

ABRUPT

It is 19.33. You are tired and starving. The day is over. Attended seven hours of courses. One-hour lunch break, a card game with your friends, and one free hour of research work. You are exhausted. Like every Tuesday. But you know that every Tuesday your food is waiting when you open the door. "Terry," you continue. You put your bag away. But you smell nothing. No food? "Terry?" The room is suddenly silent. Like a road at night seems extra quiet because you are used to the noise of cars. Like in a movie when nothing happens and there is no background music. Quiet, worse even. As if the flat were empty. As if the sofa were gone. In the daytime, the sofa seems to make sounds. Now it is quiet and empty. You stop. You listen to that silence. You freeze. Frowning, you think, It's so quiet here." Terribly quiet. Something's wrong. There should be sound. Lots of sounds. The radio playing hits and classics. Terry sometimes sings along. The sound of cooking. Simmering pans. The Scraping. Flames chasing the bottom. The faulty cooker hood. The water tap. Even the table makes sounds. Or it seems that way. Flapping lids. Cooking bubble splashes. The refrigerator door. The groan of the freezer. But now all is quiet. You go on. To the kitchen. There is no light. Light! Strange, you did not notice it before. You experience darkness and silence as a unit. Silence scares more than darkness. They say silence brings peace and calm. Silence troubles me. It haunts me. This world can no longer live in silence. When it is quiet, you feel that something essential is missing, that something is wrong. If a conversation comes to a standstill while you enter... that silence... makes you realise that something is wrong. Silence. Anxious. You open the kitchen door.

19.37 She's not here. So, there is something wrong. She's not in the kitchen. More silence indicates that she is not in the flat at all. Search for the note. You turn on the light. The empty, once-white table. Empty. Real imitation leather that doesn't intend to look like leather. Blue. Shiny metal

frame. Empty, shiny, polished. The ocean blue floor without dust. Strikingly empty. The white cabinets. The white-with-light-blue-drawings wallpaper. Empty. And silent. The electric fire. The coffee maker. The microwave. Fridge, sink, glossy. Something is not right. Two more steps. You look around anxiously. The clock on the wall. The bulletin board. Ah, of course. The note. A feeling of reassurance. Something is wrong, but it can be explained. This kitchen has been polished. Not like when you get visitors, but like just before you leave on a 4week trip. It has an explanation. A statement on the note. Where's Terry? What is going on? You take it and immediately notice that something is wrong. You pick out the pushpin. While attempting to push the pin back on the board, you read curious, attentive, anxious.

19.42 *Jake, I'm sorry. This has nothing to do with you. I just can't take it anymore. I can no longer keep fighting. One day you will understand. I'm sorry. Thank you. Fare well. I love you, Terry.* You drop the pushpin and read the note again. *I'm sorry, someday you will understand.* You close your eyes. You take a deep breath and lower your head. "No." You stand still. Quiet, or rather trembling. Would...? Oh God! And nothing. Your head is empty. You don't remember. Empty, or actually full. So full that you can no longer read it. Like multiple coloured stains blend to black, just as multiple coloured lights blend to white. Empty. There is only one thing left: "No!" As an answer without a question. You don't know what happened. That's black/full. You know you don't want it. No. No, this cannot be true. This should not be true. Terry. You stand still. You swallow. You want to cry, but you can't. You want to close your eyes as if you want to run away from reality. But once you've closed them, you only see worse things, so keep them open. You may not realise what you're seeing, but what you see is there, is real. Like a computer that collects data but does not record it. You don't know what you see. You don't know where you are ... when. Only how you feel. Miserable, black, full, and empty. Rotten. Strange, you can barely remember what happened, or why you feel that way. Suddenly cold, as you stand in the kitchen near the bulletin board with the piece of paper in your left hand. Small ghastly paper. You hold a human life. God, no.

Human life. Paralysed. Your legs frozen side by side. Your left hand is in doubt whether it would hold up the note or just let it drop. Your right hand is cramped, ready to push the pin (as if it were still there) into the board. Your head bowed. Looking between the piece of paper and your feet. No, you just know nothing now. Strange. Your left arm drops slowly, very slowly, as if you've made a decision that you keep doubting. Your decision is certain, but the doubt only fades slowly. You gradually replace the doubt with certainty. That is how slowly your left arm drops. That is how your right arm descends with your hand clinging to an inexistent pushpin. You raise your head and close your eyes, hoping to see something clearer.

19.53 But everything remains black. Gradually you notice where you are again. You can register what you see. The table, the cabinets, the kitchen. For a moment, you feel relieved. Because you are aware again of what you see. A first step toward reality. But then it looms back to you that this was just the first shock. You are in the kitchen. You have to get out. Away from that kitchen. Not just gone, but further. To her. Terry. All impressions disappear again. Swallowed in the fog of nothingness. You cannot think clearly yet. And Terry ... Terry is just a word. A word that evokes many feelings. Too much and too different to contain them all. Security. You have a connection with Terry. You can feel it. You feel home. Terry, that is where you belong. Warmth, safety. Understanding. But now there is horror and fear. Fear of Terry. Because suddenly she is so different. You cannot yet imagine how different. She is no longer Terry. It scares you. Fear of the confrontation that will follow. A forced confrontation with the other Terry, so that the word Terry gets something chilling. These thoughts dangle around you. The *home*-Terry and the *shiver*-Terry. Those feelings swirl around like autumn leaves in a courtyard. But one thing is certain: Terry is a word, like home is a word, and like cancer is a word. Terry isn't realistic yet if you try to remember her. It dawns again. The kitchen, the bulletin board on which the piece of paper hung. No, don't think about it! No, think about the door. Not the note. No! But it is already too late. You lift the paper and read the first line. *Jake, I'm sorry*. Don't. Do

not continue reading. You lower your arm. “No,” you mumble. You turn to the door.

19:57 Resolutely -Yes!- you grab the doorknob. Inch by inch, you pull it towards you. Ajar. Then further. Darkness creeps upon you from the hallway. Again, for the first time in a long time, you notice the painting on the wall between the two lights. You walk past it every day. Three, four, ... probably even more often. You haven’t given it any attention since you bought it, since all your friends admired it. You remember how excited you were. How you bought it in a daze. How you came home and immediately told Terry... Terry. You sigh and take one more step, and another, and one more until you are next to the painting. You didn’t turn on the light. A ray of light from the kitchen caresses the painting. You watch it again. An extraordinary painting. The heavenly blue shine that radiates from it. The waves in the brushstrokes, the yellow spot in the middle. Impressionism, according to Hank. You just love it because it expresses a sense of endlessness. The thought of far away and yet safe. A kind of loneliness. A sense of travel, too. You like nothing better than travelling. It has blue, wavy lines, a bit Van Gogh-like. A first impression of mere splatter. Cheap poster paint that has already hardened in the brush. Smears and rough strokes. But it’s exactly that which makes it special. That longing, that dreaming as if you can disappear into it, as if it will take you to far-away realities. Cosy and warm, only with Terry. Terry ... You sigh. You bow your head. No! Raise your head. Keep your head up. You should. You must go on. You cannot crawl away. Come on, head on. What is this? You seem to be preparing yourself for an exam. This is ridiculous. You shake your head. Another step and another, and now you have almost reached the bedroom door. Terry. Terry is there. Terry is ... Oh God. This is not true. This is ... Terry. You swallow and take another step and continue. Right to the door. Why do you have this terrible premonition?

20.06 Hand on the doorknob. Hello Terry, are you there? No, this doesn’t sound funny. This sounds sad, almost desperate. Sad as you stand there with your hand on the doorknob. Sad when you think *Terry, you are there*. Is

she there? How will she be? Why? Somehow you're convinced she's there. Behind that door. You release the doorknob. You sigh. Come on now. You take the doorknob again. When she's there... Sad, but you don't know why. Why? Because Terry isn't there. You don't understand it at all. She's there. Here, behind this door. Look. She's here. You know it. Yet, she's gone. You feel drowsy. You can't grasp it yet. Just like in a physics lesson, where you focus all the time but afterwards you don't remember what it was all about. Like when you read a book by Pascal Simon: read three pages and scroll back, reread, and reread four more times. But still, you don't understand what it says. Now you want to know. You want to be sure. You open the door.

20.09 Open, but not far enough. You don't see the bed yet. You turn on the light. No more delay. Open. Aaah. (a scream that only resounds in your head). You are shocked. You knew it. You saw it coming, and still you are shocked. Terry. Yes, she is there. Terry on the bed in a calm position. You turn your eyes away from her and look instinctively (TV instinct) at the bedside table. Yes. As you expected. The pills. No more note. The box closed. Tidy. Then watch her. Terry. She lies so quietly. On her right side. Her legs together, bent upward. Her head resting on her bent right arm. Her left arm folded over her body. Her hair untied. Her eyes closed. Her mouth half-open. She seems to smile. The bed covered. Terry. It is so quiet now, so quiet, so peaceful. You bow your head, sigh, and sniff. Lifting your head, watching her, you take an indecisive step forward. Then one more. And one more. Gently, you squat beside Terry. "Goodbye, Terry." You move your hand to her head. "Hi Terry, it's me, Jake." You sniff and warily stroke the hair from her face. "Is everything okay now?" You touch her with your fingertips, sliding over her skin. "Is everything okay now?" You look at her with watery eyes. You see her frail face, so vulnerable, so sweet, so hurt. Her beautiful mouth, her cheerful little nose, her funny jaws and her bright blue eyes, now closed. "Yes, sleep now. Sleep, my dear Terry." You don't think about what you say. You say what comes to mind when you watch her. So beautiful, so young, so sweet. So quiet, so damn quiet. "You know I love you." A tear runs down your

cheek. You know why you're crying. Pain, that's all that comes to mind while that face is in front of you, while you touch that chilly, soft skin. You feel pain. Only now are you weeping. Terry. Something tells you that something beautiful is over. That hurts. You get up while looking at her. A long time. You cry the whole time. Pain is all that's left. You bow to her. "Yes, sleep now. It's OK now." You gently kiss her on the forehead. "You know I love you." You look again and get up.

20.22 You keep looking at her. As she lies there. So peaceful. Peace. God, it's so quiet here. Hi Terry. You turn towards the window. Step 1, step 2, step 3, put your feet together. You remove the curtain. Look outside. The cool darkness of winter. The stars. The street (a back alley of a busy shopping street) empty and messy because the wind blows papers and plastic bags in little vortexes. You see so much. All details. Before you can associate thoughts, you perceive the following detail already. The closed shutters with 'FOR SALE' on them. The brown McDonald's bag. Light on the fifth floor of the office building behind the grocery. The yellow car. The newspaper in the gutter. The broken doorknob. The grocery's house number (42). Suddenly. A human, a man. The typical rhythmic sound of a firm stride. Because a man's pace is tock-tock-tock, while women walk ticketyticketytick. There is a black figure. Black, because everything is black in the dark. The man walks on. He is wearing a raincoat. And a suitcase. He continues walking. Without noticing Jake on the third floor, looking at him from the bedroom window. What would that man do if he knew Terry was in this room? Terry! You turn back to her. You bow your head. Terry. Step 3, step 2, step 1, look at her. "Bye Terry, bye." Sad. You turn away. Step to the door.

20.28 OK, you know now. Do you really know? There, in that room, lies Terry. Terry, she's sleeping. For good. No, she's gone. Yes, say it. Terry is dead. Dead, say it. "Dead". But it is only a sigh. "Bye, Terry." It sounds like *goodbye*. This is not *goodbye*, like she's planning to come back. This is *farewell*. Final.

You're in the hallway again. The light shines, but you barely notice it. You have closed the door, just as you close the door when you've just tucked in

your children: they're sleeping. Now it's time for us. That is how you closed the door. As if you left a concern behind you. As if you can quietly enjoy a night watching TV. With a beer in one hand and a pizza in the other. Some support under your feet. Your girlfriend leaning on your shoulder, watching a movie filled with action, suspense, and romance. Relaxing entertainment. But you can't relax. There! There behind that door are not your sleeping children. You don't even have children. Behind that door is not school, not books and papers. Behind that door are no annoying visitors, no neighbours, no family, no worries that you can just leave behind. Behind that door is the girlfriend who should be leaning on your shoulders. Terry is behind that door. Terry is dead. Very dead. Do you understand? Death lies behind that door. You can't go to the TV now. Terry is dead.

20.32 You move on, shaking your head. What the hell happened? Damn. What is going on? You reach the kitchen door. Still shaking your head. A bent head fixated on the ground. So, you see little. You pass through the kitchen. You notice the pushpin. You walk to the seat. Instinctively, almost, although you constantly think about where you want to go. You want to think. What exactly happened? But first, you have to sit. The chair. You must get on the couch. Only then can you sit and reflect. This is how it runs in circles in your head: you want to think, you want peace, the couch. As if that couch were an oasis of peace. An oasis in this confusing silence. To sit. Relax. The chair. Ah, here you are. You bend calmly and plop down on the couch. What happened? Damn it, Terry's dead. Now you feel tears coming up. First, the skin around your eyes softens, then gradually your eyes get moist, and finally you cry. Death. Why? Why is Terry dead? God, she can't deserve this. My dear, good Terry. You shake your head slightly, again. To cry. Pain. Because you know it will never be like it used to be. Something has broken. You don't yet understand what. You bring your hands to your forehead. To support it. To wipe away the tears. Her name haunts your mind. This can't be. Yesterday. Yeah. She was cooking in the kitchen yesterday when you got home. You can visualise it. You feel relieved you recall anything beyond

today. *Now*. Something concrete. Potatoes, Brussels sprouts and sausage. You remember the smell. Promptly you get hungry. You want to eat. But first you want to stick to that line of thought. You entered the kitchen. You squeezed her side. She kissed you -did she?- yes. Then you threw your bag in the corner and peeked into the pots. She tapped your fingers when you stole a sprout. Together you set the table. She did the plates. You the glasses and cutlery. You walked to the living room, you read the newspaper. After a while she called you for dinner. Yes. What were you talking about? School? Work? The flat? No, about Pauline, who had bought a house and could only afford it because Peter was working. You asked if she preferred you to work. But she would rather have a lazy student with plenty of time for her. And then... you want to remember every detail. You did the dishes together and watched some TV. You went to bed early. You wanted to make love, but she was too tired. You kissed her. You fell asleep fast. Damn. Terry. Terry is dead. God! What will happen to me? And why?

20.44 You get up and sigh. You move to the bathroom now. The mirror. You want to see yourself as if you need conformation it is all real. It is real. You know it. You don't need a mirror. You watch yourself. A little pale. Your eyes small and damp. Your mouth seems too numb to hold an expression. Your hair dishevelled. Yes, it is you. This is real. This is now. Damn. You open the tap and try with your right hand. Cold, freezing cold. You bend. You open your hands, let them fill up. You gush the water against your face. Shiver. Ice cold. But really. Bleeding. You stare at yourself again. Were you hoping to see someone else? Nothing has changed. Except for your eyes. You bow again, splash some water in your face again. You straighten up, sigh. You take a towel, dry your face, look again and sigh again. You drop the towel. Mirror. You hope Terry will appear behind you. As she often did when you come out of the shower or when you shave. But she is not coming. You try to concentrate. You had hoped the water would wake you up. Forget it. You can't concentrate. Not here. Why do you stay here? You must get out of here. You sigh and leave the bathroom.

20.51 You close the door. You rub your left hand through your face and wipe the virtual snot from your nose. You sniff. And now? Your coat. You still have it on. The keys, you fumble in your jacket pockets. Clanking, yes. They are there. Goodbye hall door. I'll be right back. You go through the kitchen, this time looking straight ahead. Towards your goal. You only instinctively watch the pushpin while stepping over it. You are now going strong. You switch off the kitchen light. You enter the living room. You fiddle your keys. They tinkle and rumble in your right jacket pocket. Yet you don't seem to get them. Twiddle. Yes. Figure out the right one and still try the letterbox key, even though you know it's the wrong one. Turn the key, open the door. Door closed, locked, keys, road and stairs. And then. Outside, yes, you wanted outside. Fresh air. Think. From the start. Wait a second. Blank. Yes. Terry is dead. Good. No, not good. Thoughts flash through your head. Too many thoughts mixed. They are meaningless. As if two people are discussing in your head. When one starts a conversation, the other interrupts him. They talk on together, interrupting each other constantly. Never beginning or ending a subject at the same time. An entire series of associations in which they both intervene until nothing makes sense anymore. Your mind is like a lump of uncooked meatloaf. You switch from Terry to the painting in the hallway that Henk says is impressionism. Henk who studies law like Pauline, like Terry did for one semester. Pauline who is married to Peter. Both are working now. Pauline at her father's law firm. Peter in that company that produces electronics. Electronics... STOP. Please. You want to think. You walk through the old town. With its cosy bars where you often go. You want to enter. But it seems too busy. You walk in to 'The Senator', a quiet tavern. Almost unnoticed and above all unnoticeable. You don't pay attention to anything - unusual for you who normally study every detail. You hang your coat on the coat rack, take your wallet. You glance around. You find a lonely table. Phew. Think now, Jake. Terry is dead.

21.07 Oh, my God. She is dead. Do you realise what that means? Dead. She is gone. Away. You will never see her again. Gone, Jake. Tomorrow, she will be not be there. Tomorrow you will get up alone. She no longer

makes coffee. She won't get up tomorrow. Jake, damn it, don't you see? Damn. She is dead. Away. But you can't imagine it. No. Yet, this is exactly what it is. There will be no food waiting for you when you get home from class tomorrow.

"Can I help you, sir?" A young lady in black-and-white uniform. Wavy black hair, elegant face, stylish. Not like Terry, Terry is blond and waggish. Used to be...

"... yes ... a whisky, scotch, no ice, pure. And ... do you have cigarettes?"

"Marlboro, Barclay, Camel, ..."

"Camel please. And ... do you also have a fire?"

"Yes."

"Thank you."

She left. Where were you? Terry. Yes, probably. It's time to realise it. God, dead. No, it is still too vague, a word, a concept. A cool and frightening concept, but only a concept. A worse form of *illness*. Like in old women's conversations on the phone.

-Say, Albert's sick.

-What? Is Albert sick? Nothing serious, I hope?

-He is dead.

-Oh dear, oh dear. I hope he gets well soon.

But Terry is not getting well. Terry will never get well. *Never*. Another concept. Terry, what's wrong with you? Never again will you cook. Never work again. Never learn again. Never play tennis again. Never laugh again. Never cosily watch TV again. Never cuddle again. Never make love again. Never again. Never again. Never again. Dead, dead, dead. Damn. God. She is gone. You become silent. You are tearing again.

"Your whiskey, sir." She sets up a platter with your whiskey glass, a pack of Camel and matches. "And your cigarettes."

"Thank you." You look at her for a moment, and you notice how beautiful she is. She looks at you and you know she looks straight into your watery eyes. You notice how her face changes from fake friendly to tender concern.

"Is something wrong?"

“No, never mind. Thank you,” and you wipe your eyes.

21.14 Who can understand you? Who understands what you feel now? Nobody. Not even yourself. No, you don’t understand. You want to understand. Dead, does that exist? Oh, Terry. You bow your head and put your hands around the glass. You doubt whether you will get drunk. You have never been drunk. You fear it. You are afraid of how you will react. But isn’t this what you’re supposed to do? Drown your grief in alcohol. As if it were a standard procedure. It will not solve anything. You doubt it will make you feel better. No, you’re not drinking. Maybe one or two glasses. Yes. You lift your head and then your glass and drink half.

21.16 Standard Procedure. You must do something. Damn. Terry’s dead in your apartment and you’re not doing anything. You have to make a call. Of course. Who? The police, perhaps, probably. An ambulance? Or not? At least the police. And Terry’s family. Terry’s mother and ... god, I have to go there myself. Yes, now you’re thinking clearly. Make a call. You drink your glass and put the cigarettes with the matches in your coat pocket.

“Miss?” The black-and-white comes immediately. She has little to do. She seems to care about you. “Can I pay?”

“That’s 14.25, sir.”

You take your wallet. “Can I make a call here somewhere?” You give her 15.

“Yes, over there in the corner.”

“Or no, never mind. Thanks anyway.” She smiles. You walk out. No, don’t call here. At home. Of course! Home. Suppose the police arrive earlier than me. No, make the phone call at home. Focus, Jake. Police. You should have done that immediately. And -oh god- how do I tell her mother? What happened, what happened? But first. What do I tell the police? Stop it, you don’t have to defend yourself. Terry committed suicide. That’s all. Come on! God, have you been dazed! You sprint your way back home.

21.29 The apartment. You open the door of the building. You run up the stairs and halt in front of the door. Would she still be there? The key in the lock. Your left hand on the latch. Yes. You sigh. So. Telephone. You open

the door, close it casually. Inside, you throw your coat on the couch. You sit down on the same couch. You take the phone. You pick up the receiver, press the first digit. You lower your head, sigh, put down the phone. My God. What? You take a deep breath, pick up the receiver, press the first digit. But again, you sigh and put down the handset. You have to. You know you have to. Breathe again, lift the handset, press the complete number. The phone rings.

21.36 “Good evening, Opele police station. How can I help you?”

“... Hello, my name is Jake Jensen. I..., my girlfriend... “ You rub your hands over your face. Suddenly you start your crying. You don’t understand why. You try to hold it in. You sniff (sweep under your nose). “... my girlfriend, Terry... (you swallow) Terry Grant, ... committed ... suicide.” It is quiet for a moment. “I... I thought I should report that to you.” You get yourself together again.

“Where is she now?”

As if she is still alive. She’s no longer alive. You know that. “ She’s in the bedroom ... in our flat, South Park Avenue 216B”

“Okay, stay there. We’ll send someone.”

“Yes.”

“OK.”

“Thank you.” *Or something like that.* The other side disconnects. You put down the phone.

21.38 Yes, you need to see her again. You have this awkward urge for confirmation. This need for an eerie confrontation with reality. You get up and swallow. Still quiet. You notice it again. You doubt whether you would turn on the radio. No, not now. Just let it be quiet. Silent as death. Yes, you now know she’s dead. It is etched in your memory as some statistic. You shuffle forward. Back into the kitchen. Thinking of the pushpin. You stumble there, stare at it. As if you’re wondering *Hey, how does it get there?* As if that pushpin is guilty. You pick it up and stick it back on the board. You shake your head and watch the pushpin pseudo-comprehensively. Then you go back into the hallway. You don’t look at the painting. You go straight to the bedroom door. Hand on the latch. Just a little doubt. You

press the latch down, breathe, and open the door. "Terry!" When you see her. You burst into sobs again. Your right hand is reaching for your head. "No!" You approach her. You kneel by the edge of the bed. You bow your head, nodding in a sob, "No." You rub your hands through your face, through your hair, over your head. With watery eyes. "Terry, I don't understand. What happened?" while you keep shaking your head, "Was there something wrong?" You bow your head in some kind of shame. "Did I do something wrong then?" You swallow and get up with a sigh. You swallow again and keep shaking 'no'. "Sorry." Then you look at that pretty, kind face one last time. As if she had never been more beautiful. You turn around. You scuffle to the door. You close it without looking back.

21:43 You go to the kitchen. Hungry. Suddenly. You thought of the kitchen and were struck by hunger. You stumble to the refrigerator. You open it. The bottles in the refrigerator door are tinkling. You bend over and look. Slices of bread! There are prepared sandwiches in the refrigerator. Terry. She prepared sandwiches for him. He takes a chair and sits down, staring at the open refrigerator. Slices of bread. God, what must she have endured? What must she have felt? She knew what she was going to do. She must have planned it in advance. It was not a sudden whim. It was a considered decision. She has cleaned everything up and ... sandwiches. Oh Terry, what went through your head when you made those sandwiches. Terry, why did you make sandwiches for me when... God. You take the sandwiches from the refrigerator while your eyes get moist. You lift the corners to see what's in between. Crab salad and pastrami. No doubt about it. They are meant for you. Your favourites. Jesus! She must have got it especially for you. You cry. Sobbing, you take a bite of the crab salad sandwich. You look at the open refrigerator. Everything is neatly arranged. Some apples, butter, and a jar of mixed fruit, cream, cheese, meat (sausage, yesterday's leftovers) and some medicines in the fridge door. After the first sandwich, you eat the second one. You have no taste. Your tongue and palate are numb. But you feel obliged to eat these sandwiches. Nothing else. You wipe your tears. You

get up, take the water and reach for the cupboard above to take a glass. You pour in, put the bottle back. Standing at the counter you drink, still wiping your tears.

21.49 Again you notice the silence. Something in you wants sound now. Something in you wants silence. Quiet. As you stand at the counter, your right hand resting around the glass, your left hand resting on the corner of the countertop. A little stiffened. Take a breath again. It will be like that for the rest of the evening. When you think about it, it goes like this all life. A bit of excitement and relaxation each time. It's never a flat curve. Relax for a moment to think again. He looks forward to the blue marks on the wallpaper. Dashes, crosses, dots, squares. You loved this wallpaper when you bought it. But now it has all become normal. That's the way you are. Buy everything in a folly and then it just becomes common. Yet there are things, the most interesting, you fall in love with and you stay in love with it. Because you always discover something new in it, something beautiful. Sometimes not immediately appealing, but always interesting. Such as an album by Rush or Steely Dan. Such as paintings by Dali or Hieronymus Bosch. Like architecture from Victor Horta or Frank Gehry. Like Terry. Terry was always new. Even now. Especially now. You finally ask yourself: Why? Ring.

21.53 The doorbell. That will be the police. You sigh and get up. You walk to the door. A man in a raincoat -would they all be like that?- greets you. Serious, but kind.

"Good evening, I am detective Lens, OPD homicide."

"Homicide?"

"Don't be alarmed. That's just my department. It's standard procedure that a detective joins in cases like this. You're Jake Jensen, right?"

"Yes, come in." You are startled.

"Where is she?"

You're off the map again. Maybe because of the shock. For a moment you have no idea where, when, how and even who you are. For a moment. You blink. "... In the bedroom. Follow me." When you show the detective the way, four officers follow. Through the kitchen. Down the hall. Past the

painting. In the bedroom. "Here it is." You no longer dare to open the door.

"May I?"

"Yes, go ahead. I ..." You shake your head. Lens enters. He looks around first, then steps towards Terry and feels her throat. You stand in the doorway. Unintentionally, you keep the other four from entering. Lens gets up and sighs.

"Yes," he looks at you, "Is it ok if my colleagues investigate the room?"

"Of course." You step aside.

Lens comes to you. "I would like to ask a few more questions. But if you prefer, we can do that tomorrow."

"Uh, no, it's ok. I... yes."

"Let's sit in the living room." You lead the quiet detective into the living room. "Some routine questions, nothing special."

"Yes ... excuse me, I ... I was a little shocked when you came in ... but just ask the questions."

"What was the name of the victim?"

(Huh, victim? Oh.) "... Terry. Terry Grant."

Lens takes a notebook above and scribbles. "She lived here?"

"Yes. We live here for a year or so."

"Are you married?"

"No... we're... we're in a relationship, but we're not married." You get that feeling of guilt that you always get when you are questioned, even during an exam. One of the four comes back in and goes to Lens. He bends over and whispers something in Lens' ear. Lens nods.

"Okay, can you tell what happened?"

"I came home at... half past seven about... I heard nothing. Then I went to the kitchen... and there I found... the note."

"Which note?"

"One ... I don't know where I left it. I... I must have dropped it somewhere. I don't know."

"Don't worry, keep going." He gives a signal to the man who enters the kitchen.

“Then I... went to the bedroom and there...” You sniff. Your breath is heavy and erratic.

“Yes?”

“After that, I was... I was confused, I guess. Things were fuzzy in my head. I went outside. I wanted to get a drink... and then... I came back, and I called you.”

“Did you enter an establishment to get a drink?”

“Yes, the Senator, in Pinemore Street. I had a whisky. And some cigarettes.”

“Do you remember when you were there? Did you meet someone there?”

“I’m not sure exactly when. Ten minutes before I called the police. I didn’t... I was only there for a few minutes. I only saw the waitress.”

“Do you know the waitress?”

“Er.. no. Do I need to describe her?”

“No. I was just wondering if she was an acquaintance.”

“I don’t think I’ve ever seen her before. I don’t frequent the Senator that much.”

“Did you notice anything special about Terry today?”

You shake your head and cry. “She even seemed to be in a good mood. She...”

“Was there anything bothering her?”

You keep shaking. “Not that I know.”

“How was your relationship lately, if I may ask that?”

Now shake you with all your body. “Good. Good. I thought...”

You burst out, crying, crying. Lens stands up and pats your shoulder. He puts his notebook away.

22.07 He enters the kitchen. You hear whispers. Footsteps. Lens comes back in. “Does she have relatives?”

“Yes... her parents, and her brother ... If you do not mind, I would like to inform themselves.”

“I understand. Will you inform them today? We have to talk to them tomorrow. Standard procedure.”

“I will go see them. Today.”

Lens is looking at you. As if he wants to check in your facial expression whether you are ready, “We will have to take her for an autopsy.”

“An autopsy?”

“Our coroner needs to confirm the cause of death. Just routine in such cases.”

“Ok... Then do that.”

“Can I use your phone?”

“Of course.” You’re in the seat. You can’t grasp what’s happening. It is so confusing. All those people, all those sounds. Breaking the silence. It sounds so strange now. The muffled dial tones from the receiver in the hand of Lens.

“Hello Harry?... Lens here. Can you send a car to South Park Avenue 216B? Suicide... Thank you, Harry.” The click. “Are you okay?”

“Yes, I’ll be fine. I... I was confused for a while. But I’ll be fine.”

One of the four comes in. “George, we’re almost done.”

“Harry will be right over,” Lens answers.

There you are, sitting frozen on your couch. Waiting for something to happen. For someone to say something. You know the four will come in soon. They will look at you. Quiet. Staring. You will feel uncomfortable.

“Would you like a cup of coffee?”

“Yes, I’d like that.” You get up and enter the kitchen. Perfect timing. The four come in.

“Anyone of your coffee?” All four want something. You continue to the closet. Six cups, coffee and a filter. You fill the can one centimetre from the brim. You pour it in the coffee machine. You switch it on. You stack the cups and bring them to the living room. The five are whispering. Their conversations mute when you enter.

22.12 “The coffee is ready in no time.” You put the cups on the table. “Is there anything else I can get you?”

“No, thanks.” Sigh. Wait. Wait for Harry. You briefly wonder whether he would bring an ambulance or a hearse. Lens coughs. “Can I have the address of the parents? “

“Yes... yes, the address. Bakerstreet 47B in Kwamdong.”

“Thank you.” The four are equally nervous. 1 taps his pants with his finger. 2 bumps his ear. 3 constantly wipes under his nose. 4 looks around. Lens is calm. He bends down, folds his hands and lies his chin on it. “Are you still studying?”

“Yes. I’m in my final year. Electronics engineering.”

“How are the studies going?”

“Good, good.” Lens nods. The four look around. Lens looks at them. The coffee no longer simmers. “Coffee’s ready.” You want to get up.

“Don’t bother. Peter will get the coffee.” Peter is already an older man (in his late forties, maybe in his fifties). He gets up with a sigh, somewhat displeased, and stumbles to the kitchen. You assume that he lives with a dissatisfaction in his work. Probably missed a few promotions. But he remains silent and does not growl. Because you don’t do that when you’re in the house of the boyfriend of a suicider. (*Suicider*, is that a word?) For a moment, that dissatisfaction is not important in his work. There is Terry in the bedroom. Jake is sitting with Lens in the sofa. So now it is his duty to go for the coffee. This is important. Peter returns with the coffeepot. He looks sleepy. You observe him. Everything is slow and yet fast and - strange - you don’t think about Terry for a moment. Only about Lens and Peter and 1 and 3 and 4. How they sit there. Nervous and quiet. Waiting. How Peter pours the coffee. How they all quickly grab their cups to have something in their hands. How they drink (4 slurps). None dares to ask for milk or sugar. You think about it, but something keeps you from offering, let alone getting it. They drink.

22:18 The bell. You get up. Lens looks at him. Peter, 1 and 4 look at the door. 3 looks at Lens. You shuffle to the door. Lens follows you. You open the door. The four are behind Lens. Two men with a stretcher. “Come in,” you say, while you hold the door open and stand aside. 1 shows them the way. Peter and 4 follow them. Harry comes in. This must be Harry. His impressive stature tells you this. That’s how you imagined Harry.

“And?” he asks.

“Pills,” Lens sighs.

“Oh,” while he raises his eyes at you. Lens nods. Harry turns to you, “My condolences.”

“Thank you,” you answer. Please allow it to progress, you think. You want to get out of here. You want them gone. You want to be alone. Especially those impersonal, serious, sad, silent faces. Gone. Get out of here. You walk back to the couch and sit down. You rub your hands through your hair. Lens stays with Harry. Peter with Lens. You hear some rumbling. Just leave me alone. How can you think with all these people around you? Get the fuck out. Lens and Harry murmur something. Harry nods constantly. Peter listens. 3 comes back in and goes to the three. He whispers something. Lens nods.

“Yes,” says Harry. 3 goes back. It’s too much for you now. You close your eyes. You can’t make them disappear like that. But it helps a bit. There you are. On the couch. With your head in your hands, your arms resting on your knees, your eyes closed. You try to imagine yourself away. Away from here. But they stay and whatever you try you can’t stop noticing their presence. The actions they do. Not why, not how, just what they do. As academic data, you compile it. All this time you don’t think about Terry. Terry. Terry! The stretcher comes through. Terry.

22.26 You get up. “Terry?” You step towards the stretcher. “Terry,” like a desperate cry. “Terry!” You bring your hand to your head and stop. Right in front of the stretcher. You sob. Lens has joined you.

“Do you want to see her again?” 1 already removes the sheet.

“... It’s OK now, Terry, everything’s OK now, isn’t it?” You nod.

1 throws the sheet back over her head. You bow your head and turn around while Terry is carried out of the apartment. All except Lens step outside.

“Will you be ok?”

You nod. “Yes, I’ll be fine ... I’ll go to her parents straight away ... I’ll be fine.”

“I’ll drop by tomorrow for some more details ... in the afternoon.”

“Yes, I will be here.”

“Goodbye, Jake.” He leaves. You close the door.

22.28 Oh, my god. You stand for a moment, stumble back to the couch, plop down. You are sure now that she is dead. But understanding? Realising? Not at all. “Why, Terry?” What happened? Why are you quitting, Terry? What is wrong in your life? For the first time, you ask yourself why you haven’t seen it. Was it our relationship? You and me. Was that wrong? Tell me it’s not true. Guilt! You wonder if you are to blame. Were you too bossy, perhaps? Were you asking too much of her? Yes, you always wanted her to be beautiful. You always wished she was kind. You couldn’t bear a fight. Is that what was wrong? Didn’t we talk enough? You wanted to finish your studies, damned. She gave up her studies for you. Is that why? Did she want to finish her studies? Did she hope for a career? She wanted to become a lawyer. Did she imagine herself pacing decisively in front of the witness stand? Did she want more? Is it because you broke her dream? Stop! Did she really want to study? Have you forced her to give up her studies? Or even asked? Or recommended? Was it a mutual decision that she should stop? Did you both support the idea of living together? Did she just give in to the idea to do you a favour? Did she regret it later? Did she really want to live together? Did she want to live with you? She wanted you. Or has she just acquired you like a rash and got rid of you? Are you the problem? Perhaps in your character or in your attitude? In your surroundings? Are you not attentive enough to her? Are you short-tempered or too calm? Are you boring or do you shade her too much? Are you not really her type at all? Is it your fault? “Stop it! Terry?” You’re crying. Are you to blame for her death? Who can tell? Who can tell why Terry is dead, why she committed suicide? Why Terry? You don’t understand. Even worse. You can’t shake that feeling. You can’t resolve the painful question: Are you guilty of her death?

22.33 You must go to her parents. Call a taxi. You sigh, you rub your hand through your eyes. You pick up the phone and dial the number. (You’ve dialled it so many times for nights out in town with Terry) The tones.

“Good evening, Philip’s Taxi, Opele.”

“Good evening. This is Jake Jensen, I would like a taxi to Kwamdong.”

“Where should we pick you up?”

“South Park Avenue 216B in Opele.”

“Five minutes, sir.”

“Thank you.” You already take your coat. You fumble for your keys. You find your cigarettes. You sigh. There is light everywhere in the flat now. Yet it seems dark. Because of the silence, the emptiness. Emptiness, silence and darkness come together. No lamp can change that. You want to switch them off. All lights off. While you go to the kitchen. The kitchen is bright. Because of the white-blueish wallpaper, the white cabinets and the white table. And on the table ... The note. Someone must have picked it up. You glance at it. First in fear. Then with a sense of recognition. Then pain. Then a painful curiosity. What does that note say? Did I read it correctly? What does it all mean? You don’t remember exactly. It all happened so quickly. All so unreal, blurry. You take a chair and sit at the table. You prepare for reading. *“Jake, I’m sorry. This has nothing to do with you. I just can’t take it anymore. I can no longer keep fighting. One day you will understand. I’m sorry. Thank you. Fare well. I love you, Terry.”* You sigh and bow your head. She couldn’t keep fighting. Fighting? What against? Was it maybe...? You remember one night. The one night she was so serious you barely understood. That one night. She was in headquarters. The news began with a discussion on Nicaragua. “Can you explain to me how the hell it is possible that the United States, openly, in front of the entire world, can support a group of soldiers in another country to help them overthrow their government, with no response from the international community?” “You replied that you weren’t interested in politics. You realised she was serious. So you said you did not understand. You said it probably had to do with the fact that we live in the west. We are capitalists, just like the US. We see them as the defenders of our democracy and our economic system. We, westerners, simply assume they are doing the right thing to defend our values against the communist regimes. We have become lethargic yuppies. She went it to it more deeply. Oh God. It ended about people in general, how hypocritical and selfish all humanity had become. How now no care. She was so tired of it. How everyone is always trying to take advantage of you. How she always had to be precautious and defensive, just to prevent

others from abusing your goodwill and trust. She wished she could just be herself. She wanted everyone to be good and trustworthy. She wanted to wake up one morning and be able to say, “And now all anger and adversity are over. Now everyone is happy.” But every day she was confronted with reality. She was so tired of that. She wanted to get out. Is that why, Terry? You didn’t really understand. You hadn’t taken it serious enough. She had never even mentioned it. Is that why Terry? Was it that which bothered you? Then why didn’t you say that? Perhaps I could have helped you. Goddamn it, why have I never seen it? Terry, why did you never tell?

22.41 The taxi. You get up with the note in hand and go to the door. You put the piece of paper in your pocket. You open and close the door. You lock them, run down. You leave the building with a neutral face. The taxi driver is visibly displeased because he has a night shift. “Bakerstreet 47B, Kwamdong, please.”

“Mmm” While you close the door, the taxi driver starts. He mutters some last growls. You stare through the window. Opele flashes by. But you don’t see anything. You just look outside. A habit you developed on the bus. You always look outside. Everything always flashes by, so you never have time to really observe something. Still you look. Now, at night, you see nothing at all. Maybe it is better that way. You may not want to see anything in this silence. You don’t want to see, hear, taste, smell, touch. Preferably if you want to be away for a while. Not exist, totally gone. Let the gloomy houses flash by.

“Are you still going out?”

You close your eyes. With a faint smile, you answer, “No.” The taxi driver looks in the mirror. He sees your serious-sad face. He guesses what’s wrong with you. Why you want or need to go to Kwamdong at this hour. Why you’re so sad-serious silent. Like the mourning parade following the hearse to a burial. You close your eyes and swallow. Terry. Her parents. What will you tell them? You glance in the mirror as if you hope the taxi driver can help you. No, he cannot help you. You don’t need help at all. You just have to tell them the truth. Calm. Stay calm. You must comfort them. But

you don't know how. You lower your head again. God. You peek outside again to see if you are almost there.

22.52 The taxi drives past the water treatment unit. Halfway. Ernest and Hanna. You swallow. Good people. Ernest is an electrician. He works for a company that installs pipes in large buildings. After hours, he does the same for friends and acquaintances. For the money and the fun. He likes to simplify everything. A bit conservative, but also tolerant. He knows he cannot stop the changes. Friendly. A good man. Ernest. Claiming that you know him well is also an exaggeration. You know him as well as the neighbour. Ernest. And Hanna. Housewife, but with a teacher's diploma. She gave up her job for Terry and David. She always keeps up to date with current affairs. She is rather progressive, open to new ideas. Her father is a doctor. Hanna is also always willing to help people. Hanna. Good people. Hanna and Ernest. You need to tell them Terry is dead. Oh (you sigh) God. How can you ever tell them? Terry is dead. You rub your eyes.

22.55 The taxi slows. You close your eyes and open them. "That's exactly 24, sir."

You give him a 25 note. "Thanks, " you nod to him. The driver smiles (now he does!) There you are. Your heart beats firmly. You view the house. Ernest and Hanna. You sigh, you swallow. You take a deep breath. You enter the walking path. The door, the bell. Your finger. You push it. You sigh, wait, swallow. Oh God, you can't stand the agony. The tension. You sniff and again. You're crying. Yes, cry. It does not matter. Just cry. You wipe your tears. The lights are switched on. You pinch your lips together. You swallow, you close your eyes, you snort. Stumbling on the stairs. The light in the hall. Suddenly you want to run away. Irrational. It is too late. The door opens. Ernest in pyjama. First impression. Wonder. It is almost eleven o'clock. You are alone on the sidewalk with her parents, weeping. "Jake?" He looks at you in surprise. Then in fear. You swallow, look tearfully anxious. "Terry?" you bring your hand to your head. You breathe heavily and cry. "Terry?" Ernest louder. You sob, you break. "She is dead." It's out.

“TERRY!” You close your eyes, vibrate with your entire body, you rub your eyes and look at Ernest. Ernest, defeated, furious. You breathe heavily. You don’t sob anymore. You breathe with your entire body. Ernest swallows. “Jake, how ...?”

You swallow, take a deep breath, you swallow again and sob again in the rhythm of your breathing. You look at Ernest anxiously. You sniff. “She... she has killed her...”. That last syllable remains stuck in your sore throat. Ernest reaches for his forehead. “Oh, God!” He sighs shakily. “Come in, Jake.” He closes the door and takes you to the living room. Hanna also comes down the stairs anxiously.

“Jake... Ernest?... What is going on?... What is... Terry... Terry?” Ernest goes to her. “Terry!” She falls into Ernest’s arms. “No... No... No... No... Not Terry. Terry...” You stand in the doorway with your hand covering your eyes. You cry. This hurts. Severe pain.

23.02 You swallow, sigh, cry. All at once. Only now, only now do you really feel pain. You don’t know why. But it is there. Pain. As if they are stinging you with needles that don’t injure you, but still give you an omnipresent sense of pain. Not the feeling. Not the physical sensation of pain, nor the conscious reality of pain. But the awareness of pain. It is there. It is within you. Inwardly. Pain. As you stand there in the doorway. Helpless alone. With Ernest trying to keep up. With Hanna in the arms of Ernest. Hanna, who feels the same pain. Oh God. Hanna weeps continuously, not sobbing. She lays her head on Ernest’s shoulder and cries. Ernest trembles on his legs. Crying, his hands in her hair. His head fixed on the stairs. You don’t see it, but you think he constantly opens and closes his eyes. Hanna keeps crying. You sniff. You’re over it. You look at Ernest. Ernest lifts her head and pushes Hanna away slightly. He looks at her. “Hanna?” He looks at you. He closes his eyes and seems to nod. He turns his head back to Hanna. “Come on,” he supports his wife under her armpit. He guides her into the living room. You put yourself in the seat. Hanna and Ernest join in. Hanna is still hanging on Ernest. Stairs creaking again. Oh, no! David. David comes dashing down. The living room.

“What is going on?” anxious, curious, “Did something happen?” He likes you. His breath catches. “Jake?... Is something wrong with Terry?... Terry?” He already gets tears in his eyes. David, 15 years old, Terry’s brother. Good friend.

You swallow, you pinch your lips together. Quiet. “Terry,” You sniff, “Terry is dead.”

“Terry?” he turns and grabs his head, “Oh God, no!” He lifts his head, turns back. He looks at you questioningly.

“She ... she committed suicide.” David is startled, shakes his head. Hanna swallows, lets go of Ernest, looks at you. You know how sad, how defeated you feel and how defeated you look. It’s out. You said it. They know now. Not a relief. No relief because it’s out, because the tension, the fear is gone. Only defeat. Void. Loneliness. Pain.

23.06 David leans against the wall. Not understanding, shaking his head. Not accepting. “David?” Hanna whispers. David weeps. He tries to stop it. He can’t. Every one in the room feels this sudden pain. David lifts his head. He would rather leave. Like every person wants to leave in times like this. Getting away from pain and problems. Definitely like every teenager wants to get away from problems. Teenagers should be busy searching themselves. Not dealing with pain and loss like this. He stays. He turns to the room. He tries to stay strong. He swallows. He nods. You swallow.

“She ... she hasn’t suffered much pain anymore,” because that is what they all want to know, “she took pills.” David has a hard time with it. He stands on his trembling legs with his hands in his pockets, nodding. Ernest sighs. Hanna gets up. “Should I make coffee?”

You shake your head. “No, never mind, I ... I’m going home right away, trying to sleep.”

Ernest looks at Hanna, and half closes his eyes. Hanna still impressed, trembling, weak, vulnerable, she looks at you. “Would you do that? You can stay here if you want.” Her maternal instinct. Strange how in any situation the maternal instinct of a woman remains.

David swallows. “You can sleep in my bed. I’ll sleep on the couch.” You shake your head.

“Jake, do that, I think you’d better stay here tonight,” Ernest says in a fatherly tone that you’re not used from him.

You bend your head and your entire body. Everything becomes silent. How can such a mood suddenly change completely? First there is pain in everyone and then suddenly they all want to comfort. Ernest wants to comfort Hanna, Hanna wants to comfort David, David wants to stay strong for his parents and they all want to comfort you. It must be an instinct that lies dormant in every human being. The instinct to help those in need. Would people be good after all? Was Terry wrong? Terry! Then why did you die? You place your hand against your forehead. You snort and shake your head. You sigh. You are entitled. “Yes, I’ll stay.”

23.09 “I’ll take the couch.”

“You don’t have to, you can ...”

“Never mind, David, I’ll take the couch.”

Ernest nods, David nods. “Yes, OK.”

“Maybe we should try to sleep now,” you imagine, because there is nothing left to say. Now it is up to everyone to process it. Or try it because this is something you will never fully get over. *Only time can ease the wounds that will not heal*. But you must deal with this alone. No one can help you. No one can help you understand, help you feel.

Hanna. “Yeah, let’s go to bed. I’ll bring you a blanket, Jake.” She goes to the blanket chest.

David sighs. “Sleep well,” he says, out of habit, ignoring the irony, the cynicism in those words now.

“Sleep well,” you say too, aware of the words, although they have become meaningless to you too. Like you say ‘amen’ after a prayer. You think for a moment. Yes, sleep well, David. You better sleep well now. Tomorrow, there’s another day.

Ernest is still in the armchair with folded hands. He sighs. He brings his hand to his head and fumbles with his chin. “There was nothing wrong between you, was there?”

You shake your head. “No,” you sniff, “Ernest, I don’t understand.” You look at him anxiously. Sad.

“It’s OK,” Ernest says comfortably, paternally. What is OK? You understand him. He doesn’t blame you. It’s OK. You will probably continue talking tomorrow. It’s OK now. Just sleep. Oh Terry. You get up and go to the kitchen. Behind you, you hear Ernest get up. You turn on the light. You take a glass of water from the cupboard and pour yourself some water. You drink it in one gulp. You put it back. Hanna found a blanket. You sniff.

“Have you told your parents yet?” Hanna asks.

“No,” you suddenly look surprised, realising that you never thought about it all evening, “I’ll call them immediately.”

“Do that tomorrow,” says Ernest, “go to sleep now.”

You nod, “Yes.”

Ernest takes Hanna by her side. “Come on, Hanna.” They’re leaving the room. “Sleep well, Jake.”

“Sleep well, Ernest, Hanna.” They go up the stairs. You sigh, cut out the light. You reach for the couch... the blanket. You lay yourself down. God. 23.14 You see the LCD screen of the video. 23.14 Four hours. You said goodbye to Hank four hours ago. You went to the flat four hours ago. Hank, friend of the family. He got on very well with Terry. *Got*, you said, and *Terry*, without crying. She is gone. God. No, you know you don’t realise it yet. Far from it. You know you only felt pain because something in you said that everything changed. Irrational pain. Missing? No—You don’t miss her you. Although, now that you are on the couch with her parents, alone. You suddenly wonder what they did to her room. You don’t remember. Tell yourself what it will be like. But you can’t. Tomorrow. Tomorrow you will get up with a headache and you will arrange everything. You will be too busy. You will cry (in the same irrational way) at the funeral. A few days later you will sit at the table, alone. Only then do you feel it, only then do you really cry. You already know that. Rational. Oh, Terry, we had a good time those years. Three years. How you met her in that philosophy course. How you sat next to her, bored. How wondered what she was doing there (she came with Pauline). How she was interested. How she invited *you* to dinner at the

Shoreline. How Pauline chuckled. How you visited that party afterwards. How you talked for hours in Pauline's room. How you spent the night there (well-behaved). How you stayed together. How your father reacted when you said you wanted to live together and how your mother calmed him down. How good you have been with your father since then. How you feared she was pregnant in the third month that you were seeing each other, the trip to the South of France. Terry. How you stroked her hair. How you caressed her face. How you kissed her neck. How she embraced you. How she kissed you. How you made love to her. You smile, memories. It saddens you. Over. All over. Never again. Terry's gone. Dead. Suicide. Why on earth did she commit suicide? What was so insurmountable? Was it that hypocrisy in the world? Was there really nothing wrong between us? There was nothing, was there? I wasn't that blind if there really was something so bad... I should have seen it. Why haven't I seen anything? Terry, why didn't you say anything? Did you think I wouldn't understand you? Did you think I couldn't help you? Why didn't you let me help you? What pain was so bad? Was your life so pointless? Terry, why are you leaving us here with all those questions? It is too late now. Terry can't tell us anymore. Guilt. You keep wondering, for years you will keep wondering if you had any blame, what would be there to blame you for. Who is at fault here, or is there no question of blame or guilt at all? Terry, why? Was it a whim? No, no, the sandwiches, the refrigerator, the kitchen. She planned it. She thought about it. Definitely. God. It is so incomprehensible. So unreal. But still. "Terry, what am I going to do without you?" "You breathe sighs. Slowly falling into an agonising sleep. You can't grasp what is happening, what exactly has happened, what is yet to come. Tomorrow you will get up and not realise it. You will not feel it. You will not feel it the day after tomorrow. Only pain. We all feel pain. It may take days before you realise it. Some never r it.