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Grandma and Grandpa Do Have Sex

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Edited by Miriam Price

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LESYA

HUSBAND

LESYA'S MOTHER

VARYA

MOTHER-IN-LAW

COMPUTER

YOGA INSTRUCTOR

GYNAECOLOGIST

NURSE

PSYCHOLOGIST

GRANDMA

MAN 1

MAN 2

MAN 3

MAN 4

MAN 5

SCENE 1

LESYA: When I was a child, my friends tortured a kitten to death. I buried it.

When I was 27, I was living in a friend's flat. I moved there after I finished school. I wanted to find a job in the capital but never started looking for one. Mum suggested I live at home and help pay the bills, so I agreed to come back. It was better. For Mum.

I bought a subscription for an online course on feminism for my single friend Varya. Well, I don't know. They told me to capture your attention from the very beginning. Talk about my achievements, or tell a joke…

My friend is the real deal. She may be the most beautiful girl I've ever seen. Actually, she is thirty-something and still single so I don't really know what to call her: a girl or a woman?

Everyone wants Varya, including my husband. They told me to talk about my husband too, like it would be the right thing to do. You need to see both sides of my story so you can tell me what to do.

My husband has two degrees. A legal one, and something like HR management. Since the second year of uni he had a cat, Bethany. When I moved in with him we all started living together. *(Lesya thinks)* Also my husband loves rock music. People who like rock can't be bad, I guess.

HUSBAND: *[singing]* Like Frankie said: I did it my way, I just wanna live while I'm alive…

LESYA: Get it?

Varya and I went to the same university. Evening classes, you know. Wanted to become marketing specialists. I didn't know what I wanted really, so I joined my friend in making her dreams come true. Now Varya is a marketing specialist. I'm not. After I passed my exams and got my diploma, I met my husband and -

HUSBAND: You don't need to work.

LESYA: He said he could afford to support both of us.

HUSBAND: What will my friends think if you get a job? Life has been hard on you, so relax.

LESYA'S MOTHER: Women who work nine to five age faster. No magic fairy godmother is going to help with those wrinkles on your forehead and above your lips.

HUSBAND: Lesya is two heads taller than me. She doesn't have any friends.

LESYA: Varya and I usually meet for a coffee at the beginning of every month. This is the same time that my electricity bill is due. You have to count the day tariff and the night tariff, it's a whole big story, so I usually have two hours spare on my way home. Nobody knows what I'm doing for those two hours.

When some hot guy approaches us, I never think he's coming for me. Every hot guy wants Varya, obviously.

VARYA: Boring.

LESYA: Varya thinks all of them are boring. And she tells them.

VARYA: Boring.

LESYA: Varya isn't afraid of giving someone a complex, or that this someone might kill a random woman behind the bins just because she reminded him of his mother.

Varya is bored, so she is still single. My husband only ticks three of her boxes.

VARYA: Looks, money, muscles.

LESYA: The rest is boring, just like everyone else.

None of Varya's boyfriends have a real job. One went to Canada with a circus, another is into stained-glass craft and calls it 'Tiffffffanyyyy', another one wastes his inheritance in the Maldives. There is not a single engineer, or electrician, or driver. One was into electrical stuff, you know, seriously. He even had a small business. But where is he now? At the same time that hotty who ran to Canada made Varya so depressed. She'd been wallowing for three months or so, even gained two kilos. Her parents gave her a dog, so she could walk it in the morning. She was sleepwalking. The girl didn't have any will to live. *[VARYA sneezes[* We are both allergic to cold weather. A little below zero outside and here we go – a bad cough and runny nose. Other girls bleed at the same time, we sneeze at the same time.

My husband and I met in the same group of friends. We went hiking, sang guitar songs, fed the mosquitos. Spent a few nights in a tent and got married in two years. But first I got pregnant, and he insisted on abortion. His mum called me and yelled hysterically down the phone, asking me not to keep the baby.

MOTHER-IN-LAW: Not now. It's too early. You are not ready. You don't have your own place. In the 90s I had to live in barracks next to an old lady named Steve.

LESYA: Maybe Steve's father wanted a boy. Sorry, I hate when a sad story turns into a funny one. But it's my thing. If I didn't turn sadness into a joke, I would end up in a madhouse.

Everything in life is connected…

MOTHER-IN-LAW: Steve didn't flush the toilet

LESYA: …and I wasn't allowed to keep the baby. It's dumb to become a mother, even the best mother in the world, if you don't know what to do with your own life. Every Friday my mother-in-law called me…

MOTHER-IN-LAW: I spared you the guilt. You can't have kids just like that.

LESYA: You have to get yourself checked, get HIV tested three times, then print the photo from the first sonogram and put it on the fireplace. My mother-in-law preferred to use Skype.

I couldn't escape those conversations. At that time my husband was addicted to the gym and we learned to make pancakes - syrnyky - without baking powder.

I'll explain, when we decided to get married, he said that he wouldn't let me in until I learn to cook. Borshch, soup, plov, golubtsi, syrnyky. Everything had to taste like his mother's recipe.

She moved away to earn some money, planned to get back in three months but fell in love and stayed there for 10 years. I've never seen her in person.

In my favorite series "Gilmore Girls" the main girl said that being 50 kilometers away from her mother saved her mum's life.

We have the same thing with my mother-in-law. I can't just kill her, cause it takes two days to get there from here. I might not even get there. It's way easier to learn to make pancakes.

SCENE 2

LESYA: Did I tell you that my husband is really handsome? Everyone was drooling over him at my school reunion. I brought photos of him. It was icy then but my husband refused to give me a ride. He had to go to the gym or somewhere else important. He'd been working at a 'Rogan' beer factory for three weeks. He managed the bottle sorting department. He thought that after wasting time on a law degree he finally found his dream job. He was a straight-A student at law.

Anyway, he didn't give me a ride. But before we left, we agreed to have sex in the evening. You have to know these things beforehand.

We'd been waiting for our first time for three months after we started dating. I tried to wait as long as I could. And then he asked me straight to my face -

HUSBAND: Are you a virgin or something?

LESYA: *[to audience]* Yes, I was a 29-year-old virgin. *[to HUSBAND]* "Something like that" I said, thinking he was going to dump me. *[to audience]* Well, he didn't, but our first time felt like a surgeon appointment. My husband covered the bed with some clothes, like the ones that his grandma used for pickle jars. Fucking to the sound of your breathing is kinda dumb. It's like porn but worse, so it was not my thing. It was clear to me 10 minutes in.

HUSBAND: Where is it good for you?

LESYA: *[to audience]* How should I know where is good… I tried masturbating a couple times in the bathroom to find out. But I didn't. Everywhere seemed like touching a wall. *[to HUSBAND]* No special feelings.

HUSBAND: Well, I don't know, maybe you are frigid?

LESYA: Maybe.

[google's the word 'frigid' on her phone - in incognito mode]

COMPUTER: 'Frigid is a complete absence of any interest in sex'.

LESYA: Ok. Check.

COMPUTER: "Some may experience pain during or after intercourse'.

LESYA: Huh.. check.

COMPUTER: 'The body does not respond to having sex'.

LESYA: Well, there we go. It looks like I'm frigid. Varya says it's an ugly word and I should never say it out loud.

VARYA: I just hate sex.

LESYA: It's like she over-fucked and doesn't want any more. Varya worked for an IT company and dated every CEO's assistant. It was The Big Love every single time of course. Varya met her biggest love right after: the Canadian with long lashes and blue eyes. He just had that full set that spoils every boy and works for every girl. It's the same when all the baby girls are bald and all the baby boys have stylish hair.

Varya's lover was gorgeous, but as it usually happens, married. He gave her a lot of money, you know, nails, toes (even in the winter) and face peeling. But… I don't know if I can say it… She kinda asked me not to… Ok, fuck it. Here, her lover liked to spit on her during sex. It's like a fetish. His wife didn't let him, and Varya didn't mind. She really wanted to get married. And the wife didn't want to get married, because she was married. Pun, huh. He spat on her, so she didn't like sex.

Our coffee in the second part of the month began with this:

'I had sex yesterday and it was awful'

VARYA: I didn't have sex, na-na-na-na-na.

LESYA: Next week it was vice versa. Sex knocked on Varya's doors and I had mine closed.

VARYA: I asked him what we would do on Valentine's Day. And he said, 'nothing if it's a weekend'.

LESYA: Check the calendar.

VARYA: 'Maybe later'

LESYA: But I want to know now. By the time it's 'later' you might have a new guy.

VARYA: So, eleventh, twelfth, thirteenth… fourteenth is Saturday. Damn it!

LESYA: Her lover has to be home with his five-year-old son (according to Instagram) on Saturdays. He often didn't know what to do with him so Varya googled some kids' stuff.

VARYA: His child is my child.

LESYA: *[to VARYA]* You're sick. *[to audience]* Sometimes I think that while Varya was looking for entertainment for his son, he was liking other girls on Instagram.

VARYA: Maybe the zoo? Maybe the cinema? Maybe a trampoline? Maybe a carousel? Maybe the dinosaur park?

LESYA: He barely said anything.

VARYA: There's nothing between him and his wife…they're just neighbours.

LESYA: He spat on her with pleasure one more time and then just ghosted her. She went crazy obsessed with him. Even started thinking of him as the best man in her life, forever and ever.

[*Varya starts smoking]*

LESYA: When she is depressed she smokes slims more often. She feels sick after e-cigarettes so she prefers old school. And the dog moved to her mother's house.

It was raining all day so we had to cancel the café and move the event to my place. The plan had just one downside: my husband can't stand it.

Damn, I love those simple words: 'my husband'. Varya can't beat it. But she dreams of saying:

VARYA: And mine is fine with me smoking in bed as much as I like.

LESYA: So far, she has to respond with…

VARYA: I'll clean it up

LESYA: …and we continue being friends. But my thirty-something friend radiates shamelessly with her perfect boobs cause she never wears a bra. I try not to look at her cleavage, but can't help it and think sadly about mine. I lost 9 kilos when I was in university (Mum has been telling me that I'm fat and need to lose weight since I was in reception) so I have stretchmarks on my breasts. And my thighs. It's not like they are super visible but I can't go to the beach without being embarrassed. They just reflect the sun's glare. It's like they are screaming: 'hey, look at this piece of lard!'

VARYA: You know Les'ka, I would say Yes, if he popped the question. Like 'yes' 'yes' 'yes' 'yes'.

LESYA: In case you hadn't noticed, we talk in circles about Varya's guy. Whatever we talk about, she manages to jump to -

VARYA: Yes, yes yes…When is he going to call?

LESYA: [*to Varya*] Imagine, his wife sues him, gets a few million and goes on a cruise with some Italian guy. You'd have so much fun with his son [*to the audience]* I suggested the first thing that came to my head, just to not have to listen about his not calling.

VARYA: We'd hire a nanny. We'd take her to the Dominican Republic. The kid would sit by the pool and we'd lock ourselves in the bedroom all day

LESYA: Do *you* understand why a woman who doesn't come has to lock herself up with anybody in the bedroom all day? Easy, the bed is like a workout for her. She hangs out at the gym all the time. She doesn't have to rush home after work to cook syrnyky for her husband. Varya thinks that when she's on top, her butt gets so fit. She pushes this theory all the time. Varya is able to think about sex as if it's hard work. But actual hard work is competing with a nanny and evening walks with a son. That nanny will always be under thirty. And that son will always love his mother more than any of his father's girlfriends.

To tell you the truth I know nothing about children. When I was pregnant my neighbour gave me a book about it, but I only read 50 pages. I had an abortion, and then I read it till the end. I just can't quit reading a book if I started. I was reading and my mind was wandering. I wasn't interested at all.

[*to VARYA]* But the information will come in handy with the next child.

VARYA: You're crazy.

LESYA: If he stops putting on two condoms at once, the baby will get here faster…

VARYA: Your husband is coming.

LESYA: Thank God he didn't want Varya that day.

VARYA: It is usually written on his face.

LESYA: If he does I can always see it. He's looking at you.

VARYA: Am I leaving?

LESYA: [*to VARYA*] Yes. [*to the audience*] It doesn't matter how sexy a woman is if a hungry man gets back from work.

SCENE 3

LESYA: I sometimes think that I'm Varya and Varya is me. They told me it's ok to say what you think even if it sounds horrible. I've just been asking for permission to think all my life, I didn't have to.

I forbid myself to think about how many cool things are unavailable to me.

It's like I'm sitting in a cage and looking through the bars at laser hair removal, oysters at a fancy fish- restaurant, a trip to the seaside in winter. Varya's married guy often takes her to some sort of resort… casually on a Friday after work, just like that. He told his wife he had some important zoom meeting with some business partners from another time zone. I was so inspired that I started saving money into a piggy bank. I wanted to give him two days by the sea for his birthday. He found out and we had a big fight. Well, not exactly a fight… He never raises his voice at me. The thing is what he says, not how he says it.

HUSBAND: Why the hell are you saving my money? Get a job and save your own.

LESYA: But it's for your birthday.

HUSBAND: I don't give a shit about any of your reasons. I wanna know everything, you have to tell me. We can't have secrets from each other. Cancel that fucking 'piggy bank'.

LESYA: Everything was said with that non-argument type of voice. Like we were completely fine. Get it?

HUSBAND: You don't need money, I fulfill all your needs. What do you want right now?

LESYA: [*to the audience]* I knew the correct answer was "sex". [*turns to HUSBAND]* Laser hair removal.

HUSBAND: Why the hell do you need that? It's a completely unnatural process. I love when a woman is completely natural. I want to feel the smell of her sweat, to touch her hairy legs…

LESYA: I'm definitely not a man. Thank God. But I can imagine how disgusting it must be to touch a woman's hairy leg. It's unshaved hair now and what's next? Smelly armpits? Grey hair? Droopy lips?

My husband says yes to everything. He is fine when I don't shave. He thinks his razor is safe (I take it sometimes when I forget to get my own).

HUSBAND: [*whispers]* Your sweat turns me on. [*he kisses her neck, bites it, it's painful].*

LESYA: [*putting up with it]* He loves this wild animal thing. Like he's a wolf and I'm a doe who can also be fucked.

We didn't agree about sex in the morning so I didn't have time to prepare mentally… It was really unpleasant this time. Usually to make it less dry I go to the bathroom and tense my muscles 20 times. Well, down there *(looks down at her private body parts*…) you get it. My husband threw me on the sofa and took off my pants. I could only lick my finger and put it in there to make the job easier. Try to move the dick where it can't be moved.

So I'm trying to push my finger, which is stuck between his dick and my vagina…

HUSBAND: Why aren't you moaning like normal women, don't you like it?

LESYA: Fuck, everyone likes it and I don't. Awkward…[*whispers to HUSBAND]* I love it.

[*with HUSBAND's encouragement, she keeps saying it louder and louder until she's screaming, exhausted]*

LESYA: I get why opera singers sweat so much

HUSBAND: I knew you were marriage material.

LESYA: I had a sore throat after sex. Sometimes I have to take pills to relieve it. My husband almost stopped calling me frigid. I kinda liked this good-in-bed role. I even learned to blow him without gagging. It's easy. You just need to put it directly into the cheek without it touching your tongue so you don't taste pee, salt and spunk on the end. My wolf never liked to shower before sex. He loves it when we are lying on fresh sheets smelling so disgustingly natural and have an orgasm together. I tell him I come every time he does. You just have to scream really loud in the end and he buys it.

Once I had a fever and I was so tired that I decided not to fake it.

HUSBAND: Why haven't you come? Am I bad in bed?

LESYA: It's not you, it's me…[*to the audience]* bla,bla,bla, so exhausting. To hell with it, I'd better fake a mega-gasm.

Having this kind of magnificent sex life, I continued researching orgasm trivia and oral sex for women. I even summoned the guts to give him a hint about going down on me. Theoretically, a tongue can help to finish faster than a penis.

HUSBAND: Going where? What would the guys say? They'd spread rumors that I licked a vagina.

LESYA: Ok. No licking, I'll try another way.

I read that before sex you could touch my clitoris with a wet finger. Just 5-10 minutes.

HUSBAND: Where is your clitoris?

LESYA: It's down there… You can try to touch it?

[*HUSBAND reluctantly tries, gets nervous instead]*

HUSBAND: We have such a great sex life so why change anything? If we start experimenting we might mess everything up. Actually, long female orgasms can stop ejaculation. Don't you want children? I wouldn't risk losing the chance to have a son… You are the first one to complain. Do you know how many there were before you?

LESYA: I knew that number by heart. My husband repeated it regularly (whenever we have a serious conversation). He had 8 women before me. He lost his virginity at 14. His dad hired a hooker who did it for fifty quid. My father-in-law had his own casino so could afford his son's first time. I knew everything, but asked anyway: "So how many women did you sleep with?"

HUSBAND: Eight

LESYA: And you are my first and only forever.

My husband calmed down and fell asleep with an open mouth, and I was lying and thinking about those eight women. How they screamed and moaned.

Did they do it better than me?

Or worse?

Where is my clitoris?

Am I actually good in bed?

We couldn't find 5-10 extra minutes before the next time either. My husband was in a hurry: he wanted to go to the gym and needed a quickie after work.

You know, it's a bit hard for me to do it like this, without foreplay… just here we go. I tried a second round.

HUSBAND: I didn't marry you to listen to this crap.

SCENE 4

LESYA: [*to VARYA*] I read something: if a man touches your clitoris for 5-10 minutes before sex, it can give you great pleasure.

VARYA: Oh my god, make sex 5-10 minutes longer? Voluntarily? No thank you.

LESYA: Shall we split a piece of cake?

VARYA: He hasn't called for 12 days. Maybe he got lost in the jungle, or was hit by car, or was dying of Covid.

LESYA: Calm down you nutter. Every time you think he's in trouble, there is absolutely no trouble. He's just married.

VARYA: He could have at least texted me, just once. Like 'love you' 'still alive' or just 'still alive'.

LESYA: But he didn't. I want to smoke. The last cigarette I had in my mouth was in university. It has only been my husband's dick since then.

VARYA: I'm sure he will text. We've never split up for this long.

LESYA: Weren't you saying the same thing a week ago?

VARYA: He dumped me for 8 days then. And now it's 12. It's different.

LESYA: It's the same!

I'm looking at my gorgeous educated friend and thinking it's so cool that Varya is Varya and I am me. It will be so hard for her in ten years. Now she is the queen of the world. Tinder guys beat off looking at her photo. All the marketing specialists go grey by 40, turn to therapy and then start every sentence with 'my therapist says…'. As if anyone knows better.

I'm sorry, it's all in my head. I'm a terrible story-teller. Nobody laughs at my jokes, nobody cries at my stories. I don't expect that from you either. Just give me the answer and I'll fuck off.

You may think that my husband is a jerk and Varya is a bitch. That's wrong. I love them both. Anyone can make a mistake and turn another person's life into a living hell. It's not Varya's fault that she is so gorgeous, it's not my husband's fault that I'm frigid… and fat… and can't do anything well. I washed the kitchen floor yesterday and he came back home and yelled at me for missing some dust. How did I miss that fucking dust? I knew that he would come and find it, I washed that damn kitchen twice. Where does this fucking dust come from? That's it, I'm starting to make things up. My brains live their own life. My husband didn't yell at me. Just made some fair comments. They seemed harsh because of the context, not because of his tone. You see, I am a marketing specialist, a bit. To be honest I hate housework. It is so not my thing… How can I explain? My mum sent me a link to an Instagram post "5 tips on how to please a man". She thinks it will speed up the thing with the grandchildren. Okay, I read it. Nothing new. I entertain his interests, I provide passionate sex, I cook well, I bust my butt doing laundry, I laugh at his jokes… And he always comes home unsatisfied.

HUSBAND: [*arriving home*] let's have a quickie.

LESYA: In a minute, the commercial is coming up.

HUSBAND: Let's fuck.

LESYA: Can I keep my top on?

HUSBAND No, c'mon, you know your boobs turn me on.

LESYA: My husband laid there for an hour or two and left to hang out with friends in the park. They love sitting there talking about university times. They can go to any local bar and get a round for a tenner, but they still prefer drinking from one bottle on a bench. Girls can't join, the lipstick stains the bottleneck. Men don't like to put it in their mouths. I went with my husband a couple of times. He told me not to reach for the beer and not to flirt. We agreed that he would tell me quietly if something went wrong.

HUSBAND: Don't smile like that, they'll see you're missing your first molars. You're speaking too loud. It's not funny. Stop, you're embarrassing me. I wouldn't dress like that, everyone can see your fat thighs.

LESYA: I miss university times. I could have a whole cake for supper and wake up beautiful. Now I can't even look at it. I get fat even thinking about cake, walking past desserts, listening to Varya's stories about a tiramisu she tried in some restaurant. After the abortion my body changed completely. As if they took the baby out and put a fat generator in my womb. I started wearing only black, removed low-cut jeans, got rid of high heels. My feet hurt holding all this weight.

One of my friends never uses condoms. She's had an abortion about 15 times. She says her body gets younger and slimmer. So it's just my bad luck?

[*HUSBAND returns home and they have sex.*]

LESYA: [*during intercourse*] How is Yegor doing? How is Max?

HUSBAND: Fine.

LESYA: Were you hanging out in the park or in the bar?

HUSBAND: In the park.

SCENE 5

LESYA: I found out about my pregnancy quite late. We always used condoms, I didn't even think about the chances.

GYNAECOLOGIST: Maybe it's bloating?

LESYA: Maybe.

GYNAECOLOGIST: Have you been stressed recently?

LESYA: Stressed? Yes.

GYNAECOLOGIST: Are you married?

LESYA: No

The things she put inside me, that mirror, you could easily use for chopping chicken. She didn't care if it was painful or not. It's like it was revenge for me having sex before marriage.

GYNAECOLOGIST: Oh, so you have some hymen parts here

LESYA: She sounded like she still doubted my piety.

GYNAECOLOGIST: Does it hurt to have sex?

LESYA: Well, it's like being at the dentist

GYNAECOLOGIST: With or without anesthesia?

LESYA: Without, but with modern equipment. Bearable.

GYNAECOLOGIST: Oh, you're expecting, Olesya Yuriivna

LESYA: Call me Lesya, no 'O'. What do you mean I'm expecting?

GYNAECOLOGIST: [*with a maternal smile]* A baby. Do you want a boy or a girl, Lesya Yuriivna?

LESYA: I want a boy. I always knew I would have a boy. I'll call him Freddie, like Freddie Mercury…Freddie McCartney…Freddie MacKellen… I tried the surname of every one of my crushes since year 9 on my unborn child. I didn't fuck anyone at school or university. I was waiting for The One. My husband is really handsome, and my son will be handsome. It will make his life easier. Better to break hearts than have a broken heart.

There is one more good reason to be born a man. You can come every time you have sex. Even if your partner looks like a cow or stinks when they sweat, or has no teeth. Fine. [*to GYNAECOLOGIST*] I want a boy.

[*to audience*] You know the rest. Being the worst story teller, I have already given away the spoilers. My husband wasn't excited about the idea of having a baby.

HUSBAND: You need to learn to be a mother. You have been looking at a bad example all your life, your own mother. And she is … well below expectations, otherwise, why the hell does her daughter cook such a shitty borshch?

LESYA: Am I going to be a good mother?

Is there anything better?

Who decides if one is good or not?

A friend of mine killed himself at 20 years old. His mother thought it was her fault. She was sitting in the office eating doughnuts while her son was dangling in the noose. She didn't feel it. A good mother would. A good mother would feel her son's pain, would drop everything, call a taxi, rush home and cut that rope.

HUSBAND: It's not a person yet [*he pats LESYA on her thigh.*]

LESYA: If he'd touched my belly then I would have definitely punched him. But he felt it somehow, I guess, never tried to put his hand higher.

[*to HUSBAND]* I know that you're busy but please can you give me a ride. I really don't want to go by bus, especially not now.

HUSBAND: Sweetie, you know I can't. I promised the guys I'd play tennis. I told you. If you don't visit the company party they might even cut your salary. Take a bus, please. Get it over with. Snip-snip. I'll be waiting for you at home. I'll hug you and comfort you.

LESYA: Okay.

I was offered a VIP-room for extra charge or a shared one for free. I didn't have any cash a week before my husband's payday. You can't put off an abortion. 14 more days and there would be no choice left. I didn't tell mum about it. We never talked about periods or sex, I couldn't say the word 'abortion' just like that. She wanted grandkids so badly.

Varya was at work. I had nobody else to ask to go with me.

NURSE: This way first.

LESYA: But I don't need a psychologist

NURSE: It's not your choice.

[NURSE pushes LESYA through the doors, LESYA looking weak and vulnerable. The PSYCHOLOGIST's office is hot.]

PSYCHOLOGIST: Are you married?

LESYA: [*sighs]* No.

PSYCHOLOGIST: [*scribbling, not paying attention*] …So are you married?

LESYA: No. No. I'm not.

PSYCHOLOGIST: Alone here?

LESYA: Yes.

PSYCHOLOGIST: Have you thought this through? Maybe you'll keep the baby? Social benefits are good now, enough for a crib and a stroller. Women keep babies even after being raped, and adore their children. You can get married, it's the 21st century. You'll meet someone decent.

LESYA: I tried to explain to her that I had someone decent but he doesn't want kids, but I could only sob something about 'we aren't ready'.

PSYCHOLOGIST: Do you want to calm down and think again?

LESYA: It felt like hours even though it was just 10 minutes. People who think that time goes by so fast need to come here. It felt I was moving on sticky honey, I felt numb.

I had full anaesthetic. First, they injected something burning onto my veins. Then they put a mask with some sweet gas on my face. I saw newspaper pages in my head. The newspapers I read when I was a kid. About someone who was raped under anaesthetic, someone who couldn't wake up, some who died during surgery.

I'm falling and falling. And then I'm somewhere underground, in a room with nothing to look at: white ceiling, grey walls, a table, a chair. And there opposite me was Jesus. God, it's him, it's Jesus. I need to ask something, I have to open my mouth and say something and I just can't get anything out. Can't create anything when I need it. I would be a lousy marketing specialist.

So I'm sitting and sitting and sitting. Jesus is also sitting and sitting and looking at me closely.

NURSE: Olesya Yuriivna, Olesya Yuriivna, can you hear me?

LESYA: [*her tongue is numb*] Yeah

NURSE: You mustn't sleep after the anaesthetic. Watch the news.

SCENE 6

LESYA: After an abortion you should avoid sex for 6 months and avoid getting pregnant for a year. We managed 1 month and a year and a half. I'm pregnant … again… My husband can't live without orgasms. He gets angry. Even his mother's syrnyky don't work anymore.

HUSBAND: They taste like soda

LESYA: - which I never add.

Varya doesn't leave the house for more than a week. [*to VARYA*] You'll get fat.

VARYA: Fuck it.

LESYA: She just has a great metabolism.

After the abortion my husband made me give him a blowjob every day. [*to HUSBAND*] Maybe not today?

HUSBAND: You know a man's fertility gets worse without sex? Don't you want to have children?

LESYA: I wanted children.

VARYA: [*smoking in bed]* Lesya, he doesn't call, he doesn't call, he doesn't call.

LESYA: She stopped looking after her dog. Her parents took him back. The dog chewed their couch. Varya posted an ad online to give him away.

HUSBAND: I miss sex, I really miss sex, I miss sex so much

LESYA: I had to blow him twice a day. He was still annoyed. My grandma called:

GRANDMA: So what do you think you're doing?

LESYA: Usually she asks "How's your husband? How are you?" [*to GRANDMA]* What do you mean?

GRANDMA: You know that women don't need sex at all. We have our own small pleasures, like knitting, TV series. Men are different. They need sex. Your grandpa gets on me twice a month… Do you think I like it? No, but I do my duty.

LESYA: Fuck, how does grandma know about our sex life? Does she know about the abortion?

It was my husband who complained to her about the lack of sex. Actually, he told my mum. and she told grandma. The three of them are really close, they talk about sex, my mum and I don't.

I tried to explain that I was entering a new period in my life, that it's hard for me to even think about it. I was trying to protect my vagina from penetration. Well, that's how I explain it to myself. I never said that to my grandma. I'm not sure she knows anything about female sexual organs. The clitoris was discovered about 40 years ago, the year my grandparents celebrated their silver wedding anniversary.

VARYA: Lesya, I'm 15 days late. Do you think it's bloating?

LESYA: No, stupid, you're pregnant. [*to audience]* She is just like me, all it took was looking at a dick. [*to VARYA*] Get the test.

VARYA: I won't do it until he comes back.

LESYA: He might not, you idiot.

VARYA: What if something happened to him? He has been offline for 20 days.

LESYA: I decided not to wash the floor and not to cook syrnyky. I sat on the couch and waited for my husband. His name is Dima by the way, and Varya's guy is Kolya. It might be important for your decision. My husband came home really late. Usually he calls but not today. He came back home smelling of alcohol.

Why did you tell my mum?

HUSBAND: What are you talking about?

LESYA: That we haven't had sex since the abortion.

HUSBAND: I didn't know it was a big secret. [*He shrugs and exits to the toilet*]

LESYA: Our intimate life is between you and me.

HUSBAND: What if I can't deal with you? Listen to your mother if you don't want to listen to me.

LESYA: My doctor said you have to avoid sex for 6 months. it's not like I made it up.

HUSBAND: Your doctor is a scammer. Let's go to another one, my friend says it's two weeks tops.

LESYA: It is when you don't have an infection

HUSBAND: Why are you ruining this? Are you frigid again? Why did I marry you? You wanted to be a wife, I shouldn't have said yes.

LESYA: I still want to be a wife.

HUSBAND: So please let's remember your wifely duties.

[*LESYA looks at his fly, which is open. She has nothing more to say. She takes his hand and leads him to the bedroom. First, she puts the song 'it's my life' on her phone].*

LESYA: It would look like a rape without the music.

It turns out I got pregnant that time. Or a bit later. I don't remember if we used a condom. Recently he was buying fruity ones. So I could put them in my mouth. That time it was strawberry, or was it the time before… Sex lasted about a minute and a half. He came and apologized. "It's fine". It didn't even hurt. Maybe his friend was right and my doctor was a scammer.

NURSE: Olesya Yuriivna, wake up.

SCENE 7

LESYA: Varya could also have a baby. This time we weren't just sick together. We were late together. At first Varya said she'd keep the baby anyway. She thought this baby could help her guy to leave his neighbour. She felt it was a girl.

Her lover has a son, so he's already had the first burp, the first step, the first word. Varya wanted to show her lover a whole new world and give him his own little woman.

VARYA: He can raise her the way he wants.

LESYA: Do you want your daughter to have painful periods, unplanned pregnancies and a jerk husband?

VARYA: It won't happen to my daughter.

LESYA: [*to the audience]* I haven't told my husband. It's early, you can't see the bump, can you? I don't know what to do with the baby. I don't want his decision to influence mine. But he won't be happy. He isn't able to be happy at all.

I am over thirty, maybe it's my last chance to have a baby. Mum had me when she was 28. When she was my age I was ready for school. Dad didn't want a daughter, he asked for a son. At the scan I turned my back so the doctor couldn't see my bits. So mum and dad decided Oles for a boy and Lesya for a girl. Lesya! No 'O'. But there was no boy. First it was me, and the second time mum didn't want to risk it.

I'm 32 (don't tell anyone), so it's now or never. I need to do it. I have to. It's the law of nature. The bloodline mustn't stop. This is the destiny of every woman on Earth. Freddie might stop trying to get into this world with my help and he will leave me for another woman. Somebody like Varya. I know I need to tell my husband and my mother-in-law about the baby… I don't even know which is scarier.

I can't stand sitting on a bus next to a screaming child when his mother is like "Oh, c'mon, he's just a child" Maybe I am a child myself. A child is going to have a child. What a sentence…

I'm scared that my husband will divorce me if he finds out that I got knocked up again. He is not ready to share me with somebody else. Men have more time to have kids. My time is tick-tick-ticking. I either have to sacrifice my life now or put maternity off for the next life.

Varya found out about this program for supporting women who…who don't have a husband…for some reason. I googled your number, got an appointment, filled out an application, waited for two months and now I want to ask… Can I get a room in the hostel so I can keep this baby? For me… and a bit for mum.

(Pause)

MAN 1: Dear Olesya Yuriivna

LESYA: Lesya. No 'O'.

MAN 1: What did I say? We are very sorry for you and your circumstances. We also understand how important it is to support mothers in our city. But unfortunately, there are no rooms ready for

living in. The Mayor's free accommodation program is in progress. The building will take about 3 more years.

MAN 2: Yes, there is a program. But there is also a tight budget this year. So it's going to be more like 5 years. It is difficult to forecast.

MAN 3: I think this is a family case. We cannot do anything until your husband is told about this situation. You have to tell him as soon as possible, or deal with your problems on your own.

MAN 4: I don't like this. Who told you that parenting is your business alone? Your husband has the right to know he might be a father. The main decision is up to the head of the family. I'd highly recommend you do not take too much upon yourself'

MAN 5: What if he wants a child and we have registered you for the queue? What then? Do you want to take away someone else's chance?

EPILOGUE

LESYA: Everything is connected in this life: I won't get a room in a hostel, so I decide to have another abortion on the twenty-second week. [*to HUSBAND]* I'm pregnant, I have an abortion scheduled for Friday.

I'm still married, and Varya isn't.

THE END

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