

WRECKING BALL
Feature Film

by

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EXT. VIENNA, JUNE - DAY

Early morning. A view over Viennese rooftops, almost all of the houses are built in the 19th century in Gründerzeit style and have - where the old roof used to be - a contrasting modern penthouse, huge terraces, glass windows. Cranes are spread over the city in front of the backdrop of wooded hills surrounding the city.

Thick clouds are covering the sky. The wind picks up.

EXT. THE HOUSE - DAY

The apartment building, a Gründerzeit-house, where this story is set, is covered in scaffolding.

The debris net flutters in the wind.

Sand and little stones on the wooden planks are blown away. The scaffolding creaks in its metal joints, rattled by wind gusts. A piece of debris net breaks free and flies away in the wind.

TITLE: WRECKING BALL

And then it starts to rain.

INT. EVA'S BEDROOM - DAY

The sound of rain drumming outside on the metal windowsill.

A drop starts to form on the ceiling, grows bigger, heavier, until gravity pulls it down. It lands on the cheek of EVA, 41, who stirs. When a second drop lands on her face, she wakes up, immediately looking up at the ceiling. Eva watches the next drop forming on the ceiling. The drop lands on her eye. The water won. Evas wipes her eye with a slow gesture.

EVA

Oh, fuck me!

From a very deep buried place within herself Eva conjures some energy and sits up.

Eva pushes the big double-bed to the side, the bed is heavy, Eva groans, the bed squeaks, the bedposts leave scratch marks on the wooden floor.

INT. ELIAS' ROOM - DAY

Trying hard to make no sound, Eva enters the room. It's a child's room and the child in question, ELIAS, 5, is fast asleep in his bed. Eva checks the ceiling for any water damage, but Elias' room is dry. Relieved Eva lets her son sleep.

INT. EVA'S BEDROOM - DAY

Eva carries a big pot into her bedroom and places it next to her bed under the dripping spot together with an old towel. Eva rubs with her foot at the fresh scratch marks on the floor, angry at herself.

Eva checks on three more buckets that are already positioned in the bedroom, they have also started to collect water. Eva sighs, takes pictures with her phone of all the damages and water. Longingly she looks at her bed, but turns her back on some more sleep.

MONTAGE SEQUENCE - DAY

Clothes are being thrown into the washing machine, door shut, beep, the water enters the washing machine.

Scrolling through a WhatsApp-Group titled "Group 3 Parents": inquiries about the organization of the end of year picnic.

The dish washer is being emptied.

Coffee machine heats up.

The crust of a sandwich is being cut away.

INT. EVA'S HALLWAY - DAY

Eva, dressed, her toothbrush in her mouth, Elias' toothbrush in her hand, hurries behind Elias, who is wearing a paper mask of a tiger, still in his pajamas, and who is - half screaming, half giggling - on the run.

ELIAS

No running with the toothbrush in
your mouth, Mama.

Eva being caught, laughs, takes the toothbrush out of her mouth.

EVA

No running away from brushing your
teeth. Tiger's need their teeth!

Eva catches Elias, he screams with delight, a playful wrestle starts until Eva kisses Elias on his belly and he screams with laughter.

EVA (CONT'D)

Come on, tigers need clean teeth!

But Elias doesn't stop with the game, tries to run away again, but Eva has had enough, she grabs Elias and just lifts him up, carrying him back into the direction of the bathroom. Elias protests, the playfulness has disappeared.

A loud metal banging noise is coming from outside the apartment, followed by lower metal sounds. Eva puts Elias down, looks at her watch: 6:36.

Eva puts Elias down, takes the mask off him, hands him his toothbrush.

EVA (CONT'D)
Go brush your teeth, no excuse.

Grudgingly Elias Walsh towards the bathroom.

INT. STAIRCASE BACK HOUSE; EVA'S FLOOR - DAY

Eva opens her door, searching for the source of the sound. The staircase is covered in dust, in front of Eva's apartment lays a damp floorcloth as a dirt barrier. The light is dim, because the windows are covered with a plastic foil from the outside.

Opposite her the apartment door opens and ANDREJ, 32, in dirty construction work clothes, but with a toothbrush in his mouth, looks out. Eva stares at him bewildered. Andrej sees Eva, panics, retreats quickly back inside.

Eva has no time to make sense of Andrej's appearing and disappearing, as the the metal clanking noise starts again, its source seems to come from above. Eva leans far out of her doorframe to see.

EVA
Hallo?

Elias appears behind Eva, Eva stops him right away.

EVA (CONT'D)
Not without shoes.

ELIAS
What is the noise?

EVA
Are your teeth brushed?

Elias bares his teeth.

EVA (CONT'D)
Thank you. Now, can you please get dressed?

Again, loud banging noises.

EVA (CONT'D)
Go inside, Elias.

Elias disappears. Eva quickly slips into a pair of shoes and walks until she can see the end of the flight of stairs leading upstairs. At the end of the stairs is a big metal door, sealing the entrance to the construction site, decorated with Do-not-enter-signs.

In front of the door, trying to wriggle a screwdriver between the door and its frame is MRS. SIMON, 61, wearing elegant clothes, her shoes covered with plastic overshoes against the dirt.

Eva is very confused to see her. Eva takes a deep breath and smiles.

EVA (CONT'D)

Good morning!

Mrs. Simon turns around, clearly relieved that it's "only" Eva, but doesn't return the smile.

MRS. SIMON

Morning. Can you help me?

EVA

Doing what exactly?

MRS. SIMON

There's water coming directly into our bedroom, more than the bit from last week.

EVA

Should I call the property management? Or the foreman?

MRS. SIMON

I tried. No answer.

Eva looks again at her watch. 6:39.

EVA

They'll start working in 20 minutes. So the foreman should be there soon.

MRS. SIMON

Doesn't it rain into your apartment as well?

EVA

Yes, I will show the foreman later.

MRS. SIMON

If we push together, maybe we can open it. Come!

Eva feels uncomfortable with Mrs. Simon's suggestion.

EVA
I'm not sure...

Mrs. Simon doesn't want to waste her time on Eva, so she retries with the screwdriver and the door.

EVA (CONT'D)
I mean... It's trespassing.

Mrs. Simon does not listen to Eva anymore. All of a sudden, Elias is touching Evas leg.

Eva looks down on him. He's wearing a t-shirt, no trousers and has bare feet. She picks him up immediately.

EVA (CONT'D)
What are you doing?

ELIAS
What is she doing?

ARON (OFF)
(echoing through the
staircase)
What is who doing?

Eva recognizes the voice immediately, within seconds she goes through surprise, joy, insecurity.

Elias' eyes light up.

ELIAS
Papa!

And in view comes ARON, 43, walking up the stairs. Elias wriggles now in Eva's arms, wanting to be put down.

EVA
You don't have any shoes on. It's dirty and dangerous.

But Aron, still on the stairs, opens up his arms.

ARON
Come here!

Eva has no choice but to put Elias on the filthy floor. And off Elias runs, down the remaining stairs separating him from his father. Aron catches him, hugs him. Eva notices how Aron deeply inhales Elias's scent.

EVA
I didn't know you were coming.

ARON
How should you?

Mrs. Simon now comes walking down the stairs, looking nosily at this family scene in the middle of the construction site, her plastic shoe covers swishing through the dust.

ARON (CONT'D)
Good Morning, Mrs. Simon.

MRS. SIMON
Good morning!

ARON
Be careful, I heard the stairs are dirty and dangerous.

Aron throws a side glance to Eva, who doesn't think his comment was funny, but tries to smile.

MRS. SIMON
Thank you, Aron.

ELIAS
Do you take me to kindergarten?

ARON
No, I'm just here to pick something up.

Elias doesn't hide his disappointment.

ARON (CONT'D)
(to Eva)
I'm just here to get the plans for Salzburg, I got the pitch.

EVA
Congratulations.

ARON
(to Elias)
Do you help me finding the plans?

ELIAS
Yes!

EVA
He needs to...

Aron already carries Elias inside. Eva follows, a bit lost.

INT. EVA'S LIVING ROOM - DAY

Aron, Elias now sitting on his shoulders, stops dead in his track.

ARON
What the fuck?

Elias giggles.

ARON (CONT'D)
Eva, what happened here?

EVA
You know they are removing the
roof.

ARON
But...

EVA
Elias needs to get dressed, would
you put him down?

ELIAS
No!

Absentmindedly, still assessing the room, Aron lifts Elias from his shoulders to the floor. Immediately Elias wants to be taken up again. But as Aron doesn't react, Elias starts climbing up his leg.

Eva tries to hide her look at the watch and bites down a comment.

Aron looks around the living room.

Now we can see that the water damage situation is not restricted to the bed room: The high ceilings of the apartment are stained with yellowish spots from water damages. The bookshelves are covered with plastic wrap, a huge dehumidifier is humming, the carpet is rolled to the side, because there are buckets and pans protecting the wooden floors, collecting the water coming from the ceiling, as it is still raining outside and so it is inside.

Aron takes in the full picture and turns to look at Eva.

ARON
Why didn't you tell me?

EVA
I... I thought it's not important
right now.

ARON
It's not important to tell me that
our apartment is severely damaged?

EVA
Look, I handled it, I thought you
didn't want to...

Eva takes a deep breath, trying to calm herself.

EVA (CONT'D)

They're going to redo our walls
once the penthouse apartments are
done. The foreman looked at it last
week.

ARON

It's like this for a week?

ELIAS

Papa, lift me up!

EVA

I didn't want to bother you with
it.

ARON

Ah, right, I forgot it's "your"
apartment, I don't have a say.
Never had, right?

Eva swallows her answer.

Elias is again pulling at Aron's arms.

ARON (CONT'D)

Stop it! Now!

Elias looks at Aron with huge eyes. It pains Eva.

EVA

Honey, come on, I'll get you
dressed, okay?

ELIAS

No, Papa should dress me.

EVA

Papa needs to get his plans, okay?

ARON

Is his room also a mess? (to Elias)
Let's have a look at your room.

Elias is instantly happy.

When Aron and Elias have left the room, Eva closes her eyes
for a short second, like in pain.

The roaring sound of drilling starts to vibrate through the
walls. It's 7 a.m.

INT. ELIAS' ROOM - DAY

Eva enters with two rolled-up architectural plans in her
hands. She points at one.

EVA

I brought you both, but you preferred this one, you called it the best compromise between your idea, my static's calculation, and sustainability.

ARON

Thanks.

For a second Aron smiles at Eva, but stops immediately as if being caught. Eva nods, then notices what Elias is wearing.

EVA

Why are you wearing the shorts? Why is he wearing the shorts?

ARON

I can't do anything right, can I?

Eva bites her tongue and takes the long trouser from the rocking chair, kneels down in front of Elias.

ELIAS

It's summer.

EVA

But it's raining.

ARON

It's not cold outside.

EVA

(to Elias)

If you wear shorts the rain boots chafe you on your legs. Remember last time? It hurt, right?

ELIAS

Yes?

EVA

Yes, so let's wear the long trousers, okay?

Eva starts to undress Elias. Aron gestures to a bag in the corner.

ARON

I brought his dirty laundry.

Eva looks at him, bewildered.

EVA

Why?

Aron looks up, meets Eva's eyes and realizes that this was idiotic.

ARON

(Mumbling)

I... Yeah... I actually have to take
more clothes for myself...

And with this he leaves the room. Elias wants to follow Aron,
but Eva catches him by his wrist.

ELIAS

Ow...

EVA

Sorry! Sorry, honey.

Eva kisses him on his wrist, where she grabbed him.

EVA (CONT'D)

What do you want to bring to
kindergarten today? One of your
animal figurines? The monkey?

The doorbell rings. Its sound pierces through Eva.

EVA (CONT'D)

(murmurs)

What next?

INT. EVA'S HALLWAY - DAY

It's BOJAN, 40, with MIA, 2, on his arm.

BOJAN

Sorry to bother you that early.

EVA

(to Bojan)

Did it rain through to you? I tried
to make sure...

BOJAN

No. No, oh shit, is the rain
getting in again at your's, too?

Elias comes running. With pants, but still no socks.

ELIAS

Who is it, who is it?

BOJAN

Good Morning, Elias!

EVA

(to Elias)

Please, go, put on your socks.

Elias stays where he is.

EVA (CONT'D)
(to Bojan)
How can I help?

BOJAN
It rained through at the Simon's,
it's really bad, and so the foreman
is coming to their place at ten
a.m. and the Simons, they're
nervous, so they asked me if I can
be there with them, but I can't and
I thought, you are anyways the more
obvious choice... And aren't you
working from home today?

Eva keeps a friendly face while Bojan explains lengthly.

Aron appears from behind and for reasons unknown he is bare
chested.

BOJAN (CONT'D)
(surprised)
Oh, hi, Aron, hi, good morning.

ARON
Morning.

ELIAS
Dad, it has rained through at the
Simons!

ARON
Has it now?

EVA
Ten, right? I'll be there.

BOJAN
Perfect, thank you so much.

Eva closes the door, but Bojan, hidden from Aron, points at
him with a questioning face. Eva just shrugs her shoulders.

EVA
Tell Sabine, I'll be right there.

Eva closes the door. Aron is still standing there.

ARON
Was it him?

This hits Eva out of nowhere. She tries to stay calm.

EVA
I told you it was no one you know.

ELIAS
Who? What?

ARON

Well, that could be a lie. Because obviously if you are able to cheat, you're probably able to lie, too.

ELIAS

What did you lie about, Mama?

EVA

(to Aron)

I did not lie about it.

ELIAS

Did you cheat in a game? Theo cheats all the time.

Aron laughs a cold laugh.

ARON

Yes, that's what Mama did.

Embarrassed and hurt Eva looks at Aron and shakes her head.

ELIAS

But it's not allowed to cheat.

ARON

No, it's not.

ELIAS

Mama, why did you cheat?

Eva swallows hard. Then she squats down.

EVA

We really need to leave for kindergarten, okay? So why don't you go get your socks and your little monkey. Okay? One, two, three... Go!

Elias runs towards his room. Slowly Eva gets up again, her anger and hurt behind a calm facade.

EVA (CONT'D)

That was low.

ARON

Well, you...

Eva interrupts him.

EVA

Why are you naked?

ARON

I was looking for the good shirt for the pitch.

INT. EVA'S BEDROOM - DAY

The water is still dripping into the containers.

Eva walks to the open closet, with one move she grabs "the good shirt" and hands it to Aron.

ARON

Thanks.

INT. EVA'S HALLWAY - DAY

Eva, dressed in a raincoat, tries to put Elias' foot into a rain boot, but Elias is focused on hugging a huge stuffed orangutan.

EVA

I meant the small plastic monkey.

ELIAS

You said I can take the monkey.

Aron comes in.

ARON

The way the bedroom looks, I mean,
did they offer to reduce the rent?

EVA

No.

ARON

Did you ask for it?

EVA

(to Elias)

I'm sorry, but you can't take Mr.
Monkey with you.

ARON

I'll call the property management.

EVA

No, I'm going to talk with Helena
about it.

ARON

You know that's not how things
work.

ELIAS

Dad, I want to show Theo Mr.
Monkey!

ARON

That's great!

Eva shoots him a glance. Aron doesn't understand.

ARON (CONT'D)
What is Helena supposed to do?

EVA
She's one of the owners?

ARON
Right. One of them.

EVA
(to Elias)
I know you want to bring it. But
only animals with the maximum size
of A4 are allowed. Now, give me
your foot!

ELIAS
But Theo didn't believe me that Mr.
Monkey is that big.

EVA
(to Elias)
Look, we don't have a rain coat for
Mr. Monkey. He will only get wet.

Aron puts on his jacket.

ARON
Orangutans live in the rainforest.

Eva clenches her teeth tightly.

Aron comes and kisses Elias on the head.

ARON (CONT'D)
Bye, big boy.

Elias is completely overwhelmed by that.

ELIAS
No. You'll bring me!

ARON
Elias, I can't. I'm sorry.

ELIAS
No!

Elias clings on to Aron, hugging his leg, while having the orangutan still in his hand.

ARON
Elias, I need to go.

ELIAS
No!

Elias is on the brink to tears.

ARON

Then I'll pick you up.

ELIAS

Can I sleep at your place?

Aron looks at Eva. Eva shrugs her shoulders.

EVA

I mean, tomorrow would be better...

But Elias is already happy and excited.

EVA (CONT'D)

Okay. I'm gonna pack some fresh clothes for him to take with you.

ARON

Can you leave them at the kindergarten? Like last time? I already carry my fresh clothes to the pitch, I don't want to arrive there like a homeless person.

EVA

Sure.

ARON

Although I kind of am.

Elias still clings to Aron. Aron bends down, picks Elias up, kisses him on his cheek, than hands Elias into Eva's arms. Out of habit Aron kisses Eva on the cheek, then realizes what he has done.

Eva looks at him.

ARON (CONT'D)

Okay, bye.

Eva watches Aron leave, leaning her head against Elias' head.

EVA

But then Mr. Monkey has to stay here, okay?

INT. STAIRCASE BACK HOUSE - DAY

Elias carries his giant orangutan down the stairs, a cloud of dust trailing behind them. Eva hectically locks the door. While hurrying down the stairs Eva stuffs some of Elias' clothes into a bag.

Elias is waiting one floor below in front of the open apartment door where SABINE, 34, with little Mia on her arm, closes the jacket of MAX, 5, who holds up two plastic dinosaurs.

MAX

Look, Elias! Look!

Triumphantly Elias holds up his monkey. Sabine points at it. Eva just sighs and roll's her eyes conspiratorially.

EVA

No chance today.

Elias and Max start running down the stairs together.

EVA (CONT'D)

Aron has promised Elias to pick him up today, so you don't need to take him.

SABINE

Alright. Thanks for bringing them.

EVA

Don't mention it.

Eva follows Elias and Max, who are pressing the bell at a shabby apartment door on the ground floor.

MRS. SHAARMAN, 32, kisses MANAL, 4, good-bye. Manal hurries to slip through the door and runs down the stairs.

MANAL

I'm the fastest.

Max starts to run, Elias and his monkey follow suit.

Eva waves at Mrs. Shaarman and hurries after them.

EXT. COURTYARD - DAY

Eva catches up with the kids in the courtyard, that they have to cross to get to the entrance area to exit the building. The courtyard is a square with only concrete, no tree, no grass, now filled with building supplies: bags of cement, piles of metal grids, wooden beams and material for scaffolding. Elias, Max and Manal are making an effort to run through all the puddles, as the rain is still strong.

Eva just wants to call them, when she sees the FOREMAN, 52, smoking a cigarette in the corner. Eva puts on her most charming smile.

EVA

Good morning!

The foreman nods. Eva walks towards him.

EVA (CONT'D)

I just wanted to say that I have
another leak.

The foreman sighs.

FOREMAN

It's raining.

Eva smiles even wider.

EVA

Yes, it is.

FOREMAN

Is it bad?

EVA

Like the others. And... and I saw in
the back house on floor two,
there's an open electricity cable,
just thought, you might wanna know.

The foreman throws his cigarette on the ground and walks away. Leaves Eva without an answer. Eva's smile vanishes instantly.

Next to Eva is an open sack of cement. With a firm kick she knocks it over. A cloud of cement dust settles on her shoes and trouser.

EVA (CONT'D)

Kids! We need to go!

They don't listen.

A window opens on the second floor and GRANDMA JOVIC, 83, sticks her head out.

GRANDMA JOVIC

Good morning!

The kids interrupt their jumping in puddles and all wave at Grandma Jovic.

ELIAS, MAX, MANAL

Good morning, Grandma Jovic!

Eva waves as well.

EVA

Morning!

GRANDMA JOVIC

Eva, do you work from home today?

EVA

Yes!

GRANDMA JOVIC

Then bring me some onions and
you'll get a soup for lunch.

EVA

Anything else?

GRANDMA JOVIC

Carrots and potatoes. And milk!

EVA

Noted!

Grandma Jovic closes her window.

EVA (CONT'D)

Elias! Max! Manal! We need to go!

They are deep into their game of catch. Eva tries to grab Elias' hood as he runs past her, he loses his balance and stumbles, falls, lands only centimeters away from a metal rod.

EVA (CONT'D)

I told you this is a construction
site, you can't play here anymore.

Eva grabs him firmly by the hand, picks up the dirty orangutan.

EVA (CONT'D)

Max! Manal! Now!

EXT. STREET IN FRONT OF THE HOUSE - DAY

In front of the house, forming a chain holding hands, Eva and the kids pass by a small old fashioned carnival supply shop. Masks, balloons, wigs decorate the shop windows.

ELIAS

Mama, when can I have a new mask?

EVA

You already have so many.

ELIAS

When?

EVA

For your birthday, we can get a new
one.

While passing the big glass window, Eva waves at the owner MR. WINKLER, 61, who is cleaning the shop windows.

INT. KINDERGARTEN - DAY

A kindergarten teacher puts the huge orangutan back into Eva's arms.

KINDERGARTEN TEACHER
A4. You know the rules.

EVA
He's having a hard time at the moment. I told you...

KINDERGARTEN TEACHER
Yes, but his dad moving out does not change that A4 is A4.

Eva nods.

KINDERGARTEN TEACHER (CONT'D)
Look, we've got a lot of kids where co-parenting works really well. Where the mothers are way less overworked.

EVA
Thanks, I will measure the next animal he brings. And his dad will pick him up today.

Eva turns around, knocks at the door of another group. A (different) kindergarten teacher looks up.

EVA (CONT'D)
Is Asta already here?

KINDERGARTEN TEACHER II
No, not yet.

EXT. OUTSIDE KINDERGARTEN - DAY

Eva stands outside the kindergarten, the huge orangutan in her arm waiting, checking her phone. HELENA, 39, hurries towards the kindergarten with ASTA, 3. Eva can't help but laugh at the sight.

EVA
Go, go, go!

HELENA
Sorry! Sorry, sorry, sorry! Why didn't you wait inside?

EVA
Don't worry!

HELENA
I'll be there in a sec.

Helena rushes inside.

INT. HELENA'S STUDIO - DAY

A small ceramic's studio. Eva looks at handmade plates, vases, mugs. She touches a piece of raw clay, leaves a dent. Helena brings coffee from a small kitchen corner.

EVA

You've done a great job, it feels really cozy.

HELENA

Yeah, finally, it's ready. And it's just mine. Not putting everyone else first.

Eva laughs a dry laugh.

Helena gestures Eva to sit on a small designer sofa. Eva sits down, takes a deep breath. For the first time this morning, Eva looks relaxed. Helena sits next to her, their shoulders touch, which isn't something one of them notices. Helena looks at her studio, relieved and proud.

HELENA (CONT'D)

You know how much I love Asta, but, boy, I look forward to "handing her back" to Olga on Friday and having an entire weekend just to myself. I went out last Saturday. Imagine! Next time you have to come along!

EVA

Definitely. Sounds great.

Eva does not believe her own words. Helena looks at her.

HELENA

You look tired.

Eva smiles.

EVA

Charming. Your new pick-up line?

Helena laughs. It makes Eva happy, that she made her laugh.

EVA (CONT'D)

It was just a difficult morning. No. To be honest. It was a disaster. Aron showed up, unannounced, Elias thought he'll take him to kindergarten, of course not, he just came to take stuff, like from a warehouse...

HELENA

Perhaps he just wanted to see you.

EVA

I doubt it.

Helena sympathetically squeezes Eva's shoulder.

HELENA

I told you not to tell him.

EVA

Yes, you did.

HELENA

If you want to stay with him, don't tell him, it will hurt him. If you want to leave him, also no need to hurt him.

EVA

You know it was not to hurt him. I just wanted, I thought, I could, I don't know, that we sort it together.

Helena makes a face. Eva mirrors it.

HELENA

So you really want him back?

EVA

Of course.

Helena sighs. Obviously it's not what she would suggest.

HELENA

I saw his work, the house entirely out of wood in this fancy home design magazine.

EVA

Yeah, it's great, right?

HELENA

Yes. How much of your work is in there?

Silence. Eva drinks her coffee.

EVA

Did you have the chance to forward my plans for the courtyard to your architect?

Helena gets uncomfortable.

HELENA

I didn't manage to hand it to my brothers, you know, Harry is being difficult about everything and Hannes is so overwhelmed with work.

EVA

I think that the house would benefit from it, not to speak of the climate, but it would really up-value the whole property, also for the penthouses, when there are trees and grass and shade.

HELENA

Yes, it would, I guess.

EVA

To be honest, I'm just selfish, I want Elias to have a green courtyard to play in. We would have loved to have grass to run around as kids. And maybe you still decide to move into your mother's apartment once it's renovated?

HELENA

I'm not you...

EVA

Okay, move into one of the fancy penthouses. Then Asta can play in the courtyard with Elias. Just like we did. And then they'll run to Oma Jovic and she'll have cookies for them.

HELENA

And I'll read them stories like your dad did.

Eva smiles a sad smile, Helena laughs.

HELENA (CONT'D)

You should have gone into sales and not architecture.

Eva grins.

EVA

Yeah, it was is a good pitch, wasn't it.

Eva considers saying something, then plucks up the courage to do something.

EVA (CONT'D)

I have another wet spot in the bed room.

HELENA

Shit.

Uncomfortable silence.

HELENA (CONT'D)

Do you want another coffee?

INT. STAIRCASE; FRONT HOUSE - DAY

Eva hurries up the stairs, the wet orangutan in her arm, she passes two builders who remove the plaster from the wall. Eva stops.

EVA

Can I ask why you are doing this?

The workers stop, look at each other.

WORKER

Sorry, no German. The foreman?

Eva takes another look at their work and hurries on.

Eva knocks at a door, then without waiting, pushes the handle. To her surprise the door is locked. She knocks again, impatiently.

INT. GRANDMA JOVIC'S KITCHEN - DAY

The kitchen stems from the 1980s. Grandma Jovic leans against the kitchen counter, her wheeled walker next to her, as she counts money. Eva puts the groceries in the fridge.

EVA

If you are cooking for me, you can't also pay me.

GRANDMA JOVIC

It's fine, kid.

Eva wants to wash her hands in the sink, but there's no water.

EVA

What's with your water?

GRANDMA JOVIC

I don't know. Since this morning.
Bojan brought me water to drink.

(MORE)

GRANDMA JOVIC (CONT'D)

And one of the workers brought me a bucket for the toilet. It helps if you speak their language.

Grandma Jovic smirks and hands Eva the money for the groceries, stroking Eva's cheek in a quick gesture.

INT. STAIRCASE; FRONT HOUSE - DAY

As Eva walks down the stairs, on the ground floor an apartment door stands open. Curious, Eva stops. Pushes it open a bit further. Eva looks around, listens, but there's only distant hammering. Eva walks inside.

INT. EMPTY APARTMENT 1 - DAY

Half of the old parquet flooring is torn away, replaced with cheap laminate. Metal frames are built in front of the original brick wall and ceiling, partly drywall is installed on it. Eva stares at it in disbelief, eager to venture further in.

In one room there's a huge poster hanging: a ridiculous AI rendering of how the room could look with fancy furniture. Now Eva is disgusted.

INT. STAIRCASE; FRONT HOUSE - DAY

Eva also tries to open the opposite door, it's apartment number one, but although it looks abandoned, the door is somehow locked.

Eva hears someone at the entrance to the staircase. She walks downstairs.

A huge man with the features of a Bouncer, but wearing a suit takes a photo of a piece of paper, like an official letter, hung up on the notice board. But before Eva comes closer, the man quickly tears it down.

Eva stops where she is. Unsure if she should walk on or not.

The man folds the paper and puts it into the inside pocket of his jacket. That's when he notices Eva. Just standing there. Watching.

BOUNCER

Good Morning!

EVA

Good Morning!

And with that the man leaves. Eva can't make anything of it.

INT. COURTYARD - DAY

It's raining. Hard. Andrej, the builder who Eva saw with his toothbrush in the morning, tries to remove the cement that Eva has knocked over, but it has hardened due to the rain.

EVA

(over articulating)

Do you know why the water is turned off in the front house?

ANDREJ

Sorry, no.

EVA

When it will be turned on again?

ANDREJ

Please ask the foreman.

EVA

Where is he?

Andrej points behind Eva. Eva had not seen the foreman, standing behind her. Immediately Eva changes her posture.

EVA (CONT'D)

I was just wondering about the water.

FOREMAN

Do you have water?

EVA

Yes.

FOREMAN

So...

EVA

But Mrs. Jovic doesn't. And it's summer and she's old...

FOREMAN

Of course.

MONTAGE SEQUENCE - DAY

Water buckets, pans and pots are being empties and put back again. The wooden floor around the buckets has to be wiped dry, due to small splashes.

INT. ELIAS' BEDROOM - DAY

Anxiously, Eva takes a ladder to check the ceiling in Elias' room properly for any wet spots. Even with the ladder the ceiling is way too high for her to reach it.

It looks dangerous how Eva balances on top of the ladder, without anyone holding it. As if she could fall any moment.

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

Eva puts away the plastic covering her desk at the window, sits down, opens the plan of a prefabricated family house on her computer.

On Eva's desk are several pictures, a photo stands out: it's clearly the 1990ies, two girls and a boy are grinning into the camera in the courtyard. Next to it is a picture of Elias, Max and Manal at the exact same spot.

With a deafening bang, rhythmic hammering starts coming from directly above Eva. Eva puts on her headphones, takes a sip of coffee. Plaster trickles quietly onto her keyboard, as she starts to work.

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

The rain keeps pouring, steadily, relentlessly. The sky is filled with dark grey clouds.

The hammering is still deafening. Eva's phone rings. Eva takes a look at the display. She considers, takes a deep breath and picks up.

EVA
(very light voice)
Hi, Mama, how are you?

Eva gets up, stretches and puts her mother on speaker. The cutting noises of chopping vegetables are clearly audible.

EVA'S MOTHER
I'm preparing lunch, your
grandfather is napping.

Eva looks out of the window. And takes a second look. Across the courtyard, through the window to the other staircase: a clown, a person in a full clown costume, carrying balloons, walks up the stairs.

EVA'S MOTHER (CONT'D)
Are you there?

EVA
Of course.

INT. EVA'S BEDROOM - DAY

The phone call continues while Eva sorts laundry back into the wardrobe.

EVA'S MOTHER
Your grandfather had a bad night,
called for me three times.

EVA
Are you tired?

EVA'S MOTHER
When wasn't I tired? And you?
Keeping busy?

Eva rolls her eyes at the phone. She starts sorting socks into pairs, rolling them into balls.

EVA
No, I'm lying on the beach with a
good book and a cocktail.

EVA'S MOTHER
Funny. Did you talk to Aron?

EVA
It's not that simple.

EVA'S MOTHER
Of course it's simple. You have a
kid. Was it simple with your
father? No. Was it hard when he got
sick? Yes. Did I stay? Of course.
And your husband is not sick.

EVA
Mama! It's not...

EVA'S MOTHER
Don't say simple or easy. Your
generation wants simple and easy
and you give up if it's hard. I
thought I taught you differently.

Eva looks at the socks: Two thirds have not found their sock-partner yet. With one angry, brisk movement Eva scoops up all the single socks and throws them into the drawer. Eva glimpses at her watch. 10:07 a.m.

EVA
Fuck.

INT. MR. AND MRS. SIMON'S BEDROOM - DAY

MR. SIMON, 73, leads Eva into the bedroom. Small drops of rain sprinkle her hair.

Mr. Simon has a big white bandage on his forehead.

EVA
What happened?

Mr. Simon points at the ceiling. Above the bed a piece of plaster is missing.

MR. SIMON
Hit me while still sleeping.

Eva is clearly shocked.

EVA
Have you gone to the hospital?

MRS. SIMON
I told you in the morning it's bad.
But you didn't want to help then.

Eva keeps on smiling politely and assesses the room: It looks much worse compared to Eva's apartment. Buckets and plastic everywhere, water dripping and dripping, mold on the wall behind the bed.

MR. RENOLT
Your daughter?

Eva turns around. Together with the foreman, two men have entered the room, both very tall, one - MR. RENOLT, 45, - very skinny, wearing a suit, the other one is the man, who looks like a bounder, who Eva saw earlier this morning at the notice board.

Eva has to stifle a giggle.

MR. SIMON
No, Eva is a neighbor.

EVA
Eva Theiss.

MR. RENOLT
Theiss, ah, yes. Do you need anything?

EVA
No, I'm just... Mr. and Mrs. Simon asked if someone from the neighbors could be here with them...

MR. SIMON
She's an architect.

MR. RENOLT
An architect. So, you're the spokesperson of the tenants?

MRS. SIMON
Too bad Bojan couldn't make it.

Eva tries to keep smiling, despite the insult and the confusing situation.

EVA
I'm.. Excuse me, but who are you again?

MR. RENOLT
Ah, how rude of me. My name is Renolt, I'm the proprietor's representative.

EVA
You are representing Helena, Harry, and Hannes Feldner?

MR. RENOLT
No! I represent Neuhuber Real.

EVA
Who?

Mr. Renolt gives her a condescending smile.

MR. RENOLT
Harry Feldner sold his third of the house to Neuhuber Real.

Eva's jaw drops. She looks at Mr. and Mrs. Simon, who already seem to know.

MRS. SIMON
Perhaps we can go back to assessing our ceiling problem and especially the still ongoing flow of water.

MR. RENOLT
Of course. I'm so happy nothing serious happened.

EVA
Is it safe? I mean... more of the ceiling could come down.

Mr. Renolt looks at the foreman.

FOREMAN
Of course. I just can't control the rain. But we already found the root of the problem and are working on it. Do you hear that?

Everyone stays silent for a second to listen to the massive hammering from directly above.

EVA

But is the roof open above us?

MR. RENOLT

You can't build a penthouse without removing the roof first. You should know as an architect.

It's hard for Eva to keep a polite composure.

EVA

Yes, of course. What I mean is if the open roof is waterproofed. With flame-cut tar paper, for example.

Mr. Renolt looks at Eva as if she's fascinating. The foreman as if he hates people who know it all. But he smiles.

FOREMAN

Yes, of course.

EVA

I also have water damage, but by far not as bad as here.

MRS. SIMON

How long will this take?

FOREMAN

By tonight we will have the water under control.

Eva's phone starts to ring. It says "Kindergarten".

EVA

I'm sorry, I have to...

INT. MR. AND MRS. SIMON'S KITCHEN - DAY

KINDERGARTEN TEACHER

(on the phone)

Elias is feeling sick, so could you please come and get him.

EVA

His father will pick him up today.
Did you call him?

KINDERGARTEN TEACHER

No. You're the first emergency contact. When will you be there?

Eva swallows her growing annoyance.

EVA

Perhaps Elias is just unhappy.

KINDERGARTEN TEACHER

Look, he's puking.

EVA

I'm on my way.

KINDERGARTEN TEACHER

Oh, and he's asking for Mr. Monkey.

Eva hangs up. Tries to call Aron. Straight to mailbox.

INT. STAIRCASE; BACK HOUSE - DAY

Eva carries Elias up the stairs, her jacket full of vomit, the huge orangutan full of vomit, Elias is too. Eva is humming a calming little melody.

When Eva reaches her floor, Mr. Renolt and his shadow, the bouncer, are waiting in front of the door. When Mr. Renolt sees her, he smiles.

MR. RENOLT

Ah, there you are. We already rang the door bell, but...

Slowly Eva walks up the remaining stairs. Eva tries to stand straight, very aware of the state she's in.

EVA

How can I help you?

MR. RENOLT

I was just wondering, you said, your name is Eva Theiss, correct?

EVA

Yes?

MR. RENOLT

That's curious, because the contract for this apartment is under Beate Theiss?

EVA

That's my mother. Perhaps you have her original renting contract, because I grew up here.

MR. RENOLT

So she's not living here?

Eva tightens her grip on Elias, he's heavy. Eva is sweating now. She swallows.

EVA

She's with my grandfather.

MR. RENOLT
So you're just watering her
flowers?

As if Elias was waiting for a cue, he vomits again. Mr. Renolt is clearly disgusted, but tries to stay polite. He nudges his assistant, who hands Eva a business card. Eva observes their weird dynamic.

MR. RENOLT (CONT'D)
Please tell your mother to give me
a call. And if... just in case... you
are now the main tenant of this
apartment, please send me your
contract, because the one from your
mother is all I've got. And it's, I
guess, from before you were born.

Eva takes the card with her vomit free hand.

INT. EVA'S HALLWAY - DAY

Inside the apartment, Eva's façade collapses. She puts Elias down, who immediately sits on the floor. Eva's hands are shaking, she looks at her son full of puke, herself full of puke. For a second it looks as if Eva is going to join Elias' there on the floor. Just for a second.

INT. EVA'S BATHROOM - DAY

Her phone tucked in between ear and shoulder, Eva undresses Elias. Her mother picks up.

EVA'S MOTHER
It's not a good time. Are you
alright?

EVA
Elias is sick.

EVA'S MOTHER
I'm sorry, I can't come and help.

Eva tries not to lose her patience.

EVA
That's not why I'm calling.

Eva throws the vomit-covered clothes in the washing machine, puts her jacket in, too. Elias is sitting on the bathroom rug, hugging the vomit-covered orangutan.

EVA (CONT'D)
I need the contract you signed with
Mrs. Feldner, when you transferred
the lease to me.

EVA'S MOTHER

What contract?

EVA

The agreement. That I can take over
the lease on the apartment.

EVA'S MOTHER

I came to an agreement with her,
but there's no written contract.

Eva drops the trouser she just wriggled out of.

EVA

What do you mean?

EVA'S MOTHER

I talked with Helga, like you asked
me to, although there was no need,
because the contract says that I
can pass the apartment on.

EVA

Yes, Mama, but that's in case of
your death.

EVA'S MOTHER

I don't understand. What are you
making a fuss about?

Eva swallows hard. Takes a deep breath.

EVA

It seems as if Harry sold his third
of the house to an investor. Who
just asked questions about me
living here.

EVA'S MOTHER

It was never a problem.

EVA

It wasn't a problem, when Helga
owned the property. But she's dead.
And an investor doesn't care what
the dead mother of the guy who sold
him a building promised to someone
who's rent is way below market
value.

EVA'S MOTHER

So if you know all this about
contracts and real estate, why
didn't you handle it back then?

Eva pants. And grabs Mr. Monkey out of Elias's hands and
throws him into the washing machine. Elias protests.

EVA

Okay. I need to get Elias cleaned.

EVA'S MOTHER

And perhaps you calm down, hm?

Eva puts Elias in the shower. Turns on the water.

No water.

Eva tries the faucet on the sink. Nothing.

EVA

Fuck!

Elias throws up in the shower.

INT. STAIRCASE; BACK HOUSE - DAY

Carrying Elias, wrapped in a towel, Eva knocks at the apartment below her's. Sabine opens the door.

SABINE

Oh, no, is he sick?

EVA

Yes. Do you have water?

SABINE

No, not since an hour.

INT. STAIRCASE - DAY

Eva with Elias and Sabine with Mia, walk through the dirty house until they find a worker.

EVA

Where is the foreman?

The worker just shrugs his shoulder. Another worker walks by.

EVA (CONT'D)

The foreman? Where is the foreman?

WORKER

Roof!

INT. STAIRCASE; ENTRANCE TO ROOF - DAY

Eva and Sabine approach the iron door Mrs. Simon had tried to open in the morning. It is open now, but Eva won't step over the threshold. She knocks against the metal door. Andrej appears from the construction site.

EVA
Is the foreman there?

ANDREJ
Yes. One moment.

Eva and Sabine wait. Elias is almost falling asleep in Eva's arm, she shifts his weight to her other hip.

The foreman appears at the door, Andrej behind him.

EVA
The water is turned off.

FOREMAN
Yeah, you complained earlier, so we fixed it.

EVA
That was the other part of the house. Now there's no water in this part.

SABINE
We need water for the kids.

Little Mia in Sabine's arm drops her pacifier into the dirt and starts to cry.

FOREMAN
I'm sorry but we announced that we need to turn off the water.

SABINE
When?

EVA
Not to us.

The foreman makes a apologetic gesture.

SABINE
And when will it work again?

FOREMAN
Could take a while.

INT. STAIRCASE; FRONT HOUSE - DAY

Eva, carrying Elias, a towel and fresh clothes, knocks at Grandma Jovic's door. The door is almost immediately opened from inside.

Not by Grandma Jovic but by Mr. Renolt, the proprietor's representative. Behind him stands the bouncer guy. He makes old Grandma Jovic look tiny next to him.

Eva can't hide her surprise.

MR. RENOLT

Oh, hallo, we seem to run into you
everywhere.

EVA

Well, yes...

Eva looks at Grandma Jovic.

EVA (CONT'D)

Is your water working? 'Cause mine
isn't and I really need to bathe
him.

GRANDMA JOVIC

Yes. Go, go. You know where
everything is.

INT. GRANDMA JOVIC'S BATHROOM - DAY

An old-fashioned bathroom with colored tiles. Elias and Eva sit together in the bathtub. Elias is still dizzy, he snuggles up to Eva's chest. Despite the overall situation Eva relaxes, rocks Elias, humming gently, as she forms funny hairdos out of the foam on his head. Elias can't see them, but Eva smiles.

INT. GRANDMA JOVIC'S KITCHEN - DAY

Eva and Grandma Jovic eat soup. Elias, sitting on Eva's lap, chews on a piece of bread.

EVA

What did Mr. Renolt want?

GRANDMA JOVIC

The beanpole? Introduced himself.
Did you know that Harry sold his
part of the house?

EVA

Not until today. I don't like it.

GRANDMA JOVIC

But, at least, someone shows up.
Have you seen Harry here since the
construction site started? Or
Hannes? Not even Helena. Feels like
they don't care.

EVA

I don't know...

GRANDMA JOVIC

I think, he was very polite. Talked about the elevator, they will start building it soon. I mean, I could leave the house again.

Elias falls asleep in Eva's arms. Eva kisses him on his head.

EVA

Thank you for cleaning and feeding us.

GRANDMA JOVIC

Anytime, darling.

INT. ELIAS' BEDROOM - DAY

Eva puts Elias into his bed, tugs him in. For a second she sits down on his bed, strokes his soft, clean hair.

Then her gaze falls on a mural next to the bed: A hand painted wimmelpicture with mountains and a castle, and people and animals, creatures and fairytale characters. It looks old, on some parts the paint is chipped. On top of the castle tower stands a female knight, sword drawn.

INT. EVA'S LIVING ROOM - DAY

While checking on the pots and pans, Eva calls Helena. No answer. Eva records a voice message.

EVA

Hi, I just wanted to ask...

Eva deletes the message. With a quick gesture Eva knocks the 1990ies photo of the three little kids off her desk. Then starts a new recording.

EVA (CONT'D)

Quick question: Why didn't you say this morning that Harry sold his share? Are you and Hannes planning on selling, too? Please call me!

Eva hits "send". The moment she sits down, there's a knock on the apartment door.

INT. EVA'S HALLWAY - DAY

Andrej, the builder, is standing outside.

EVA

Yes?

Andrej leans closer and talks with a very low voice.

ANDREJ
Water working again.

EVA
Why do you whisper?

Andrej looks up the stairs leading to the entrance to the construction site, puts a finger to his lips, and walks away.

Eva realizes something.

EVA (CONT'D)
(whispering)
There was no need, right? It was on purpose, wasn't it?

A small nod from Andrej is all she gets.

INT. ELIAS' ROOM - DAY

Eva checks on Elias, who is still asleep. Eva ponders something.

Then she searches in drawers, until she finds a baby monitor, that clearly has not been in use for a long time. Eva sets it up, connects it to the second part.

INT. STAIRCASE; BACK HOUSE - DAY

Eva knocks at Sabine's and Bojan's apartment. Sabine opens. She looks a bit annoyed that it's Eva. Again.

EVA
Good news. Water is working again.

SABINE
Yeah, I noticed.

Sabine starts closing the door.

EVA
Bad news: I think we have a much bigger problem.

SABINE
Can you just talk with Bojan about it? Bojan handles everything with the construction site. And his grandmother. And all the other neighbors. Whoever needs something from him. He's happy to help.

Eva doesn't notice Sabine's irritated tone.

EVA
Perfect, I'll call him.

INT. MONTAGE SEQUENCE - DAY

Eva runs up and down the stairs, knocking at apartment doors, entering, coming back out, knocking at the next one.

Several times the baby monitor in Eva's pocket blinks, but as the sound is turned off, Eva doesn't notice.

As Eva crosses the courtyard, she sees Mr. Renolt and the Foreman, smoking cigarettes. They interrupt their conversation when they notice Eva. Eva greets from afar, hurries on. She can feel their eyes on her back.

INT. STAIRCASE; BACK HOUSE - DAY

As Eva walks up the stairs with a satisfied mood, she sees her apartment door is open.

Eva starts to runs, taking two steps at once.

INT. EVA'S HALLWAY - DAY

Eva enters the apartment, looks around.

EVA
Hallo? Elias?!

No answer.

INT. ELIAS' ROOM - DAY

Eva bursts into the room, the bed is empty. Panic.

INT. STAIRCASE; BACK HOUSE - DAY

Sabine is really bad at hiding her annoyance, seeing it's again Eva who's knocking.

EVA
Is Elias with you?

SABINE
No... What happened?

But Eva doesn't listen, she's already on her way down the stairs.

SABINE (CONT'D)
Are you all right?

Eva's already in front of family Shaarman's apartment, knocking. Waiting for just a second, then knocking again. But no one answers. Eva's hammering at the door now.

The foreman walks up the stairs, followed by Elias.

EVA
Elias!

Eva's relieve is huge.

ELIAS
Mama!

EVA
Where were you?

FOREMAN
Don't you take care of your kid?
What kind of mother are you? A
construction site is not a
playground. And my workers are no
babysitters.

EVA
I'm sorry, I'm so sorry. (to Elias)
What were you thinking? You can't
run away.

Elias starts to cry. The foreman leaves.

ELIAS
You were not there and so I thought
I go to Grandma Jovic.

EVA
I'm sorry I left you, but you can't
just run out of the apartment!

ELIAS
But I put shoes on.

Eva hugs Elias tightly.

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

Eva is sitting at her desk. Sends an email. A second. A third. Sips coffee. Behind her, on the couch, Elias watches cartoons, wrapped up in a blanket, giggling. Eva continues doing the structural engineering calculation for a semi-detached building.

Suddenly, something moves outside on the scaffolding: Two workers are fixing plastic foil in front of the windows, covering them completely. Eva opens the window.

EVA
What the hell are you doing?

WORKER
Boss told us.

EVA
That can't be necessary!

The workers continue. The light inside gets murky.

All of a sudden, a crack runs across the entire window pane.

EVA (CONT'D)
What the fuck!

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

Eva goes trough her numbers, Elias is sleeping in front of the TV, although the hammering from the attic is really loud.

ARON
Hallo!

Eva makes a scared little noise, turns around.

Aron is standing in the room.

EVA
What the... Why didn't you knock?

ARON
You didn't hear me. I didn't know I was not allowed to use my keys.

EVA
You just scared me.

They look at each other, then Aron notices Elias.

ARON
How is he?

EVA
He stoped with the puking, no fever. But he's very sleepy.

ARON
Okay. So I guess I'll wait till he wakes up? Unless you don't want me to take him tonight?

EVA
No, sure. He's very much looking forward to it.

Aron nods. Awkward silence.

INT. EVA'S KITCHEN - DAY

Eva and Aron are waiting for the Bialetti machine to start boiling. Eva glances at the clock on the microwave. Aron notices it.

ARON

I am capable of making myself coffee. Here. In my home. Former home, sorry. You seem to have better things to do.

Eva ignores his provocative tone.

EVA

I just have a call soon. (...) He ate a bit. But perhaps be careful tonight, even when he says he's hungry, just bread or salted pretzels or something non fatty.

ARON

Yes, sir.

Eva tries really hard to keep it light.

EVA

How was the pitch?

ARON

Good. I think. They were totally into all wood and reusing material, and so on. And they seem to like the design.

EVA

Of course they do! That terrace combination is unique, an eye catcher.

Eva's compliment means something to Aron.

ARON

You know it's a rework of the design in Styria.

EVA

The one we never made.

ARON

Would have been a great house.

Silence. The Bialetti starts hissing.

EVA

Aron... Could we talk, not now I mean, but could we sit down and talk it through?

ARON

No. I'm not ready for it.

EVA

But how long shall we go on, it
feels like a vacuum and I...

ARON

(interrupting)

I don't think I can forgive you.

This takes Eva's breath away. She's scrambling for words.

Now steam is coming from the Bialetti.

EVA

I am sorry. So sorry. You know I
am.

ARON

And you think that's enough?

EVA

No. That's why I want to talk.

Eva turns the stove off. Aron takes the Bialetti and pours coffee in his cup.

ARON

It's just, I'm so... I just never
thought that you could do that to
me. I mean... I need some kind of
gesture at least.

EVA

A gesture?

ARON

Yes...

EVA

Like what? Like in a movie? Running
after you at an airport? Should I
serenade in front of your AirBnB? A
thousand flowers each day?

ARON

Don't make fun of me.

Eva has lost her patience.

EVA

Come on! I fucked up. But that's a
childish idea of how to fix a
relationship.

ARON

Don't call me childish.

Eva bites down a comment.

ARON (CONT'D)

What?

EVA

Nothing. It's just not only about us.

Eva takes Aron's yet untouched coffee and walks out.

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

Eva is in a group conference call. The background is blurred to hide the chaos of plastic covers and buckets.

With one ear Eva listens to Aron and Elias in the hallway.

Aron comes back into the living room.

ARON

Where's the bag with his clothes?

Eva quickly turns her camera off.

EVA

In kindergarten. I took it there, you asked me to.

ARON

Did you bring it back home?

Eva has no patience left.

EVA

No. I was busy carrying my heavy, puking five year old. While you did your great pitch.

Before Aron can answer, Eva points at her screen.

EVA (CONT'D)

You know where his wardrobe is. I'm on a call.

Eva turns back to the screen. Turns the camera on, smiles.

EVA'S BOSS

Eva? Did you have had a connection problem? Can you can present the project from the engineering side to our client, please.

EVA

Sorry, yes. Of course.

Frantically Eva sorts through her notes.

EVA (CONT'D)
One second...

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

The call is done. Eva puts down her headphones, Eva looks at the plastic foil covering the window in front of her desk, listens to the steady beat of the hammering, accompanied by drilling noises. Almost like a melody.

With a sudden movement Eva gets up and leaves the room.

When she returns, Eva opens the window and with a long kitchen knife she stabs the foil, cutting it open, slashing, freeing her view.

And - like magic - all of a sudden, the hammering, screeching, and pounding stop. Eva looks at the watch. It's 5 p.m.

The sound of the rain, the flapping of the plastic foil outside the window, and the dripping of water into the buckets inside the apartment are almost calming.

INT. BOJAN'S LIVING ROOM - EVENING

At Bojan's place all the neighbors huddle together in the living room: On the sofa, on the floor, on additional folding chairs. It's crowded but strangely cozy.

EVA
(to Bojan)
Where are the Shaarmans?

BOJAN
I think they don't dare to come.

Eva nods, looks around the room: Bojan sits next to Sabine, Mr. and Mrs. Simon are there, as is Mr. Winkler from the carnival shop, MARTIN, 47, and his partner AHMED, 49, the students LUCA, 25, ANNA, 22, and LEO, 23.

BOJAN (CONT'D)
Thank you everyone for coming,
thank you Eva for organizing. Do
you want to start, Eva?

All eyes are on Eva. But instead of feeling insecure, she straightens up.

EVA

I wanted to get together because with the new situation of having a real estate investor as one of the proprietors, I thought it's important to exchange what everyone knows, so they can't play us against each other.

AHMED

Do you think they want to do that?

Eva shrugs her shoulders.

EVA

I hope not, but... most of us have old leases, meaning low rents. We are not an investor's favorite renters.

Concerned looks.

EVA (CONT'D)

But, I mean, we have something most houses don't have, we have a real community, right?

BOJAN

That's very true.

Eva takes out a notebook.

EVA

Is it okay if I'll take notes?

Nodding.

BOJAN

Did you talk with Helena?

EVA

Couldn't reach her. Nor Hannes.

BOJAN

I talked with the property management, they confirmed that Neuhuber Real is now one of the owners.

LUCA

I googled them. Online they have a reputation of either selling and reselling houses or the houses are construction sites for ages.

More concerned looks. And loud outrage.

SABINE

Please, a bit more quiet, the kids
are sleeping.

BOJAN

Sorry, darling.

MR. WINKLER

This Mr. Renolt came and really
encouraged me to stay in business,
I guess it's difficult to find a
new renter when the shop is almost
hidden behind the scaffolding. But
honestly... business has been bad.

MRS. SIMON

I think, he's a very polite man,
and finally it felt like someone
listens. He promised that they
really build an elevator.

EVA

An elevator is not a bonus. They
HAVE to, you can't legally add two
more floors without one.

AHMED

He asked a lot of questions about
the house. Wanted to know about
you, Bojan, and Eva growing up
here. But I mean, I don't know you
that well.

EVA

I think it's really important that
no one talks to him alone anymore.

LUCA

Did they cover your windows as
well?

MARTIN

It feels like a lot of work is
happening now in the staircase and
I don't know why.

A lot of people nod.

BOJAN

I tripped over a cable this
morning.

MRS. SIMON

There's this smell on the first
floor sometimes, it's disgusting.

MR. SIMON

Our niece told us how high the rents are getting across Vienna, we would never be able to afford another apartment.

ANNA

My sister is looking for ages already. With three kids.

They continue to voice their concerns, damages and suspicions. Eva keeps taking notes.

INT. BOJAN'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

It's late. People are saying good-bye, the last ones are Mr. and Mrs. Simon. Mr. Simon hugs Eva enthusiastically. Mrs. Simon is impatiently waiting for him.

EVA

Did the water stop?

MRS. SIMON

No, we will sleep in the living room tonight.

MR. SIMON

Thank you for doing so much. Send greetings to your mother.

They leave. Eva turns to Bojan and Sabine.

EVA

Thank you for hosting. With the water damage it's just...

Sabine nods, she sits on the sofa, looking tiredly at the mess around her. Eva feels guilty.

EVA (CONT'D)

I'll help you clean up.

BOJAN

Bullshit, sit down, have a glass.

Bojan opens a bottle of wine. Eva collects empty chips bowls and glasses on a tray until Bojan forces a glass in her hand. They cheer. Eva notices that Bojan has not offered Sabine a glass. Eva looks at her. Sabine catches her look. Eva smiles. Sabine faintly smiles back.

EVA

It's always the alcohol that reveals us. Congratulations.

Sabine nods. Bojan grins happily and sits down next to Sabine, puts her arm around her, kisses her. Eva looks at this happy couple longingly.

BOJAN

We didn't want to tell anyone yet.

Eva smiles at him.

EVA

Three kids... Amazing...

SABINE

Is it?

EVA

I... I don't know.

The atmosphere is all of a sudden awkward. Eva can feel it.

EVA (CONT'D)

So what do you make of it?

Bojan sighs.

BOJAN

No clue... Maybe it's nothing?

EVA

I mean... real estate investors don't have the best reputation...

BOJAN

But I understand that it is expensive to maintain the house with our low rents.

SABINE

Poor house owners.

Eva laughs.

SABINE (CONT'D)

I thought that's why they build the penthouse apartments?

EVA

Do you still have your parent's rental contract or do you have a new one?

BOJAN

Hell, no, that would be horrible now, I made a new contract back then with Mrs. Feldner. You did, too, right?

EVA
Of course.

Eva takes a big sip of wine.

SABINE
I still think she could have been more generous with the rent. We did all the renovations in the apartment ourselves, it was still in the condition of when you grew up here.

BOJAN
But it's an open-ended lease. I heard from colleagues that's like finding a gold nugget in the Danube.

Eva's phone rings.

INT. NEW APARTMENT BUILDING - NIGHT

A newly built apartment house, white and shiny. Eva, annoyed and impatient, exits the elevator. She has to look around, she's clearly the first time here. A man, LAURENZ, 28, waves from an open door.

LAURENZ
Hi, you must be Eva. Aron's getting Elias ready.

Eva looks at him bewildered.

EVA
Who are you?

LAURENZ
I'm Laurenz.

Eva just stares at him.

EVA
How...

Aron appears, carrying Elias, completely swollen from crying. Elias stretches his arms towards Eva; his sobbing has reached the hick-up-stage.

ELIAS
Mama...

Eva takes him in his arms, soothes him.

EVA
Hi, honey! What happened, hm?

Elias just buries his head in Eva's shoulder.

Laurenz waves goodbye at Eva and Elias and goes back inside.

ARON

He had a nightmare and then...

Aron makes a gesture like an explosion. Eva strokes Elias' back.

EVA

The nightmare is over, honey.

Everything is save again.

(whispering to Aron) Who's the guy?

ARON

Found his room online. The Airbnb was getting too expensive. What's your problem?

EVA

My child is with a man I don't know, in an apartment I don't know. Maybe, maybe, just a suggestion, you share information like this!

Eva forgets about whispering. Elias is still crying, Eva starts to rock back and forth.

ARON

Oh, here we go! I do everything wrong, because right is only what you are doing. But the thing is now: Turned out you're not so perfect yourself.

EVA

I just said I want to know who my son is with.

ARON

Do I know that? Maybe you have your lover over every night. Too bad your son woke up, right?

Eva trembles.

EVA

You wanna know why he's still awake? Because when was the last time you consoled him after a nightmare? When did you get up at night? Last time? Hm?

ARON

You want to humiliate me? You've already done that!

Laurenz reappears.

LAURENZ

It's really late and you are being quite loud.

EVA

Sorry.

Laurenz disappears again into the apartment.

EVA (CONT'D)

(trying to whisper)

I can count the days I was not responsible for bringing him to bed on one hand. And he's five.

Eva takes a deep breath.

EVA (CONT'D)

You asked for a grand gesture today, where were mine? Where were my gestures?! Or thank-yous? Over the last years? For staying home? For cutting back on my career...

ARON

Oh, wow! I didn't say "Thank you" enough and so poor you had to go and f...

Eva has had enough.

EVA

Stop talking like that about me in front of him!

The neighbor opens his door.

NEIGHBOR

You shut up or I'll call the police.

ARON

Sorry.

NEIGHBOR

Poor child.

The neighbor closes the door.

EVA

(whispering)

Where is his backpack?

ARON

You just love watching me make mistakes, don't you? Makes you feel needed.

EVA

And you love that I made a bigger one! The backpack.

Steaming Aron goes back into the apartment to get the backpack.

INT. ELIAS' ROOM - DAY

Eva carries Elias, tugs him into his bed, gives him a kiss and wants to get up.

ELIAS

No, Mama, stay. Tell me a story.

EVA

Honey, it's really late.

ELIAS

Please. A story from the picture.

Elias turns around, so that he can have a look at the big wimmelpicture painting next to his bed. Eva sits back down on the bed, looks at the painting as well. There are bunnies playing in a meadow.

EVA

So, the bunny family...

ELIAS

No, the princess' story.

Elias points at the castle with the tower and the woman with the sword.

EVA

The rumors said that...

ELIAS

No, start at the beginning.

Eva sighs.

EVA

Okay. When I was a little girl my father, your grandfather, used to travel far and long until he could not travel anymore. And I asked him where he had been. And he told me he had been to the Land of Wonders, and he drew me this map.

(MORE)

EVA (CONT'D)

And he said: It's a land where the sky hugs the hills, where no one is alone unless they want to be.

Eva looks at the princess.

EVA (CONT'D)

The rumors said that the princess was not afraid of anything, but everyone was afraid of the princess.

Eva looks at her watch. Elias looks calmer now.

EVA (CONT'D)

The princess watched over the Land of Wonders...

INT. EVA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Eva is laying in her own bed. Water is dripping in different buckets, together with the rain outside it sounds like a percussion concert.

Eva sends two more work emails from her phone. She scrolls through the Kindergarten-WhatsApp and sends a message that she can organize balloons as decoration for the picnic.

INT. EVA'S BATHROOM - NIGHT

The orangutan is dripping water in the shower.

INT. EVA'S BEDROOM - DAY

Screeching metal sounds and the alarm go off at the same time. It's 7 a.m.

Eva turns the alarm off and notices Elias, who must have crawled into her bed at night. He's very awake and pointing at the ceiling.

ELIAS

Look, Mama, this looks like an elephant.

Eva tries to fully wake up.

It's still raining outside and the water is also constantly trickling from the ceiling into the the buckets, some have spilled over. A new spot has emerged, the water has already created a puddle on the floor. With her eyes Eva traces the stains on the ceiling, some really look like animals.

EVA

And that's a snake.

Elias giggles.

ELIAS
No, a rain worm.

Eva has to laugh, she kisses Elias on his hair.

ELIAS (CONT'D)
Why is Papa not sleeping here?

EVA
Papa needs some time for himself.
But he loves you very much.

Elias still looks at the wet stains.

EVA (CONT'D)
Do you miss him?

Elias nods slightly.

INT. EVA'S HALLWAY - DAY

Again, Eva is trying to put Elias' feet into his rain boots. Elias is trying to avoid it by laying down on his belly, crashing two toy cars into each other. Today he wears a bear mask.

EVA
Please, Elias, the sneakers will be
wet within seconds.

Elias ignores her,

EVA (CONT'D)
Come on, otherwise Manal and Max
leave without you.

A soft knock on the door. Immediately, Elias is up on his feet, opening the door, the bear mask on his face.

ELIAS
Raaaarrrrgh.

EVA
Elias! We ask who it is before we
open!

INT. STAIRCASE; EVA'S FLOOR - DAY

Eva reaches the open door. It's Andrej, the worker, who acts as if frightened of "Elias, the bear". Then he smiles at Eva.

ANDREJ
Good morning!

Andrej presents a piece of wood with huge nails amateurishly hammered into it. Elias lights up.

ELIAS

Mama! I made that yesterday!

Andrej hands it to Elias, but Eva snaps it out of his hand immediately. Elias whines.

EVA

That's too dangerous for a kid.

ELIAS

Mama!

Elias tries to grab it, but Eva holds it out of his reach.

ELIAS (CONT'D)

Stupid Mama!

EVA

Hey!

ANDREJ

I'm so sorry, I thought, it made him happy.

EVA

What do you want?

Elias is trying to pull down Eva's arm.

ANDREJ

I wanted to ask... You saw me yesterday...

Andrej points at the neighboring door.

ANDREJ (CONT'D)

Please don't tell anyone.

EVA

Okay.

Andrej smiles very relieved. Eva hands Andrej the wood-nail-thing back.

ELIAS

But it's mine!

ANDREJ

I take care of it for you, okay?

As Andrej walks up the stairs to the door to the roof, Eva looks at his body.

Elias is still tugging at Eva. Eva loses her patience.

EVA
Stop it! Now!

Eva grabs Elias arms and shakes him slightly.

MRS. SHAARMAN
Is Elias ready?

Embarrassed Eva turns around and nods. She has not heard Mrs. Shaarman coming up the stairs.

Before Eva can say anything, Elias runs inside to put his rain boots on.

Mrs. Shaarman comes closer, lowers her voice.

MRS. SHAARMAN (CONT'D)
The tall man...

Eva knows who she is talking about: Mr. Renolt.

MRS. SHAARMAN (CONT'D)
Asked me if we know people,
friends, also from Syria, for
example, who are interested in an
apartment. He said: "No
formalities."

EVA
Thanks for telling me.

MRS. SHAARMAN
We don't want trouble.

Eva nods. Elias is done, Eva hands him his little backpack, bends down to kiss him, but Elias runs off.

Eva is left behind, standing in the open door.

EXT. STREET IN FRONT OF HELENA'S STUDIO - DAY

It's pouring outside. Eva can see Helena through the big windows of her ceramic's studio. Without knocking, Eva tries the door, as it's not locked, she opens the door with gusto.

INT. HELENA'S STUDIO - DAY

Eva's entrance gives Helena such a scare, that she drops a ceramic bowl. It shatters on the floor.

Eva stands there, her raincoat is dripping, creating small puddles. Helena looks at Eva, then bends down to pick up the pieces.

Somehow the courage Eva just felt leaves her. Instead she tries to make a joke.

EVA

I just wanted to check if you're
alive.

Helena keeps on collecting the shards.

EVA (CONT'D)

Because I couldn't reach you...

Helena still doesn't look up.

HELENA

Maybe I didn't want to be reached.

Eva feels insulted by Helena's comment, but doesn't give up.

EVA

Why didn't you tell me?

HELENA

Please, can you just leave...

EVA

I would, but... I can't. I really
need to talk with you about the
house and my renting contract. This
Mr. Renolt found out that I'm
living on my mother's renting
contract and(...)

Helena interrupts Eva.

HELENA

I can't help you.

Silence. Except the noise of Helena collecting the pieces of
the bowl.

EVA

You are my friend. Please tell me
what's going on.

Eva hates to beg.

HELENA

It's family business.

Now, Eva is hurt.

EVA

Great that the house is business to
you. Well, for me it's home.

Finally, Helena looks at Eva.

HELENA

If you want to keep your home, stay
out of it.

(MORE)

HELENA (CONT'D)

Every tiny thing that all of you complain about draws out the construction work and increases the costs. And makes it more difficult to keep the tenants who barely pay rent.

Eva stares at her for a long second.

EVA

Well, that's victim blaming.

Helena laughs a short unempathetic laugh.

EVA (CONT'D)

And you know it is. You just don't want to get your hands dirty, pretending that you and Hannes are the nice ones. That's not what your mother would have wanted. To kick all the people out you grew up with.

Helena smashes the pieces she just picked up back on the floor.

HELENA

Leave my mother out of it.

EVA

Well, she would be ashamed of what you do!

HELENA

Out! Get out! Get out of my studio!

Eva turns around to leave. With a gesture of her shaking hand she throws a vase on the floor. It breaks in two with a loud noise. Eva does not turn back.

INT. EVA'S OFFICE - DAY

Little daylight enters through the windows, wind presses the rain against the glass. Eva is sitting in an open-plan office. It's striking that most of the people working around her are women.

Eva can't concentrate.

A woman, LINDA, 38, walks through the room. Quickly, Eva gets up and follows her.

INT. KITCHENETTE - DAY

The kitchenette has no daylight. Linda is waiting for the coffee machine to heat up. Eva walks in, smiling extra friendly.

EVA

Oh, hi, how are you?

LINDA

Eva! Hi. Romy is teething, I didn't get any sleep.

EVA

Wait!

Eva conjures from a hiding spot in the cupboard coffee capsules from a good brand.

EVA (CONT'D)

That's the good stuff.

Linda gratefully accepts one, but stops midair.

LINDA

Why are you bribing me?

Eva feels offended.

EVA

No, you always got me coffee, when we worked deadlines for competitions at BLUE.

LINDA

Those were different kind of nightshifts.

EVA

But we loved it, it was exciting.

LINDA

Yes, we did! Maybe motherhood is the same sleep deprivation but boring jobs.

EVA

Stable.

LINDA

That's why they're boring.

They laugh a desperate laugh together. Eva pulls up the courage.

EVA

But I really need something.

LINDA

And there I was, thinking you'd
love me just for me.

Eva doesn't know how to take Linda's joke.

EVA

Because you worked for the
municipality in between... The lease
of the apartment I live in is in my
mother's name. And there's a real
estate developer involved now.

LINDA

Not good.

EVA

Yes. And it's raining through.

LINDA

The official tenant's association,
they have good consulting. Legal
advice. Go soon. And get your
neighbors together. They will try
to make deals, money for moving
out. The first to sign will get the
least of money.

EVA

Thanks.

LINDA

And if you're afraid the walls
collapse, call the city's Bureau
for Immediate Action, they'll send
construction site inspectors.

EVA

That won't be necessary.

LINDA

Well, I've seen horrible things.
But as long as it's not a Paragraph
18 house, it will be fine.

EVA

A what?

LINDA

Did they hang a notice somewhere?

EVA

No. Wait. Maybe?

LINDA

Does anyone live in apartment
number one in your house?

EVA

Why?

INT. EVA'S BOSS' OFFICE - DAY

Eva knocks carefully on the open door, when her boss looks up, Eva enters. She looks nervous, almost shy.

EVA

The MATT project is complete now.

EVA'S BOSS

Thanks. Why don't you just send it?

EVA

I... I just did.

EVA'S BOSS

Okay. Thank you.

Eva stays, although her boss clearly dismissed her.

EVA

I wanted to ask... is it okay if I go to do home office for the rest of the day, and work from there?

Eva's boss takes a deep breath.

EVA'S BOSS

I'm missing a bit of initiative from you lately.

EVA

Sorry?

EVA'S BOSS

I am well aware, that this job is for most of my employees the practical option, the safe haven to have a family. How do you think I started myself? But it's not exciting, is it? I heard you in the kitchen.

Eva feels clearly embarrassed.

EVA

I'm sorry you had the feeling I was not... I like my job.

EVA'S BOSS

You don't have to like it. I just need more than the bare minimum. The call yesterday was...

Eva gets defensive.

EVA

My son was sick. He actually still is, that's why...

EVA'S BOSS

This is not your dream job, but I see potential in you. Saw, until lately. So, if you get yourself together again, there is a possibility for promotion.

EVA

Okay. Ahh, thank you?

EVA'S BOSS

Now, work from home, for Christ's sake.

INT. STAIRCASE; FRONT HOUSE - DAY

Eva is standing in front of the notice board she saw the Bouncer rip away the paper. Eva's pondering.

Eva walks over to the mailboxes, lifts the lid above the small slit of No. 1, peeks inside: It's filled with mail. Eva tries to pull it out by hand, but the paper gets stuck.

But now, Eva is determined. She doesn't have to go far, until she finds an open toolbox. With a screwdriver, she forces the mailbox open. Letters and leaflets fall to the floor. Quickly, Eva picks them up.

Eva spreads the mail onto the lid of the waste paper bin, sorts swiftly through it, takes a look at any letter that may look official, nothing in all the junk mail, until she sees a notification paper from the post office about a registered latter. Coming from a magistrate.

Eva's heart is pounding.

A noise makes her aware that the foreman has been standing behind her, watching her. Eva doesn't say a thing. Nor does he. Calmly, Eva puts the rest of the mail into the waste paper bin and hands the screwdriver to the foreman.

INT. POST OFFICE - DAY

Impatiently Eva is standing in line, using the time to read about paragraph 18 on her phone. Finally, she's next.

Smiling, Eva hands the post officer the notification.

POST OFFICER

Your ID.

EVA

Oh, sure.

POST OFFICER

Doesn't match.

EVA

Yes, it's my neighbor's. She asked
me to pick it up.

POST OFFICER

Do you have a letter of
authorization?

Eva tries to play dumb.

EVA

Do I need one?

POST OFFICER

Come back, if you have one. Next!

EVA

No, no! You don't see. Okay.

Eva leans in now, tries to play it confidentially.

EVA (CONT'D)

No one lives in that apartment
anymore. Not for years. This may be
a court order, that we get kicked
out of our apartment. So it
concerns me. More than the person
it's addressed to.

The post officer looks at Eva just not interested.

EVA (CONT'D)

Can you at least let me peak into
it? You have to help me. You have
the power to help me. Please do!

POST OFFICER

"Your life is in my hands." I can
already hear the violins, your
performance is breathtaking.

Eva let's go of her act.

POST OFFICER (CONT'D)

Come back with a letter of
authorization.

Eva smile is now sour.

POST OFFICER (CONT'D)

Including a copy of the addressee's
ID.

Now, Eva hates her.

INT. STAIRCASE; BACK HOUSE - DAY

Frantically, Eva knocks on Bojan's door, Sabine opens.

SABINE

Mia is sleeping. Can't you just call?

Eva ignores Sabine's complaint and walks inside. Closes the door behind her.

INT. SABINE'S AND BOJAN'S HALLWAY - DAY

Eva holds up the notification.

EVA

I think that they are trying to put our house under Paragraph 18.

SABINE

Meaning?

EVA

Okay, so, I learned today, that if the owner claims that the rental income is not enough to maintain the building, they can try to get a court ruling under §18, which allows them to raise the rent. Without limit.

SABINE

And they did that?

EVA

Yes. I think so.

SABINE

But they have to tell us!

EVA

They just have to inform one tenant and they sent it to number one.

SABINE

Which is empty.

All of a sudden, a loud rumble, like stones falling, comes from the bedroom. A child, Mia, starts to scream. Sabine runs. Eva follows her.

INT. BOJAN'S AND SABINE'S BEDROOM - DAY

In the bedroom wall is a huge dent with cracks in the plaster and in the middle is a hole to the neighboring apartment. Bricks are lying on the floor.

The foreman is standing in front of it, assessing the damage. Sabine is still in shock, she's rocking Mia back and forth.

EVA

How the hell did this happen "by accident"?

FOREMAN

The worker misunderstood the instructions.

EVA

With a load-bearing wall?

The foreman looks at Eva.

FOREMAN

What are you implying?

Eva just stares at him.

SABINE

I would appreciate if you just send someone to fix that and then I want some peace and quiet.

FOREMAN

Of course.

The foreman leaves.

SABINE

(to Eva)

What are you doing? Can't you see you're just provoking him?

Eva looks at Sabine, confused.

EVA

But I thought... I mean, he's clearly lying, there's nothing they could have been doing that can cause accidentally breaking through a wall as thick as my arm long.

SABINE

I can't care. You and your "expertise" are making it worse.

EVA

I was just trying to help.

SABINE
Did I ask for help?

Eva is hurt.

INT. STAIRCASE; BACK HOUSE - DAY

Eva is standing outside of Bojan's and Sabine's apartment. She looks upstairs, takes a few steps towards her apartment, then turns around, walks down the stairs.

INT. MONTAGE SEQUENCE - DAY

Eva talks to Mr. and Mrs. Simon, shares the news about \$18.

Next, Eva knocks at Martin's and Ahmed's door, Martin is home.

Eva leaves a message for the students.

INT. GRANDMA JOVIC'S KITCHEN - DAY

Eva sips her tea, it's still very hot, Grandma Jovic opens a pack of orange flavored cookies and shoves them towards Eva.

GRANDMA JOVIC
So, what you are saying is, they
want us out?

EVA
Yes. But... Can you call Bojan again?

GRANDMA JOVIC
I will later. Darling, be patient.
Also with the tea.

Eva nearly burnt her mouth.

EVA
I called the tenant's association,
we have an appointment on Monday.

GRANDMA JOVIC
So until then, let it be.

EVA
Why is everyone so relaxed? Am I
the only one who cares to keep this
house alive?

GRANDMA JOVIC
Of course not! We all care. Now,
eat a cookie! Sugar calms the
nerves. That's what the lady on TV
said and I want to believe it.

Eva does not manage to listen properly. Absentmindedly she shoves a cookie in her mouth.

GRANDMA JOVIC (CONT'D)
I haven't seen Aron in a while.

Eva is nodding, happy that the cookie in her mouth makes an answer impossible. Grandma Jovic takes a good look at Eva.

GRANDMA JOVIC (CONT'D)
What is going on?

For a moment, there's the possibility that Eva just talks with Grandma Jovic. About her pain and her fears. But then she smiles.

EVA
Don't worry. Nothing will change. I won't let it happen.

It's not clear who Eva reassures.

EVA (CONT'D)
I need to pick up Elias.

INT. STAIRCASE; FRONT HOUSE - DAY

As Eva walks down the stairs she stops in front of apartment number one, the apartment she once already tried to get in, after exploring the renovation vis-à-vis.

This time the door is open.

INT. APARTMENT NO. 1 - DAY

In the first room Eva finds to her surprise several mattresses on the floor, with simple blankets and small piles of personal stuff next to them.

The silence is broken by Eva's phone ringing: Aron. Eva quickly takes the call.

EVA
(low voice)
Hi.

Eva keeps on walking through the apartment.

ARON
(on the phone)
Hi. (...) I thought... I wanted to ask if you have plans for Elias this afternoon, if not I'd like to pick him up from kindergarten.

EVA

Oh.

ARON

Or is he still sick?

EVA

No. No, he isn't.

The oven in the kitchen is clearly not working as it's replaced with a camping stove. A lot of plastic bottles are standing around.

ARON

I'd bring him back in the evening.

Eva notices a bad smell.

ARON (CONT'D)

(on the phone)

So is it a yes?

The bathroom door is open and Eva realizes that she is smelling feces. The toilet has been used without the water working.

EVA

What the fuck!

Eva fights the urge to vomit.

ARON

Come on! It's a normal question! If it's such...

Eva interrupts him, trying to breath through her mouth.

EVA

No, no, no, that was not about you, I just found... it's a problem with the house.

Eva gags again.

ARON

Are you okay?

EVA

Yes, it's fine, please, pick him up, Elias will be happy. I need to go. Bye.

Before Aron can respond, Eva hangs up.

Quickly Eva takes a video of the place then hurries to get out of there, stumbles over something on the floor. Eva has to force herself not to run.

INT. STAIRCASE; FRONT HOUSE - DAY

Eva stands outside of the apartment, trying to process, what she just saw.

A loud hissing noise comes from the cellar, the cellar door is open.

INT. CELLAR - DAY

Eva follows the noise, sniffing the air repeatedly to check if it may be gas. Eva turns a corner and screams.

Someone screams back, frightened.

And then Eva starts to laugh as she recognizes Mr. Winkler, the shop owner, is hunched over something on the floor.

MR. WINKLER

Oh, I'm so sorry I frightened you!

EVA

I scared you, as well! What are you doing?

MR. WINKLER

Getting a balloon order ready.

Now Eva notices two boxes: a small one containing uninflated balloons, a big one containing inflated balloons.

EVA

But that's not helium, right?

MR. WINKLER

No, just regular air. Like one you would pump your bike up with. It's just too loud to have in the shop.

EVA

By the way, I need decorations for Elias' end of year picnic. And I need to tell you something.

INT. ENTRANCE AREA - DAY

Eva walks through the entrance area with a box full of decorations: Paper streamers, balloons not yet inflated.

Workers, one of them Andrej, are installing scaffolding on both sides, making it quite narrow. Eva stops. She can't make any sense of it.

EVA

What's going to happen here?

ANDREJ
We remove the plaster.

EVA
But... What work needs to be done?

Andrej shrugs his shoulders, smiles, and keeps on working.

INT. COURTYARD - DAY

Just as she wants to enter the staircase to the back house Mr. Renolt and his bouncer exit. Eva takes a deep breath.

MR. RENOLT
Ah, Miss Theiss, we were looking
for you. No, to be honest, for your
mother. But no one seems to be
home.

Eva just looks at Mr. Renolt and how he plays this elegant, charming person.

MR. RENOLT (CONT'D)
I have an offer for your mother.
Maybe you can deliver it to her?
Shall we go upstairs?

Despite the heavy rain Eva stays where she is, trying to hide her fear behind boldness.

EVA
No, I don't want to make you walk
up all those stairs.

MR. RENOLT
You want to talk here?

EVA
I'm all ear.

The Bouncer opens an umbrella and holds it over Mr. Renolt. Eva doesn't hide how ridiculous she finds the gesture.

MR. RENOLT
Look, I didn't receive a new lease
so, the situation is quite clear.

EVA
Enlighten me.

MR. RENOLT
It's obvious that you are living in
the apartment now, not your mother.

EVA
And you have proof of that?

Mr. Renolt smiles at Eva as if he is pitting her.

MR. RENOLT
Let's cut to the chase.

EVA
What are we chasing?

It becomes more and more difficult for Mr. Renolt to keep his smiling facade.

MR. RENOLT
I am being very generous with you,
offering you a certain sum, as a
little help for settling into a new
apartment.

EVA
That is very generous. Indeed!
Problem is: I won't move.

MR. RENOLT
Maybe I can convince you. I will be
here tomorrow from 7 a.m. on, with
the notary, so that it's convenient
for everyone to sign before work or
school or kindergarten.

EVA
That's not very convincing as an
argument. Practical, but not
convincing.

MR. RENOLT
I will tell you the sum, but you
have to understand that this is
confidential. Otherwise everyone
will ask for so much money.

EVA
Now I'm intrigued.

MR. RENOLT
I can... but only if you sign
tomorrow... plus an NDA of course...
offer you 20.000 Euros.

Eva laughs.

EVA
Once? One time 20.000 Euros?

Eva looks at the Bouncer.

EVA (CONT'D)
Would you give up your apartment
for 20.000 Euros?

The Bouncer does not react. But Mr. Renolt stops smiling.

MR. RENOLT
For a soon-to-be divorced mother
this should sound like a small
fortune.

EVA
A what?

This caught Eva by surprise, but Mr. Renolt plays innocent.

MR. RENOLT
Oh, maybe your neighbors
misunderstood. But divorce or not,
a construction site is not a place
to raise a kid. I heard you lost
him yesterday? Imagine what could
have happened to him!

Eva is angry.

EVA
Thank you for this excellent talk.

Mr. Renolt drops his charming mask.

MR. RENOLT
You have until tomorrow. Tomorrow
morning you can sign, then your
offer expires.

Eva gives him a disdainful look.

EVA
No one will sign. Not in this
house.

Now Mr. Renolt laughs patronizingly.

MR. RENOLT
I heard you talked with everyone
about Paragraph 18.

EVA
Ha! So it is true!

MR. RENOLT
Makes them very eager to take a
deal.

EVA
Who? Come on! You can't give me a
single name.

MR. RENOLT
Bojan Jovic. And he promised me to
convince his grandma, too.
(MORE)

MR. RENOLT (CONT'D)

I mean she's really better off in a retirement home, don't you think, too? Won't take much convincing with the clown-shop-guy. And students are always in need of money.

EVA

You are lying.

MR. RENOLT

Am I?

Eva leaves them standing in the rain.

INT. STAIRCASE; EVA'S FLOOR - DAY

Eva knocks at Bojan's and Sabine's door. Knocks again.

She can hear faint voices arguing behind the door.

Just as Eva intends to knock again, the door opens.

Bojan looks exhausted.

EVA

Hi.

BOJAN

Hallo.

A door is slammed shut in the background.

EVA

Did they fix the hole?

BOJAN

Fixed... I mean, they closed it.

EVA

Good...

Eva smiles, but the tension inside her, makes her fuzzy.

EVA (CONT'D)

You wanna hear something funny?

BOJAN

Sure.

EVA

It's really ridiculous, because Mr. Renolt told me that you and also your grandma want to sign a deal tomorrow. I mean! That's crazy.

(MORE)

EVA (CONT'D)

You would never agreed to be bought out. The poor man must be hallucinating, right? Right?

Silence, then a sigh.

BOJAN

No, I think we are going to take the deal tomorrow.

Eva looks at him. His sincerity frightens her.

EVA

That's bullshit. We just have to organize, I already have an appointment for counseling.

BOJAN

Even if we "win" or even if the increase in rent is affordable, there will be two, three more years of dirt and drilling and no place to put a stroller and with a new born, this is hell.

EVA

But once it's done, we will have a garden down there for the kids to play, and Max and Elias will go to school together next year, I can bring them... You won't find that in any other apartment...

BOJAN

We will move to the countryside. Sabine wants to move back to her family for ages, and I am honestly running out of reasons to stay.

This hurts Eva.

EVA

I didn't know you were a coward.

BOJAN

I'm not a coward. I'm doing the responsible thing. And I don't let myself be held back by nostalgia.

EVA

Oh, fuck you!

Eva turns around and runs up the stairs. Like an angry kid.

INT. EVA'S HALLWAY - DAY

Trembling and still in her raincoat, still in her shoes, Eva tries to call Bojan. He does not pick up.

She can feel the vibration of the drilling above her.

Eva looks around. A new water damage from the rain formed a puddle in the middle of the hallway.

INT. EVA'S BEDROOM - DAY

Like a robot Eva mops the floor as some of the buckets have spilled over. Suddenly the drilling and hammering stops. It's 5 p.m.

As if someone turned Eva off as well, she sits down on the bed, exhausted. Slowly she lies down. Looks up to the wet spots. They have expanded since she looked at them with Elias.

Eva almost wants to close her eyes. Suddenly she opens her eyes wide again. There's something under her bottom, she sat down in a wet patch. The whole mattress is soaked. Eva looks up at the ceiling. New wet spots, huge. Anger hits Eva like a lightning, she gets back up.

With her foot Eva overturns one of the water buckets, watching the water spill on the floor. And another one. As a drop hits her on her neck, it's enough.

INT. STAIRCASE; ENTRANCE TO ROOF - DAY

Eva runs up the stairs, and like Elias the other day, she has forgotten to put on shoes, but she does not care about it. Eva rattles at the door sealing the entrance to the construction site on the roof. Hammering with her fists against it. Nothing. No one comes.

Determined Eva runs back downstairs.

INT. STAIRCASE; EVA'S FLOOR - DAY

Eva disappears into her apartment, only to return a second later with a small key in hand.

INT. STAIRCASE; FRONT HOUSE - DAY

Eva is standing in front of the electrical breaker box (Sicherungskasten) which is next to the mailboxes. She opens it with the small key and, like she expected, there's a bigger key hidden below the fuses. Triumphant Eva takes it.

INT. STAIRCASE; ENTRANCE TO ROOF - DAY

The key fits into the construction site door to the attic. Eva turns the key, opens the door, walks up the narrow steps.

EXT. ROOF - DAY

Eva opens another door, a gust of wind and rain hits her. The roof is gone, only the metal bars and pillars that held the roof are left. And a part of the wall is still standing, blocking the view.

Eva looks around, looks at her feet, in socks, on the wet ground. It's just rough wooden planks, just the floor that used to be the floor of the attic.

Eva assesses where her apartment is. There the water is standing at least ten centimeters high. Same situation. No cover sheeting, no tar paper. With her foot Eva shoves the water to the side, in complete disbelief. All of this will end up in her apartment.

EVA

Fuck you, you fucking idiots!

No one hears her.

Eva sees a shovel, gets it, tries to shove the water to the side, tries to create a movement, but where to? There are no pipes for the rain water left and surrounding the roof is a knee high wall, creating a kind of basin for the water.

Still, Eva shovels, shovels the water, she's already completely wet and drained, but there's no progress, nothing changes, the water doesn't get less.

With a frustrated cry, Eva takes the shovel and tosses it. It crashes into the remaining wall, knocking a piece down.

Eva goes to pick up the shovel again, takes it at the far end of the handle and smashes the shovel blade against the wall. A brick falls down. It feels great!

Eva repeats it, crashes the shovel harder and harder against the wall, the bricks fall. And crash. Eva works herself into a frenzy.

ANDREJ

Hey! What are you doing?

Andrej is standing on the roof. Eva turns around, sees that it's "just" a worker, and continues.

Andrej comes closer.

ANDREJ (CONT'D)

Stop! You have to stop!

Eva ignores him. Andrej tries to grab the shovel, but gives up as he gets nearly hit. Andrej stands in a safe distance and watches Eva as she continues to tear down the wall.

Eva does not pay attention to Andrej, she thinks he's gone. When suddenly a big hammer crashes into the wall next to her shovel, smashing a big piece off the wall.

Rain and wind hit Eva in her face, she lifts the shovel again and swings it against the bricks.

Side by side Eva and Andrej tear down the wall.

With one huge rumble a big part of the wall collapses, crashing onto the wooden floor, splashing into the water.

And suddenly the whole city is visible. The view overwhelms Eva, demands her full attention: Through the rain and the clouds the city is lying at her feet with its river and hills, its church towers, cranes and parks. And its houses, so many houses, so many homes.

Eva's breath is shaky. The shovel slips out of her hands, she trembles from the exertion. And with the trembling and the view suddenly the tears come. They start silently, then shake through her body.

Andrej is standing next to Eva, looking at the view as well, then he notices that Eva is crying. He carefully puts the hammer down, looks at her, waiting. Slowly, gently, he puts his hand on her shoulder. Supporting her.

Eva turns to Andrej and leans against his chest. Andrej holds her. Slowly, Eva's crying becomes quieter.

Eva notices Andrej's hands stroking her wet hair. Notices his smell. His firm grip.

Eva stretches her neck and kisses Andrej. Andrej kisses her back.

INT. EVA'S BEDROOM - DAY

Water is dripping stronger than ever from the ceiling, the puddles on the floor, where Eva kicked over the buckets, are still pooling.

In the wet bed Eva takes Andrej's boxer short off. Looking directly into his eyes.

Their sex is calm, slow and attentive.

INT. EVA'S TOILET - DAY

Eva is sitting naked on the toilet, peeing.

She has something wild about her, fearless.

All of a sudden, there's this weird, almost rushing sound. She hears footsteps running.

ANDREJ (OFF)
Come! You have to come!

INT. ELIAS' ROOM - DAY

In Elias' room the water has entered. It does not drip, it's running from the ceiling, especially along the walls.

Andrej, half-dressed, is using Elias' blanket to soak up some of the water.

Eva runs over to the wall with the wimmelpicture painting. The water runs over it, destroying the paint.

EVA
No! No, no, no, no.

The tower with the princess in shining armor is washed away.

ANDREJ
You need to call someone! The foreman.

Eva looks at him, half-naked, looks at herself, completely naked. Looks at the room. And starts to laugh. Desperately.

INT. ELIAS' ROOM - EVENING

The room is packed: People in suits, people in workwear, firefighters, who are placing tarpaulins under the wet spots, as the water is still coming. Everyone is wearing helmets, assessing the damage.

Eva is standing in the middle, watching, listening. Like a tiger on the prowl. No friendliness about her, no people pleasing.

EVA
It was getting worse since yesterday morning. But until now this room was still dry, at least.

Eva states it matter of factly.

Bojan is there, too. In a corner. And Mr. Renolt.

HANNES, 44, enters the room, he shakes Bojan's hand, looks around, sees Eva.

HANNES
Eva.

EVA

Hannes.

Eva makes a gesture like welcoming Hannes to a party.

EVA (CONT'D)

Thanks for coming.

A woman in a suit with a protocol (Inspector) looks up.

INSPECTOR

Who are you?

HANNES

Hannes Feldner. One of the owners.

MR. RENOLT

Aaaah, the other Mr. Feldner,
pleased to meet you, Renolt,
Neuhuber Real.

Hannes shakes his hand, but distances himself from Mr. Renolt afterwards.

Although there's barely any space left in the room, a small group of experts returns with the foreman.

A tall woman with a helmet (Expert) reports to the inspector.

EXPERT

The roof is... open without tar
paper.

EVA

(to the foreman)

I knew it!

The foreman just looks at her with dislike.

EXPERT

And above that room the wall had
been brought down in a way that
damaged the floor. Hence, the
waterfall.

Now Eva tries to hide her bad conscience. Remorsefully she looks at the destroyed wimmelpicture.

FOREMAN

The tar paper was supposed to be
installed today, but the weather
made it impossible.

EVA

Oh, come on! I specifically asked
you about tar paper yesterday at
the Simon's. And you said you did
it already. You lied.

INSPECTOR

Please, no accusations.

EVA

Those are facts, not accusations. They want to drive us out of the house, because we have old rental contracts. I mean they broke through a load-bearing wall into his bedroom.

Eva points at Bojan.

INSPECTOR

(to Bojan)

Is the wall stable?

BOJAN

I guess so?

The foreman nods.

INSPECTOR

Okay.

EVA

They broke through on purpose. And Mr. Simon was hit on the head by a piece of plaster. They turn the water on or off as they please! They have workers living in an apartment without water.

MR. RENOLT

(to the inspector)

Excuse me, it's completely understandable as her son's room is in this condition, but the rest are wild accusations. I guess Miss Theiss is a bit hysterical as her renting contract is invalid, so I...

INSPECTOR

Hysterical?

MR. RENOLT

Yes.

The inspector looks Mr. Renolt up and down.

INSPECTOR

And would you describe yourself a bit "testical" today?

Eva enjoys this moment.

INSPECTOR (CONT'D)

(to expert)

I want to look at all the
apartments on this floor.

INT. STAIRCASE; EVA'S FLOOR - EVENING

Eva follows the whole troop as they walk over to the apartment opposite Eva's, the one Andrej stays in.

Eva quickly tries to deflect.

EVA

No one is living there.

INSPECTOR

Someone has a key?

FOREMAN

The key is missing.

INSPECTOR

(to a firefighter)

Open it.

Wood splinters.

INT. EMPTY APARTMENT (ANDREJ) - EVENING

Most of the rooms have water stains and dripping water, but it's collected in old paint buckets. In one of the rooms there's a mattress on the floor, a make-shift shelf out of bricks, containing books and small items. Compared to the other workers' apartment, this one is clean, almost cozy.

The inspector throws an annoyed look at the foreman.

INSPECTOR

Tell your construction site manager
to remove this or I will tell the
Financial Police to look at the
labor contracts.

Eva looks around, but Andrej is nowhere to be seen.

INT. MR. AND MRS. SIMON'S BEDROOM - EVENING

Mr. and Mrs. Simon are overwhelmed by the sheer number of people entering their apartment, assessing their damage. Bojan tries to calm them down. Hannes shakes their hands.

HANNES

(to Mr. Simon)

It's horrible that you got hurt.

Eva stands next to him, she's angry at him, one can tell.

EVA

You sound like a prime minister
after a flood.

HANNES

Feels a bit like it.

EVA

How does it feel to say to his face
you're sorry but then you are part
of kicking us out. Just because you
can get more rent.

Hannes looks a bit confused.

HANNES

I'm not... It's...

But Eva is so angry, she doesn't listen.

EVA

How convenient that I don't even
have a lease. Just my mother. Tell
me: Out of pure interest: When did
you start the plan with the deals?
Did you and Helena help plan it or
did you just follow Mr. Renolt's
lead.

Before Hannes can answer the inspector raises her voice.

INSPECTOR

Can I have a bit of silence!

The noise dies down.

INSPECTOR (CONT'D)

I need you all to leave this
apartment now, I hereby impose an
official entry ban with immediate
effect, the ceiling is too unstable
and needs to be reinforced.

MRS. SIMON

What do you mean? The whole
apartment?

INSPECTOR

Yes. You can get a few personal
things and need to leave, now.

MR. SIMON

Where should we go?

INSPECTOR

The building contractor has to supply a substitute apartment.

MR. SIMON

But where?

INSPECTOR

Please. Pack. Now.

Mr. Simon starts to cry.

EVA

And me?

INSPECTOR

You what?

EVA

I was the one who called?

MRS. SIMON

You called them?!

EVA

Yes. What about my apartment?

Eva is very confused.

INSPECTOR

Ah, yes, I advise you to not use the kid's bedroom, but on your side the ceiling is stable.

EVA

No! What about all the water still standing there on the roof?

The foreman and Mr. Renolt look at Eva suspiciously.

FOREMAN

Did you go up on the roof?

EVA

Did YOU ever go up on the roof?

INSPECTOR

The roof will be sealed with tar paper first thing tomorrow.

Eva can't believe it.

EVA

And until that, all the water can come down? It's still raining!

INSPECTOR

The contractor has to take care of your damage. If they don't you can sue them in court.

Eva looks at her, looks at Hannes. Hannes looks at the floor. Eva turns to the inspector.

EVA

Can't you see it's a scheme to drive us out? They even motioned for a paragraph 18!

The inspector looks confused, turns to her assistant, they check, shakes their head.

INSPECTOR

There's no motion for paragraph 18 on this house.

Eva looks at her with wide eyes.

EVA

But I saw... I saw the bodyguard hang up the notice and then he made it disappear again.

Everyone stares at Eva.

INSPECTOR

Did you call the magistrate and they confirmed they have a motion for paragraph 18.

EVA

No.

It dawns on Eva.

INSPECTOR

See... And now out, everyone, do I have to repeat myself: This apartment has an official entry ban.

INT. STAIRCASE; BACK HOUSE - EVENING

Eva drags herself up the stairs to her apartment. She sees the foreman talking angrily to Andrej. Andrej looks up and sees her. Disappointment and anger in his face.

MR. RENOLT

Miss Theiss?

Eva turns around, Mr. Renolt is standing behind her on the stairs. Nothing left of his charming character.

MR. RENOLT (CONT'D)
Thank you so much.

EVA
For what?

MR. RENOLT
Oh, you just made my work so much easier. Mr. and Mrs. Simon are going to sign tomorrow as well. And Number 7.

EVA
Martin and Ahmed.

MR. RENOLT
Yes. Great team work. First the rumor about paragraph 18. Now the horror of having an apartment declared of in danger of collapsing... If you are ever looking for a job...

Eva turns around and keeps on walking.

MR. RENOLT (CONT'D)
But please don't go to the roof anymore, yes? Otherwise we have to sue you for trespassing.

Eva keeps on walking.

MR. RENOLT (CONT'D)
Oh, and your offer is off the table, but I guess, you must have anticipated that already.

EVA
Oh, fuck off.

INT. EVA'S HALLWAY - EVENING

Eva closes the door behind her and takes a look at the chaos. The floor is filthy, no one took off their shoes or cleaned them while walking in and out. Not to speak of all the water.

Eva's phone rings with a message. Aron: On our way.

EVA
Oh, fuck me.

INT. EVA'S HALLWAY - NIGHT

Eva can hear Elias impatiently knocking at the door, a rhythm.

The main lights are turned off, only small lamps are turned on. The floor seems to be clean.

Eva straightens her shoulders and takes a deep breath before she opens the door.

Elias walks in immediately. Eva quickly bends down to hug him.

EVA
How are you, honey?

ELIAS
We had pizza!

EVA
Did you like it?

ELIAS
Yes!

Before Elias can get out of her hug, Eva picks him up, although he's still wearing his rain boots and rain coat.

Eva turns to face Aron, looks into his eyes, quickly looks away.

EVA
Thank you!

ARON
You don't need to thank me.

Eva shrugs her shoulders.

EVA
So...

ARON
So...

Eva has one hand on the door, trying to say good-bye to Aron.

ARON (CONT'D)
I thought...

Aron looks at Elias.

ARON (CONT'D)
(to Elias)
Why don't you take your shoes off
and go play something? I need to
talk to Mama.

Eva protests, holding Elias tight.

EVA

No, it's too late to play. What do you want to talk about.

Aron sighs.

ARON

Maybe... Maybe we need to find a way to communicate.

Eva does not react.

ARON (CONT'D)

To talk.

EVA

To talk?

ARON

At least about pick-up days, times, and this stuff.

EVA

Now?

ARON

Why not?

Eva throws a desperate glance into the dirty apartment, knowing how Elias' room looks.

EVA

I'm very tired. Maybe some other day?

Aron is annoyed.

ARON

So when it fits you, we should talk, but...

EVA

No, of course I want to talk, just not now.

ARON

Whatever.

Aron kisses Elias on the head.

ARON (CONT'D)

Bye, honey.

ELIAS

Don't you stay?

Aron just shakes his head, he seems to find it difficult to leave.

ELIAS (CONT'D)
 (to Eva)
 Can Papa stay?

EVA
 Another time, honey, okay?

Reluctantly Aron turns to go.

ARON
 It's crazy the scaffolding in the entrance hall.

EVA
 Yes.

ARON
 Are there any more water damages?

EVA
 Not really.

Aron nods.

ARON
 Okay, then... Good night.

Aron turns around once more to stroke Elias hair.

ARON (CONT'D)
 I love you.

Eva closes the door.

INT. EVA'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

The sofa is turned into a bed with a cozy blanket fort out of pillows at one end; all placed in the middle of the room, where there is no water dripping down. The room is lit with small lamps, some paper garlands are hanging around and a couple of balloons are scattered.

Elias and Eva wear their pajamas, eating snacks in the blanket fort. Elias wears his tiger mask on his head like a hat. And plays with a balloon.

ELIAS
 Can I show our fort to Max, can I get Max for a sleepover?

EVA
 Max is probably already asleep.

ELIAS
 Can I bring him a balloon tomorrow?
 And Manal?

EVA

Sure.

ELIAS

Can we inflate more balloons?

Elias points at the box full of balloons that Mr. Winkler gave to Eva.

EVA

No, they are for the picnic.

ELIAS

What picnic?

EVA

You know, the end of kindergarten year picnic. I told you, it's in two weeks.

ELIAS

Is it when I have to go to the other group with the other teacher? Afterwards?

EVA

Yes, exactly.

EVA (CONT'D)

Same kindergarten, just another teacher.

ELIAS

And other kids.

EVA

Some of them.

ELIAS

I don't want that.

EVA

Why not?

ELIAS

It's stupid. I don't want to.

EVA

And what do you want to do about it?

ELIAS

We can... We can lock the door in kindergarten.

Elias is getting excited.

ELIAS (CONT'D)

And then the new teacher can't come in.

EVA

I don't have a key. Do you have a key?

ELIAS

No... But we can put all the toys in front of the door and the tables and the chairs.

EVA

Like a fortress.

ELIAS

Yes! And we fight like the princess.

Eva grabs his tiger mask and puts it on.

EVA

And I fight like a tiger.

Eva roars. Elias giggles. Eva tickles him and roars. Elias laughs and "hits" her with a balloon. The tiger only roars louder.

INT. EVA'S BATHROOM - DAY

Eva is brushing her teeth, looks at her tired self in the mirror. The tiger mask is still on her head. Eva spits the toothpaste out and puts the mask on.

The tiger roars.

INT. EVA'S LIVING ROOM - DAY

A new morning dawns. Heavy grey clouds are still on the sky. But there's no more rain outside, only inside.

Inside there is water constantly dripping from the ceiling.

Eva enters the living room. She does not look like she slept at all, still wearing the same clothes. Eva takes a look at the watch. It's 6:07 a.m.

Gently Eva wakes Elias. He is very sleepy.

EVA

Wake up, we are having an adventure today.

Elias protests a bit, but Eva puts Mr. Monkey next to him.

EVA (CONT'D)

Mr. Monkey needs your help with something. Something amazing.

INT. CELLAR - DAY

With a loud hiss, a balloon is inflated. Eva holds it to the valve of the pneumatic pump, Mr. Winkler showed her. Eva ties the balloon with a knot and hands it to Elias, who is already holding two balloons, several are lying on the ground around him. Elias loves it. Eva inflates one more, then she tries to grab as many as possible.

ELIAS

Where are we going?

INT. ENTRANCE AREA - DAY

Eva and Elias walk into the entrance area with the balloons. Elias stops and gasps.

ELIAS

Wow!

The entrance area is an elongated corridor, connecting the main front door with the courtyard, and close to the exit to the courtyard are some stairs that lead to the staircase to the front house.

In the middle of the corridor, hung between the scaffolding on the left and right, a multitude of garlands and paper streamers is strung up, blocking the passageway. And in between the garlands are balloons.

ELIAS (CONT'D)

Did you make that?

EVA

But you had the idea. I just built the fortress.

Elias looks at in wonder.

EVA (CONT'D)

It's not done yet. Could you crawl underneath the paper streamer and I'll hand you the balloons?

INT. ENTRANCE AREA - DAY

The passage is now blocked completely with the colorful balloons. Eva puts a blanket on the dusty stairs to the front house and gestures Elias to sit down.

Eva takes a look at her watch: 6:52 a.m.

ELIAS

Why did we build a fort? Why is the
princess fighting today?

EVA

Because someone wants to take her
home.

Several workers emerge behind Eva, obviously coming from the empty apartment, staring at the blockade, looking at Eva. Andrej is one of them.

Elias grins at the workers, excitedly.

ELIAS

Good morning!

The workers proceed to walk to the courtyard, to some smoke a cigarette there.

ELIAS (CONT'D)

Don't they like it?

EVA

I'm not sure, but just as a
warning, not everyone will like it,
honey. But that's okay.

The sound of the opening entrance door is audible, though Eva has no view on the door. Tension flushes through her.

FOREMAN (OFF)

What the hell!

A smile appears on Eva's face. Elias jumps up.

ELIAS

Surprise!

Eva laughs.

FOREMAN (OFF)

What is this? Hallo!

ELIAS

Hallo!

A balloon bursts with a loud bang.

ELIAS (CONT'D)

No! Don't!

EVA

It's okay, don't worry. There are
enough.

Another balloon pops.

ELIAS

Stop!

The door opens again.

MR. RENOLT (OFF)

What is happening here?

FOREMAN (OFF)

I don't know.

ELIAS

It's a fortress!

MR. RENOLT (OFF)

Who is that? This is ridiculous!

He clearly tries to walk through the garlands, but Eva has done a good job.

Eva stands up and peaks through holes in the barricade. Mr. Renolt is standing there with a man in a suit, probably the notary.

Ahmed appears behind Eva, in a suit.

AHMED

What happened here?

ELIAS

Mama built a fortress!

AHMED

(to Eva)

Are you insane, blocking the exit?

I need to go to work.

EVA

I thought you need to sign a deal?

AHMED

Yes, we are. Martin is.

EVA

Well, let's see...

Another balloon bursts.

ELIAS

Stop!

MR. RENOLT

Who is there? Who did this?

Bojan comes running in his pajamas, he stops dead as he sees the colorful barricade.

BOJAN

I thought that something exploded!
What the fuck!

ELIAS

(to Bojan)

Is Max awake? Can I show it to Max?
Mama, can I go get Max?

EVA

Go!

Elias runs off.

MR. RENOLT

Who is there? Miss Theiss?

EVA

Yes?

MR. RENOLT

Are you responsible for this?

EVA

No! This is completely your
responsibility!

MR. RENOLT

Very funny!

EVA

Yes, I was born a clown!

More people appear: Mr. and Mrs. Simon, Sabine comes with Max, Mia and Elias. Luca and Anna, the students, show up, very sleepy, Manal. The kids start playing around with the balloons.

FOREMAN

This is dangerous, the only exit is blocked.

EVA

Oh, that's too bad, I just thought, you know as it is big deal signing day, we make it a bit festive. A good bye party for the whole house.

MR. RENOLT (OFF)

If you don't end this now, I am going to call the police!

EVA

And you are going to tell them what? That there are too many balloons?

MR. RENOLT (OFF)
It's a safety hazard.

EVA
You are a safety hazard.

BOJAN
Eva, come on!

Eva looks at him and the others.

EVA
What? What should I do! Nothing
like all of you? Give up?

SABINE
You need so much attention, don't
you?

EVA
I don't need attention. I just
don't understand, why two days ago,
we all talked about sticking
together, and now, the moment
someone waves at you with money - a
ridiculously small amount of money -
everyone just abandons, what we
have here.

MARTIN
Because we are legally at a
disadvantage.

EVA
Says who? Did you consult a lawyer?

The kids are throwing the balloons in the air. The workers
have come back into the entrance hall to listen and watch.

EVA (CONT'D)
There is no Paragraph 18. I was
wrong about it. If we just you
consult with a lawyer from the
tenant's association? But no! You
all trust some real estate guy with
a sleazy smile and a bag full of
cash.

MR. RENOLT (OFF)
I AM CALLING THE POLICE NOW!

EVA
Oh, do it! I don't care!

Eva turns again to the others.

EVA (CONT'D)

He pays too little. He only represents one third of the owners. Why the fuck do you give up so easily? Why do you stop caring for each other? Why the fuck do you all want to leave?!

Silence. Also the kids stopped running around. Elias looks at Eva. He's scared.

Eva just looks at everyone. Some look her in the eye, some look on the ground.

EVA (CONT'D)

You will all never find a home again, where... where...

FOREMAN (OFF)

I am going to end this freak show.

A phone behind Eva is ringing. It's Andrej's. He picks up.

ANDREJ

Yes?

FOREMAN (OFF)

Are you here? You are here!?

Andrej puts the phone away and just shouts.

ANDREJ

Yes!

FOREMAN (OFF)

Get the others, get tools and knives and destroy the fucking balloons.

Andrej looks for a second at Eva.

ANDREJ

Yes!

Andrej talks in a foreign language to the workers.

Everyone watches as they get tools and methodically start destroying the balloons. The echo of the bangs makes it crazy loud.

ELIAS

No! No! Stop!

Eva looks at her neighbors.

EVA

Is no one going to do something?

Elias starts pulling at Andrej's arm. Eva grabs him, pulls him back, Elias screams. Kicks. Hysterically. Cries.

Eva get a hold of Elias, picks him up.

EVA (CONT'D)
You assholes? They are destroying
our home and you are just watching!
Out of convenience. Shame on you!

Elias cries in Eva's arms.

EVA (CONT'D)
It's all right, honey, it's all
right.

Eva carries Elias away, covering his ears against the loud sound of the popping balloons, carrying him to the courtyard and their apartment, while he continues to scream and the balloons pop.

INT. ELIAS' BEDROOM - DAY

Eva is still carrying Elias, he's much calmer now, together with him, she sits down on his bed.

Elias looks around. Astonished and terrified: He has not yet seen the condition his room is in.

ELIAS
Mama, it's broken.

Eva just nods.

ELIAS (CONT'D)
You have to fix it.

EVA
Let's get dressed.

INT. ENTRANCE AREA - DAY

It looks like the remains of a party, shredded paper streamers, half hanging garlands, plastic shreds from the balloons. Only a couple of balloons survived.

Eva passes through with Elias holding her hand. Elias carries Mr. Monkey. Elias sees the balloons.

ELIAS
Can I take one with me?

EVA
Of course.

ELIAS

Why don't we wait for Max and
Manal?

EVA

They are already gone.

INT. KINDERGARTEN - DAY

The kindergarten teacher tries to hand the orangutan back to Eva. Eva does not take it.

KINDERGARTEN TEACHER

A balloon and a huge animal?

Eva turns around.

INT. EVA'S OFFICE - DAY

Headphones on, Eva goes through floor plans and calculations. She tries to concentrate, but angrily her fingers play with a piece of a glittery paper streamer.

INT. KINDERGARTEN CLOAKROOM - DAY

Eva is sitting like a giant on the tiny bench, waiting, impatiently tapping her leg.

Elias comes running in, followed by Max and Manal.

ELIAS

Mama, I had two bananas! Two!
Because I said one is for Mr.
Monkey.

EVA

I thought you are a tiger, but it
seems like you are a monkey.

ELIAS

You are the tiger!

Elias, Max and Manal change from their slippers into their shoes. Asta, Helena's child, comes in the cloak room as well.

ASTA

Hallo, Eva!

EVA

Hallo!

Eva looks at Asta.

EVA (CONT'D)
Go, get changed, you are coming
with us today!

ASTA
Really?

EVA
Yes! We have balloons at home, you
like balloons, right?

Asta's eyes light up. Elias, Max and Manal cheer.

INT. KINDERGARTEN - DAY

As Eva wants to leave, followed by Elias, Max and Manal, carrying Asta on her arm, one of the kindergarten teachers stops her.

KINDERGARTEN TEACHER II
I was not aware that you pick up
Asta today.

EVA
Oh, really? Didn't Helena say so in
the morning?

KINDERGARTEN TEACHER II
Asta was brought by Olga today.

EVA
Ah, okay... I guess they still have
to find their rhythm for
communicating.

KINDERGARTEN TEACHER II
I guess so.

EVA
Have a nice day!

Eva walks out with Asta.

EXT. OUTSIDE KINDERGARTEN - DAY

Eva starts walking out of the kindergarten.

EVA
What about a race to the corner?
Who is the fastest?

Elias, Manal and Max are excited.

EVA (CONT'D)
One, two, three, go!

And off they go and Eva with Asta runs after them.

INT. ELIAS' ROOM - DAY

Eva is sitting with the kids on the ground, there are snacks and chocolate everywhere, everyone wears an animal mask acts like the animals. Eva is, again, the tiger. No one cares that the room is like a wet cave with water still dripping from the ceiling. The kids are playing with the water, filling it from one bucket into the other.

The drilling and hammering noises are unbearably loud, but the kids are working hard at being louder.

Eva's phone is lying on the bed, it's vibrating the whole time: Helena. Eva looks at it and throws it back on the bed.

Then there's hammering at the apartment door. Eva gets up.

INT. EVA'S HALLWAY - DAY

Eva answers the door, still wearing the tiger mask on her face. The moment that Eva opens the door Helena pushes it open, storms into the apartment.

HELENA

Where is she?

Helena looks at Eva with the mask on.

HELENA (CONT'D)

Are you insane? You asshole! Have you lost it completely? You can't kidnap my daughter!

Eva just roars like a tiger.

HELENA (CONT'D)

Asta!

ASTA (OFF)

Mama!

Helena runs towards Asta's voice. Eva follows.

INT. ELIAS' ROOM - DAY

As Eva enters, Helena is hugging Asta, who is wearing a panda bear mask. When Helena is sure that her daughter is healthy and happy, she notices the condition of the room in horror, takes in the water, the stains, the tarpaulins, the buckets, the damp air. And the shock is visible in Helena's face.

EVA

What animal do you want to be?

Helena just looks at Eva.

ASTA
(to Helena)
Are we going to visit Grandma now?

HELENA
No, we, no...

The whole anxiety and adrenalin rush melts away and Helena sits down on Elias' bed, holding Asta tight against her.

HELENA (CONT'D)
No, honey, no, we talked about it,
Grandma does not live here anymore,
you know, we went to the graveyard...

But Asta does not listen any longer, she wriggles out of Helena's arm and joins Elias, Max and Manal. Helena looks at Eva.

HELENA (CONT'D)
I should have called the police.

EVA
Heard that one before today.

HELENA
What?

EVA
Nothing.

HELENA
What was your plan? Kidnapping my daughter to blackmail me into doing what exactly?

EVA
There was no plan, I learned that plans don't work. But now that you are here, what do you think of this beautifully renovated house? I mean you should definitely take credit for this.

Helena looks at the remnants of the wimmelpicture.

HELENA
I'm sorry your father's painting is destroyed. I loved it. I envied you for it.

EVA
As if.

HELENA

Yes, I did. And I know how shit it was when your father died, because I was there. But your pain is not the only pain in this fucking world. You never thought once that I just don't want to have anything to do with the house, I have not even been here since we had to empty my mother's apartment, because it's fucking painful. And my brothers fighting about it is hell. Harry going behind our backs and finding out through you, sucks.

Eva slowly takes off the tiger mask.

HELENA (CONT'D)

You're not the first one who might lose her apartment, you are not the first woman whose husband put all the mental load on her. Get your shit together and accept that things change.

Helena gets up and walks to Asta.

HELENA (CONT'D)

Honey, we need to go now.

ASTA

No!

HELENA

Yes, we are. But you can take the mask with you. Is that okay, Elias?

Elias is not happy about it.

ELIAS

Will I get it back?

HELENA

Yes, you will.

Eva stands there and watches Helena pick up Asta.

HELENA (CONT'D)

(to Eva)

If you ever do that again, I'll sue you. Understood?

EVA

Yes.

INT. EVA'S HALLWAY - DAY

Eva watches Max and Manal put their shoes on. Elias is hugging Mr. Monkey.

ELIAS
Why can't they stay?

EVA
It's late and their parents are waiting for them.

ELIAS
No! I want them to stay!

Eva opens the door.

EVA
Bye!

Max and Manal leave the apartment, Elias shoves Eva as she closes the door.

EVA (CONT'D)
Hey, Elias, stop it!

ELIAS
Stupid Mama!

EVA
Okay. Time out.

Eva picks up Elias, who is kicking and carries him away.

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

Eva puts Elias, including Mr. Monkey, on the sofa bed, which is still a pillow fort.

EVA
You're going to go to calm down,
while I'll fix dinner.

ELIAS
No!

EVA
Yes!

Eva turns her back on Elias and walks towards the kitchen.

Suddenly Eva can feel a slap on her butt. With something big and soft. Eva spins around and before Elias knows what happened, Eva tears Mr. Monkey out of his hand and throws him, as hard as she can against the window. The window with the crack. And the cut open foil.

Mr. Monkey sails through. Smashing the glass.

ELIAS

No!

Elias runs to the window, Eva after him, grabs him, before Elias can reach the window, where the shards of glass are sticking out like sharp teeth.

ELIAS (CONT'D)

Mr. Monkey. You stupid. You.

EVA

Stop! Elias!

Elias is more than upset. Eva can see the orangutan lying on the scaffolding.

ELIAS

You have to get him, you have to...

With all her strength Eva holds on to Elias, who fights her, crying, thrashing. Eva herself is in shock.

INT. LIVING ROOM - EVENING

Elias is asleep on the sofa bed, he looks tear-stained and puffy. So does Eva.

Eva looks around her, looks at the mess. Disgusted by herself.

INT. NEW APARTMENT BUILDING - EVENING

Aron is already waiting, leaning against the door frame of Matteo's apartment.

ARON

What happened?

Eva walks towards him, carrying Elias, who's asleep, puffy face with swollen eyes, pulling a suitcase behind her.

EVA

Can you take him?

Aron takes Elias from Eva's arm.

ARON

What happened, Eva?

EVA

Can I come in?

INT. MATTEO'S KITCHEN - EVENING

Everything is white and shiny and new in this kitchen. Eva is sitting at the kitchen table, waiting.

Aron comes in, stays at the kitchen counter, distant from Eva.

ARON

He fell asleep again.

Eva takes a deep breath.

EVA

I need to say something and please, please listen. Please.

Aron folds his arms in front of his chest.

ARON

Okay.

EVA

Okay. You need to take care of Elias. Not for tonight, for a while.

ARON

I don't understand.

EVA

For one, the apartment is not in a condition where he should stay, anyone should stay, the water came down in his room, and we are probably losing the apartment, maybe, I don't know.

ARON

What? How can it...

EVA

That's not important. Not now. But...

Eva takes another deep breath, suddenly she can feel the tears coming up, but she fights it.

EVA (CONT'D)

I need to take time for myself. And you have to take care of Elias. At the moment, I am not capable of doing it. You have to step up, you have to get a proper apartment...

ARON

Okay, how long?

Eva looks at Aron.

EVA

If... If there is any chance that this, our relationship, survives I need you to do this.

ARON

What do you mean "if it survives"?

EVA

It's dying. It has been dying for a long time.

ARON

Why didn't you then just break up with me instead of cheating on me?

EVA

I don't want to break up with you. I love you. And I miss you.

Aron takes a deep breath.

ARON

So why did you cheat?

EVA

It was selfish and it felt good to do something that was just for me. And then I told you and maybe I thought I... Maybe I thought you'd fight for me, listen to me...

ARON

You thought it makes you attractive if you sleep with another man?

EVA

No... I wanted you to see me... I don't want to be "just Elias' Mama". Just the person who knows where your wallet is and who knows when Elias has to get a vaccination and who buys a birthday present for your mother.

ARON

But I never asked you to do all those things...

EVA

But you never stopped me either, did you? Or did them instead of me.

Aron takes a deep breath.

ARON

So, you say, it's over...

EVA

No. I say, I want to have time to figure out what I want... And then we'll see if we can start from scratch or not...

ARON

But how long...

EVA

I don't know.

Slowly, Aron sits down on the floor, right where he was standing.

ARON

No...

Aron starts to cry.

ARON (CONT'D)

That's not what I want. I want us to be a family.

EVA

I thought everything is good, if it stays the same. I thought we just need to go back... but that's wrong...

Now Eva starts crying to.

EVA (CONT'D)

I really hope we can figure it out. Because it makes me really sad to think that we can only be good partners and parents if we are separated. That's a shit solution. But what we had, was a shit solution as well.

ARON

I love you.

Eva nods.

EVA

That's good.

INT. ARON'S ROOM - NIGHT

Eva sits at the bed, watches Elias sleep. She cries. Then she kisses Elias on his hair and silently walks out.

INT. STAIRCASE; BACK HOUSE - NIGHT

Exhausted Eva walks up the stairs, walking through dust and plaster pieces. She walks by Bojan's apartment, stops for a second, continues to walk.

Suddenly, Bojan's door opens. It's Bojan.

BOJAN

Hi.

EVA

Hey.

BOJAN

I thought I've heard someone.

Eva nods. Bojan takes a look at her.

BOJAN (CONT'D)

Are you alright?

Eva just shakes her head, fighting another wave of tears. Bojan looks at her, it pains him to see her like that.

BOJAN (CONT'D)

I talked to Hannes. He said he will call you tomorrow.

EVA

Okay.

BOJAN

He said you have no proper lease.
Why didn't you say so?

EVA

If you all are already not listening to me, thinking I had one...

Eva shrugs her shoulders.

EVA (CONT'D)

Thank you. Good night.

BOJAN

Good night.

Eva keeps on walking up the stairs.

BOJAN (CONT'D)

By the way: We didn't sign.

Eva turns around.

EVA

No?

BOJAN

No.

Bojan smiles.

BOJAN (CONT'D)

It was way too tempting that you said, we might be able to get more money. We'll see if it was wise.

EVA

We'll see.

Eva smiles, too.

INT. EVA'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Eva is standing in the middle of the room. Every now and then there's a quiet splash from a drop of water falling into a bucket.

Through the broken window a gust of wind waves through the room, making the leftover balloons dance.

THE END