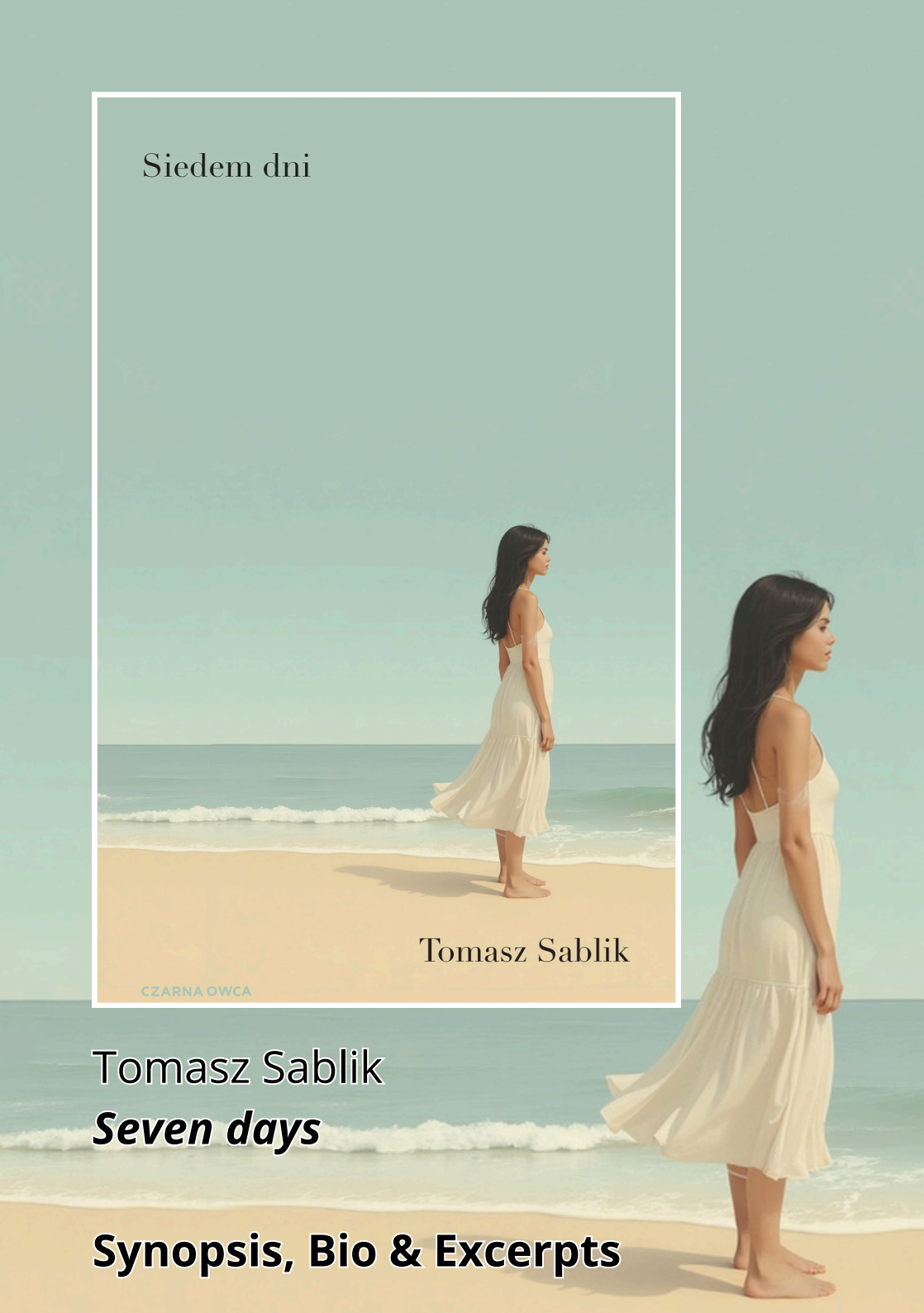
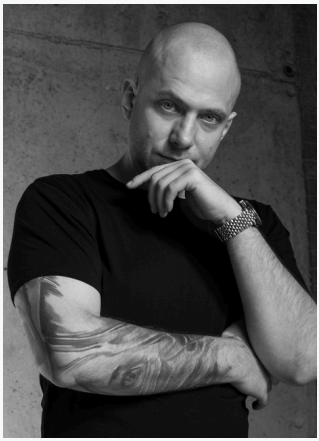


Tomasz Sablik

Seven days

Synopsis, Bio & Excerpts



Tomasz Sablik

About the author

Tomasz Sablik is a writer born in Bielsko-Biała whose books delve into the labyrinths of the human mind. An introspective soul, he finds solace within the walls of his own home, channelling his fascination with human psychology into hauntingly vivid narratives.

Seven days
Tomasz Sablik

Contemporary

June 2025
256 pages

4.0/ 36 ratings/ 14 reviews
7.1/ 123 ratings/ 61 reviews

Can one week really change your whole life?

The Sicilian sun, the deep blue sea, and what seem to be carefree summer holidays at a seaside hotel. But each guest has arrived with more than just a suitcase of holiday clothes. Four people. Four lives. Four different perspectives. And seven days that will change everything.

Roma comes with the man she loves, unaware that within days she will uncover a truth that will shatter everything she believed. Chiara escapes to the beach every morning before dawn, alone with her thoughts of death. Stanisław knows that some things in life are beyond repair. Lena, for the first time, feels that happiness might be within reach — but will that feeling survive the return to everyday life?

A moving story about the strength born in life's hardest moments. About friendships forged in the shadow of tragedy. And about how sometimes we must lose everything to truly find ourselves.

It's an unassuming book, without overwhelming emotions, but with immense strength inside.
nakanapie.pl, literary blog

- Sablik translates his experience from writing horror into another genre, evoking the same intense suspense and emotions.
- The language is light, without excessive dramatization – all the tension lies between the lines.
- You simply can't put it down – incredibly gripping!

Ask your boyfriend about Sylwia K. Better yet, check his phone. The code is 8980. Have fun, you idiot. (No, this is not a mistake).

The fact that the phone code was matching, served as final confirmation that the text message was not a mistake. After entering the last digit of the code, the numeric keypad disappeared, opening the doors to the entire contents of the smartphone. Roma felt like an intruder. She sat on the toilet seat, wearing only a T-shirt and panties, with the bathroom door locked. It was almost four o'clock. She had made sure that Rafał drank more that evening. Before going to bed, he tried to get to her, but luckily she didn't have to fend him off because he fell asleep on top of her, which would have been funny if it weren't for the fact that she was about to come face to face with Sylwia K.

Seven days
Synopsis by Anna Władyka-Leittretter

The novel is divided into chapters, each of which corresponds to one of the seven days mentioned in the title. In each chapter, we follow the story from the perspective of a different character (indicated at the beginning of the respective chapter), who acts as a narrator. The story unfolds day by day, and the tension between the characters gradually builds up, leading to a surprising and turbulent finale.

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Roma and Rafał – a couple in their thirties with a difficult and turbulent relationship. During their stay, Roma discovers that Rafał is most likely cheating on her. Rafał's body is entirely covered with tattoos, which are his distinguishing mark.

Chiara and Mikołaj – a couple in their thirties, which is confronted with a completely new life situation. Chiara has had an accident and is now in a wheelchair. This turned their lives upside down, and Mikołaj has taken on the role of an (sometimes overly) protective and caring partner.

Stanisław, Maria and Lena – a married couple in their fifties and their teenage daughter (Lena). Stanisław is struggling with financial problems and debts in Poland, which he tries to hide from his family at all cost. He booked the expensive holiday despite their financial woes.

Day One

Roma is nearly thirty and insists on being called by this name rather than her given one. She adores her boyfriend, but it seems she doesn't fully understand him. For her, this trip is a chance for intimacy: seven uninterrupted days with the man she wants to spend her life with. Yet even on the plane she already senses, **Rafał** pulling away: he avoids taking photos together, brushes off her attempts at closeness and seems more interested in the scenery than in her.

Chiara is intelligent, bitter, sharp-tongued, and craves independence, but cannot escape the reality of her paralysis. She envies the freedom of other couples, their careless laughter. She notices **Rafał** immediately and feels drawn to his rebellious aura.

For **Stanisław**, family is like fragile glass: one careless move and it could shatter. He carries his mother's handkerchief as a talisman, clinging to the small comforts of love and memory.

By evening, they all arrive at the same hotel in Palermo. They are seeking an unforgettable stay, a holiday to remember. And it will be so, but not in the way any of them expect…

Day Two

Roma and **Rafał** spend the day by the pool, struggling to keep their conversations pleasant. A minor casual joke about her weight and his lack of enthusiasm for the hotel sparks a heated argument about her parents' financial support. When Roma mentions that Rafał cannot even afford cigarettes, he explodes with anger and storms off, leaving her shaken.

Chiara spends the day at the beach with **Mikołaj**, who carries her into the sea. At first, she laughs, but soon breaks down in his arms, overwhelmed by grief and the sense that their marriage has become a prison. Although Mikołaj reassures her of his love, she struggles to accept it.

Meanwhile, **Stanisław** tries to maintain peace within his family. **Maria** criticizes everything, from the cost of sunbeds to his parenting and grows suspicious about how her husband has financed the holiday, as only a few months ago he was in serious debt Lena refuses to apply sunscreen, mocks her mother, and remains glued to her phone. Stanisław observes the other guests with compassion, particularly Roma, who seems to have been crying, and Chiara, whose beauty and sadness haunt him.

Day Three

Rafał grows increasingly distant from **Roma**. She recalls what her mother told her about Rafał – that she shouldn't build a relationship with a man who seems like a brutal criminal. But everyone can change, can't they?

Suddenly, **Roma** receives a troubling SMS from an unknown number: Ask your boyfriend about Sylwia K. Or even better – check his phone. The password is 8980. And have fun, you idiot (no, this is not a mistake). For a while she doesn't know what to do – she is stunned and thinks about it all day. In the end she forms some sort of a plan…

Chiara finds herself fantasizing about **Rafał**. She compares him to her former lovers and realizes how much she misses passion and recklessness. Her resentment toward Mikołaj deepens, even as he continues to care for her. Unable to sleep, she goes alone to the beach at dawn, just to watch the beauty of the Italian landscape.

Lena is lazy and doesn't want to go anywhere, so both her parents struggle to organize any family plans for the trip. But there are some positives—**Maria** tries to set aside her husband's troubled past and enjoy the stay.

Day Four

The SMS was no mistake—the password to **Rafał's** phone worked. **Roma** discovered an entire conversation between **Rafał** and Sylwia, full of love declarations, heart emojis, and sexual innuendo. She lost her temper instantly and flew into a rage. Rafał was asleep, and she began yelling at him, waking him and striking him with her fists. She burst into tears, leaving him stunned in the room.

Chiara leaves the room again at dawn and goes to the beach. Unfortunately, this time there is nobody to help her with the wheelchair, so she falls from it onto the sand and crawls toward the water. There, she finds **Roma** sitting alone in tears. They talk about relationships, men, and a tentative bond begins to grow between them.

Stanisław continues to act as peacemaker. He remains quietly proud of his resilience, even as Maria undermines him at every turn. He begins to suspect she is hiding something from him, just as she suspects him of financial irresponsibility.

In the evening, **Chiara** leaves her husband in the room, exhausted after the workout, and heads to the bar by the pool. She is overflowing with emotions—anger, frustration, and the impossibility of how her life has changed since the accident. She hates the whole situation and projects her anger onto her husband, who only tries to help her. After a few sips of wine and a brief conversation with a man, she turns toward the pool and drives into it in a desperate act. After the tumultuous events, she is rescued by a German friend of **Lena's** and by **Stanisław**, who jumps into the water to save her and helps her out.

Day Five

In the morning, **Roma** wakes up early and goes to the beach—she needs to think: about **Rafał**, their future together, and what to do with her life. She meets **Chiara** there and helps her get to the sea. They talk like two close friends about boys, relationships, the complications of life, Chiara's deep sadness, and the events of the previous day.

Maria bursts into tears in front of **Stanisław**—she spoke yesterday with his brother, whom Stanisław's creditors are threatening, along with his family. She wants to leave and get a divorce because of all the lies.

In the evening, **Chiara** finds **Stanisław** at the bar, writing some notes.
Roma can't stand **Rafał** and his behavior—he is suspicious and angry because of the joke that someone might be looking for her. She doesn't even know what to say, yet she still wants to fight for the relationship, even as it becomes increasingly clear that she is being victimized and oppressed. The tension inside her continues to grow.

Day Six

Chiara and **Roma** meet again on the beach at dawn. Roma falls apart—she doesn't know what to do and cries, telling Chiara the story about the phone and the password. Chiara tells Roma that, from her perspective, **Rafał** is not the right man for her. But the only advice in such a situation is: you have to choose for yourself; nobody can do it for you.

Stanisław wakes up early, gives his sleeping wife a kiss, leaves an envelope and the keys, and walks out of the room. This is the end—he will not come back.

During the day, Roma meets Chiara at the pool again. Other characters are around as well: Rafał lies on his sunbed by the pool, **Mikołaj** lurks nearby, and **Lena** is talking with **Eric**. A normal vacation day—but never again.

For a few days, Roma has been exchanging glances with the handsome Italian lifeguard. She wants to do something to make Rafał feel guilty. Suddenly, she walks toward the lifeguard and gives him a kiss—not deep, but visible enough, especially to Rafał, who watches her every step.

From that moment, events spiral out of control. Rafał is furious and rushes toward them. At first, he pulls his girlfriend by the hair and strikes her in the face. The lifeguard tries to intervene, yet Rafał is stronger. Suddenly, Chiara, in her wheelchair, comes to help—when Rafał strikes her as well. Eric and Lena also try to intervene, jumping on Rafał and attempting to subdue him, but none of them can win the fight.

Then, almost out of nowhere, Chiara's husband, Mikołaj, arrives on the scene. He cautiously grabs Rafał and delivers a powerful blow to his face. Rafał falls unconscious to the ground. The fight is over.

Everyone is stunned. After a few discussions with Chiara, Roma finally decides to leave Rafał and spend the last night in Chiara's and Mikołaj's room.

Day Seven

Everyone is packing and preparing to go back home. **Roma**, emotionally and physically exhausted, confronts the truth about her relationship. **Rafał's** affair and violence leave no room for illusions. She realizes she must choose between remaining under his destructive influence or reclaiming her independence. She chooses the latter, contacts her friend to pick her up from the airport, and asks if she can stay at her place for a few nights.

Chiara finally realizes that the problem is in her and that she can't share her despair and take it out on her husband. Yesterday she saw a real man in him, and now, on the airplane, cuddling to his arm, she promises herself to make a change. She calms down and sees that **Mikołaj** is a true friend and source of support.

Maria finds the letter from **Stanisław**. In it he apologizes for everything, expresses his love for his wife and daughter, and reveals that he intends to end his life. He can no longer handle the pressure from his creditors. However, he has purchased a life insurance policy for himself in case of accidents — his family can receive a substantial sum, which might help them start anew.

Reflection

The novel *Seven Days* has a lot to offer. It is easy to read, contemporary, and relatively short, with gripping narration and tension that fills every page until the climactic scene, when everything explodes. Beyond that, it invites reflection on the decisions we make in life—what we can change and what we cannot—and reminds us that sometimes it is better to accept rather than to fight.

Anna Władyka-Leittretter is a freelance translator (since 2012) and conference interpreter (since 2013) for Polish, English and German, based in Leipzig; publicly appointed and certified translator and interpreter (certification from the Higher Regional Court of Dresden and from the District Court of Berlin); member of BDÜ (German Association of Translators and Interpreters) and VKD (German Association of Conference Interpreters)

Seven days
Sample translated by Anna Władyka-Leittretter

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***[Day one. Chiara still cannot come to terms with her lack of independence, and on top of that, her overprotective partner is driving her crazy*]**.

Chiara

'Are you okay, darling?'

She raised her head and looked at the boy with short blond hair and hazel eyes. In his gaze, she saw the familiar concern that she has had enough of today. Not only today, for that matter. For God's sake, she had had enough of it for a long time.

When he first looked at her with those eyes, asking her out for a coffee, she sank into them like a child sinking into a high snowdrift when jumping off a balcony. She used to do that herself in the old days, when she still knew what happiness and feeling in her legs were.

Now she found herself simply unable to bear that look. They were at the airport in the luggage claim area. The black luggage belt had just started moving, and somewhere in the bowels of the building, the first suitcase came with a thud.

‘How many more times are you going to ask me that?’ she inquired in a gentle tone, though irritation was slowly taking hold of her. ‘It’s only noon, and you’ve already asked me this about ten times. Are we going to reach a hundred, Mikołaj?’

‘No,’ he replied, even more concerned and now slightly taken aback. ‘It’s just...’

‘Just leave me alone, okay? If I feel bad, I'll let you know, dad,’ she said mockingly. ‘Scout’s honour. I can’t run away from you in this wheelchair, can I? And I admit, it would look extremely ridiculous.’

The girl lay her hand on her chest. She felt her heart racing again with anger, as if it wanted to jump out of her chest. She regretted reacting so harshly, but she couldn’t smile any longer and assure him that she was fine.

In fact, she was suffering a lot. She had agreed to this trip to make him, her husband, happy, but she regretted it just before departure when several people stared at the airport staff as they clumsily loaded her wheelchair onto the plane.

‘I’m sorry, darling,’ he replied, somewhat confused.

‘Jesus! You don’t have to keep apologising,’ Chiara scolded him again, more sharply than she intended. ‘Go get our luggage, please. No one’s going to kidnap me, and if they try, I’ll scream like a fucking lunatic. People will have a blast again.’

It was stronger than her. She usually tried to control her emotions, but today she just couldn’t. She wanted to go to the toilet. She was already completely sweaty, she smelled, and to top it all, her back hurt unbearably. The thought that they still had over an hour’s bus ride to the hotel didn’t help either. Watching Mikołaj go to get the luggage and sneak glances at her, she prayed silently that the air conditioning on the bus would work.

Chiara was paralysed from the waist down. Rooted to her chair, she had plenty of time for observation—and she took a quiet pleasure in it. Truth be told, she often felt there was little else left to occupy her hours.

Her eyes met those of a petite blonde who had first drawn her attention on the plane’s stairway, then again during the bus ride to the terminal, and now once more. Chiara could feel the woman’s gaze upon her; she allowed it, unflinching, unashamed. She might easily have met her stare head-on, fixing her with the glacial

look she had perfected, the one that could turn curiosity into discomfort. But she chose not to.

Instead, she wondered whether the pretty blonde even noticed that the boy she had arrived with could hardly keep his eyes from wandering to every other girl in the airport. Chiara knew this type of man. The guy standing next to the girl was covered in tattoos. He was tall and very slim, and extremely attractive. He was drawing attention to himself. He was posing as a bad boy, and maybe he was one. She couldn't tell yet, but seven days together, if they were going to the same place, would allow her to find out. She thought distractedly and embarrassedly that she would prefer to have a man like that by her side.

One like the one she once had, but an accident took him away from her, along with her ability to walk.

[The second day of the stay. Stanisław carries a cotton handkerchief with him everywhere he goes. It means a lot for him as it was a gift from his mother just before she died. His family is getting ready for their first trip to the beach.]

Stanisław

Before going to the beach, he hung a freshly washed handkerchief on the balcony and secured it with not one, not two, but three clips so that the wind wouldn't blow it away. He waited a moment to make sure they were secure. He hoped Maria wouldn't see it, and when they returned from the beach, he would quickly take down the handkerchief and put the clips back, in a small basket in the wardrobe. He didn't know why, but those clips might make her angry. When he entered the room, his wife and daughter were waiting for him at the door. Lena was typing on her phone, and Maria was staring at Stanisław with an irritated look.

'How much longer?'

'I'm coming, I'm coming. Ready to jump into the sea?'

'I don't want to go to the beach,' Lena replied, without looking up from her phone. 'I'd rather go to the pool.'

'You can go to the pool anywhere, my dear. We're going to the beach,' her mother declared in an adamant tone.

'But we were at the beach yesterday.'

'And we're going today too.'

‘Oh, okay. If you say so,’ replied the bored girl, clearly not in the mood for an argument, still tapping away on her phone.

Stanisław never said it out loud, but he felt that his daughter had inherited most of her traits from him. Take her composure, for example. Unlike her mother, who was only composed when she was fast asleep. Of course, like every teenager, Lena had her outbursts, but it was more a matter of hormones than genes, and Stanisław hoped that in the future she would become a sensible, intelligent woman who would combine the best qualities of both him and Maria. He wondered if that was what every parent wanted for their children.

‘Lenka, shall we go to the beach first and then to the pool for a while?’ asked Stanisław, closing the bedroom door.

‘Yeah. Okay. I don’t know...’ She hesitated. ‘Actually, I don’t care anymore.’

The man wanted to hug his daughter, but stopped himself. He also wanted to hug his wife, but before he could make up his mind, she shot ahead and was already going down the stairs.

‘It’s strange that the lift is broken just when the Poles have arrived,’ said Maria.

‘It’s only one floor. We could use some exercise.’

‘For you, definitely, Staszek.’

He didn’t react to that, although he could have said that it was her who was overweight because, unlike him, a builder in a pretty good shape, she spent most of her time sitting at a desk at school or at home.

But he said nothing. Silence was golden, and in his wife’s case, it was a ticket to a quieter day.

They passed two young people in the hall. One of them was a boy covered in tattoos (even Lena looked at him, raising her eyes from her phone for the first time), and right behind him was a young girl with red eyes, maybe from the salt in the water, but most likely from crying. They were coming back from the pool or the beach. The girl said ‘hello’ quietly, but soon bowed her head again, dragging her feet behind the man.

Stanisław thought of his handkerchief. Whenever he saw tears, he thought of it. He would have given the girl his handkerchief if he had had it with him. If he had dared, that is. He wanted to stop the girl in the lobby and tell her not to worry, ask her why her eyes were red and tearful. Ever since Lena was born, something in his heart

broke when he saw women being hurt. He had never been so sensitive before. He wondered if the man she was following was the reason for her tears.

But he tried not to think about it.

When they reached the beach, an elderly, grey-haired man, most likely one of the lifeguards, approached them with a slow, almost lazy gait. He walked as if he was carrying invisible bags of cement on his shoulders. He was completely sunburnt. Stanisław greeted him and held up three fingers, pointing to his family. The man nodded, looked around, and then waved his hand for them to follow him. He had a strange gait, leaning slightly forward, with his legs wide apart and his arms outstretched, resembling a gorilla. Despite his serious expression, he seemed a quite nice man.

[Day four. Roma receives a text message from an unknown number: *Ask your boyfriend about Sylwia K. Better yet, check his phone. The code is 8980. Have fun, you idiot. (No, this is not a mistake).*]

Roma

The fact that the phone code was matching, served as final confirmation that the text message was not a mistake.

After entering the last digit of the code, the numeric keypad disappeared, opening the doors to the entire contents of the smartphone. Roma felt like an intruder. She sat on the toilet seat, wearing only a T-shirt and panties, with the bathroom door locked. It was almost four o'clock. She had made sure that Rafał drank more that evening. Before going to bed, he tried to get to her, but luckily she didn't have to fend him off because he fell asleep on top of her, which would have been funny if it weren't for the fact that she was about to come face to face with Sylwia K.

She saw a bunch of icons in front of her, including Messenger and WhatsApp, but she hadn't clicked on any of them yet. She thought about retreating. About putting her phone on the shelf and asking Rafał who Sylwia was and what the text message she had received meant. She would do it tomorrow, calmly, over breakfast.

She remembered the beginning of their relationship, when she gave him the code to her phone, saying that since they were together, they didn't need to keep any secrets from each other. He replied that – in his opinion – a relationship was based on trust and they should maintain their privacy. She didn't change her phone code, so he had

full access to it, and anyway, she had nothing to hide. Except maybe the messages to her friend, in which they sent each other silly, innocent jokes.

However, he didn't give her his code. She didn't understand it, but she respected it because she trusted him. After all, he was all she had. He was her boyfriend and her friend. Roma's sister had her own life and her own problems. As soon as they left their family home, their bond deteriorated significantly. Friendship has a way of expiring. And the one with her sister had already expired.

So maybe she was afraid to see what she might see, because she didn't want to lose the only person close to her. The man with whom she saw herself growing old, having children and sharing a home. Sure, they faced difficulties, but difficulties are written in the stars, and the sky is the same for everyone. Roma didn't believe that there existed a human being who did not have any problems at all; it would simply be against nature.

Her fingertip seemed to touch the Messenger icon on its own, and her heart froze. Time stood still, then rushed forward. She held her breath and let it out after a long moment. The world spun.

The first person on the list was Sylwia. In her profile picture, she was tilting her head and pouting slightly at the camera. Unlike Roma, she had dark, almost black hair. However, it wasn't that which made her heart sink, but the last message visible in the chat.

Good night, accompanied by a purple heart emoji. Roma tapped the conversation again and it opened up on the entire screen.

She scrolled down twice with her thumb, which gave her a preview of a few sentences. That was enough for her.

S: Are you thinking about me?

R: I am thinking about you, sweetie. (Heart).

S: But a lot?

R: Very much.

S: More than ANYONE else? (Wide-open smiley face).

R: I think about you so much that sometimes I forget to pee, haha.

S: You fool. (Heart emoji). But you know... IT'S STILL NOT ENOUGH, HAHA.

R: Only three more days and I'll be back. When I get back, I'll take care of you and show you how MUCH I MISSED YOU. I'm going to bed because I'm drunk. Good night. Be good.

S: I don't like being good. I think I'll find someone to lie with until you get back.

R: You'll get an extra spanking for that.

S: Oh, I can't wait XD.

R: I'm going to bed, baby. I'll be back soon.

S: Good night. (Blue heart).

Roma felt as if someone had frozen her in the position she was sitting in. She looked at the date and time. They had written these messages right after dinner, maybe while she was in the shower. Her stomach burned even more, as if someone had put a hot piece of steel in there. She left the conversation and went back to her inbox, and then she saw that almost every person Rafał was writing to was a girl. Five people. Five girls whose profile pictures and names she didn't recognise at all. A few hearts next to the messages. One chat with his friend, Tomek.

She pressed the side button, turning off the iPhone, and placed it on her thigh with a trembling hand.

She felt a powerful anger. She closed her eyes, trying to calm down. She moved her leg nervously, wanting to smoke, wanting to get wasted or get high, wanting to cease to exist. Suddenly, she stood up and her legs carried her away. She reached the door in one leap, opened it with a bang, and then turned on the light. Rafał didn't react, still sleeping on his side with his mouth open.

‘YOU... YOU FUCKING BASTARD!’ she yelled and threw the phone at him.

The phone missed his face by a few centimetres and slammed into the headboard. Rafał jumped to his feet and, almost falling over, bumped into the window sill.

‘YOU FUCKING SON OF A BITCH!!! YOU LIAR!!!

She lunged at him. He couldn't back away, so she slapped him twice across the face, but he blocked the third blow. He held her hand, still not fully aware of what was happening. However, her other hand reached its target and hit him on the temple. Then he instinctively pushed her hard onto the bed.

‘What the... What the fuck are you doing?!’ he yelled, stepping back and hitting his head against the window.

‘More like WHAT THE FUCK ARE YOU DOING! You piece of shit! Who is Sylwia?! 'YOU MISS HER SO MUCH'? 'SHE'S GONNA GET A SPANKING FROM YOU'?

‘What?’

‘Shit! Who is Sylwia??? Who are all these girls you're texting? ANSWER ME AND DON'T FEED ME BULLSHIT!!!

Roma got up from the bed and stood in front of Rafał again, who was clearly in shock. He had never seen her so agitated and aggressive before. She surprised him. She wanted to throw herself at him, breathing heavily, clenching her fists. Rafał looked at the phone lying in the corner of the room.

‘Did you go through my phone?’ he asked, or rather stated, more to himself than to her.

Roma lowered her head for a moment, and that was her mistake. She felt a hard blow on her cheek, which made her stagger and fall back onto the mattress. However, she got up immediately and this time looked him straight in the eyes with confidence and courage.

‘How long has this been going on? A month? Six months? HOW LONG HAS THIS BEEN GOING ON?!’ she screamed, not caring about anything.

‘Nothing has been going on! What the fuck are you talking about? She's just a good friend, that's all!’

‘Just a good friend, that's all?’

‘That's all! Fuck, give it a rest...’

Roma nodded. Her cheek burned mercilessly.

‘And you send each other hearts? And she wants you to spank her? What does that mean? Because to me it sounds pretty clear.

‘Oh God, we were just joking, Roma. Calm down.’

‘Those are some really great fucking jokes you have! Do you think I'm an idiot?!’

‘Calm down, okay?’

‘Calm down yourself, for fuck's sake! What would happen if I talked like that to a good friend of mine? Huh? Would that be okay? What do you think?’

‘I wouldn't ask.’

‘Oh! You wouldn't? Remember the guy who asked me to dance at my sister's wedding, you wanted to skin him alive, didn't you? Remember?’

‘I don't go through your phone, do you understand?! YOU'RE FUCKING CRAZY!’

‘Oh, really? Go ahead, then!’ Roma rushed over to her phone, grabbed it and threw it on the bed, now standing on the other side. ‘Go ahead. Look through it! Come on! And give me yours. Let's see, okay? Let's compare our messages. Let's see how I text my friends and how you text your friends. Come on! Oh, I forgot! I DON'T HAVE ANY MALE PALS, SINCE I MET YOU!!!’

‘I'm not fourteen to do shit like that, Roma.

‘Oh, right. You're not fourteen? Fuck, I'm such an idiot! Fuck!

Rafał remained silent, and perhaps it was this silence that caused tears to well up in the girl's eyes.

‘Roma...’

‘Get away from me. Go away. Leave me alone.’

The tears were stronger than her, and even though she didn't want to, she burst into tears and left the room. She heard the door close behind her and headed for the stairs, barely seeing anything in front of her.

[Day four. Lena is talking to Erik, a German teenager she met at the resort. However, he suddenly notices that Chiara has entered the hotel swimming pool in a wheelchair for unknown reasons.]

Lena

The boy suddenly jumped up.

‘Hey! It’s just shoes, come back here!’

But he was already running as fast as he could, knocking the tray of dirty dishes out of the waiter's hands, and when Lena got up to see where he was going, she saw him jumping into the pool fully clothed.

‘What the fuck...’ she whispered, dropping a piece of bread roll onto the tiles. Several people in the front rows also got up and ran towards the pool. Suddenly, there were screams.

Lena, now seriously frightened, ran after the boy, and when she made her way to the front, she realised that he was trying to save a girl who, along with her wheelchair, had somehow ended up at the bottom of the pool.

People started shouting in different languages and waving their arms, a few went to look for a lifeguard, some ran to the staff.

Lena could swim, but she couldn't save anyone, so she started screaming something incoherent, but panic was clouding her mind: *‘He's a German boy! Save him!’* Meanwhile, Rudi tried to pull the woman to the surface, but she either fainted with her eyes open or did not want to come up with him.

Finally, without thinking, Lena's legs gave way and her body fell into the cool water. She tried to pull the boy out, and he tried to pull the girl out. The wheelchair was behind her. Despite her emotions, Lena felt that it looked tragicomic.

‘Help!’ she screamed as soon as she managed to emerge from the water, but the people gathered around the pool just continued to shout.

Finally, someone jumped into the pool. It was her father.

‘Get away!’ he shouted and dived in, pushing her away with his hand.

Lena obeyed, watching her dress float on the water like a water lily.

Stanisław was tall, so together with the boy, he managed to lift the girl and pull her out of the turbulent blue water.

When they laid her on the edge of the pool, she began to laugh loudly, cough intensely, and then her smile disappeared and she suddenly began to cry.

[Day six. Roma is furious with Rafał for the betrayal she has discovered and wants to get back at him. In the previous days, she met Chara several times and they talked about men and love, which gave her food for thought.

Chiara

She stopped as something caught her attention.

Roma was sitting just a few sun loungers away from them and now she stood up, and Chiara saw a look of madness in her eyes. The girl stood by the pool, staring at it for a moment, then threw her phone into the water, as far away from her as possible. But that wasn't the only peculiar thing. When she did, she looked around and headed quickly towards the pool showers. She almost knocked over an elderly lady with a drink and a straw, though she probably didn't even notice her. And now, the blonde girl she had met at dawn on the beach, whose body was the colour of milk chocolate, went towards the showers and chatted up the Italian lifeguard.

Chiara looked at Rafał, who was watching his girlfriend tensely.

Roma giggled, at one point touched the lifeguard's arm and stroked it, then moved closer to him and... kissed him. It was a quick, unexpected kiss. The lifeguard seemed completely taken aback, his arm now around Roma's waist.

'Oh my god,' Chiara stammered, covering her laughing mouth. 'They're...'

'What?'

Lena and Eric turned in the same direction. The boy muttered something under his breath in German, took off his sunglasses and widened his eyes.

It was irrational, but Roma was undoubtedly kissing the Italian lifeguard, whom she probably didn't know. Chiara had already forgotten about needing to pee. All she wanted was to rush over to Mikołaj and tell him what had just happened, but just as she was about to do so, she saw something that made her smile fade.

Rafał was already running towards Roma. Everything happened quickly, and Chiara was slightly tipsy... But she saw clearly how Rafał yanked his girlfriend by the hair and then punched her in the jaw. Chiara didn't think long, in fact, she had only one thought in her mind – to kill the fucking bastard. How? She would figure it out along the way.

She grabbed the wheels and moved them vigorously, throwing back only, 'I'll beat the fuck out of him,' and then, 'Stay here,' to the teenagers.

The lifeguard didn't just stand. First, he ran his hand through his hair, as if he wanted to look impeccable during the fight, then he pushed Rafał, who was a head taller than him, and aimed a punch at his chest or face, and his indecision caused his fist to cut through the air and Rafał lost his balance for a moment. But it worked.

Screams rang out. Chiara rushed towards Rafał, not knowing what to do when she got to him.

Meanwhile, he pushed the Italian lifeguard against the wall by the showers and punched him in the stomach. The slim, tanned and handsome lifeguard bent over, knelt down and remained there, trying to catch his breath.

‘Hey! Hey, you!’

Chiara swung her arm and hit Rafał in the thigh with all her strength, which she regretted the moment she realised that the blow hurt her more than it hurt him.

Rafał turned around. His eyes were filled with anger and madness. Without thinking twice, he swung back and hit Chiara straight in the temple.

Her vision flickered, mixing with black and white, some tiny dots appeared and she felt sick. For a moment, she thought she was in outer space. When she finally fell back to earth, she felt blood dripping from her eye, or maybe it was just sweat? No, sweat isn't that warm and sticky.

She noticed something bizarre and terrifying at the same time, but was unable to even speak. She wanted to scream in terror and laugh out loud, but panic prevented her from deciding which direction to take. She chose the latter. Chiara began to giggle, and then burst out laughing when she saw that same bony and gaunt elderly lady who had been staring at her husband with a pipe in her mouth, was now looking at her, a girl with a broken eyebrow, covered in blood, laughing her head off.

Eric had jumped on Rafał's back, who was kicking the lifeguard. The lifeguard was starting to lose consciousness, at least Chiara thought so. She wasn't sure, because the world was still spinning around her as if she had been transported from outer space into a giant washing machine on spin cycle.

Eric was hanging around Rafał's neck and trying to strangle him, but Rafał easily pulled him off his back and threw him like a sack of potatoes next to the already badly beaten lifeguard.

‘You fucking...!’ shouted Lena, who was now charging at Rafał, but he countered her clumsy kick and punched her in the face, so she didn't finish her sentence, but spun around, holding her sore nose, and fell on her bum, then started looking left and right as if she had just woken up, trying to understand where and who she was.

Chiara, still laughing, looked around for Roma and spotted her, lying with a broken nose, staining the concrete by the pool with blood. People around her were panicking, shouting in different languages, just like when Chiara was the centre of attention and she could hear the screams through the water in her ears.

Suddenly, she saw the lifeguard trying to get up, and Rafał was about to deliver another, possibly fatal blow with his shin straight to his head, but at that moment, another huge man sent him crashing to the concrete with a single blow to the jaw. The man was tall, athletic, handsome, and at that moment as wild as an animal.

His name was Mikołaj, and he was her husband. She had never seen him so enraged before. She didn't recognise the person he was now. Chiara's cackling stopped and turned into pure amazement. He glanced at her, and then his eyes lit up even more. Maybe it was the sight of blood on her temple, or maybe it was something else that only he could see.

He approached Rafał slowly and confidently, grabbed him easily by the shoulders and lifted him up, then delivered another straight punch to the man's stomach and jaw. Finally, Rafał fell unconscious, hitting his head on the concrete.

Chiara was about to laugh even louder, but instead she vomited all the beer she had drunk onto her stomach.

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