

# **"Linda, Victor"**

**A short play for two actors and a soundtrack**

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**Scene 1**

Linda, about 60 years old, sits on a chair at stage right. Victor, a few years older than her, sits on a chair at stage left.

Unless stated otherwise, they talk to the audience.

Sometimes we hear their recorded voices – they are marked as “L.V” / “V.V”.

The characters’ recorded voices sometimes sound younger and more energetic than their present voices, and sometimes sound identical to their present voices.

**LINDA:** (after a few moments of silence) Silence.

Sitting in silence.

Not even looking at each other.

Sitting, not looking, in silence.

**VICTOR:** I get back home and my head is exploding.

Maybe it’s the sun, maybe it’s age.

My head always gave me trouble.

But never like that.

And I need some wind.

God, I need some wind so much.

The house is empty.

All the blinds are shut, and all the windows are closed and locked.

Locked.

Just like I left them.

I stand in the living room, cursing her.

Out loud.

Horrible curses.

I can’t stop cursing her.

Why does she behave like that?

Who gave her the right?

Because her heart forgot me.

Because she thinks about all kinds of things that are not me.

For a few good years, already.

You can tell when one is forgotten, when one is being detached from another person's soul. And there. I'm forgotten.

**LINDA:** Even the grandchildren didn't make us start talking.  
We have grandchildren. Two. Twins.  
Cute. I think.  
Our son won't talk to me ever since they were born.  
One son. Only son. Our son.  
My beloved.  
Our son talks more with him.  
Everybody talks more with everybody.  
Except for the two of us.  
Silence.  
A grandfather and a grandmother sitting in silence.

## Scene 2

**LINDA:** I was beautiful once.  
I wasn't named "Linda" for nothing.  
Lin-da.  
They knew I would be beautiful.  
And I did turn out to be beautiful.  
I was a beautiful child.  
And a beautiful girl.  
And for a few good years also a beautiful woman.  
A beautiful woman who loves dancing.  
Ballroom dancing.  
Italian songs.  
Loves dancing and sweating. For hours.  
Not for the guys.  
For the dance.

**L.V:** Oh, please.

**V.V:** Why? You haven't gone for years.

**L.V:** I feel like it, all of a sudden.

**V.V:** Then go.

**L.V:** Aren't you coming?

**V.V:** At my age?

**L.V:** I'll go by myself.

**V.V:** Just don't come crying to me afterwards.

**L.V:** (laughing) Why would I come crying to you?

**V.V:** (laughing) Who will you cry to?

An Italian ballroom song is heard. Stops after a few moments.

**V.V:** How was it?

**L.V:** I'm going to bed.

**V.V:** Aren't you going to thank me?

**L.V:** What for?

**V.V:** For letting you go.

**L.V:** I'm going to bed.

**V.V:** Say "thank you" already.

(Linda doesn't answer) You can also thank me in the morning.

**LINDA:** (to Victor) Thank you.

Victor looks at Linda, and immediately looks back at the audience.

**VICTOR:** Sometimes a word escapes from her, in my direction.  
 She regrets it immediately.  
 The word escapes from her so fast and I can't understand what she is saying.  
 Even when I'm sitting right next to her I can't understand what she is

saying.

### **Scene 3**

**LINDA:** I love drinking tea.  
I haven't drunk tea for years.  
It ran out, and nobody bothered to buy some.  
And yet – I love drinking tea.  
All I ever need in the morning is a cup of tea and a “good morning”.  
But there is none.  
Neither a “good night”.  
I can't remember when was the last time we said that.

**L.V:** Good morning.  
**V.V:** Good morning.  
**L.V:** How did you sleep?  
**V.V:** Fine. And you?  
**L.V:** Wonderful.  
**V.V:** Good night.  
**L.V:** Good night.  
**V.V:** Did you set the alarm clock?

### **Scene 4**

Linda's recorded voice is identical to her present voice during this scene.

**VICTOR:** I don't have any other women.  
I don't know if I could have had.  
But the fact is that I don't.  
I won't deny that the idea goes through my mind, sometimes.  
Especially lately.  
But I immediately ignore it.  
I don't think she thinks I have someone else.

I once asked her. If that kind of thing sounded possible to her.  
I didn't try to pretend I had, I just asked, in the most direct and frank manner.

“You? I'd be very surprised. Very very surprised”.

She wouldn't stop laughing the whole day.

As if she pondered the idea and found it ridiculous, each time anew.

She hides so much cruelty behind her laughter.

Once, I loved it about her so much.

Once, I wanted her to be jealous for me so much.

But she won't be jealous for me anymore. Never.

**LINDA:** I know he cheated. More than once.

I know.

He didn't even bother to hide it.

Started to come home late, all of a sudden.

Going out for walks.

Walks in perfume stores.

**VICTOR:** I don't know if I can still be jealous for her.

There was a time I couldn't stop.

When she would go to all that dancing of hers.

She wanted me to come so badly.

What do I have to do there.

So come and stand at the side.

I came.

I was surprised by how much fun I had.

It's nice to be in the presence of genuine joy.

But I couldn't keep on coming after a few times.

I hated her there.

She would sweat. God, she would sweat so much.

And I would pray hard. Without words.

I didn't come for a few times and then she also stopped going.

I was happy.

She was starting to let go of me and I was happy.

**LINDA:** I once saw him walking in the street. From afar.

He had a different walk. A fast one.

**L.V:** Get closer.

**LINDA:** He had a different smell.

**L.V:** Get even closer.

**LINDA:** He had a different expression.

A man walking in the street, almost skipping.

Left all his worries back home.

**L.V:** Probably going to meet someone.

**LINDA:** Meet someone and look at her, with a look of love.

**L.V:** Hide, so he doesn't see you.

**LINDA:** Meet someone and make plans with her.

**L.V:** And maybe it would be better if he did see. Shame on him.

**LINDA:** Shame on him.

**L.V:** Do you remember how he used to make plans with you?

**LINDA:** I remember.

**L.V:** Do you remember how he used to look at you, with a look of love?

**LINDA:** I remember.

I remember it so very much.

**L.V:** Do you think he still remembers?

**LINDA:** I don't think he ever did. I don't think he ever knew.

**L.V:** Where are all the looks now?

**LINDA:** Went out. All the looks went out.

**L.V:** And maybe it would be better if he did see. Shame on him.

**LINDA:** Shame on him.

### **Scene 5**

Throughout the scene, Linda is dancing while sitting on her chair.

Linda's recorded voice is identical to her present voice.

**VICTOR:** Friday dinner.

With the son, his wife and the grandchildren.

Without her.

Said she wasn't feeling well.

Could have made an effort, had she wanted.

She didn't want to.

The son's wife became vegetarian after giving birth.

All of a sudden.

I cook vegetarian food for her.

I love cooking.

**L.V:** Why does he cook for her?

If it's so important for her, why can't she cook for herself?

As if he doesn't spend enough time standing on his feet.

And afterwards he'll insist they'll take everything in plastic boxes.

Won't bring me leftovers, even.

Punishment.

**VICTOR:** When he was little, I was the one who made him lunch.

I would come home from the store, especially, in order to make him lunch.

Until he asked her to make him lunch. Said that mommy's food is better.

She probably told him to say that, in one of their drives.

I didn't insist.

I tried to insist on the drives and that didn't help.

He would call me in tears and ask me to come get him, and would still agree to ride with her the next time.

After he asked I started eating in the store, alone.

Twenty-five years.

She would make food for the both of them and wouldn't leave me

anything.

Their recorded voices sound younger.

**V.V:** Are you tired?

**L.V:** I don't have any energy today.

**V.V:** Are you sick?

**L.V:** No, just tired.

**V.V:** So I will cook for him today.

**L.V:** No need to. I'll be up in a sec.

**V.V:** I'll tell him you made it.

**L.V:** Really?

**V.V:** Sure.

**L.V:** You're not just saying it.

**V.V:** No.

**L.V:** Thank you.

**V.V:** No problem.

Someone from work called. Said they were searching for you.

**L.V:** Good. Let them search for me for a while.

Their recorded voices laugh.

**VICTOR:** She took away the few moments of grace I had with him.

The few moments I was willing to give and he was willing to receive.

Today it's lost.

I even talk more with the grandchildren.

Linda's recorded voice is identical to her present voice.

**L.V:** He's so good with the grandchildren.

He melts, and they melt right along with him.

Why can't I? Why does my body stiffen the second I see them?

He wasn't like that with our son.

Said he had to be strict with him.

Meaning, of course, that I was spoiling him

Didn't miss any opportunity to hurt.

**VICTOR:** When will I lose them too?

Their recorded voices sound younger.

**V.V:** Today too?

**L.V:** Today too.

Is there a problem?

**V.V:** It's been two weeks.

**L.V:** So it's been two weeks.

Did someone from work call again?

**V.V:** No. They stopped calling.

**L.V:** Great. I'll find something else.

What, are you sick of cooking for him?

**V.V:** No.

**L.V:** Do you still tell him I made it?

**V.V:** He doesn't ask anymore.

**L.V:** I can certainly cook his lunch.

**V.V:** He is going to a friend.

**L.V:** Why won't you let me see him?

**V.V:** He's scared of you.

**L.V:** What did you tell him?

**V.V:** Nothing.

**L.V:** What did you tell him? What did you tell him?

**VICTOR:** (to Linda, who is still dancing on her chair and isn't paying attention) I

didn't tell him anything.

Linda's recorded voice is identical to her present voice.

**L.V:** He texts me when they leave.  
I read it to myself in his voice and smile.  
And then I look at the time and can't believe the nerve of this woman.  
And he? He is probably doing the dishes.  
He does it so badly.  
Insists on not buying a dishwasher.  
He doesn't discriminate between the dishes: plates, cups, forks, knives –  
all are washed badly.  
I used to go over the dishes after he'd finish.  
I'd wait for him to go to bed and wash the dishes again.  
He would let me take the dust off the good dinnerware set only on  
holidays.  
I once took a big meat knife and washed it well after a holiday meal.  
I entered the room with the knife.  
He was already sleeping on his side, and I was standing next to him with  
the knife.  
His face is so serene when he sleeps.  
I knew I wouldn't do anything.  
I knew.  
His face is so serene when he sleeps.

## **Scene 6**

Linda and Victor sit frozen on their chairs.

Victor's voice is identical to his present voice.

**V.V:** I get up in the late morning.

Naturally, without an alarm clock.

I eat a good breakfast. Drink coffee. Take a shower.

Open a window.

It's not too hot and not too cold.

I get dressed and I feel how the clothes fit.

The clothes are not exquisite. But I put them on exquisitely.

I get on the bus and I start riding between green fields.

I sit next to a window and sink into contemplation.

A good sinking, warm, enveloping.

I feel, in a sense, that the stop is getting closer.

I arrive at the building,

pass through the glass doors,

nodding hellos,

up the elevator.

I search the door I'm asking for,

but without any worries, with a sort of tiredness of a man who knows he will find what he's looking for.

I knock three rhythmic knocks,

wait for two seconds and turn the knob.

I get in and say:

And here Victor, very slowly, turns his head to Linda, gets up from the chair, walks a few steps towards her and speaks to her

**VICTOR:** Linda?

Linda, very slowly, turns her head to Victor, gets up from the chair, walks a few steps towards him and speaks to him

**LINDA:** Victor?

They stand in front of each other for a few moments.

Darkness.