

*Misha's Party*  
Richard Nelson and Alexander Gelman

Scene: The night of August 20, 1991. The Ukrain Hotel, Moscow. The Coup.  
Dramatic

Katia: a woman sharing a painful memory, 40-50

Mikhail has invited all his ex-wives and their husbands to attend his 60th birthday celebration. Here, his first wife, Katia, shares the sad story of his cruel dissertation of her.

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KATIA: I remember—not laughing, but crying with Misha.

[FIODOR: Listen to this.]

KATIA: It was winter too. *(She eats, sips, continues.)* Perhaps the same winter, Natasha. Masha, you were—five. And a beautiful child. *(She takes another bite.)* I knew that Mikhail was seeing another woman. We'd been married six years and this was not the first. With some men—you know... *(Shrugs.)* It's the glands I think. Then one afternoon, I was standing there at the kitchen table and I can see him telling me: he's leaving us. Masha and me. He's saying: Katia, I am leaving you. *(Beat.)* He's taking his things, he's moving in with this woman, he wouldn't give me your name, Natasha. Not yet. I try to joke with him—this is impossible. A wife you can leave, but there's a child here, whom you love. *(She looks at Masha, then takes another bite.)* But your mind is made up. It's been an agonizing decision. This is why you've been so preoccupied of late, you tell me. Because you'd been trying to make up your mind. *(Beat.)* Suddenly I'm crying. I'm thinking crazy thoughts—how are we going to live? I'm thinking: what are you taking with you? I'm thinking: am I such a bad lover? I'd wondered that often before—with the other girls he's gone out with. The tears are pouring down my face and I'm hysterical. *(She eats.)* He doesn't dare look at me, then Masha runs in—do you remember this?

[MASHA: Yes.]

KATIA: She wants to know what is happening, so—I tell her. Your

another woman.

father's running off with ~~another woman~~. This woman who is ruining both our lives. He tells me to stop it. Masha runs out of the room crying. She's screaming in the bedroom. I begin breaking things. You at first try to grab my arm but... *(Shrugs.)* Then I look at you, Misha. For the first time since you told me; and I see that you are crying too—weeping—uncontrollably. *(Turns to Natasha.)* Did he tell you this?

*(Natasha shakes her head.)*

I didn't think he would. This weeping—it calms me. I get control of myself. And I take Mikhail in my arms and say—it'll be fine. It'll be OK. And I kiss him on the cheek, on the forehead, on the mouth. I never loved you more than I did at that moment, when I was letting you go. *(Beat.)* That is why I never fought the divorce. I never hounded you for money. Two years you went without paying anything—

[MIKHAIL: I had nothing.]

KATIA: I said not one word. Because I loved you. Fiodor knows all of this. He's heard me tell this story a hundred times.