

Excerpt from the play

THE WOLF FAMILY

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Rīga

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Finale of the play THE WOLF FAMILY

Ervīns (To Klāvs) See that your knees don't start acting up from your fit of self-reproach.

Einārs (To Ervīns) Leave my knees alone.

Ervīns I was talking about *his* knees.

Einārs Oh. (To Klāvs) Anyway, you've got it easy. Just take me as an example and don't repeat my mistakes.

Klāvs mutters something unintelligible.

Einārs No, I really mean it. I know what I'm talking about: nothing sucks quite like looking back and realizing that you've been an ass. (To Ervīns) I was an ass with you. (To Klāvs) And I was an ass with you. And that is a bloody idiotic feeling that just keeps bugging me, and so I keep looking for ways to get away from it: by searching for signals for the Amarok on that whatsit-Express site, by decorating a nursery that is of no use to anyone...

Klāvs That's not true.

Einārs No, it is – no need to humour me. I know what's what. I am the guy who sits in front of his telly all by himself, and talks to the roe deer wandering around his land. To fucking roe deer, for chrissakes! I am the guy who gives an out-loud running commentary on his every move, just to get rid of the silence. I come up with these effing ideas of getting effing fit and Nordic effing walking, of building yet another effing gazebo out there. The whole effing place will soon be a village of effing gazebos, like an effing Shanghai! All this, just so I can try and prove to myself that no, I'm not a walking waste of space! But if I'm honest – if there is no-one to reaffirm it, no one to sit in those gazebos, then... (Makes a helpless gesture.) I *am* a waste of space.

Ervīns I think Maija likes it here.

Einārs You think. You *think*. Thank you, by all means, but no offence – some people still think the Earth is flat. (To Klāvs) The truth is, it's actually round, and, unless you wish to get knocked out by your own stone, you have a sole task. You must very deliberately do whatever benefits Maija – and nothing else. Maija! Not you. And you must never forget that she needs you. Even if it sometimes feels like the opposite is true. She needs you. Whatever the distance is between you. To realize that, and get over your pride and self-reproach, well... It takes some balls. I did not have the balls. You do. You can do it.

Klāvs I don't have any balls.

Einārs Oh you do. You do.

Ervīns A Swede just said ‘Hej’ to you, and you almost ripped off his arm. He says he doesn’t have the balls!

Klāvs I suppose I should apologise to him.

Silence; Einārs and Ervīns responds by muttering something unintelligible.

Everybody stays seated as before; the ‘bee’ keeps turning.

Ervīns *(To diffuse the tension.)* It would almost be nice now if your Amarak started howling again. Can’t stand the silence.

Klāvs Awoo! Effing awoo!

Einārs Go ahead, have a good laugh.

Ervīns Awoo, awoo, awoooo!

A pause.

Klāvs *(Softly)* I am scared.

Ervīns Remember what Gran always used to say: be afraid but do it anyway.

Einārs *(Chuckles)* What is it with people that they only start to get a grip on things by the time they have grandchildren...

He absentmindedly watches the ‘bee’. Silence.

Einārs Lone wolves are rare... Usually it’s either old animals who have been banished from the pack, or young males in search of a territory of their own. Like a fool, I moved from one kind of loneliness to another. I kept running from situations and places where I didn’t feel like I was the effing boss, kept looking for my own territory, my own freedom like my life depended on it, and then – then I fucked it all up.

Klāvs Stop it.

Ervīns Sounds like Klāvs’ mama was right about your beating yourself up and your knees.

Einārs *(Sarcastic.)* Right. My knees ache from beating myself up, sure. The fact that I went skydiving for years definitely has nothing to do with it. Unlike beating myself up.

Ervīns When I was little, I used to hope you would take me along one day and let me have a go.

Einārs *(Looks at Ervīns)* I know. But risking your own life is one thing; risking your child’s is another matter entirely. *(A pause. To get out of this uncomfortable conversation with Ervīns, he turns to Klāvs.)* Am I right, Klāvs, my boy?

Silence. The 'bee' keeps turning. Ervīns walks over to the jam jar and makes open jam sandwiches for everybody.

Klāvs That's a cool bee, by the way.

Ervīns *(Looks at the 'bee')* It's alright.

Einārs Thanks.

Klāvs *(To Einārs)* Would you have a sheet of paper?

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Klāvs *(In a letter to his daughter)* Hi baby! Hi my little Wolf Cub... We're at your Gramp's right now, and it's slowly dawning outside the window. I am here and so is Gramps, and so is your Uncle. All of your support base, all of my support base, we are all here. It's lovely here, actually: the forest is lush, the fog is low. You are still asleep. In the morning you will find a jam sandwich by your bed. I wanted to surprise you... You may or may not remember this later, but I am going to do everything in my power for us to make lots of memories together. Bigger than a jam sandwich. Although jam sandwiches are actually an important part of childhood.

My baby Maija. I was the one who chose your name, by the way. I thought it was a gentle name, a calm one. Just now, your Gramps told me that to the Scandinavians your name is a shorter version of 'Maria' – 'an awaited or wished-for child' or something. Perhaps Sweden is indeed waiting for you. But from now on, every year, come 9 May, all three of us – your Gramps and Uncle and I – will travel to wherever you are, and we will see in the Tenth of May, the name day of Maija, together. We will make it a real festival. By which I mean to say that it's going to be alright, as long as I spend less time thinking about myself and quite a lot more about what is best for you.
Love you. Dad.