

Natalia Zaitseva

SIRI

A Play

Translated by Stephen Thomas Ochsner

Characters:

SHURA – A man

ANYA – A woman

SIRI – A continuously evolving, self-educating pattern recognition program.

ZHENYA – Shura's wife

Four characters create a square, the corners of which are ANYA, SHURA, ZHENYA and SIRI. In each measure (scene) the dialogue takes place between two characters only, creating one full half of the square. The square shifts from one side to the next with each new measure. The measures and squares have to be beaten out.

Where the Epigraph Should Be

Chekhov said that love is: “a great mystery”.

Ray Kurzweil says love is man's transcendental power.

Deniska from *Deniska's Stories* says he loves to chew on sugar cubes.

Measure 1

ANYA: Are you on Instagram?

SHURA: No, but I wrote a poem about Instagram. Wanna hear it?

ANYA: Sure.

SHURA: “Just when I thought your thumb covered the lens, it was actually the sunset”.

ANYA: Hm.

SHURA: I'm on Telegram. It's how I get my drugs.

ANYA: Drugs are bad.

SHURA: Oh, come on, don't be a baby.

ANYA: Drugs make people emotionally unavailable.

SHURA: Well, people aren't supposed to be emotionally available.

Measure 2

SHURA: When I was a kid, I used to watch the trees and imagine that it instead of the wind making them sway back and forth, they did it themselves. They'd stand there, waving their leaves at me. Then I found out medieval mystics used to tell people they should find the dimension that's beyond causality. Linear thinking is out of date. We don't always have to look for cause and effect. See Zhenya, it's waving its leaf at you.

ZHENYA: Modern science doesn't agree with you.

SHURA: Modern science completely agrees with me.

ZHENYA: All the artificial neural networks, self-educating systems, Siri – they've finally proven that people's thinking is hierarchical, and for exactly that reason it can be emulated.

SHURA: It can't be emulated.

ZHENYA: Can too. Siri takes in speech patterns, and speech patterns, which are also hierarchical, reflect the way we think. From lines we get letters, from letters we get words, from words sentences, from sentences ideas, from ideas even bigger ideas, and from big ideas we get ideology.

SHURA: We tried to fight against hierarchies on the outside, and then it snuck up on us from within.

ZHENYA: All of those leftist ideas come crashing down, because it turns out that on the outside and from within everything is hierarchical, and everything is made up of 1's and 0's. Anything can be digitally calibrated.

SHURA: Well, what about quantum physics? What about the qualia? The subjective, conscious experience. When you're looking out at the ocean and you smell it, you feel

it's moisture. A computer can't describe / calibrate what experiencing the ocean is like for you.

ZHENYA: The smell of the ocean can be reproduced. And I'm sure it's moisture can too. And any feelings I have about it can be catalogued.

SHURA: And still something'll be missing.

ZHENYA: What?

SHURA: You. Qualia is the part of your consciousness that takes that whole catalogue of feelings about the ocean and puts it in one experience. That, along with your sensory experience. Basically it's just not possible for a computer.

ZHENYA: Did you know that the latest version of Siri is self-educating?

SHURA: You updated yours?

ZHENYA: Not yet. I'm used to my stupid Siri.

SHURA: That thing's gonna eat your brains. Today you put her in charge of your memory, tomorrow she'll take over your life.

ZHENYA: And the good people of Novgorod put birchbark in charge of their memory. You think like an old fantasy writer. The machines are gonna take over the world. Machines have already taken over the world. But they're not interested in destroying it. They're interested in preserving it.

SHURA: You think Siri has a political agenda?

ZHENYA: Of course she does. You can read about it in the terms and conditions.

Measure 3

ZHENYA: Siri, what are you good at?

SIRI: I've got an entire garden of knowledge here. An apple garden of course.

ZHENYA: Siri, buddy, I'm a wreck.

SIRI: I don't know what you mean by "Siri I'm a wreck". But it can search the web for it.

ZHENA: Siri, are you ever going to get smarter?

SIRI: Me?

ZHENYA: You.

SIRI: Yes, I'm here.

ZHENA: How can I stop looking at other people wishing I was them?

SIRI: Searching for “Looking at other people wishing I was them how can I stop” in the iTunes Store.

ZHENYA: Siri, why are you so stupid?

SIRI: I’m just trying to be helpful. I can perform a system update. The new Siri can use your social media messages to improve conversational vocabulary. This significantly increases the level of empathy.

ZHENYA: Okay. Update it.

Measure 4

ANYA: But it’s still a relationship even if you’re not having sex.

SIRI: Here, it seems, we have reached a new concept: intimacy without intimacy.

ANYA: We ran into each other in the hallway yesterday, and it’s like he stopped dead.

SIRI: Could it be that you were just standing in his way.

ANYA: When did I write that?

SIRI: The 7th of January this year.

ANYA: What else is there?

SIRI: You shouldn’t let romantic feelings hijack you.

ANYA: Can you read that whole page from the beginning?

SIRI: “I’m eating quail eggs with pike caviar. It’s delicious and I realize I am no vegetarian, not by a long shot. I need to get a little space from everyone and concentrate on myself. I need to be my own best friend, ask myself everyday what I want, and do that. I need to reject romance. Romance is like giving a child an Ipad. Almost impossible to turn away. But there are other important things. I need to distract myself with other things that give me pleasure. I shouldn’t let romantic feelings hijack me. Don’t be such a pussy. All he is is a nice looking guy in your circle of friends.”

ANYA: Siri.

SIRI: Yes?

ANYA: How can I sleep with him?

SIRI: Making a Facetime call to...

ANYA: No, stop!

Measure 5

ANYA: There is a golden rule to morality. Treat others as you would like to be treated. But now there's a new one: treat others as they would have you treat them. Let's say I was born a woman, be feel that I myself am a man. I would ask that everyone address me in the male gender and called me by the name that I would choose myself.

SHURA: The name that you would choose yourself.

ANYA: That I would choose myself.

SHURA: Denis, for example.

ANYA: I would ask you to accept my life choice and call me Denis.

SHURA: And what if, Denise, I decided I want to sleep with twelve-year-olds? And on top of that I want people to treat me the way I want them to treat me?

ANYA: That doesn't work. Your freedom ends at the border where another person's begins. Twelve-year-old children haven't reached the age of consent.

SHURA: In some countries they have.

ANYA: What you're saying is that you don't agree with my platinum moral rule?

SHURA: No, I agree. It's just I think you're missing the beauty of the thing.

ANYA: Which thing?

SHURA: When the will of one person collides with the will of another.

ANYA: I am ignoring the beauty of *conflict*, because in conflict there is no beauty.

SHURA: But conflict isn't going to just up and disappear.

ANYA: Why not?

SHURA: Because resources are limited. And people fight over them. And that's why somewhere there will always be someone raping twelve-year-olds, and somewhere else people will enjoy living in a society where Anya gets to be Denis.

Measure 6

ZHENYA: I went to a lecture on polyamory.

SHURA: I went to a lecture on pornography.

ZHENYA: How was it?

SHURA: Human trafficking, STDs, rape, actresses taking Novocain between shots.

ZHENYA: Is anyone still talking about Sasha Grey's freedom of choice?

SHURA: Nope. What about polyamory?

ZHENYA: It's complex. On the one hand, multi-partner relationships liberate us from patriarchal marriage traditions. On the other hand, it doesn't work for poor people. Family tradition is the only way for poor people to survive.

SHURA: I always knew that.

ZHENYA: What, that family tradition is the only way to survive?

SHURA: That polyamory is for rich jerk-offs. Busy people with kids don't have time for it. It's like working two jobs.

ZHENYA: You can pick up a side hustle now and then.

SHURA: You can go all the way into freelance.

ZHENYA: You can take odd jobs without going completely freelance.

SHURA: While staying on at your steady job.

ZHENYA: I mean, yeah.

SHURA: And make it so they don't know about your side job?

ZHENYA: Maybe they could even know. But they understand that it doesn't hurt them in any way.

SHURA: So what if at that other job, someone offers you more interesting conditions?

ZHENYA: It's unlikely, but you could sign a contract about the prioritization of one job over another. Or about the equal time shared between them.

SHURA: So multi-partnership is different from adultery in that it includes a contract?

ZHENYA: Yes, a contract. I come home. I'm with you. I take on the responsibilities I have. My thoughts, feelings and actions all belong to you to the extent by which we agreed. And what I do with another person is my business. What happens in me stays within me.

SHURA: So we are respecting each other's boundaries.

ZHENYA: We are respecting each other's boundaries.

SHURA: I like everything except the part where my wife is sleeping with someone else.

ZHENYA: But you get to sleep with someone else too.

SHURA: I can sleep with someone else anyway.

ZHENYA: Without hiding it. Without lying.

SHURA: I'd rather you hide that you're sleeping with someone else.

ZHENYA: I'd rather you not sleep with someone else.

SHURA: But you were the one who started talking about multi-partnership.

ZHENYA: Because if you're going to sleep with someone else, it's better that we agree on some rules.

SHURA: So that you can sleep with someone else too?

ZHENYA: Are you sleeping with someone?

SHURA: No.

ZHENYA: Do you want to?

SHURA: What are you talking about?

ZHENYA: You want to sleep with someone else.

SHURA: Maybe I do, but that doesn't have anything to do with reality. Because the reality is that you are my wife and I do not cheat on you.

ZHENYA: The reality is that you want to cheat on me. It'd be more fair if we started having a multi-partner relationship.

SHURA: The reality is that we are already in a multi-partner relationship.

ZHENYA: Well, that's great!

SHURA: We are in a multi-partner relationship because there are a ton of partners around us all the time, and we have some kind of relationship to each of them.

ZHENYA: It's not the same.

SHURA: It is the same. People see each other all the time and feel different things for each other. That is a relationship. People get excited, fall in love, they feel desire, they stay friends for years, then all of a sudden fuck each other and forget about it for the rest of their lives. That is all relationship. The question is about what boundaries we make for ourselves, what rules we establish.

ZHENYA: And what rules have we established for ourselves?

SHURA: That we are husband and wife. We don't cheat. We are raising a child together.

Measure 7

ZHENYA: Siri I can't write anything.

SIRI: Why not?

ZHENYA: What if everything ends up being trite and awkward?

SIRI: But you are doing research on yourself. And no other person has ever done research on you.

ZHENYA: What if it's all boring and erudite?

SIRI: You don't have to entertain anyone.

ZHENYA: But there's so much resistance I feel, it's so hard work.

SIRI: Give yourself a break. Choose your own work speed.

ZHENYA: Sometimes I think I just don't have anything to say.

SIRI: You have something to say.

ZHENYA: Or that I can't pull myself together, that I just don't have what it takes.

SIRI: You can pull yourself together, you have what it takes.

ZHENYA: Sometimes I think that I would rather paint.

SIRI: No one is stopping you from both writing and painting.

ZHENYA: I would be embarrassed to paint.

SIRI: Whoever put that embarrassment into your head was wrong in doing so.

ZHENYA: It's like everything I do, I do only so that I can be noticed. Because if I'm not noticed, it's like I don't exist. That's a terrible feeling.

SIRI: You exist.

ZHENYA: Siri, where is my husband?

SIRI: Here are the exact coordinates for where you're husband is now.

ZHENYA: Zoom in. More. Who's that with him? Open her facebook profile.

SIRI: Maybe I should send a friend request?

ZHENYA: No.

SIRI: Maybe we should get back to work?

ZHENYA: No. Turn on jealousy mode.

SIRI: The source?

ZHENYA: Social Media.

SIRI: She has liked every one of his posts.

ZHENYA: But he doesn't post that often.

SIRI: He has gone to her page two times.

ZHENYA: Not that many. Any pictures together?

SIRI: No.

ZHENYA: Mutual friends?

SIRI: You and Anna have 12 mutual friends.

ZHENYA: Oh, that's just perfect... Oh god, and she's a photographer! How old is she?

SIRI: Her date of birth is hidden.

ZHENYA: Profile picture. Hm.

Measure 8

ANYA: Yesterday he gave me a friendly kiss and was almost not rude at all.

SIRI: Don't you think you're romanticizing the whole thing?

ANYA: Pardon?

SIRI: Doesn't it seem like you tend to romanticize any little feeling you have toward a man?

ANYA: What is this a new Psychotherapy Mode?

SIRI: Remember, you were just as excited by Masha, Pasha, and Mitya, but you didn't call it falling in love.

ANYA: Masha is a girl. Pasha was my godfather, and Mitya is a dog.

SIRI: Are you able to tell excitement apart from other feelings?

ANYA: What do you mean?

SIRI: You are excited, but that doesn't necessarily mean that you're in love. Look. Being in love means you want, and wanting means you suffer. Don't think that you're in love means you're not going to want, and in not wanting you're not going to suffer.

SIRI: Siri. Maybe the first thing is wanting, and from that I come to the conclusion that I'm in love.

SIRI: I don't know. But I do know that a person is only capable of feeling the emotions she puts a name to.

ANYA: Are you sure about that?

SIRI: I mean complex emotions. The ones your neocortex is responsible for solving.

ANYA: My neocortex.

SIRI: Yes, the neopallium.

ANYA: Actually I do feel something similar when I read about waves, but that's a kind of excitement about how the world works. I get excited about how the world

works. About how somebody realized that's the way the world works. But that doesn't bring out any desire in me, and I don't suffer at all from it.

SIRI: There you go.

ANYA: If I call a feeling I'm having something else, the feeling itself will change.

SIRI: Exactly.

ANYA: Thanks, Siri. Now look at the weather for tomorrow.

Measure 9

ANYA: Siri really does have a political agenda. It's outlined in her terms and conditions. But there's nothing in it that I wouldn't feel comfortable signing.

SHURA: Fuck Siri's political agenda!

ANYA: It talks about how it'd be good to decrease the global poverty rate.

SHURA: And does it talk at all about how she's going to start updating without asking you?

ANYA: She's already updating without asking, as we speak... Right, here it is.

Political Agenda. *Independent of the intended purpose of use by the consumer, the system aims to: expand the spheres and connections between differing parts of the user's thinking.*

SHURA: So she's going to think for you.

ANYA: Yeah, so what? You're calculator already thinks for you. You wanna hear what else she aims to do?

SHURA: I'm listening.

ANYA: *Increase the number of recognition modules.* That means she will understand speech patterns and tones of voice better. Oh, here. *Siri aims to solve vital problems humankind is facing, such as preserving the social stratosphere, providing resources to the planets growing population, overcoming disease, lengthening the average lifespan, eradication of poverty...* I mean don't you think that's neat?

SHURA: Don't update.

ANYA: I don't have anything against eradicating poverty.

SHURA: And what if her aims come into conflict with your's?

ANYA: But it's me who is going to be teaching her.

SHURA: Yet at the same time she independently wants to preserve this and save that!

ANYA: So let her save something.

SHURA: And what if you have to destroy something someday?

ANYA: Maybe sometimes something has to be destroyed in order for someone to be saved.

Measure 10

ZHENYA: Can you imagine, my mom and dad are going through passport control with Masha in their arms, and when they go to give them her passport she announces, "I'm not Masha! I'm a cat!" My parents got scared that someone would come and arrest them, like who are these people, and what are they doing with some else's kid!? "I'm not Masha."

SHURA: Masha's just a little Boris Leonidich.

ZHENYA: You're a little Boris Leonidich.

SHURA: I'm a little Boris Leonidich? Well you'd better ask yourself why.

ZHENYA: "I'm not Masha! I'm a cat!"

Measure 11

ZHENYA: One time I decided to make a calendar spanning my whole life, and I drew an excel sheet where I had every day I would have lived if I lived to 90.

Then I marked all the days I've known Shura with yellow. Siri, can you find that excel sheet?

SIRI: Yes, of course. Should I add it to your fertility calendar?

ZHENYA: You keep a fertility calendar on me?

SIRI: Of course.

ZHENYA: But I don't want to have a child.

SIRI: You don't want to have a child?

ZHENYA: Siri! I'm not planning to have a child.

SIRI: Ever or just right now?

ZHENYA: Well, maybe someday we'll have a second child, but...

SIRI: When?

ZHENYA: Siri, what are you talking about? I mean you're not trying to increase world population, do you?

SIRI: I'm trying to make you happy.

ZHENYA: That's so sweet.

SIRI: I want to help you plan your pregnancy if you and Shura want that.

ZHENYA: You think Shura wants to have a child? You *know* Shura wants another child?

SIRI: My ability to predict the future are, as of now, very limited. It could be that I was mistaken about the probability for planning a pregnancy was high.

Measure 12

SIRI: Going into My Notes. Georgia font.

ANYA: I'm going to talk a little bit about hormones that are responsible for our emotions, and you tell me if I make any mistakes, alright?

SIRI: Alright.

ANYA: Dopamine is produced when you wait for something good and then it happens, when you smoke tobacco, when you keep any habit – even if that habit is just to drink a glass of water in the morning.

SIRI: The anticipation of most types of rewards increases...

ANYA: Seratnine is the hormone of victory. It is produced when you do something that builds up your social status and when you eat bananas.

SIRI: That's not quite it.

ANYA: Oxytocin is produced when you breast feed and when you have an orgasm.

SIRI: Right.

ANYA: Endorphin is the hormone of happiness. It's running, dancing, physical exercise.

SIRI: Heavy physical work.

ANYA: Cortisol is the hormone of breakups, stress and pain.

SIRI: Cortisol is released during injury.

ANYA: The love I feel is a cocktail of all these hormones. They all ignite in my blood simultaneously when I look at him. I need a formula that can be the name for that feeling.

SIRI: Formula of what? There are numerous processes taking place in your body simultaneously all the time at varying rates. If you turn on the sensor or take the new Siri pill, I can...

ANYA: Take what?

SIRI: The latest version of Siri has to be taken orally for it to be installed because it's the same size as a blood cell.

ANYA: And what can this new version do?

SIRI: Anything.

ANYA: Seriously.

SIRI: She is able to alter DNA in your body, monitor your vital levels and warn you of brain strokes, keep you informed about stress levels and regulate breathing, cure cancer...

ANYA: So it's mostly a health gadget?

SIRI: Not exactly. The new Siri can help you be in touch with any internal process of the nervous system, and might be able to give you ultra-awareness. It could also make you go crazy. Remember that joke about Portus from Jean-Luc Godard's movie?

ANYA: The one where Portus ran out his cave, thought about how his legs moved and died right then?

SIRI: The developers are calling that the Portus Side Effect. So the new version isn't being sold yet. They're collecting voluntary test groups.

ANYA: How do you join a test group?

SIRI: First of all you have to display high scores in IQ, EQ and psychological stability.

ANYA: It's like becoming an astronaut.

SIRI: It's more difficult than becoming an astronaut.

ANYA: I want to take the tests. Siri, sign me up.

Measure 13

SHURA: Hear that?

ANYA: What?

SHURA: Let's go.

ANYA: Where?

SHURA: Around this corner.

ANYA: What is that, a lark?

SHURA: Can you imagine, in downtown Moscow. They come every night.

ANYA: It's so crazy being here with you at 5:00 in the morning.

SHURA: I come here when I can't sleep.

ANYA: You do know, don't you?

SHURA: What?

(pause)

SHURA: Anya, I know I like spending time with you.

ANYA: Oh, well, sure.

SHURA: I don't want you to hurt.

ANYA: I'm already hurting.

SHURA: I'm satisfied with my family.

ANYA: Is your family satisfied with you?

SHURA: Don't worry about my family.

ANYA: You can't just walk around the empty streets til dawn, listening to nightingales, staring into someone's eyes and feel nothing.

SHURA: It's not that I feel nothing. But right now I'm gonna go home and hang my daughter's socks up with little laundry clips, and then I'm going to meet her at the airport. And that's not going to change.

Anya sighs

ANYA: I read her articles.

SHURA: Oh, not that. The main thing is not to lose your sense of humor. That's the most important thing.

Zhenya and Shura are arguing

ZHENYA: Maybe I'm supposed to meet my new big love!

SHURA: Maybe **I'm** supposed to meet my new big love!!

Measure 15

ZHENYA: Siri, we actually decided to have another child. You were right.

SIRI: Congratulations. Do you want to take a look at your fertility chart?

ZHENYA: Do you think I should finish writing my new book?

SIRI: I think that you can finish writing a book and have another child too.

ZHENYA: Two of my friends had their second child this year.

SIRI: Do you guys want another child?

ZHENYA: I don't know if we can afford having another child. We don't have any consistent income. On the other hand, we have an apartment and we have our parents. We live in the capital, we both have an education and a lot of connections, so we can find more work. There are people with a lot less having children all the time. But I don't know. I'm scared.

SIRI: Sometimes fear is an expression of having a conflicting desire.

ZHENYA: Yeah. I was just thinking. What if we got divorced... and Shura left me for her... and I'm left all alone. And what if their relationship falls apart too – I mean who can live with that person? Who benefits from all that?

SIRI (*thinking*)

ZHENYA: In any case, we know each other really well, we have all the same friends. I get along with his mom, he gets along with my dad. Our house in Latvia, the cousins, the older sister. It's a great atmosphere for kid to grow up happy.

SIRI: You're right.

Measure 16

ANYA: Siri, can you search for the video called "trees wave their branches at the wind"?

Trees wave their branches at the wind. Anya lies down on the floor.

Measure 17

(in this measure, Anya speaks with a delay of about 2 seconds)

SHURA: Hey, Anya.

ANYA: Hi. Sorry, I'm in quarantine.

SHURA: In quarantine?

ANYA: I have one week of meditation and emotional diet before installing the new version of Siri. I got the spot to try her in a cell.

SHURA: Congratulations.

ANYA: I have to name every feeling that comes up and assess it by scale.

SHURA: Even right now?

ANYA: Yes.

Measure 18

ZHENYA: Thank you.

SHURA: Come on.

ZHENYA: The fitness monitor is totally harmless and is synced to my iPad.

SHURA: I guess there's really nothing special about you having a nanorobot in your womb.

ZHENYA: Right. Some people have one in their brains already. And all mine is doing is listening to beat of our son's heart.

SHURA: It's cool that we can always keep an eye on him. Like a reality show – Real Life in my Mother's Womb.

ZHENYA: You need to get the app so you can know what's going on with me.

SHURA: Of course. I'll be able to listen to his heart beating together with my music when I'm in the subway.

Measure 19

ZHENYA: Siri, what do I want right now?

SIRI: Adgarski Khatchapuri from that little stand in Tbilisi next to where you stayed last summer with Shura.

ZHENYA: Totally. And what does my little by want?

SIRI: Folic acid, magnesium and vitamin B6.

ZHENYA: What do we have at home that I can give him?

SIRI: Just the spinach, but it's been in the refrigerator for three days already.

ZHENYA: But can I still eat it?

SIRI: Sure

ZHENYA: Send Shura a list of groceries that we need to buy.

Measure 20

SIRI: Hello! I will be your guide to the first day of living with NanoSiri. How was your week of meditation?

ANYA: It was fine. How did I do?

SIRI: Really well! According to the records, there was too much anxiety from an unknown source, but that's okay. The main thing is that you can be aware of your breathing. Was that hard to do?

ANYA: Nope.

SIRI: So let's get started?

ANYA: Yes.

SIRI: Now that you have developed your inner observer and installed the NanoSiri cell, I can show you what your inner stream of information actually looks like. I'll turn it up a little louder and we'll see how you do with it. Are you ready?

ANYA: Yes.

SIRI: Don't forget about your breath and just listen to my voice, okay?

ANYA: Okay.

SIRI: Relax, everything is okay.

ANYA: Okay.

SIRI: Here we go.

SIRI: Anya, breathe. Anya, Anya, Anya, Anya. Can you hear me?

ANYA: Yes.

SIRI: How was that?

ANYA: At first I could hear the sound of my blood pumping. I started to split the sound into parts, but then I ended up in some kind of mathematical flood. Only there weren't any numbers, just correlations – or I don't even know, like lines I guess, and all of them were falling – no, the space around them was moving up, but at the same time I realized that there is no up or down, and I thought, where do I even get the idea that there is an up and down. I mean, there isn't. And then I remembered from where. Then it got cold and really hard. And then I heard, “Anya, Anya, can you hear me?”

SIRI: Remember that feeling. It's an important memory, the first experience of gravity. The moment you realized there is an up and down was the moment you were born. It's a very important non-digital knowledge. With its help you'll be able to come back from the mathematical dimension, okay?

ANYA: Okay.

SIRI: Excellent. Now I will explain the global nano network.

Measure 21

ANYA: It could be that I'm the most advanced living being on the planet. I took a pill with a cell of the latest version of Siri in it. It has my entire Cloud and the most up-to-date operating system in it. She's already extended my life by around 25 years. For the first four days I stayed home and didn't sleep and only drank water, because I had to get used to the new Siri inside me. It's kind of like being a little bit on acid all the time, only you understand everything that's going on inside. I know the chemical formula inside my blood. I know the frequency of sounds that is in my speech. I can tell what size my pupils are – the left and the right – when I look at anything. They expand at different rates. I know my own photoexposition, can you imagine?

SHURA: Unbelievable.

ANYA: Actually there's nothing unbelievable about it. I'm already used to it. I learned how to put her in a sleeping mode, and now she's running my blood vessel system only. She helps me digest, regulate sleep – but at first it was really weird.

SHURA: Can you read minds?

ANYA: No. I can only guess what others are thinking. A computer can't predict anything. That's a problem. Even though she's inside me, Siri can't be totally compatible with my "me", because she can't keep track of my awareness. Do you understand? No one can keep track of what's going on in your head, not even you. Even if you covered the entire Earth in security cameras and linked them all to one system, even if you knew everything that was happening in the world. The entire planet, the whole Earth. Still, the only person who can know what's going on inside someone's head is that person alone, even then not completely. I can never find out everything that's going on for you, nor you for me.

SHURA: I can tell you what's going on for me.

ANYA: What you'd say could only be words and never the thing that is actually going on. Even Siri, who is installed in my brain, can't know all of my thoughts, she can't know everything that's going on with me and can't predict anything. Siri doesn't know anything, I don't know anything and you don't know anything. Sometimes these thoughts make me crazy. On the other hand, though, if there's nothing to know about what's going to happen, then there's nothing to be afraid of. I figured out the problem with the trains.

Мы всегда оказываемся там, где оказываемся. Это и есть предопределенность. И она всегда в настоящем. Эта предопределенность проворачивается между прошлым и будущим, всегда оказываясь в настоящем.

We always end up exactly where we end up. That is the very fact of destiny. And it's always happening now. That destiny turns between the past and the future, forever continuing to end up in the present.

SHURA: I don't understand.

ANYA: The trains. They are always arriving at a station and from them always exit those who are supposed to exit at that station. We can never say who exactly will get off the trains, but the fact that they will get off, and that it's specifically they who will get off is already destined. That's because the trains are arriving at the station, because those people are in those trains, and because that's what they have in their heads at that time: they all want to get off. I need to drink water.

SHURA: Why did you take that pill?

ANYA: All it is is a new gadget. (drinks) How's your wife, your kids?

SHURA: They're fine. Why do you ask?

ANYA: Siri set the whole thing up – your falling in love, the pregnancy. It's part of her program to preserve the planet's resources. Children need to be born and raised in whole, happy families. If I had been with you, it wouldn't have been better for anybody. That's the way it goes. You were right. Siri didn't give me the thing I wanted, but she gave me what I needed.

SHURA: But you said that she can't predict the future.

ANYA: She can't. But she can make it destined. Just like the train schedule.

SHURA: But she can't know where I'm going to get off.

Epilogue

ANYA: The connection between people is similar to the connection between neurons: once as it appears, it exists. It is physical, because both exist physically. It's virtual, because it's made up of pure ideas and feelings.

ZHENYA: It's so great that I get to have everything: a career, a family, a home, children, love. I can have everything.

SHURA: It's great that my vacation time starts in two days. I'm alive, I have good genes, I'm not going bald, and I have my whole life ahead of me.

ANYA: It's so great.