

Igor Bauersima

NORWAY.TODAY

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Englisch von Dr. Marlene Norst

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A play in five scenes

Characters

Julie, a 20 year old girl

August, a 19 year old boy

Wouldn't it be nice if we were older
Then we wouldn't have to wait so long
And wouldn't it be nice to live together
In the kind of world where we belong
You know it's gonna make it that much better
When we can say goodnight and stay together
Wouldn't it be nice if we could wake up
In the morning when the day is new
And after having spent the day together
Hold each other close the whole night through
Happy times together we've been spending
I wish that every kiss was never-ending
Wouldn't it be nice
Maybe if we think and wish and hope and pray it might come true
Baby then there wouldn't be a single thing we couldn't do
We could be married
And then we'd be happy
Wouldn't it be nice
You know the more we talk about it
It only makes it worse to live without it
But let's talk about it
Wouldn't it be nice
Good night my baby
Sleep tight my baby

Wouldn't It Be Nice

Brian Wilson/Tony Asher

*The air sounds rather like "see you in another world" by Nurse With Wound and silence.
White noise.*

Julie enters. She is wearing a T-shirt which says Julie@home.shirt

Julie: Hi, I'm Julie. These are my first words in this place. If my message should, on that account, seem inappropriate, I beg your pardon. You see my information is intended only for those who want to commit suicide. I would, therefore, request those of you who do not intend to leave this life, just to disregard me and perhaps leave this chat-room briefly.

--

Julie: I will, and that's no sudden decision, soon commit suicide. I have been thinking about it for a long time. My decision has been made. Even if it seems a bit strange to some people, I want to do it together with somebody. Which explains my question here: Would somebody like to die with me? You don't need to say anything right away. I completely understand if people aren't prepared to admit openly here, that they've had a gutful of everything. You're, most probably, sitting next to your life-sector partners and they find it quite OK to plunder the earth's resources a bit longer and to wait till cancer or some other plague scrapes them off the face of the earth. But I don't want to send any bad vibes here. Smile. What I want to say is that there are, normally, still many bonds between those who want to go and the rest. There aren't many people who comprehend the supreme act of life-fulfillment, that is who understand what "removing oneself from this world" means for the dignity of a human being. Normally people want to go on living till they notice that everyone's gone and they're all alone and always were. I mean to say, one of us will outlive all the rest. That's dead certain. But look, I don't want to cause any arguments here, either, on the contrary. Because those who still take the whole thing seriously are, after all, in the majority. I mean to say, most people are, after all, imprisoned in some sort of intellectual construct. Emotional ties, feelings of responsibility, right? Delusions of success, the urge to procreate, the thirst for pleasure and other reactionary needs. Fair enough. But all of you are here because, sooner or later, you want to let go of life. Unless it was just a load of shit, we're all of one mind. Yes? Yes! Well then.

--

Julie: Yes. Well, let me repeat, all genuine replies are welcome. You can, of course, also send me an email and we'll arrange everything. Smile.

--

Julie: Because, guys, as you will probably have noticed already, I don't belong amongst people, not even among those who are tired of living. It may be a sad fact, but it's a fact, nevertheless. And if I don't feel comfortable in company, it's less because others don't behave as I'd like them to, but rather, because I myself don't. The need to play a role and my inner resistance against that, spoil every social event for me and I can really only be happy in my own company, because that's where I can be completely truthful. That's not allowed amongst people, and no one ever is...

--

Julie: So please don't be upset if I just behave as if you're not here.

August enters. He is wearing a T-shirt which says: august@home.shirt

August: Well, if no one's going to say anything now, then perhaps I'd better say something. Because...Well, my name's August and...Please don't ask me why. I don't know. I had nothing to do with it.

--

August: I was never really able to imagine that I could have anything to do with life. As such. I don't know if other people feel the same way. But most of the things that happen in life are so funny, so funny... I don't mean funny "ha ha," just funny "peculiar". Of course, there are moments. For instance, when I'm alone and I'm just running along by myself and I can hear my breath and my footsteps and the blood pounds loud in my ears. However, I don't run all the time. Not possible unfortunately, to run all the time. The aim is: hardly to be here at all. That is, to be nowhere. To be absent everywhere. That's being alive. Like that, it might be bearable for a bit longer. After all, people do say they're living "a" life rather than "the" life, just an approximation. Not the real thing. If somebody says he's living life to the full, I can bet you a hundred to one, he's some fake asshole.

--

August: The thing is, most of the time, everything's standing still. And I'm standing still, and there's not a sound to be heard.

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August: Just a vague noise. As I said before, I don't know if others feel the same way. No idea. Perhaps I'm sick. But that's another thing I can't stand, people saying: "You're sick, my boy". I mean, when a complete weirdo comes up to you with a big stupid smile on his dial and says: "you just have to get well and then you'll see..." that's when I really lose it. Who do they think they are, these super- weirdoes, who're ready to tell you: "Things aren't what you think they are. They're only what we think they are." You know what I mean? I mean, I don't need them to tell me that things aren't as I think they are, I can figure that out for myself. But how can anybody be so bloody sure that things are, as they think they are. Everything's just a mega- lie here. Everything's make-belief. Everybody, all the time, pretending to be somebody and, all the time, they're actually not somebody else. In these circumstances, how can anybody be expected to know what's what. Nothing is. The most real feeling I can have, is the feeling of nothingness. For instance, if I take this chair here and lift it up in the air like this... then it'll go up. Good. It goes up in the air. And yet there's such a strange feeling of uncertainty floating along with it. I don't know, did it really go up or was it just pretending to? Is the real, really real? If I then lower it, it'll come down... perhaps...Yes, it does come down. And when it does- and that's the point- it presumably only pretends to come down in order to reassure us. Everything's fake. I mean one can see it everywhere, nothingness. Take this chat-room. Now and again, there'll be somebody who'll speak up against all that, but it won't help. After all, most of the users play it cool out there by running around as observers, biting themselves in the arse, just to get the feeling of being semi- alive. Because, in the long run, most of them are too cowardly to take their final exit, anyway. Better just to hold on for another round. Something real may still happen. Nothing real will ever happen, here. I mean, just imagine we were to go with Julie now. All of us. Now that would be something real! We'd all go and cut each other's wrists, mutually.

--

August: I mean, let's face it, you're all here because you've had enough of everything. That represents potential. That would at least be a beginning. That could be seen as a model.

- -

August: It was high time for some one to come out of the closet, here. The fact that Julie, here announces: "I'm going", is, I reckon, a good thing.

Julie: Thanks.

August: I'm not just saying that.

Julie: Sure.

August: It's a sign of life.

Julie: OK

--

Julie: Was that meant to be ironic?

August: What?

Julie: Sign of life.

August: No. Yes. No! I just meant that otherwise nothing would be going on here.

Julie: No. Probably not.

August: It's not even clear, really, who's actually here. If somebody suddenly says "I'm going now", I can at least imagine that somebody's just been.

Julie: Users come, users go.

--

Julie: But I'm still here.

August: Yes.

Julie: And, obviously, you are too.

August: Yeah, yeah. So you want to die?

Julie: I'm going to die. Yes.

August: That's what I'm doing too.

Julie: Yes?

August: Yes.

Julie: You mean, soon?

August: Yes.

Julie: Seriously?

August: What do you mean?

Julie: I mean really.

August: Really?

Julie: I mean you're going to break off all connections?

August: All connections?

Julie: To life and so on.

August: Totally. As I said before, I haven't got much to break off.

Julie: Yes.

August: It's easy exiting from a fake like this one. I could do it tonight, if I had to.

Julie: But doing it here wouldn't be real. I mean really go away.

August: Sure thing.

Julie: Away. Away.

August: No logging off or falling asleep or anything like that.

Julie: Exactly.

August: That's what I'm going to do.

Julie: You're not sick or anything, are you?

August: No. Yes. Dunno. I just told you...

Julie: I'm not sick.

August: I see, yeah, well.

--

Julie: Listen, I haven't got time to waste in endless show-chatting. As I said before, I'm in a hurry.

--

August: By the way, what do you look like?

Julie: What do you mean, what do I look like?

August: Tell me what you look like.

Julie: Like Natalie Wood. Like Natalie Wood before she drowned.

August: Who's Natalie Wood?

Julie: A film star. She drowned.

August: Did she?
--

August: Describe her. What did she look like?

Julie: Dark hair.

August: I like that.

Julie: 90% of the human race has dark hair.

August: Is that so? Yeah. I like that.

Julie: Natalie Wood before she drowned is really a psychic condition. She was in: *Rebel Without a Cause*. Besides, no one knows anything, least of all what she looked like when she drowned. And if anybody does know, he must have helped her do it and I can say anything I like here. Natalie Wood is a bloody star and her death is a mystery.

August: I'm sure she looked good before she died. I imagine she had a shitty life as an actress. Everything always a total fake. False walls, false floors, false people, nothing's real and all the time people telling you what to do. Nobody could put up with that sort of thing. You'd stop breathing, you'd lose the power of speech. I reckon, when she realized she was about to drown, she gave a real sigh of relief. Life as an actor. I mean to say...no, seriously. It would be kind of liberating.

Julie: Yes.

August: Yes. But I don't necessarily want to drown.

Julie: No. Doesn't have to be that.

August: How d'you want to do it then?

Julie: Together with someone.

August: But how?

Julie: Can't tell you here. Only "if". There are bound to be some "Do-gooders" here who'd like nothing better than to save someone or something. The only thing I can tell you is that it's dead certain. A one-way ticket.

August: Then take me with you.

Julie: How old are you?

August: Doesn't really matter, does it?

Julie: Yes.

August: Well then.

Julie: Go on, how old?

August: Nineteen.

Julie: Forget it.

August: What?

Julie: I don't want to involve any beginners.

August: I'm no beginner.

Julie: Well, did you ever commit suicide? I mean, did you ever try to?

August: No. Yes. Sure.

Julie: And?

August: Hasn't come off yet.

Julie: So you are a beginner.

August: Hold on. You're still alive too.

Julie: Yes. But I haven't tried it yet. Nor am I going to try it. I'm going to do it. People who give it a bit of a go and then count on getting sympathy are really not my cup of tea.

August: Just a minute. I made some honest attempts. I've got a scar on my face. I fell out of bed, soon after my birth. I threw myself down. My first reflex action. Ever since I've been able to think, I've thought about suicide. Seriously. For instance, I wanted to run into a bridge pylon on my motorbike. To make it look like an accident so that nobody would have to feel guilty.

Julie: And?

August: And what?

Julie: What happened to the pylon?

August: That was just an idea. That was one possibility. Dunno. As a matter of fact, I haven't got a licence.

Julie: This is for real.

August: Yes, I know. I can tell by your voice.

Julie: What?

August: That this is for real, here.

Julie: Really?

August: Really.

--

August: Hello?

Julie: Yes. Have you got a photo of yourself?

August: A photo? What do you mean, a photo?

Julie: A photo. To look at.

August: Yeah.

Julie: Let's see it

--

Julie: That's you?

August: Yep.

Julie: Just as I feared.

August: What?

Julie: You're good-looking.

August: What d' you mean?

Julie: A real spunk.

August: Rubbish. Let's see one of you.

Julie: There you go.

August: Really?

Julie: What do you mean?

August: Looks quite OK

Julie: Thanks.

--

August: I want to come with you.

Julie: Hold on. I've got a question. If you answer it correctly, I'll think about it.

August: Are you being serious?

Julie: After all, I don't know you. Perhaps you're some kind of pervert.

August: Yes, smile.

Julie: Are you?

August: No. Smile.

Julie: Good, if you lot out there want to join in, you're, of course, welcome. OK, ready? What is Reason?

August: What?

Julie: Yes.

August: Yes?

Julie: That's the question. Take your time.

August: Reason? What is Reason? Reason is sick. Everybody knows that.

Julie: Is that all?

August: Dunno.

Julie: Does anybody know? No idea? Yes? No. Reason?

August: Yeah. I don't know. It's different for everyone. Now I, for instance, find it reasonable to commit suicide, while someone else doesn't. There was this philosopher, for instance, who didn't commit suicide but who found out that we've got eyes in order not to see and ears in order not to hear. What was his name again? Well, anyway he said that Reason relies on these eyes that don't see and these ears that don't hear. And that's why Reason is an unreasonable concept. He's kind of world-famous. Just about one of the greatest. No idea of his name...he was called something or other.

Julie: I'll take you with me, if you want me to.

--

Julie: What's the matter?

August: Yeah.

Julie: You'll be in it, then? We'll do it together?

August: Yep!

Julie: No. I mean, I want to know.

August: Yeah.

--

Julie: I didn't expect that. Such speed.

--

Julie: You're serious?

August: Yes.

Julie: You're absolutely serious. No bullshit?

August: Totally.

--

Julie: You're serious?

August: Shitfuckingdeadlyserious.

Julie: Am I happy now or what?

August: I don't know.

Julie: At this very moment, I am, presumably, happy.

--

Julie: You must promise me something.

August: What's that?

Julie: You must promise that you won't tell anybody about it. You mustn't let anybody know what we're going to do. Not your parents, not your friends, not your girlfriend, nobody. We're going away and telling nobody, where to. Absolutely nobody.

August: No.

Julie: Swear. Swear that you'll tell nobody.

August: Sure thing.

Julie: Say: I swear that I won't say anything.

August: I swear that I won't say anything.

Julie: And if I can't keep my big trap shut, I'll burn in hell forever.

August: And if I can't keep my big trap shut, I'll burn in hell forever.

Julie: Long live death!

August: Long live death!

Julie: Amen.

August: Amen.

Julie: We need a tent.

August: A tent?

Julie: And something to eat?

August: To eat?

Julie: Beer.

August: Should I make sandwiches?

Julie: And we need warm clothes. At night it gets to be minus something. Anyway, something very cold.

August: Where are we actually going?

Julie: To the snow.

August: Freezing to death?

Julie: Track me down. If you get on to my homepage, wait for a bit to see if anybody followed you. Then I'll pick you up. Smile! Guys.

August: Smile.

Change of scene to the sound of "Wouldn't it be nice" by the Beach Boys. It is daytime, it is snowing continuously and the stage at the back ends in Nothingness. The edge of the world. Laden with heavy back packs, both arrive at the plateau. They stay there for a long time gazing at the diffuse white panorama. Finally they put down their packs in the snow. August attempts a few steps in the direction of the abyss, slips, falls down and comes back.

August: That's slippery.

--

August: It's nice here.

Julie: D'you think so?

August: This river.

Julie: That's a fjord.

August: It's enormous. Where does all that water come from?
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August: What?

Julie: That's a fjord. That's water from the ocean. That's the sea.

August: Well, anyway.
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August: Anything the matter?

Julie: What?

August: What's the matter?
--

Julie: What should be the matter?

August: You're not saying anything.
--

August: Something is the matter.

Julie: No.

August: I say, it's nice here and you don't say anything. Something's the matter.

Julie: Oh.
--

August: You can tell me, what's the matter!

Julie: Nothing's - the - matter!

August: Are you scared or something?

Julie: I don't know. Could be.

August: Where does it go, the fjord? Does it go anywhere?
--

August: I think it's nice here.

Julie: Can't you just keep quiet for a bit?

August: Why?

Julie: Because you're not saying anything the whole time.

August: I'm saying: it's nice here.

Julie: That's nothing. That's nothing.

August: Oh.

--

August: How long do you intend remaining silent.

Julie: Eternally. I intend remaining silent e-ternally.

August: Beginning now?

Julie: Now, too.

August: Eternally?

Julie: Yes.

--

August: I think it's too cold for that.

--

August: When it's cold you can't remain silent eternally. Anyway not for long.

--

Julie: Gee, you're funny!

August: What do you mean?

Julie: Used to be the class comedian, didn't you? August the clown?

August: No.

Julie: So you're trying to catch up now, quick smart, before it's too late?

--

August: You're making yourself really unpleasant.

Julie: Is your name really, August? What's your real name?

August: August.

Julie: That isn't your real name.

August: Yes it is. Got it for my birthday.

Julie: You called yourself August in the chat-room, because my name's Julie.

August: Julie- July...Never occurred to me. No, really, it didn't. What an idiot! Julie-July. Well, you're cold enough for July.

Julie: OK, OK. But I'll never believe that's your name. Never.

August: Tell me, why you didn't want to do it on your own.
--

August: You didn't utter a word in the taxi. And just a while ago, you didn't either. I dunno.

Julie: I – don't – have – to – talk – all – the – time. Can you or can't you understand that?

August: Sure, I can understand that. I don't have to talk all the time either. It's just that I feel like it now. I've got the feeling that something's the matter. Why don't you tell me what it's all about?

Julie: What it's all about? We're standing at the edge of the abyss. There's the abyss. There's the hinterland where the little people live and worry. There's the center. There's the edge, and then there's nothing for a long time and then there's the sea. There are fish there and they're hungry. That's what it's all about.

August: We can also be silent, if you feel like it. There's nothing nicer than being silent together with somebody else. Except perhaps being silent on your own. I mean, I'd have committed suicide on my own too, but what you said about not fitting in with people, about only being able to be yourself on your own – I liked that. It's exactly the same with me.

Julie: You didn't tell anybody that we're here?

August: No. Why?

Julie: Just wanted to be sure.

August: Nobody knows where this is anyway. I said: I'm staying with a friend for two days. They'll only look for me the day after tomorrow. But they certainly won't look here. What about you?

Julie: Nobody'll look for me.

August: I don't know. I can well imagine that somebody'd be looking for you.

Julie: What's that supposed to mean?

August: Well -. Just look at yourself and you'll see what I mean. I just can't get it into my head that nobody'd be looking for you. Why there are always thousands, tens of thousands looking for someone like you.

Julie: All those people looking, really and truly?

August: No, seriously. Millions are looking for something like that. Something sad, slightly depraved.

--

August: It's almost impossible for me to look down there.

Julie: Then don't look.

August: In places like this, I always think I'm going to jump. I've always thought that. Are you like that too?

Julie: Yes.

August: But I've never been up as high as this.

Julie: 600 metres.

August: I've looked it up on the net. The average speed of a clothed body in free fall is between 190 and 205 km per second, so that's about 55 meters per second. Let's see that's – 600 – so together with the acceleration phase that makes it a free fall of about 10 seconds.

Julie: More or less.

August: You've already worked that out for yourself, haven't you? What are you going to do in those 10 seconds?

Julie: Fall.

August: Oh.

Julie: And be dead.

August: Is that all?

Julie: Ten seconds for getting to be dead. I'll just let myself go and nothing will exist anymore, everything's here, but nothing will exist anymore. There won't be a single thing, no single event in this world, that will concern me in the slightest. You've given up everything, your sadness, your joy, your hatred, your love, your wretched character, the responsibility for your waste paper. The lot! It leaves you cold. Our continent produces 40 million tones of shit per day and it simply isn't your problem. Every thought is superfluous. You've left everything behind. Every action is impossible. You have no responsibilities, you don't even have to breathe. You're absolutely free to do nothing. Absolute, eternal freedom. You are God and God does nothing. You are conscious of everything for a few seconds but there is no way back, no for and against.

--

Julie: And then you're gone.

August: And your memory. What are you going to do about your memory? You can't just forget everything.

Julie: Yes, you can. You've got to end everything beforehand.

August: End.

Julie: Yes. You've got to concentrate on the moment.

August: The moment, is it?

Julie: Unless you want to die without being aware of it. But to live your whole life waiting for one moment and then to miss it, seems to me to be just about the stupidest thing, I can imagine.

August: I always hoped that I wouldn't miss that brief moment of life, if it ever came.

Julie: Same thing.

August counts to ten.

August: I first thought that when I fell, I'd only think of one thing: This is it. This is it. This is it. This is it. This is it. I thought that will be my last thought. "This" and "is" and "it". A completely empty thought. It doesn't mean anything at all. It is completely empty and somehow suitable. But I'm afraid it won't be enough for 10 seconds and just before the crash-landing, quick as a flash, I'll think of something unnecessary and unsuitable like: "You're thinking 'This is it' because you promised yourself you would, and actually your Dad bought you a lemon gelato at Luna Park when you were four." Crash.

Julie: Lemon gelato?

August: I just made that up.

Julie: Your father didn't buy you a lemon gelato?

August: Yes, he did. Dunno. Yes, of course. I certainly won't be thinking, "This is it" for ten seconds. Not a chance. At that point I will certainly waste another 1/10th of a second on lemon gelato. I will not be able to survive the most unique and vivid situation of my life without losing concentration. I can't take anything seriously for long.

Julie: If you don't take anything seriously you must be lying all the time.

August: Yes, everybody lies. Everything. Even "This is it" sounds like a lie, the more I think about it. So I don't have to concentrate on anything any longer. The only thing that has substance is boredom. That I can take seriously. Boredom.

Julie: I can't stand boredom.

August: But you have to take it seriously. It's everywhere. The whole universe is boring itself to death. Everything is getting slower. The DJs, the music, the

cars, the planets, the particles of matter. Everything is chilling out. The total chill-out. One day the moon will crash onto the earth. I heard that somewhere. Because of gravity. Because the earth sucks everything in and the moon is losing its momentum. My father hasn't got any momentum left either. He revolves around my mother. Everything sucks. The universe sucks and disintegrates and becomes uniform and boring and cold and dead. Chill-out. I read somewhere, sometime ago that: "The Big Bang struck stupidity's forehead. The universe was born out of the recognition of one's own inadequacy." I've remembered that. Don't know what it actually means but it seems to hit the nail on the head pretty well. At least hits the right note. I think falling for ten seconds is too long, if you don't want it to set in – I mean boredom. Even if nothing concerns you anymore, memories of some meaningless thing or other will suddenly strike you. And you'll remember a cool afternoon by the lake and the sun on the moss and the smell in the holiday house and how you had toothache and the child with epileptic fits, and your bicycle in the cellar and the escalator on which you kissed for the first time and you'll realize how stupid you were, how dishonest and small and weasely, and how you couldn't really cope with that and all the rest, and you'll be overcome by the longest of all boredoms. Ten seconds is an eternity. I ask myself, whether we shouldn't jump from further down.

Julie: Have you got a girl friend?

August: Na.

Julie: I'm not surprised.

August: D'you mean that?

Julie: I get depressed after listening to you for a while.

August: Aren't you depressed anyway?

Julie: No.

August: No?

Julie: What?

August: You're not depressed?

Julie: No.

August: Well, what are you?

Julie: Normal. I'm happy.

August: You're having me on, aren't you?

Julie: No.

August: I can't understand that.

Julie: I incline to happiness.

August: Yeah. Sure. That's normal.

Julie: That's what I said.

August: I mean the inclination is normal. But not for intending suicides. They do incline more towards abysses and the like. And towards fear and horror.

Julie: Yes.

August: I don't understand.

Julie: Being depressed is not worth the trouble. It's stupid, it puts the breaks on, and it's no fun. It doesn't offer anything at all. Absolutely nothing at all whatsoever. It doesn't offer a potential suicide anything at all either. Depressive suicides are nothing but wet rags.

August: Well, why are you committing suicide then?

Julie: Are you totally stupid or what?

August: What's up?

Julie: Why are you hassling me like this? I've told you before that I've had it. I've had it. I've had it up to here. I'm fed up. Enough is enough. I'm not starting all over again.

August: There's no need to shout like that. You may wake some animal here out of its winter sleep. By the way, are there any bears here?

Julie: Yes.

August: Shit –
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August: You still haven't told me why you didn't want to do it alone.

Julie: Because- because when you compare effort invested and effect achieved, it doesn't pay off. It has to be worth it. I'm determined that my life will be fulfilled, right to the very end. Living alone is full of pathos, so is dying alone. I don't want to end wretchedly in some hole. And besides, I might never get round to doing it, on my own.

August: What do you mean by "it's not worth it."

Julie: I want to get something out of it. I want to know, what a person's like who's going to die. I saw on TV how they shoot people using a time-loop etc. But TV is fake. And with a time-loop you don't see more, you just see more clearly that you don't see anything.

August: You want to see how someone dies?

Julie: Yes.

August: How I die?

Julie: Yes.

August: You're completely off your rocker. No, I mean it, that's really sick. You're totally out of it.

Julie: Oh.

August: Are you on drugs or something?

Julie: You've crossed half of Europe to stand round here with me in all this whiteness. And you're quite OK are you? Just take a look at yourself. Do you reckon you're normal? At least I know what I'm doing. Do you know what you're doing? Where you are? Why you are where you are?

August: Not the foggiest.

Julie: You're at the edge of the abyss. You've arrived at the other end of your un-lived life, my boy.

August: Perhaps, my girl, I didn't really come here to kill myself,

Julie: How am I supposed to know why you're here?

August: Yeah. How can you be supposed to know why I'm here?

Julie: You're going to play at being all mysterious now, are you?

August: What'll happen if I tell you that I'm not going to do it? Just because I never intended doing it. That I just came because I was curious?

Julie: Do you know why that isn't true? Because you're shitting yourself. Just now in the taxi, you were shivering. I thought you were going to give us away. The driver was looking down at your hands all the time. I saw him. You're scared.

August: I was feeling cold. I'm still feeling cold. And since I've been standing around here, listening to you, I've been feeling even colder.

Julie: You're scared.

August: I don't know you. I don't know who or what you are.

Julie: That really doesn't matter. There's not the slightest difference between me and all the other girls you know. You can project onto me, anything you want to. I've also got some make-up with me, to make it easier for you.

August: Project onto you?

Julie: Yes. Imagine I'm your mother or something. How do I know what you fancy?

August: You're completely crazy. What am I doing here?

Julie: You're going all limp on me. We've just got here. This isn't a picnic. I'm not paying your flight to have you go limp.

August: Bloody hell, I'm not going limp. I don't know you.

Julie: That doesn't matter, we both want the same thing. We want to commit suicide here. That's what counts.

August: I don't trust you. I don't believe you. I don't understand you. You're not even bloody depressed. Why do you want to commit suicide? I dunno. You're not talking to me. At any rate not honestly. Are we on some kind of TV Show here or what? Why don't you talk to me normally? Why are you play-acting all the time? After all, I'm not play-acting.

Julie: If I sound a bit phoney, it's just because I'm forcing myself to talk, to keep you happy. That's what it's all about.

August: Yeah, why don't we say what it's all about. Good idea.

Julie: Because you force me to play-act some sort of social chitchat.

August: Just a minute. You wanted to take someone with you. You didn't want to come here alone. You wanted to see what someone looks like when facing death. And now you've got it. This is what someone looks like who's going to die. He just talks. Shit.

Julie: He just talks shit.

August: Yes. That too. Maybe.

Julie: "When facing death". Where do you get such rubbish from?
--

Julie: Are you howling or something?
--

August: No.

Julie: You're bawling

August: No.

Julie: He's bawling, guys

August: What guys?

Julie: It's just an expression. "He's bawling, guys."

August: Never heard it.

Julie: There you go. You're never too old to learn.

August: What does that expression actually mean?

Julie: "I'm surprised that you're bawling."

August: I'm not bawling.

Julie: I mean your expression.

August: My expression?

Julie: "He's bawling, guys."

August: What are you talking about? I'm just looking around, damn it. I'm not bawling. I'm just looking at the damned lake. At the water. And the ice.

Julie: And bawling.

August: So what? It's not a crime, is it?

Julie: No.

August: No.

Julie: But you claimed that you weren't bawling.

August: Because, because, shit. I'll claim here what I want to. I don't have to prove myself to anybody here. I can say what I want to here. If I'm supposed to make my exit here, then I can behave as I like, too. I can let it all out, just as I like and relieve myself in whatever way I want to and say everything I've never said before. Shit.

Julie: You've already said that.

August: I could just die laughing. Honest to God.

Julie: Hold on. You said: "If I am supposed to make my exit."

August: Yes. And?

Julie: That sounds funny.

August: Yes?

Julie: Yes. As if you didn't want to anymore.

August: What?

Julie: Exit.

August: I don't want anything anymore.

Julie: Hold on. Making your exit, that's something you've got to want.

August: Yeah. Shit. And I don't want to know, what I want, anymore either. I'll just bloody well want it.

Julie: Just a feeling I had.

August: And I don't want any feeling, either.

Julie: We've got a deal.

August: Yeah, I know.

Julie: I've just got to be sure. We've got a deal.

August: Yeah.

Julie: What's our deal?

August: There's no turning back

Julie: And if one of us no longer wants to?

August: Yes, I know...

Julie: Well, then.

August: All the same, I'll say what I want to here. And I'll do what I want to here, too.
August briefly goes and does what he wants to.

Julie: What are you doing?

August: I'm doing what I want to.

Julie slowly edges her way to the precipice.

Julie: Come over here.

August: What for?

Julie: Come over here.

August: What for?

Julie: Come and have a look at this,

August: I don't want to see anything, at the moment.

Julie: Are you scared?

August: No.

Julie: Then come over here.

August: I'm not going over there. It's slippery. It's slippery where you are.

Julie: It's a test of courage.

August: I don't need a test of courage, just now,

Julie: Fuck, I can't look down, if no one's holding me.

--

Julie: It's a long way down and I've no idea what'll happen if I look down.

August: I thought you'd been here before. With your parents.

Julie: I was just little then.

August: And you didn't look down?

Julie: I did. But my father held me.

August: He's not here, now.

Julie: No. He's not here, now.

--

Julie: What's the matter? Are you coming?

August edges his way forward and crawls over to Julie on all fours. They crawl towards the edge.

August: But no shit, OK?

Julie: You don't have to look down. Just hold me tight, by the feet –

August: Kant! Kant's his name.

Julie: Who?

August: The philosopher.

Julie: What philosopher?

August: The one with the eyes and the ears. The one who said they were no use.

Julie: You're distracting me.

Scene change. A cliff-face looms before us. Far above us the white sky. Above the edge of the cliff, Julie's head appears.

August (off stage): What's up? What can you see?

--

August (off stage): Go on, tell me. What's up?

--

August (off stage): What does it look like?

Julie: What does what look like?

August (off stage): What you can see.

Julie: Have a look for yourself.

August (off stage): What?

--

August (off stage): Can't you say something.

Julie: Don't know.

August (off stage): No? What can you see?

Julie: I don't know, what you want to hear. I can see the arse-end of New Zealand. What do you mean, what can I see? I can't see anything. A bloody bottomless pit, that's what I can see.

August (off stage): And what's down there, right at the bottom?

Julie: Right at the bottom, it's dark. Maybe there's something down there. Don't know. Presumably hell or something like that.

August (off stage): You mean you can't see the bottom?

Julie: No. Something's sticking out. A bit further down, something's sticking out. We've got to jump over that. We've got to clear it.

August (off stage): Something's sticking out?

Julie: Yes.

August (off stage): How far is it sticking out?

Julie: A good bit. We've got to jump clear of that.

August (off stage): And if we hit it, won't that do it?

Julie: Don't know. No. Perhaps it'll just rip a piece off you and you'll fall further. And your arm'll hang there waving good-bye for a bit.

August (off stage): And you can't see the very bottom?

Julie: Come and see for yourself.

August (off stage): I'm going off my brain.

August's head appears.

--

August: I can't look down there.

Julie: Then don't look.

August: Everything's spinning.

Julie: Then look away.

August: Shit.

Julie: What?

August: Why are we doing this?

Julie: You've got to do something.

August: Yep.

--

August: Do you think others have done this here? Before us?

Julie: You can bet your life on it.

August: How can you be so sure?

Julie: You don't believe we're just about to invent something, do you?

August: No.

Julie: You can bet your bottom dollar that this has been done before. Just like this or a bit differently but basically pretty much the same way.

August: I mean this way. As a pair and so on.

Julie: In pairs, alone, like lemmings. All old hat. But that's all completely irrelevant. I'm doing this for myself. Not for other people. I'm not doing a public performance or anything like that.

August: Nope.

Julie: And I've never done this before. I've never in my whole life committed suicide before.

August: No.

Julie: That's what counts. That's what makes it absolutely unique. That lifts the whole thing above everything that's ever been done before. I've never done this before. And time's running out.

August: What? Now?

Julie: Yes.

August: Hold on, now?

Julie: Yes.

August: But...

Julie: What?

August: But I...

Julie: What?

August: You...me...we've brought all our stuff. And the food, and the tent and everything.

Julie: Yes- and?

August: Yeah, well I thought we'd sleep on it.

Julie: We'd sleep on it?

August: Yeah..

Julie: You mean, you still wanted to think it over?

August: Nono...no. That's not what I wanted to do.

Julie: Well, then.

August: But - well, just wait a minute. Now, straightaway, that's a bit... I still have to write something and...

Julie: Let's go.

August: Hold on.

Julie: Ready? We're standing up.

Julie stands up.

Julie: Ready? Hurry up!

August: No. Hold on. I can't stand up. I'd fall down, right here.

Julie: That's the whole idea. Let's go.

August: Wait. Wait. Don't hassle me.

Julie: Come on! I want to get it over. I want to go down there, now. Let's go.

August: Hold on. I still want to...

Julie: Sleep on it, that was it, wasn't it?

August: No. Yes.

Julie: You can sleep as much as you like when you're dead. Ready? We're jumping.

August: No!

Julie: Go!

August: Leave me alone!

Julie grabs August's hand. There's a struggle. They wrestle with each other. During the fight both of them nearly fall over the edge several times.

August: Stop that!

Julie: Coward!

August: Stop that! Let go of me this minute!

Julie: No.

August: Let go!

Julie: We've got a deal.

August: Let go, damn you! We're falling.

Julie: Yes.

August: That wasn't the deal.

Julie: That was the deal.

August: Let go of me!

Julie: If you don't jump, I'll help you.

August: Let go!

Julie: No.

August: If I fall down there, you'll hang for murder.

Julie: I'll jump after you, you idiot.

August: I don't want to.

Julie: What?

August: I don't want to!

Julie: You're coming with me.

August: If you don't stop...

Julie: What? What?

August: I'll kill you, damn you.

Julie: Super!

Julie trips and falls. She just manages to hold on to the overhanging cliff edge with one hand. She's dangling over the abyss. .

Julie: I can't reach up. Help me.

August (off stage): You are – you are really sick! I could have fallen down there!

Julie: Yes, so what? It was fun. Help me up!

August (off stage): Wait a minute. I just happen to have a song for the occasion.

Julie: Help me. Damn you. I – I'm sorry. I was stupid, that's all.

August (off stage): Hang on, it'll be there in a minute.

Julie: I was just joking. I'd never have pushed you down. Honestly. Help me, damn you. Bloody hell, just imagine, if I were to fall down here, what would you do then? I can't hold on any longer. Help! Damn you.

August appears again with a ghetto blaster and tries to get it started

August: Listen. D'you know this? It's a recording my brother made.

Julie: Help me up, you freak.

August: Sh! Just wait. How does the stupid thing work?

Julie: If you don't help me, I'll fall.

August: And?

Julie: And...you'll have me on your conscience. You wouldn't want that.

August: The thing won't start.

Julie: Help!

August: How far did we actually drive in the taxi?

Julie: Help me.

August: Do you think anybody can hear us?

Julie: No.

August: No. Nobody can hear us. Nobody can hear from 40 kilometers away.

Julie: Help me up.

August: You could scream all you liked here and nobody'd hear you.

Julie: Exactly.

August: Give it a go.

Julie: What?

August: Let out a scream.

Julie: Help me.

August: Louder.

Julie: Why don't you scream yourself, you freak.

August: Haven't got any reason to, just now.

Julie: I haven't got any reason to, either.

August: No?

Julie: No.

August: I'd be a bit scared if I were in your shoes.

Julie: Why?

August: Because you don't know me.

Julie: So what?

August: And because you don't know who I am. Perhaps I'm completely nuts. Hold on, the song goes something like this: Tumtumtum, tumtum, tumtumtum, tumtum...

Julie: Ooh, you wicked, wicked uncle.

August: Tell me, what I get out of it, if I don't let you fall. What would I get out of it, if I didn't do it?

Julie: Don't know. Pull me up. I can't take any more.

August: What do I get out of it?

Julie: Help me up, damn it.

August: What do I get out of it?

Julie: Anything you want.

August: Anything I want?

Julie: Yes.

August: And if I don't want anything?

Julie: If you don't want anything, you don't get anything. Go on, pull.

August pulls Julie up. They sit, exhausted, on the edge of the cliff.

August: You wanted to kill me.

--

August: You did, didn't you?

Julie: You're bonkers, you know.

August: You wanted to see me fall down there.

They both look down into the abyss. Julie slowly takes hold of August's hand.

Julie: I wanted...

August: Fuck you...

Julie: Fuck yourself.

August: Fuck you, really and truly.

Julie: You don't say.

August: You damn well wanted to kill me there.

Julie: Forget it.

August: At the very least, you wanted to kill me.

Julie: I could die laughing.

August: I'm bound to get pimples from such a shock.

Julie: Pimples? You're thinking of pimples at a time like this?

August: Yes.

Julie: Far out.

August: I can't help it. I'm always thinking of stupid things.

Julie: He's thinking of pimples.

August: Who are you talking to?

Julie stands up.

Julie: We ought to put up the tent. It'll get dark. Soon. Another half hour and it'll be dark here again. It's always dark here in winter.

Scene change.

Same scene as 2. ,but it is dark. In front of us a dimly lit tent. August is standing in front of it and gazing up at the sky.

August: There was something up in the sky just now.

Julie (off stage) What?

August: There was a kind of light. In the sky.
Julie comes out of the tent.

Julie: Where exactly?

August: Everywhere. It was really bright. Just briefly.

Julie: A sort of illumination?

August: Yeah. I don't know. I was just standing there and then I looked up to see if there were any stars. And then I saw it. Suddenly.

Julie: And?

August: What do you mean “and”? It was uncanny.

Julie: What did the light tell you?

August: Don’t be so stupid.

Julie: Are you being serious?

August: Yes. It was enormous.

--

Julie: OK. I’m feeling cold. (*disappears into the tent again*) *A large veil of light flickers across the night sky.*

August: There! There! There it is again! It’s enormous! Can you see it? There.

Julie comes out

Julie: A North-light! That’s a North-light!...The camera!

Julie disappears into the tent again. Reappears with a video camera and films the magical phenomenon.

Julie: Hold on! I’ve got it. I’ve got it. A North-light...

August: Have you ever seen anything like this – before?

Julie: No. Never.

August: But you grew up near here.

Julie: You’d get one of those every fifty years. That means practically never.

August: I’d call that rare.

Julie: It’s not the place for North-lights. I don’t know anybody who’s ever seen one here. It’s too far south.

The light fades again.

August: It’s gone.

Julie swings round to August.

Julie: Say something.

August: How big is a North-light?

--

August: Stop that! I mean how big is it? It looks so big. But if it's as big as it looks, one ought to be able to see it from everywhere. Why don't people see North-lights? You don't know anyone who's ever seen a North-light and I don't either. I mean to say, half the world can see the moon at the same time. And if the North-light is as big as it looks then half the world ought to be able to see it too. Or perhaps a few less. But in any case quite a lot of people. Wouldn't you think?

Julie turns off the camera.

Julie: You're sweet.

August: Show me. Let's see if there's anything on it. Perhaps one can't film a light like that.

August rewinds the cassette.

August: Perhaps North-lights are quite small. A kind of hallucination, you can't talk about with anybody afterwards. Perhaps they only flicker in front of our faces. Like a sort of Home Video. For private use only.

August lets the camera run. While both of them look at the small control monitor, the same spectacle begins again in the sky behind them.

August: There it is!

Julie: Somehow it doesn't seem to be all that small.

August: Still it isn't the same on video.

Julie: Looks like a fault in the system. Somehow surrealistic.

August: It's just about the most beautiful thing I've seen for a long time. Just imagine we were some kind of cave dwellers.

Julie: We'd be shitting our pants thinking that some god or other was after us.

August: Yes. Did the cave dwellers actually wear pants?

Julie: Don't know. Sure to have had collars, but.

August: I don't know. And do you think they had gods?

Julie: Of course. They had the North-light. Every fifty years or so, a god would go past in the form of a North-light and give them a bit of a wave. And they'd live off that for fifty years.

August: Inside their cave.

Julie: Yes.

The picture behind Julie and August swings from the North-light towards August.

We see August say the words "How big is a North-light" again.

Julie: How big is a North-light. Super.

August: I really look like a total idiot. Totally fake.

The camera is off. Night sky.

Julie: I treated you really badly.

August: What?

Julie: I'm sorry. I was a real pain, today. You mustn't believe everything I say, Specially when I'm just about to kill myself. At a moment like that nobody is genuine.

August: No?

Julie: No. I like you.

Julie kisses August gently on the forehead.

August: Why did you do that?

Julie: I felt like it.

August: You sure have soft lips.

Julie: You know what...you can trust me.

August: I like you too.

Julie takes the camera from August and films him. We can see the close-up of August in the projection.

Julie: Say that again.

August: What?

Julie: What you just said, say that again

August: That's not possible.

Julie: You said something else, just now.

August: I can't say that again.

Julie: Never again?

August: Let me have a go.

August takes the camera and films Julie.

Julie: Listen to me: we haven't got much time. We've still got about 4 sandwiches and ten dozen cans of beer. The music and the cigarettes certainly won't last till spring. And it'll soon be morning. And tomorrow is history. We've got to be quite clear about that here. That means nothing matters. You can make a real fool of yourself and it won't matter, you really don't have to show any restraint, understood? Nobody expects that here anymore. You can let it all hang out. You can grab anything you like from this whole panorama, and it won't matter. You can say all the sentences in the world. You can do whatever you like. You can repeat words or not repeat them. You can stand on your head. So, if I ask you for something, I mean if I ask you to do something, something quite unimportant, then bloody well do it, or I'll go ballistic. And if you get some hair-brained idea, then do it. It's much more fun than not doing it. Thinking is out. Thinking is something you do when you have time. And we haven't got time. Agreed?

August: Agreed.

Julie: I mean to say, later we'll have time to think for all eternity.

August: Yeah?

Julie: Yes. If whatever thinks inside us is spirit, and spirit is eternal as they all claim then, logically, it follows we have all eternity for thinking but only comparatively little time for doing. So if you ask me to do something, I'll do it.

--

Julie: I like you. Get it?

August: Yes. I like you too.

Julie: Just a minute. Let me have it.

Julie takes the camera and films August.

Julie: What did you say just now?

August: Don't know.

Julie: Did we just have an agreement?

August: Yep.

Julie: And?

August: What?

Julie: And did you just say something? Go on! Out with it!

August: I don't feel like speaking, when I'm acting under orders.

Julie: OK. Then say something else. Something new. Hurry up. We'll have a practice, here right now. Come on, relax. Thinking is out. Say anything! Emotions – ready, set, go! Trust your instincts. If you haven't said anything, anything emotional in three seconds, I'm jumping. One, two, three.

August: Heil Hitler!
--

Julie: Are you crazy or what?

August: What's up?

Julie: That war really fucking stupid, here, at this moment.

August: I couldn't help myself, it just slipped out. You're stressing me out.

Julie: You really put your foot in it that time. That was mega-embarrassing.

August: But nobody can hear us, here. You said: Say whatever you like.

Julie: But not something like that.

August: I did save your life, however.

Julie: You've got nothing more intelligent in stock?
--

August: By the way, why did you bring a camera?

Julie: No special reason. Just because I felt like it. So that they, so that something would remain... Now it's here, so it's here.

August: I want to sleep with you.

Julie: Why are you saying that?

August: Because you're saying, I should say whatever I like.

Julie: Have you got a condom?

August: Nope.

Julie: He hasn't got a condom.

August: Whatever for?

Julie: Mama, he hasn't got a condom and he wants to sleep with me, should I let him? Nonono. No, I'm not into the baby-making business, I'm going to jump down there, straight after. No worries. Got anything wrong with you? No worries, I'll take it along for the ride. It won't survive that.
--

Julie: What's up?

August: Nothing.

Julie: Does it worry you?

August: What d'you mean?

Julie: That I make jokes.

August: No.

Julie: Well, then I'd better go into the tent and freshen up.

August: Yes.

Julie: "Yes..."

August: Yes.

They disappear into the dimly lit tent with the camera and close it behind them. We hear their voices, amplified.

Julie: (off stage) You're shivering.

August: (off stage) I'm feeling cold.

Julie: (off stage) The way you're shivering, we're not going to get anywhere. Turn that thing off. Give it to me. Turn it off. Is it off?

In the video picture we see August and Julie in the tent. The picture flickers. Julie appears to take the video camera and put it away. The picture disappears briefly and reappears. We can vaguely see some colourful object, perhaps a piece of clothing, in a close-up.

Julie: (off stage) We have to breathe. Are you breathing?

August: (off stage) Is there someone you adore?

Julie: (off stage) Adore?

August: (off stage) A friend.

Julie: (off stage) You're sweet. Ask something else.

August: (off stage) What's up? Is there someone?

The picture moves jerkily. Suddenly both are in focus.

Julie: Why don't you ask me how I like it?

August: How do you like it?

Julie: Doing a handstand on the back of a horse.

August: And how does he like it?

Julie: Well, if you'd rather do it with him than with me then you've come to the wrong address.

August: With whom?

Julie: How should I know? You keep harping on some character or other.

August: Just wanted to hear about him.

Julie: You wouldn't be jealous or anything, would you?

August: No.

Julie: Because that's sudden death for me. The last thing. The last thing I need is to sit in a tent at the edge of a precipice and listen to a jealous love-scene. You're breathing's too shallow. Things won't warm up here that way. What's the matter?

August: What d'you mean, what's the matter?

Julie: You're still shivering.

August: It's cold.

Julie: Come here.

August moves closer to Julie.

Julie: You're shivering.

August: So are you.

Julie: Hold me tight.

--

Julie: Do you think that the end of the world will come at night?

August: Na. At dawn.

Julie: So you do know the film.

August: What film?

Julie: "Rebel Without a Cause"

August: No.

Julie: Well there's a scene just before the end, when what's his name, he's much younger than the other two, almost like their child, see? They're almost like his parents, the lovers, and he asks this character, who's played by James Dean, he asks him if the end of the world will come at night.

August: Yes. And?

Julie: And James Dean says: "No. At dawn."

August: The character's a genius.

Julie: That's what it says in the script.

August: Just what I said.

Julie: Which character?

August: The character who wrote the script.

Julie: Perhaps he pinched it from somebody, just as you've just pinched it from him.

August: I didn't pinch it from him.

Julie: You've seen the film.

August: Yep.

Julie: And you know who Natalie Wood is, too.

August: Yep.

Julie: You just pretended you didn't know?

August: Yep.

Julie: And I believed you.

August: Perhaps you were only pretending too.

Julie: Perhaps.

August: Perhaps.

--

They kiss briefly.

Julie: Yes. But I bet, you never imagined that we'd be going through with it like this all naked-like, did you now?

August: I did imagine it.

Julie: Yes. But we don't really have to do it, do we?

August: Na. Not necessarily. We could just imagine it, in a bit more detail.

Julie: Yes. We could.

August: Well then, the next thing I'd probably want to do is get under your jacket.

Julie: And I'd put my hand just there. Like this, on the inside of your upper thigh.

August: You'd go straight for it then.

Julie: Yes.

August: That would provoke me quite a bit.

Julie: Provoke you?

August: Yes. Or how should I put it?

Julie: No idea. I never say anything like that.

August: Arouse me.

Julie: Yes? When I put my hand there?

August: Yes it would. And I'd probably use my hand, the one I'm leaning on, to touch your hair and then your neck.

Julie: Presumably, I'd then move my hand up and down like this.

August: And that's when I'd try to move my hand in the direction of your bra without drawing too much attention to myself.

Julie: How would you manage that?

August: Well...By going along the side. So that my wrist as it moved down would most likely brush against your breast.

Julie: Yes. Most likely. At that moment, I'd probably let go of your upper thigh. And feel your face with my hand and stroke your cheek.

August: That would, most likely, encourage me. I'd then move my hand around your waist and touch you on the back.

Julie: That's when I'd kiss you on the neck.

August: And I wouldn't say a word the whole time. But I'd be shivering.

Julie: Yes. Me too.

August: I'd be totally aroused because we're about to do it...

Julie: I'd smell your smell. And then I'd have to look at you again. And I'd think that you're really bloody good-looking.

August: No. Hold on, that's what I think. That's what I would think.

August comes out of the tent while the video still shows the two in the tent. August speaks to himself and to the audience.

August: I'd be thinking how come this super-kitten's in a tent with you? She's so beautiful and altogether classy. And I'm just me. She must be odd to be messing round with me. Perhaps she's crazy. I'd suddenly get close to losing all respect. This is some kind of stupid mistake. There's a catch. A case of mistaken identity. She thinks I'm not me, but actually I am. I mustn't let her know or she'll disappear on me.

Julie comes out of the tent. Meanwhile the film continues to run in the background as if nothing had happened. She stands beside August. She, too, looks at the audience during the following scene.

August: I must be careful to behave as if it's quite normal for a woman like her to be interested in me. In a tent. As if that's happening to me all the time. And while I'm telling myself all this, I'm moving my hand over your breast and kissing you, more or less like they do it in the movies, because I've got to act really cool and because I can't imagine what it's like to behave naturally in a situation like this.

Julie: Well, presumably, one brushes one's hands over breasts etc...

August: Yes.

Julie: Yes.

August: Yes. And so I'd kiss you, for a very long time with style and say to myself, she sure has soft lips.

Julie: And I'd wish that the kiss wouldn't end, and everything I'd been up to now would start crumbling and collapsing and there'd be more and more space for you inside me. And I wouldn't want to let you in, not just yet, because I'd be ashamed of the mess inside me, where there's a lot that isn't clear but the kiss would go on and on and I'd already be a bit unsure who I actually was, kind of, because I'd be so busy using my tongue, that for a moment I'd think, it's a good thing that it's all over and that we're going to survive, d'you understand? Survive everything.

Something on the video behind them does not seem to conform to the reality in the tent any more. Gradually the picture Julie imagines takes shape before our eyes. In the following scene a kind of "dialogue" occurs between screen and stage, both spaces seem to merge.

Julie: The dying has finished and we're in a place that belongs to us, at home under the blanket, and it's possible to be at home, and the dying is over and we can go outside and outside everything's normal and the dying is over, d'you understand? Nothing is straining after death, everything just is and I'd wander

out into the street, lost in thought, and the kiss would last till I was in the street, and it'd be night and I'd take you with me and run through the streets, and we'd hail a taxi and get in, and then I'd cling to your upper thigh again because it feels so firm.

August: And in the meantime, of course, there'd be a few other things going on as well.

Julie: Look, the lights. The lights of the town.

The lights rush past.

August: Yes.

Julie: What we'd really love to do is make love in the taxi, publicly, because it's where we got to know each other, that time.

August: Yes. But not this time. I'd start undressing you. First the jacket, then the shirt.

Julie: And I'd help you so that it'd go faster. And I'd tear at your shirt, like crazy, so we'd get rid of that too. And then we'd lie there beside each other and, of course, I'd say: "I'm cold."

August: And I'd lie down on top of you, a bit to the side, and your skin would really be quite cold, and mine too, but together, somehow, it'd be quite warm. And I'd kiss you even more. And with my hand, the free one, (because the other one'd be squashed underneath you, but I'd pretend it didn't matter) with that other hand I'd work on your upper thigh like you'd be doing with me, because I'd know she likes that, she did it to me too and it felt good.

Julie: And quite slowly, I'd spread my legs so that you'd know it was OK to go up a bit further with your hand. Because we really haven't known each other all that long.

August: Yes. And I'd let my hand move up. But you can't really get a proper feel through the jeans so I'd just go on kissing like mad till I managed to get the pants undone down below.

Julie: And I'd turn away from you, so I could undress completely. And I'd get completely undressed. And you'd take me in your arms and we'd get warm. We'd lie there like two small coffee spoons and hold each other tight. And I'd look at the tent awning, and the tent awning would be flapping and we'd be in the desert, two Bedouins, and I'd feel your chest on my back. Have you got hair?

August: What?

Julie: On your chest?

August: Na.

Julie: Good.

August: I'd hold you and move my hip up and down and also try to keep a hold on myself in all the excitement.

Julie: And sooner or later, I'd give way to all that passion lusting around. And I'd get up on all fours and scream: "Take me, off you go, take me, take me."

August: Seriously?

Julie: Why not?

August: Well...And I'd say to myself that sex-kitten is really off the planet and I would...well I'd do it.

Julie: How would you do it?

August: Well, I'd just...you...I'd, well...

Julie: You'd take hold of me by the hips.

August: Yes. With one hand. With the other, I'd move up and down your back.

Julie: And I'd search for you. I'd press my arse against you, and I'd feel you entering me. First slowly and then with increasing urgency. And I'd breathe faster with every thrust.

August: I would love you.

Julie: You mean you'd fuck me. We'd fuck the brains right out of our skulls.

August: No, I would love you.

Julie: You mean fucking boring fuck me.

August: No.

Julie: You think, you're in love, then.

August: Yes.

Julie: With all the trimmings, and you'd whisper sweet nothings in my ear.

August: Yes.

Julie: What would you call me?

August: Frog.

Julie: Frog.

August: Yeah. Dunno. Na, Cat, most likely.

Julie: Cat, is it? You've got a thing for animals, then?

August: Or just Baby.

Julie: Sure, or for babies.

August: What's up?

Julie: I'm happy.

August: Me too.

Julie: Tomorrow, we'll die,

August: Yeah.

Julie: I'm so happy.

August: Me too.

Julie: Come on.

Julie takes August by the hand. They disappear into the tent again.

Julie: *(off stage)* Put on some music! Go on, put on some music! What was that you wanted to play me? What was that you wanted to play me? Show me!

Julie puts on the CD.

August: *(off stage)* Na, further, further forward. The fourth track. There. "Death of An Angel" by the Kingsmen.

August: *(off stage)* The organ. Super. They were completely off the planet. Hear it? That's historic music. That's trash. They called it trash. They were punks twenty years before the punks. Real punks. I mean the punks imitated them. The whole No-Future thing is a total fake. Really. I mean, perhaps trash is fake too. But that doesn't matter. Listen, the track's perfect. They were inspired. Absolutely. They saw the North-light and when it was gone, they had the song: "My baby's Gone, and left me here to stay."

Julie: *(off stage)* Interesting...

Scene change.

Same scene as 2. Dawn. August is crawling out of the tent. He has the video camera and moves towards the precipice. He stops. Then he films the panorama, does a slow sweep of the abyss and finally zooms down. He then switches the camera off. Julie comes out of the tent and stands beside August. She seems a bit tired and is dressed for a party. She is wearing an elegant dress and high-heeled shoes.

Julie: Somehow today is a black day.

August: This morning as I was dozing, I dreamed that I found myself at the edge of the source, that I was standing in the abyss where everything began, and watching the creation of chaos.

--

Julie: Off we go. Let's put an end to it.

August: You go first.

August takes a few steps back from the precipice and points the camera at Julie.

Julie: Wait. Have you got it set to shoot?

August: Yeah.

Julie: Na. Wait. Switch it off.

August rewinds.

August: OK.

The camera is running.

Julie: Hello Mother, hello Father...shit, that was no good, wipe it again.

August: OK.

The camera is running.

Julie: Ready? Hello Mother, hello Father, hello Grandma, hello Rune. As you can see I'm here in this spot where – what's the matter?

August: D'you want the "ready" included?

Julie: Of course not.

August: Then we'll try it again. Wait.

Julie: Only start when I say OK. OK? – OK...Hello Mother, hello Father, Hello Grandma, hello Rune. Well, as you can see, I'm here in this place where we used to come when I was little, and you, Father, used to hold me by the feet so that I could look down into the abyss, because you were afraid that I might fall...

August: What's wrong?

Julie: Switch it off.

August: What's wrong?

Julie: Nothing. I...Show me. How does it look?

August: The whole thing?

Julie: No, only the end.

August rewinds. On the screen we can see Julie saying: "...Father used to hold me by the feet so that I could look down into the abyss, because you were afraid that I might fall..."

Julie: Somehow seems like shit.

August: Dunno. I found the take pretty good.

Julie: Bit over the top, didn't you think?

August: Dunno. After all, this is rather special. Just go on. We can do a second version later.

Julie: OK. Can you just go on? After "might fall"?

August: Yes, hold on...OK.

Julie: I'll say OK.

August: OK.

Julie: OK. I'm here today, because I want to make up for that. I'll jump down from there today. That is to say, I'm actually already dead. *(She tries to hide her laughter)* At this very moment as I'm speaking to you, I'm already dead. *(She laughs.)* Believe me, it's a weird notion. *(She laughs even more.)* But you know that already. Otherwise you wouldn't be watching this video... well...shit, I've lost the thread.

August: I'll switch it off, will I?

Julie: No! Why?

August: I thought because of the laughing.

Julie: That might have been a good thing.. Somehow comforting, perhaps. Those are, perhaps, the very moments.

August: But it was a bit weird, don't you think?

Julie: Weird?

August: A bit.

Julie: No worries. Just go on.

August: Then you'll have to go on laughing for a bit, on account of the "continuity."

Julie: What sort of continuity?

August: The continuation.

Julie: But this is a cut.

August: Yes, but after this cut there's still a continuation. Because it'll go on from where we stopped.

Julie: No. It goes on a bit, a bit further on. That's why I won't laugh any more now. You mustn't interrupt. OK? I'm the only one who can interrupt. OK?

August: OK.

Julie: OK...

August: Camera's on.

--

Julie: Afterwards nothing follows.

--

Julie: Afterwards nothing follows. Afterwards there's The End. After the beginning nothing follows.

Julie: Can you hear me?

--

Julie: Turn the thing off.

August: What's up? That bit was super. The silence. You should make more pauses. They're super.

Camera off.

Julie: There's no "Camera's on". After "OK" there's no "camera's on." After "OK" I'll come on.

August: Did I say anything?

Julie: Yes. You said, "camera's on." But they can all see that the camera's on. Otherwise they wouldn't hear you say "camera's on."

August: Don't be such a fucking fusspot.

Julie: Bloody hell, I don't commit suicide here every day. I want it to turn out well.

August: OK.

Julie: OK.

The camera is on.

Julie: We interrupt for a short commercial. Shop till you drop, motherfuckers! Yes, and now here we are again, live, as two young, innocent, middle-class European-made creatures, of their own free will, throw away the life entrusted to them...OK. Come on, get on with it...OK.

--

August: What is it?

Julie: I said "OK". So the camera should be running now.

August: It's been running for ages.

Julie: It's been running for ages. Well... I don't want it to look as if I don't know what I'm doing. I really do know. Besides I've got someone with me, who can bear witness. The bloke behind the camera is August and he's my best friend. I love him. Big time. Show your face.

August briefly holds the camera up to his face and grins.

Julie: Yes, Rune, that's August. You're sure to think "typical loser." But being able to be a loser can be a great success. Think about it. It's a big success to be able to be one. And August is a super-loser. Don't laugh. And that's why I love him. I don't want anything to happen to him. That's why we'll jump together. We'll hold each other by the hand and we won't let go till we reach the bottom.

August: Just a minute...

Camera off.

Julie: What's the matter?

August: I dunno. Wouldn't it be better if we both kept out of it a bit?

Julie: What d'you mean?

August: Well...I dunno. I don't really know Rune, and I don't know if I want to bequeath him anything. About being a loser and so on. I dunno.

Julie: That's just between him and me. I'm not saying that you're a loser in general. That's just between Rune and me. We could, actually, make separate cassettes.

August: Yes, but it's not really relevant. I mean, from the point of view of "content" I'm not really involved in your committing suicide.

Julie: I want to finish getting this said.

August: Good. But then you'll make another version without me. OK?

Julie: If you want it that way. Well then, OK. Where was I?

August: We won't let go of each other till we're down there.

Julie: Yes. Yes, that's it. What are you saying? "A version without you"? There is no version without you. Come on, let's carry on. Well, OK...

The camera is on.

Julie: I want you to know that it was always my dream. I always wanted to die with my lover. At the same time. So that I wouldn't have to live through the pain of someone leaving. I could only ever imagine dying together with all of you. At a picnic. All of us together. "Family killed by a meteorite. The crater was the size of a football stadium." I couldn't visualize one of us dying before the others. Yes. Now I'm going on ahead. I'm sorry about that. But that's how it is. When you, Papa, when you held me by the feet that time. That felt good. I always got a good feeling from all of you when I needed it. You were such good parents, there's nobody like you. Because you really always held me by the feet, you, my friends, and my colleagues... I could look into every abyss on earth and feel no fear. Because you were there. And, and I thank you for that, because I had a wonderful life, thanks to all of you. I've seen everything. I've devoured the whole world. And I got everything there is. I've got everything I ever wanted. I always got everything. There was nothing out of reach. I was everywhere and the rest I saw on film. I was in the tropics with the aborigines and the sun rise, I ate Big Macs and shopped at Prada and vice versa, I was loved, I was desired, I can sail and play golf, I got a distinction in IT, I've developed computer games, made money, done everything that was fun. I've got a tattoo, there... I've tried every drug on the market without wrecking myself and played round with boys, spent a night with Brad Pitt, wasn't much fun, but sociologically interesting, that happened when you let me fly to New York alone. Young Rune was on the same plane. Sorry. I had the great love affair with you, Rune, and I still love you. Even though you've become a great "winner." Look after yourself. Yes, everyone has his or her own time. In short, you gave me the world on a platter, I tasted it all and no sooner did I have it in my mouth than I spat it all out again. Because any one thing can never outweigh all the possibilities of the next. My life... that is to say my past, consists mainly of a future that came to nothing. For a long time I didn't understand one thing – For a long time I didn't understand that there's only one way you can have everything: by wanting nothing. To have everything, desire nothing. and I believe ... I'm not hungry anymore. I have had enough and require nothing. I don't want anything, indeed I never wanted anything. I don't know if you can understand that. In any case, not one of you can give me anything, no one can give it to me except I myself. Yes, there is one thing I still want, a beautiful death. And I wanted to say good-bye to all of you and to hold you really tight and to comfort you and say that everything will be alright and... because I do... because you do... ...because I... because... Turn it off.

Camera is switched off.

--

Julie: It's just occurred to me that I'm a total idiot.

August: Why?

Julie: I'm only talking about myself.

August: Well...it is the last time.

Julie: What's more, it was all nonsense. That won't do. I can't do that. Put a new cassette in.

August puts in a new cassette.

August: I reckon that wasn't bad. Anyway, I understand you much better now. Why you want to kill yourself and everything. I can understand that. Seriously.

Julie: But that was all stuff and nonsense. That I've already had everything. That the whole world held me by the feet so that I could look into the abyss. Fuckingshit. It's complete idiocy. Propaganda.

August: Yes. But all in all.

Julie: Again.

August films Julie.

Julie: Hi, folks. Here I am again...yeah. Not because I want to reproach you, here. Only those who cling to life do that. Just wanted to say: "Have a good day." And don't get too upset, because if I'd discovered earlier that I've got just as many faults and weaknesses as you have, I'd have killed myself on the spot. Understand? Seen in that light, I've really held on for quite a long time. Well, then...

--

August: I've switched off.

Julie: I'm finished.

August: Yeah, I didn't know, it was so short.

Julie: It was shit. You have a go.

Julie hands August the camera.

August: Hold on, I don't know if I can manage to make it so short.

Julie: I'm ready.

August: Well, shoot.

The camera runs.

August: Hello. My dear ones. Here I am again...I...well...I always wanted to be a part of something, of life, of a story, but at the same time...Shit. Sorry. Yes. Since I was able to think, I've never wanted to make anything happen, d'you follow? I've never had the slightest desire, to be the cause of anything in the whole wide world. Perhaps, there's a word I might have wanted to say, but at the moment I can't imagine which one. Yes, I can. Coward. I'm a coward.

Presumably. Till today, my only act of courage consisted in not committing suicide. I've always lived in fear of being surprised by misfortune. That's pretty well poisoned my life. Yeah. That's why I'm anticipating fate today and throwing myself down into misfortune before it strikes me. Yeah. Well...don't let it upset you, will you? Maybe it's good fortune, maybe it's misfortune. Oh yeah, and don't forget to feed the fish. Yeah, Cheers.

Camera off.

Julie: You've got a fish?

August: Yeah. I actually wanted to bring it with me. But I thought because of the plane – and anyway it's a salt-water fish.

Julie: That down there is saltwater.

August: You're kidding.

Julie: It's a fjord.

August: Yeah. Oh shit, I hope they feed it. Let me have a look. I want to see what it looks like. You've got to imagine that you're your parents looking at it.

August takes the video camera and rewinds it. We see and hear the above again. Both of them stare in fascination at the little control monitor.

Julie: "I'd have killed myself on the spot. Understand? Seen in that light, I've really held on for quite a long time. Well, then..."

August: Hello. My dear ones. Here I am again...I ...well...I always wanted to be a part of something, of life, of a story, but...

August switches off.

August: Somehow no go. Somehow sounds super-fake. I can't do that. I mean I can't base my whole life on such a lie. It simply isn't possible to leave something like that lying around here. Something so bloody fake.

Julie: We'll have to wipe that. I'm standing there like someone in a hypnotic trance.

August: I'm just talking... I dunno.

Julie: Well...That's true. But on top of that, the way I look!

August: That's normal.

Julie: What do you mean?

August: Well... when you've just got up.

Julie It's just too depressing. I look like a member of some sect. I want to avoid that. Don't want them to think, I was off my brain or anything. By the way, that stuff about being a coward, that's rubbish.

August: Well...

Julie: Why do you say things like that?

August: To comfort them. I thought if a coward kills himself, it's somehow comforting.

Julie: Don't you feel like telling them the truth? Rather than some fake bullshit? I think this is the right time for it! And anyway I wouldn't want to have jumped with a coward.

August Yeah. Yeah. That was shit.

--

The camera is running. Julie acts super-cool.

Julie: Hi, guys. I've had it. You can't understand that, so I won't go burbling on. 'Bye.

--

Camera off.

August: That had something. In all its brevity.

Julie: Again.

The camera runs.

Julie: Hello Mother. Father, I'll deal with you later...

--

Julie: No. That's not a proper beginning. Wait. Wait. Let it run. Dear Mummy, dear Papa. I'm here with August, August is my new friend. We love each other.

--

Julie: Fuck. Really. Fuck. I can't get it right. Come on, you have a go.

Julie takes over the video camera.

August: Yes. Hold on. Well. OK. Hello. I'm sorry that I've done this to you. But in the whole business I wasn't really thinking about you. In the moment that's about to occur, I really couldn't have cared less about you. That's the truth.

--

August: How do I know that I couldn't have cared less about them in the moment that's about to occur? Hold on, again...OK?

--

August: Hello. You can't imagine what it's like being me. I can tell you, it's shit. I can't even turn out a proper farewell speech here. It's enough to make you give up and that's why I'm now going to...'Bye.

Camera off.

Julie: You can't mean that seriously.

August: At least it's true. I don't know. Hold on, now I've got it.

Julie: OK.

August: Dear Mother, dear Father, dear Brother and dear Rest of the World. Considering everything and thinking it all out clearly, it is impossible not to take leave of one's senses. See you soon...

Camera off.

Julie: I don't know... Perhaps we should just put the camera down and stand in front of it, say something short and then go.

August: Yes.

Julie puts the camera down and presses the button.. They both stand in front of it, holding hands.

Julie: I love you.

August: Me too.

They go hand in hand in the direction of the precipice. They stand at the edge holding hands.

Julie: That's too melodramatic.

August: Yes, it is somehow.

Julie: And besides, all the previous stuff is still on it.

August: Yeah.

August switches the camera off again.

August: Perhaps a bit of music would help?

Julie: Music?

August: Dunno. As an accompaniment. In the background?

Julie: Wait, I've brought something. It was always a comfort when I was sad.

Julie fetches the ghetto blaster from the tent.

Julie: The thing is, I didn't have everything. That's the thing. I don't know. Somehow I can't believe a word I say, anymore. The North-light, tonight. I'd

never seen a North-light. Shit. I mean, if we'd jumped yesterday, we'd have missed the stupid light altogether. I've seen absolutely nothing. There. Wait. There. Track 6. Ready?

August: Yeah.

Julie: OK. Let it run.

The camera runs. Julie puts in a CD and lets it run. ("egg radio" by Bill Frisell). She wants to say something, looks into the camera for a long time, finally she just cries. The song plays on. Julie turns the ghetto blaster off.

Julie: Sorry.

August: D'you want to have another go?

Julie: No. I don't think I can do it. It shouldn't be so difficult to say good-bye.

August: Let me have another go.

He hands the camera to Julie.

August: OK?

Julie nods. August looking thoughtful:

August: If death is so terrible and perhaps it is, how come that after a while we consider each of our friends fortunate who has ceased to live?

--

August: Life's a problem for me that I have to solve again every day. If I were to follow my deepest instincts, I would scream for help from morning till night.

--

August: All my contradictions come from the fact that it's impossible to love life more than I do and at the same time, almost constantly, to have the feeling of being excluded and forsaken.

--

August: For years, I've lived alone with myself and been unhappy. But today, today I'm happy. Perhaps real happiness comes with the realization that one doesn't need oneself anymore.

--

Camera off. Julie is thrilled.

Julie: Amen. That was awesome.

August: Shit...

Julie: You're a poet. Where d'you get stuff like that from?

August fetches a book from the tent.

Julie: That sounded so real. I was quite moved.

August: Nope. Pinched.

Julie: Doesn't matter, does it?

August: I don't know.

Julie: We can leave it like that.

August: You think that's it?

Julie: Yes. Don't you?

August: Nope. That was pinched. That doesn't count. I want to say something of my own.

Julie: OK. But you have to do it just like that, kind of thoughtful. That's super.

August: I've got to put it on, somehow?

Julie: Yes. Believe me, that was totally believable.

August: You mean I've got to fake it?

Julie: Looks like it.

August: So that it seems real?

Julie: That's what it looks like to me.

August: Really?

Julie: That's what I'm telling you.

August: I have to fake it?

Julie: If that was fake, I'm afraid you do.

August: That was fake. I completely bloody faked it.

Julie: But it looked real.

August: But if that...that was fake!

Julie: So what? Fake obviously doesn't always have to be fake. Fake can sometimes be absolutely real.

August: Fake can be real?

Julie: Yes. It's only fake when it's nothing. That's fake.

August: That's what you say.

Julie: That's what I'm saying.

August: It's only fake when it's nothing.

Julie: Yes.

August: But nothing is absolutely nothing.

Julie: Yes.

August: So nothing is fake.

Julie: Yes.

August: So everything here has to be for real. Suddenly?

Julie: That's what it looks like. *(laughs)*.

August: You're joking.

Julie: No. Not just now. Not just now, *(laughs)*.

August: So everything here is for real?

Julie: You're shivering.

August: Yes. I'm scared.

Julie: But why?

August: Because of the future.

Julie: What future?

August: My future. I dunno. I was never afraid of my future before, because I knew that at any moment I could kill myself. D'you understand? But now...

Julie: But now?

August: Suddenly I'm not sure... that I can still kill myself. Can you understand that?

--

Julie: Off you go.

August: OK.

The camera is on.

August: Hello, Everybody. I'm here in Norway, today. I told you that I was going to stay with Mats for the weekend. But I lied to you. You wouldn't have let me go. So I lied to you. Julie, here, paid my flight. Yes. And it was worth it. I mean, we're going to jump down here in a moment...I mean that's why we're here. To make our exit. But it was also worth it in other ways, because the short time we had here was really great. I mean, I, actually, really felt alive here. Actually, maybe for the first time. Last night we saw the North-light. We filmed it. You can have a look at it. It was a huge, beautiful light. It covered nearly the whole sky. And I thought of you, too, and why you can't see the light at home even though it's so big. The thing is, on the video it looks much smaller and darker. As if you're seeing it through a mist. You've got to have experienced the real thing. I can really recommend it. Julie, here, hadn't seen one before, either. We stood there like idiots. Yes. You ought to see it sometime. But it's supposed to be rare, Julie says. Yes. Yes and... Julie is a friend. Julie. I...She is... Well I am...actually...yes. Well, I actually ...I actually wanted to tell you, why I'm doing what I'm about to do in a minute, but...to tell you the truth...I really don't know any more. No idea. Sorry.

Camera off.

August: Do you know?

Julie: Na.

August: Well, then.

Julie: Yes.

--

August: Hold on.

August packs up all the cassettes in a bag and walks towards the precipice. Julie stands beside him. They look at each other. August tosses the bag down. They watch it fall.

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Julie: It's got caught.

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August: We may just have had a stroke of luck from which we won't recover for quite some time.

Julie: I want to get away from here.

August: Me too.

Both off.

THE END