noticed a man who was sitting very attentively at his laptop.

GERALD

So. So what?

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ERIC

We decided to approach random people and found out that they were actually losing money from their bank cards.

GERALD

Yes, it's clear. Did you find out who did it?

ERIC

Practically. Just in case, we took several photos from these video cameras so that, if anything happens, we can provide them to the court. We still have some evidence.

GERALD

And who do you think hacked their bank cards?

KEVIN

This is a good question.

ERIC

You know, the strangest thing is that the photo of this man on the laptop looks very much like you.

GERALD

And what does this mean?

KEVIN

You fucking hacked their bank cards.

ERIC

Yes, and now you're trapped.

Chapter 7

Gerald points casually at himself with both hands.

GERALD

(indignantly)

What makes you think it was me?

KEVIN

Understand. I didn't believe it at first either, but he explained it to me.

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GERALD

(mouth opens in understanding)
That's why you fought in the alley.

ERIC

It really was a small misunderstanding.
But I decided to come here in advance
to check everything.

GERALD

Why did you come here, Kevin?

KEVIN

I wanted to solve problems with the
company. I was advised to go to one
place. And then I noticed Eric.

ERIC

Yes, he was watching me too.

GERALD

And you thought that he stole your
data?

KEVIN

Yes, because I also had evidence. But
it is already clear that this is not
so.

GERALD

What did Eric say about the fact that
he didn't do it?

ERIC

He clarified some information from me
and was even going to beat me for his
company. Well, I just showed him the
evidence that I collected together with
the specialist.

KEVIN

Yes, but he was faster. And younger.

GERALD

Is that why people noticed you?

ERIC

Always when it's not needed.

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GERALD

And what do you want to do?

KEVIN

Just to check on you. I thought it was Eric's fault, but it's all your fault. And you will be responsible for everything.

GERALD

Wait, what did you do, Eric, that you know me?

ERIC

I worked in the same company as you. I was on the second floor, and you, if I'm not mistaken, on the third.

KEVIN

Damn, you're even closer than I thought!

ERIC

Why did you do your job poorly?

GERALD

I had a crisis in my relationship. This was around September 19th.

ERIC

I thought he was late.

GERALD

No, it started right then. Then I was told that the tester did not like the mechanics of the application and I was simply fired.

ERIC

You couldn't do it for a whole week.

GERALD

I didn't feel very good. It's not my fault.

ERIC

But you only had one task. Do your job.

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GERALD

What didn't you like at all? I did everything right!

ERIC

That stupid gold color always ruins the picture.

GERALD

So you didn't like the gold color!

ERIC

Not really, but he was clearly superfluous.

Gerald slams his fist on the table.

GERALD

Superfluous you say!?

KEVIN

Okay, stop it.

(spreads his hands and looks at both)
Better tell me how you did it.
(to Gerald)

GERALD

What are you talking about?

KEVIN

How did you cleverly hack us? This is clearly not very simple.

GERALD

I sent you a virus file by mail on September 27th. You opened it and I was able to analyze your data.

KEVIN

I knew that it was all because of that file from the mail.

ERIC

But how did you set me up?

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GERALD

First, around October 16th, I sat down at my laptop and conducted a hacker attack on Kevin's card. Then I substituted your stolen bank card and transferred funds from Kevin's account to it so that I could then withdraw the money. Afterwards, I transferred money from the stolen bank card to my online wallet. Then I withdrew money from my wallet at an ATM and deleted my online wallet.

ERIC

When was this?

GERALD

It was already October 17th.

KEVIN

Wait. It turns out that you hacked my account and used my money? Then I lost data and money. And my company went down!

GERALD

It's not my fault that it turned out this way. But I did link the transfer of funds to your bank card. But it was very stupid of you to rejoice in the success of the company and at the same time open virus files.

KEVIN

No, you are completely at fault and you will pay for it!

GERALD

So what will you do? Call the police?

KEVIN

Yes, she is already ready and with the evidence that I have with me, she will understand you right away. Moreover, Eric also has them.

GERALD

Yes, sure. I just checked it. They can say everything, but they never do anything.

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KEVIN

I understand you. Then look that way.

GERALD

What's there?

KEVIN

Look.

Gerald looks to the left, where there are many tables. He sees a random man on a nearby table keeping his eyes on him. Gerald looks first at Eric and then at Kevin.

KEVIN

You're definitely trapped. The main entrance is blocked and there is simply nowhere to run.

Gerald realizes that he has nowhere to go. He looks down sadly and wipes the table with a rag. He is silent and calm and leaves the bar.

GERALD

(to Kevin)

And what next?!

ERIC

Come with us.

GERALD

Let's just keep it quiet.

KEVIN

Certainly.

They calmly leave the bar and a police car pulls up.

KEVIN

Go calmly, and then we will decide how to resolve our issue.

Gerald gets into the car in front of the policeman. The cop looks at Kevin and Eric and doesn't say anything. Gerald gets into the car and it starts to drive. The car drives off into the distance.

GERALD

(with a grin)

Idiots.

Gerald looks at the policeman in the mirror.

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GERALD

Damn, I probably shouldn't steal money
from cards anymore. At least here.