

The Main Hearing

Country: Czech Republic

Category: Drama

Title: Hlavní přelíčení

Company: Czech Radio

Author(s): Lenka Veverková, Karel Poláček (author of the original literary novel)

Producer(s): Klára Novotná

Director: Vít Vencel

Sound engineer: Ladislav Reich, Jan Trojan

Other key staff: Václav Neůžil, Magdaléna Borová, Klára Cibulková, Marek Němec, Hanuš Bor and others

Language: Czech

Length: 50:42

SUMMARY

THE MAIN HEARING A drama from Prague's periphery about false impressions and a murder Karel Poláček (1882-1945) was a significant Czech writer, journalist and screenwriter. Because of his Jewish background and family ties, he was transported to a concentration camp in 1943. He never returned and did not live to see the end of the war. His novel *The Main Hearing* (1932) was inspired by an actual trial. The defendant is railway worker Josef Maršík, a loudmouth whose delusive ideas of a better life lead him to where he never wanted to be. Eager to show his independence, he procures money in the most unfortunate way: he lures it from a naive maid, Alžběta, under the promise of marriage. He entangles himself and her in a web of lies that gradually lead to crime. Poláček brilliantly portrays the man trapped in illusions and convinced of his own innocence to the end. He captures Maršík's desperate steps towards an inevitable catastrophe, as well as the rapid stream of consciousness in which the tragicomic hero denies any wrongdoing ever more fervently. Lenka Veverková, the author of the radio adaptation, placed Maršík at the centre of the crime story, but she has also let him enter into a dialogue with his own desires, his nagging conscience and his false defence. Working with the concept of an inner voice, director Vít Vencel and actor Václav Neuzil have created a character whose naivety and small-mindedness captivate our attention despite being morally indefensible.

CAST:

Maršík

Maršíková

Alžběta

Barchánek

Týc

Constable

Madam

Innkeeper

Waiter

Prison guard

Judge

Shop assistant

Clerk 1

Clerk 2

Man 1

Man 2

Rascal

Woman 1

Woman 2

Court reporter

Head waiter

Children

Intro. At the court

Judge: Will the defendant please rise.

Court reporter: The main hearing against Josef Maršík, a railway attendant, currently in regular custody, begins. The public prosecutor's office in Prague is suing Maršík

Maršík: *They are suing me, indeed. But it'll all come out.*

Court reporter: for acting against Alžběta Vállová,

Maršík: *I won't let them slander me...*

Court reporter: a 38-year-old housemaid,

Maršík: *Wait until I tell them where it all began. That I had to show I knew my stuff*

Court reporter: in such a manner ...

Maršík: *and how I could get along... I couldn't take my word back! And her? I trusted her with everything. Whose fault is it anyway that it got so complicated? ... It was her who lured me into a trap! I trusted her with everything and yet... That's what I get for it. But I won't let them slander me. It'll all come out...*

1. In the kitchen with an open window

(Children shout over each other outside.)

Maršík: It's so hot again...

Maršíková: Where have you been so long? I've been warming the meal up for nearly an hour!

Maršík: Where could I've been? On the railway.

Maršíková: *(snaps at the kids)* Can't you be quiet for a while? *(closes the window)* I cannot stand it here any longer. The kids are naughty, I have to rebuke them constantly and settle their disputes, they keep screaming and Daddy has no patience with them... The house is too small for us! How many dumplings will you have?

Maršík: *Damned life, there isn't and won't ever be peace... As soon as you come home, she gets started right up. She's only cackling on and on.*

Maršíková: I've asked, how many dumplings?!

Maršík: Five. Or six. *There's no joy in being around her... She didn't use to be like this. She used to have a full figure and nose splashed with freckles.*

Maršíková: I'll give you more sauce straight away. The fence needs fixing.

The grass in the garden needs mowing... Are you listening to me?

Maršík: Of course I am. *She's got a pointy chin now, her eyes are bulging...*

Maršíková: Enjoy your meal, then!

Maršík: *...and she smells of bile soap.* Enjoy your meal. *Walking home would feel different if a cheerful, plump blonde was waiting for me*

Barchánek: *(enters)* Are you eating?

Maršík: You can see yourself. We are, indeed.

Barchánek: I see, you are eating... Mm. That's good... Maršíková: Would you like some?

Barchánek: So, look... Mm... well...

Maršík: And close the door, there's a draught.

Barchánek: Look... This won't do anymore. I don't want to have you here.

Maršík: What are you saying?

Barchánek: Start looking for a more suitable place. I want to make this into a summer apartment. And rent it out.

Maršíková: Daddy, what are you saying? You can't do this. Where would we go? What about the kids?

Maršík: *The way her nose puffs up every time she's close to tears...*

Barchánek: I told you. I don't want to see you here when the spring comes!

Maršík:

What a nice Daddy you've got. Indeed, you do! But I won't stand for this!

2. On the porch

Maršík: Now, what did you mean by that?

Barchánek: I meant what I said. You have to find a different place to stay. You can still stay throughout the winter-

Maršík: Whoa, do you think we won't find a flat? Is that right? I could build a house if I wanted to!

Barchánek: I'd like to know how.

Maršík: This mouldy shack of yours! My house will have a balcony! And a gazebo in the garden! And there'll be a tin weathercock on the roof, and it'll turn! And you'll just watch! Just watch. And I won't invite you in. You'll rot in here! All alone.

Barchánek: You'll be begging to stay after the spring!

3. In the pub

Maršík: *That old fart, he can really piss me off like no one else. He makes you say things you wouldn't let out otherwise. How am I supposed to build a house when -*

Innkeeper: Here's a pint of beer.

Maršík: Thanks. Listen... any idea how to make a million? The first one I have, it's the second one that worries me.

Innkeeper: It's important you've got the first million. The rest will come. Will you have some terrine? With onion.

Maršík: Well, bring it over. *Money would come to some...If I only had it,*

I'd know what to do with it. It wouldn't be a house. It would be merely a detached house. No. A villa. With a tennis court. Or not. Instead of a court, a gazebo seems a better idea. With a gramophone. And no terrine with onion. Coffee instead.

Týc: God bless, one beer -

Maršík: Hello, gentlemen! *I'd have it served by a blonde in a red dress.*

Constable: Make it two right away! Hello, everyone!

Innkeeper: Ah, Mr Týc and Constable! I'll be right with you!

Týc: Maršík, what are you doing here this early? Can we join you?

Maršík: *and she'd swing her hips as she walks...*

Constable: I'll be as quiet as a mouse, reading my newspaper.

Maršík: Just sit down, I say. You're not disturbing me.

Constable: Thank you.

Innkeeper: Two pints of beer and terrine. How was your service, gentlemen?

Týc: Caught all the criminals as always, don't worry!

Maršík: Fancy a game of cards? For five crowns?

Constable: I don't play cards. Granny used to tell me: "Don't you play, you'll lose." And right she was. It's not my thing. I'll read instead.

Maršík: Listen, Constable, does it mention anywhere how to get rich?

4. In the kitchen

Maršík: Papers, papers... Ouch! They always used to be here. Maršíková:
What are you looking for out there?

Maršík: Papers!

Maršíková: You've been drinking!

Maršík:

Maršík: Where do we have papers? Where are they? Quick. Maršíková:
Papers? What do you need them for at midnight? Here - Maršík: There,
you see! Go to sleep. Hush.

5. Collage of advertisements

Will an intelligent man succeed in finding a girl or a widow in possession of a modest dowry?

Woman 1 *Dear Sir -*

Maršík *A photograph is welcome but not mandatory.*

Woman 2 *Dear Sir -*

Maršík *"Civil servant – towards new life"*

Woman 1: *I'm cheerful and like to laugh, Mum calls me smiley or chirpy.*

Maršík: Well, look at that...

Woman 2: *I haven't had serious relationships so far, this is my very first attempt. I don't own any dowry, however –*

Maršík: Then why are you bothering me, gorgeous?

Woman 1: *I'm of gentle and sensitive nature, not afraid of any work and longing for my own nest. I'm expected to inherit everything after Daddy's death -*

Maršík: Everything, imagine that!

Woman 1: *- but there's no thought of a dowry yet.*

Maršík: Yet another cheater! Such a shameless hussy!

Alžběta: *Distinguished Sir. My name is Alžběta and I am skilled in all the house chores. I am nice to kids, the question is if you'd be nice to me since I don't know you yet. I don't have any photograph of myself, but if I had to, I'd go to a photographer. I work as a maid but on my bankbook I do have from the past -*

Alžběta/Maršík – seventeen thousand. Distinguished Sir, unless this is meant as a joke,

Alžběta: - *I look forward to hearing from you, I am free in the evenings and on Sundays.*

Maršík: *Distinguished miss!*

Alžběta: *If it is a joke,*

Maršík: *From all the letters I have received,*

Alžběta: *you'd better not reply,*

Maršík: *I liked your response the most,*

Alžběta: *hopefully, you are intelligent enough to mean it.*

Maršík: *because I see you are an orderly person. If you wish to get to know me better, I will be waiting to meet you in the Golden Well restaurant on Sunday at five. I am blonde, of a medium build, I will be sitting at the window with a flower on the table. Yours faithfully...Vladimír Podhorský.*

6. In the restaurant

Maršík: *Hello, miss, I am...you know... Vláďa. No, not like this. Pleasure to meet you, Alžběta, my name is Vladimír. Vladimír Podhorský is my name.*

Alžběta: My name is Válová...

Maršík: Marš – Vladimír Podhorský, nice to meet you, miss. *Oh, lord.* Here: this rose - *Such a greyish face.* – for you. *Yellow canine teeth. And porcelain ones in the front.*

Alžběta: Thank you.

Maršík:

Maršík: You've got a gorgeous smile!

Alžběta: Thank you.

Maršík: *She's got no buttocks.* Waiter! *She's as thin as a skeleton.* Wine! *How old can she be? Forty?* Two glasses of red wine!

Alžběta: I won't have wine...

Maršík: It was quite a long way to get here but I had the entire compartment for myself so I could have a lie-down... *Seventeen...* You know, I work at the railway. *Seventeen thousand is easy to say...* So I can travel for free... *but what can you buy with it.* Are you from Prague? *It would make the old fart shut up.*

Alžběta: I... I serve in the Lesser Town.

Thank you... So cheers. *I'll need to look for a plot of land.*

Alžběta: I am not used to drinking.

Maršík: Then just a little sip... *With seventeen thousand you'll certainly buy a plot of land with a stretch of garden to go with it.* You know, us railway workers like to have a drink every now and then. A little fun, that's it, but no indecencies, that's nothing we'd go for... *The house should have windows to the east.* I am old enough to settle down, don't you think, Alžběta? *Morning light.* I am forty... *A balcony.* I get my work done, I am fun to be around. *And some space for a gazebo...* But honestly – I live on my own and I miss a woman by my side. *Flowerbeds.* Someone who'd cook for me. Or bake from time to time. Or go to the swimming pool on Sunday with me – *She's sitting here like a shtummer!* - or to the park.

She's wringing her handkerchief. We'd be holding hands.... *She, bringing me coffee to the balcony, seriously? This speech is*

ridiculous. I shouldn't have started anything in the first place. But seventeen thousand...

7. In the restaurant, a few hours later

Maršík: Alžběta, as I said: A woman is meant to marry, there's nothing you can do about it. No wonder, you'd like to get married! *There's to be money after all!*

Alžběta: Men prefer those who can enjoy life.

Maršík: *We'll get to build!* Now whoa. You must not paint everybody with the same brush, we are not all the same. *Boy!* I've got my principles. *The old man's jaw will drop.* Also, you need to have a certain standard of living, I say. *I'll give him a wave from the balcony!* Just imagine... *And I'll give him - a cosy little house... exactly this smile.* ... it's got a pantile roof, with a turret and a tin weathercock. It turns as the wind blows. And I'm sitting on the balcony and you are bringing me coffee...

Alžběta: I'd love to serve coffee for you, Vláďa.

Maršík: *Alžběta will be shorter of money,* So I was thinking... *yet richer in memories.* ... you've got something, I've got something. We could get it together.

8. On his way home

Maršík: *I'll pay her back. In installments, perhaps...* Constable:

Maršík! Maršík!

Maršík: What is it?

Maršík:

Constable: What are you doing outside this late? Was the last train delayed?

Týc: Constable and I are just going for a pint of beer. Will you join us?

Maršík: Gentlemen... I'm nearly asleep standing up. I was up in Prague today, making arrangements... *Why am I talking through my hat again?* I met an old friend from the army there, see... *I didn't* - and had a couple of drinks. – *do anything wrong*. I must get home, I'm getting up early... *One date with an unknown woman?*

Constable: Well, Týc, we won't push him, will we?

Maršík: *So what?*

Týc: But we're going the same way for a bit!

Maršík: *I'm an honest man!*

Týc: What's new with you?

Maršík: Nothing new. *It's good to exchange a couple of words*. And what's new, is not worth mentioning. *It might turn out useful to be hand in glove with police officers*.

Týc: And have you heard about the murder in Vršovice? They killed a female newsagent.

I've heard something. No long trials with such a murderer. Grab him by his neck and hang him on the spot. No fussing around!

Constable: You're fierce, indeed, Mr Maršík.

Maršík: I can't watch any wrongdoing, that's against my nature. There are more evil people than there used to be. The war is to blame.

Týc: There are still as many evil ones. They are just more brazen.

Constable: We've nicely walked you home. Good night then!

Maršík: Good night!

Týc: See you on Friday!

Maršík: On Friday as usual!

9. At Maršík's place

Maršík: *Perhaps I should drop it, really. There's no such law to force relatives out of the house.*

Barchánek: Who's creeping in the house at midnight?

Maršík: *I won't move out, even if the old man seeks help from authorities.*
Go to sleep!

Barchánek: Instead of holding onto something, doing something... Maršík:
I am not a stranger, my children are his blood.

Barchánek: He returns home at midnight and reeks of booze no less!

Maršík: *You'd better not bother me, you limping devil!* I've told you!

Barchánek: Where have you been? Buying a plot of land?

Maršík: We'll get to build! But it's none of your business.

Maršíková: *(enters)* What's all the commotion? It's nearly midnight!

Barchánek: Go to hell!

Maršík: *That old fart. He'll see, this old fleabag, how far I can get. I needn't rely on anybody, I'll live by my wits.*

10. On a walk

Maršík:

Alžběta: I'll tell madam today that I intend to quit by the end of the month and move out. She won't be happy, a decent maid is hard to find. But she is kind, she won't stand in the way of my own happiness.

Maršík: Well... By the way, I've already picked a flat, a decent one. *I'll say it was a mistake.* It won't cost a fortune either. The landlord offered a discount. *I'll explain everything.* He's still open for discussion. *So and so.* The kitchen is somewhat tiny, but the room is adequate. *I imagined it differently.* It gets sunshine all day. *You imagined it differently...* We'll be happy there. *This can't go on!* It's not a house, though...

Alžběta: It doesn't matter at all, there's going to be less cleaning-up, at least.

Maršík: We just need to pay a deposit. I've already ordered tradesmen to come and get the place in shape. The floors need fixing. And it needs redecorating. We need to cover that, too. It's going to be ready for us to move in within a month. And we'll have been married by autumn...

Alžběta: Vláďa, my dear Vláďa!

Maršík: *That's the last I need. What if we get spotted?*

Alžběta: I can't wait!

Maršík: Hang on, Alžběta, not here... *I'd have to explain: "Gentlemen, it wasn't a date, it was a relative whom I accidentally ran into and walked her part of the way."* I'm going to the bank tomorrow. Give me that bankbook of yours, I'll withdraw the money and pay for everything. *"And God knows why she wanted to kiss me goodbye."*

Alžběta: I... perhaps I'd accompany you there!

Maršík: I'll go there alone.

Alžběta: Well... I... I've got it from my late mistress, she's dead now.

Maršík: Alžběta, who do you take me for? Do I look like a thief?

Alžběta: Not at all! I didn't mean it like that, I didn't mean to offend you. Just be kind to me, always. I am just silly... But you, I trust you, Vládíček, you're prudent and intelligent...

11. At Alžběta's Madam

Madam: *"Will an intelligent man succeed in finding a girl or a widow in possession of a modest dowry? ... Serious offers only...* Where did you find this advertisement, Alžběta?

Alžběta: In The Lesser advertisement section. It was advertised last week.

Madam: So you would like to get married. That's nice, I am happy for you.

Alžběta: Madam, I was just...

Madam: If I were you, with this dowry of yours, I'd also quit working as a maid, get married and start a new life. I mean, you can pick and choose. But Alžběta... be careful when replying to that ad! There are way too many impostors running around the world!

Alžběta: I...

Madam: Have you replied to him yet?

Alžběta: I...

Madam: Have you written to him you actually do have money?

12. In the bank

Clerk: Next, please!

Maršík:

Maršík: *You know, my relative has entrusted me with her bankbook,*

Clerk: Next!

Maršík: *to withdraw some money for her.*

Man: Your turn, sir.

She had no one to turn to!

Man: Can you hear me?

Maršík: *Anyway, I'm happy to oblige...*

Man: It's your turn.

Maršík: Hello. *He's giving me a suspicious look.* You know, my relative -

Clerk: Here, give it to me.

Maršík: Ah, yes. Here you are.

Clerk: How much?

Maršík: Ehm... I beg your pardon?

Clerk: How much would you like to withdraw? Talk to me, man, I have no time to waste. A thousand, two, everything?

Maršík: Everything.

Clerk: Very well... a moment...

Maršík: *Everything, everything...*

Clerk: Here's your number. When they call your number, go to the counter on the opposite side. For now, take a seat.

Maršík: Alright... thank you.

Clerk: Man, take the ticket with the number on it!

Maršík: Certainly. *You know, sir, I meant it well.*

Man: It takes ages, don't you think?

Maršík: *Not for my sake, I meant it for the sake of my family* ... You were saying? Ah, you're right. Ages. I'm always waiting around. It takes nearly an hour whenever I go here. You know a relative asked me -

Clerk 2: Twenty-four!

Maršík: - and I couldn't say no to a relative, you know what I mean. She was in charge of the railway canteen -

Clerk 2: Twenty-four!

Man: What number have you got? Aren't they calling you?

Maršík: Ah. You are right.

Clerk 2: Well, there you go, twenty-four.

Maršík: It hasn't taken so long today.

Clerk 2: There you are: seventeen thousand, four hundred and four crowns, on top of that.

Maršík: Exactly, right, thank you. You see, it's not for me, it's for a relative of mine...

Clerk 2: (*shouts out*) Twenty-five. Twenty-five!

13. Money_collage

Children: Daddy, can we have ice cream? Can we have ice cream? Please!

Maršík: I'll have a beer, please! And two lollipops! Black coffee!

Men: Now, he's pushed the boat out. Look at him!

Maršík: Have a drink, have fun, don't be silly... Have a drink, I tell you and don't embarrass me in front of people!

Maršíková: And where have you got the money from?

Maršík: I'll be spending the most of all. I can afford it.

Maršík:

Alžběta: *When are we going to see each other again?*

Maršík: I'm buying for all of you! Today it's on me!

Innkeeper: Last orders, gentlemen!

14. At a café

Alžběta: We should also go and choose some furniture...

Maršík: There's no rush, is there?

Alžběta: Then there'll be too much to arrange at once.

Maršík: I just think it's perhaps too early...

Alžběta: The first of the new month is in two weeks' time. I am so looking forward to the wedding!

Maršík: *Look at that, somebody is longing to get married.*

Alžběta: I've already found a replacement for myself.

It'll be best to drop everything.

Alžběta: Julie.

Maršík: *Who's gonna bear the shame of being around this scarecrow!*

Alžběta: She's young, gets the work done.

Maršík: *Go to blazes, you know.*

Alžběta: I still need to train her, she can't do much, but she's trying hard.

Maršík: *What can't be, just can't.*

Alžběta: Madam has taken to her.

Maršík: *I'll take her to the carpenter's and then I'll tell her everything.*

15. In the shop

Alžběta: Look at the cupboard. It's gorgeous!

Maršík: Nice oak!

Shop assistant: It's alder. Of exceptional quality.

Alžběta: I'd like it very much.

Maršík: We'd like to have the entire bedroom equipped by you. Beds, a linen cupboard, bedside tables -

Shop assistant: Yes, of course. We've got the tables with one drawer...

Maršík: Two drawers are better. It's more practical.

Alžběta: You're right, Vláďa!

Shop assistant: As you wish. We can prepare anything tailor-made. You pay the deposit...

Maršík: The deposit... I haven't decided for sure yet. I'll stop by next week.

Shop assistant: No problem!

Alžběta: Let's take it. I like it!

Maršík: We don't throw money away this easily.

Alžběta: I beg you, Vláďček. The bed is so beautiful.

Maršík: No, girl, it's not that easy to decide. Let's sleep on it. These big purchases can't be done so impulsively!

Shop assistant: So perhaps something small for your flat. At the front counter, we have also hardware products. If I may... Alžběta: Look at the metal fitting. It's brass, isn't it?

Maršík:

Maršík: Fitting, come on. That's of secondary importance. If anything, then it must be practical! How much is it?

Shop assistant: A hammer? Ten crowns.

Maršík: Ten crowns?! Such a hammer is a necessity in any household.

Alžběta: Well, I...

Maršík: You need to nail or break something here and there, you can't make do without it. Without a hammer, right? Here's ten crowns. I need it. For my home, you know...I'll stop by on Monday to discuss the bedroom!

Shop assistant: Feel free to visit us, we'll give you a deal, you'll be satisfied.

Maršík: *What a dirty trick I am up to here, but what can you do, that's what today's world calls for.* Ten crowns for a hammer. What a rip-off.

Alžběta: You'll nail a nice picture on the wall for me.

Maršík: Of course I will. But I need to get going now. Trains won't wait!

16. In the pub

Maršík *She'll weep a while and forget.* Hey. One more round! *Perhaps she'll be lucky in the end and find a match,* Hello! *who'll make her happy.* He can't hear me perhaps! *I wish her well,* Rum, I say! Rum for everybody! Pour us a drink! *I wish well to everybody, I do.* I'm buying! On me! On me!

Constable: Maršík is spending again.

Týc: I just wonder where he gets the money.

Constable: And it's not the first time. It happened last week, too. Maršík:

Will any of you have more beer? Well, gentlemen?

Innkeeper: I've heard you! I'm right with you!

Cheers, gentlemen!

everybody: Cheers!

Maršík: We're drinking on me! I am the one paying!

Man 1: Hey, Maršík, you have deep pockets, don't you?

Man 2: I am wondering where you are getting all this money from, too!

Maršík: You wonder, don't you? You're way too curious but I won't tell you at any cost. There's a woman involved.

Men: A woman? Maršík, you're cunning. And where did you meet her?

Who'd want you, after all?

Maršík: I met a landowner lady at the Podolí swimming pool. The moment she set her eyes on me, she started giving me the eye. I stroke while the iron was hot, you bet, she caressed my hair...

Man 2: How can you even say such rubbish?

Maršík: On my honour.

Man 1: And what's the name of this landowner lady of yours?

Maršík:

Maršík: Clearly, I can't tell you, it's confidential. She wore a red dress, had blonde hair, she was nice and plump and tossed her bum as she walked. She looked very pretty – she invited me right over, you know, she owns a beautiful villa, I took a seat in an armchair on the balcony and she served coffee and cake. Gentlemen, I had a blast. Plenty of meat and wine, and on top of it, she stuffed me with money. Take it, she said, and if you need more, I'll give you again. I love you and I can't be without you –

Man 1: *(laughter)* And didn't she call you "a fibber" by chance?

Constable: *(laughter)* Oh no... how can you mix this all up, Maršík!

Týc: And what's her name?

Maršík: But this I can't ...

Men: Don't fool around... her name?

Maršík: I just can't, it's impolite...

Men: Spill the beans!

Maršík: Well... Her name is Berta Stiburková and she's from Mšeno. But not a word to a soul or I'm in a great trouble. At home, mainly. You know what I mean. *I haven't squandered much. Three hundred. Okay, four.* Right, shall we have one more round? On me! *Still, it's just some change.* Innkeeper, beer! On me! I'm buying! *I'll get the money before we meet again. And if I don't ... she'll hardly object. She's kind-hearted, tame, just like a soft chicken that has just hatched from the eggshell.*

17. At the railway

Watchman: Maršík!

Maršík: *Everything will go smoothly.*

Watchman: Maršík, wait!

Maršík: *You just need to take it deftly in your hands.*

Watchman: A woman was looking for you here yesterday.

Maršík: Which woman?

Watchman: Older one, she came yesterday, crossing the tracks back and forth...I thought for a while it was your wife, but it couldn't have been because I know your wife well.

Maršík: It was a mistake, she was probably looking for someone else...

Watchman: Not at all, lad. She looked for no one else but you. True, she asked for a different name...I forgot...Podhorský, right. I told her: 'There's no one of this name.' She went: 'There must be!' ,What's this person supposed to look like?' She said: 'Like this and that, of medium build, with blonde curly hair...

Maršík: There are millions of this description!

Watchman: As she was leaving, she turned and said that I should tell you... that you should let her know or she'd take you to court.

Maršík: *So she...*

Maršík: That's a mistake!

Maršík: *...wants to denounce me!*

Watchman: So are you. Maršík, just give it a break. An older married man like you...is he allowed to do this?

18. In the corridor at Alžběta's Madam's house

Maršík: *(rings the bell) She's not tame, she's sly. Anyways, I'll tell her that it's over between us. She's not worth this fuss! And if I spent some of her money, for God's sake, it wasn't a fortune...*

Madam: *(opens the door)* Why are you ringing so many times?!

Maršík: *She has cost me money, too.*

Madam: What do you want, sir?

Maršík: *Were it not for her, I could have saved money to bring some goodies for my children.*

Madam: I am asking what you want!

Maršík: Yes... I... I've come to see Alžběta. Could she spare a while? *I give my word of honour I'll change my manners, and so will my wife and we will –*

Madam: Are you Mr Podhorský?

Maršík: Yes... Em, yes, that's me.

Madam: I thought you'd come tomorrow.

Maršík: *I'll tell her a joke and that might cheer her up.*

Madam: Alžběta is tied up in the kitchen.

Maršík: *It is slightly confusing but it'll get solved somehow.*

Madam: Alžběta! Alžběta!

Maršík: *Just use my wits -*

Madam: It's that Vladimír of yours! Come over here!

Maršík: *You bet.*

Alžběta: Hello.

Maršík: I heard you were at the railway station. Alžběta. Don't do this to me!
Such a shame! Why should you be running after me now?

Alžběta: But... I haven't heard from you, you haven't left a note.

Maršík: How could you have thought anything like that? About me? I was ill!

Alžběta: You were using a false name!

Maršík: We didn't know each other at first! I need to be careful! I won't disclose my true identity at once! Now it's quite different, isn't it? And besides! Am I an impostor?! I wanted to move! Nail your pictures on the wall. Know what, Alžběta, take your money back. I don't need this! I didn't deserve this kind of mistrust! Farewell!

Alžběta: No! I beg you, no. I've already announced to madam that I am quitting. I didn't mean it like this. I... I apologise. ...

19. At Maršík's place

Barchánek: If you have money to spend, you can even leave before Christmas!

Maršíková: Do you want to throw us out in the cold? What kind of man are you?

Barchánek: This man of yours could have easily found something by now! But he thinks only of himself. He reportedly squanders money on drinks and food out at the pub, everybody says.

Maršíková: That's not true at all!

Barchánek: And where is he all the time? Aha?

Maršíková: Even if, he's not eating thanks to your money!

Barchánek: And where did he get it? You tell me! Where did he get it?

20. At Alžběta's place

Alžběta: Madam, thank you so much for everything.

Maršík: *I had a wrong guess, when I thought she would give up on me.*

Alžběta: Let me just finish sweeping the floor, so it's neat and clean.

Madam: Leave it alone, Alžběta.

Maršík: *That she would let me go my own way...*

Madam: Julie is coming tomorrow morning to clean everything. You won't let your man wait, will you?

Maršík: As for me, I can wait.

Madam: Have you packed everything? The tablecloths for your trousseau?

Alžběta: Yes.

Madam: I don't know how to thank you enough for your long-standing service.

Alžběta: You're so kind to me. *(to Maršík)* Will you help me with the basket?

Maršík: A basket? Which basket?! This one?! *She's giving me orders.*
What's inside? *The way she stares at me.*

Alžběta: Towels, sheets.

Maršík: *Such a devoted and possessive look!*

Alžběta: Dresses. Madam gave me also a few Sunday best tablecloths.

Maršík: *As if I were her laundry basket!* Nice... what you've got.

Alžběta: What *we've* got, darling.

Maršík: *Am I forever hers only because she gave me her bankbook?*

Madam: Alžběta, I wish you best of luck for your new status.

Maršík: *When I get rid of her... when all the worries are gone, I'll start paying more attention to the kids.*

Madam: And you, sir, keep an eye on her!

Maršík: *I want them to know they have a father who provides for them.*
Certainly. *I'll get them, say-*

Alžběta: Let's go.

21. On the train

Alžběta: So sit down next to me.

Maršík: I want to stand! *I am not sitting down. I am not dancing to her tune.*

Alžběta: And why are we going this late in the evening?

Maršík: The tradesmen were still not finished in the morning. They were doing the floors... *In plain sight, everyone's watching.*

Alžběta: There's going to be so much cleaning-up after them!

Maršík: *What is she dragging behind in that basket?!*

Alžběta: Now we'll have to burn the midnight oil because of them...

Maršík: I'll nail those pictures for you, as I promised. I have the hammer on me.

Alžběta: I'm looking forward to it. So much! When are we getting off?

Maršík: Two more stops. Then a short walk through the forest. And we're there.

Alžběta: Through the forest?

Maršík: You're not scared, are you? We'll walk together.

Alžběta: I am not... Only that you are being this sulky all the time...

Maršík: *But I haven't given up yet.*

Alžběta: As if you were not happy at all.

22. In the forest

Maršík: *I'll fight.*

Alžběta: Are we there yet?

Maršík: It'll take some more time. *But somehow, it's not possible now.*

Alžběta: The basket is heavy.

Maršík: Now, give it to me. *I'll tell her everything. I'll leave and she won't see me anymore.* Only if you didn't drag so much stuff with you.

Alžběta: The pictures are also inside.

Maršík: *She's also to blame!*

Alžběta: Saint Joseph and embroidered roses.

Maršík: *She shouldn't take interest in married men, there are enough single ones in the world. I am a married man and she needs to acknowledge what is appropriate and what is not...*

Alžběta: And why are you so silent?

Maršík: *So, now I am in a position where I didn't want to get to. I'll simply tell her...* Alžběta!

Alžběta: Is it still far away?

Maršík: We'll be there in no time at all.

Maršík: *I'll just tell her:*

Alžběta: I'm really glad to hear it!

Maršík: *"Miss, it's all been a scam."* See, can you see that fourth house from the end?

Alžběta: One, two, three, four... Aha!

Maršík: *"It mustn't go on."*

Alžběta: There it is! The one with the chimney!

Maršík: *"Forget about our love and look for your luck elsewhere. And carry that basket yourself on your way back. It's not what I have imagined. It was just a dream."* Now it's too late. Alžběta...

Alžběta: Josífek?

Maršík: Alžběta -

Alžběta: Hang on... right here? You can't... Not here... You know, I've got this woman's period... Josífek. Wait...Ouch! You're strangling me!

Maršík: It's too late!

Alžběta: Help! Help! No!

Maršík: Haven't you got enough?

Maršík pulls out the hammer and starts pounding her head.

Maršík: ...haven't ...haven't you got enough!?

Maršík: *A villa. A villa with a roof. And there's a weathercock on the roof...*

And I am sitting on the balcony... Such nonsense! What villa, what

weathercock! Enough! Enough, I say! There are no balconies now, there's a basket... The basket, the basket! It'll be a real trouble! I need to get rid of it. But first I need to take it home. I mustn't leave anything behind! The hammer. The hammer. What have you got here? Here's the handbag, the purse...Look... Why do I have such sticky fingers? Fifty-five crowns, twenty pennies...

23. In the courtyard

(Maršík pumps water.)

Maršík: *No one. No one saw it. It's still dark. And when the dawn breaks?*

No, they won't find her, it was deep in the forest. In a bush. No one will discover her. Oh, I feel anxious, I feel sick.

Barchánek: Why are you wasting water?! How dare you waste? You come at down and just look around...

Maršík: *It's still not morning!*

Barchánek: Well, come and look at him!

Maršík: *No matter what, he can't help carping at me!*

Barchánek: Come and see what a boozier you have taken home!

Maršíková: Quiet, you'll wake the children up!

Maršík: *And she whimpers.*

Maršíková: Were you at a night shift again?

Maršík: Not really, I am just late... *That's strange.*

Maršíková: Quite often lately, or so it seems to me.

Maršík: *Everything is just as usual.*

Maršíková: Are you staying at home tonight?

Maršík: I am. But now I need to get to work. *Although something has changed.* Where's my shirt? *She shouldn't have imposed herself on me. Everything could have been different.* Coffee? *Aren't there other men in the world?* Am I supposed to brew coffee myself?! *She couldn't help it, she wanted to run her own household, now she's got it.* Nothing's ready or prepared, nothing!

24. At the railway

Watchman: I am telling you, rabble and thieves, nothing else! Why are you looking at me like that?

Maršík: *That basket, it's evidence!* I didn't sleep much. I'll go walk my round, that'll wake me up. *I must get rid of it. It can't stay in the shed for long.*

Man 1: Maršík. Maršík!

Maršík: *The old man goes there every now and then...*

Man 1: Do you have a cigarette?

Maršík: *What was in that basket...* What?

Man 1: A cigarette, do you have any?

Maršík: *Clothes, linen,* I've got one... *but also the letters from me!* Here.
From Podhorský, that is...

Man 1: And will you go for a smoke with me?

Maršík: No. *I need to burn them. Along with the bankbook.* I must go! *But what about the other stuff?* I need to walk my round, you know.
Hang on, hang on...

Man 1: What's up?

Maršík: I was given, from a landowner lady in Mšeno, she's called Berta.

She owns a large distillery and I used to work there as a coachman.

Man 1: And what does it have to do with me?

Maršík: She gave me a basket full of clothes.

Maršíková: *Whose money is it?*

Maršík: She gave it to me and said:

Maršík: *Where did you get it from?*

Maršík: There you go, take it. I won't need it anymore. And she was so pretty in that red dress...

25. At Maršík's place

Maršík: How could you dare?

Maršíková: I was cleaning up... I wanted to wash your trousers you had on yesterday, they're all dirty!

Maršík: Shut up! And listen what I have to tell you. Not a word to anyone,

is that clear? It might get me in trouble... Maršíková:

I'll keep quiet, you can trust me.

Maršík: Go to sleep.

26. In a dream

Alžběta: Josífek! Josífek! Come to me.

Maršík: Alžběta?

Alžběta: Hurry up.

Maršík: Where are we going?

Alžběta: You'll see.

Maršík: Are we there yet?

Alžběta: It'll take some time!

Maršík: Where are you taking me?

Alžběta: The tradesmen left the place rather messy. Hurry up.

Maršík: Is it still far away?

Alžběta: Can you see that building? You can see the roof and the chimney.

Maršík: No!

Alžběta: Josífek. Why did you leave me lying behind? All alone in the middle of the bushes. You know, flies keep pestering me and clinging to my face? A swarm of flies buzz 'cause they smell the carcass...

Maršík: No, not this! No!

27. In the bedroom

Maršíková: Come on. Wake up. Get up!

Maršík: What? What's the matter?

Maršíková: You're burning up.

Maršík: It's nothing! I just had this stupid dream. Just a stupid dream.

Maršíková: You should give the money back.

Maršík: I can't give it back.

Maršíková: Why couldn't you-?!

Maršík: Because... it belongs to me now.

28. In the restaurant

Waiter: Here... your tripe soup.

Maršík: *Just consider everything carefully.* Hang on, listen... *You just need to move sensibly and carefully.* A friend of mine recommended this place... *With caution, above all!* Do you happen to know where I'd find a shorter man, black hair, a business man...

Waiter: He's sitting over there.

Maršík: *Why did he give me such a weird look?*

Waiter: I'll send him over.

Maršík: *What didn't seem right to him?*

Man: Let's see what nice you've got here?

Maršík: I've got something after my late sister. *As if you couldn't have a business meeting in a restaurant.* You know, she was the oldest of us.

Man: Let me have a look. There's so much of it. Five dresses. Bed linen...

Maršík: What will you give me for it? *If you're not cautious, they'll rip you off.*

Man: Whatever I give, I'll still lose out. People just want new things nowadays, it's not what it used to be... I'll give you ninety, not more. A deal then?

Maršík: No, no, no. Ninety-five.

Man: No one would make up for my loss.

Maršík: Ninety-five crowns, just have a look at the good quality.

Man: Good quality, but worn out!

Maršík: *Did I have to make up such a fairy-tale?* I'll add the basket for free! *I always talk too much.*

Man: Alright then.

Maršík: *That's my misfortune.*

Man: Ninety-five. Deal!

Maršík: Deal.

Maršík: *The words pour out of me and I can't hold them back. Most importantly, her things will get scattered among people. And nothing of Alžběta will remain. .*

29. In a dream_a journey

Alžběta: Josífek... You reckon you'll forget about me?

Maršík: What do you want?

Alžběta: I just want to tell you: You should spend all the money!

Maršík: But I don't feel like spending it... I want nothing!

Alžběta: I had seventeen thousand.

Maršík: Leave me alone!

Alžběta: Now I have nothing.

Maršík: I know. And what's next? What?

Alžběta: You must do away with the banknotes to prevent them from giving evidence.

Maršík: True! But I... I'll handle it.

Alžběta: Well, then I am happy, indeed, Josífek.

Maršík: I'll sort it out, there'll be no sign of it eventually.

Alžběta: I am glad to hear that!

Maršík: I won't have the money give evidence against me!

30. Maršík on a spending spree_collage

Maršík: Sausage and bear! For everyone. Cognac! We'll drink cognac.

Waiter: Here's the cognac.

Maršík: Enough. I don't want it anymore. I used to live without money, so I can continue living like that. I thought it would get used to me, but I was wrong!

Boy: Newspaper. Evening edition. Sir, buy your newspaper!

Maršík: Let me see. What do they write? *In a village not far from Prague, a body of a dead woman was found in the forest, known as "On the Punk". The woman in question was stunned by a blunt object and strangled. There are numerous abrasions on her neck, with visible fingerprints.*

1. In the pub

Constable: What is it?

Maršík: *Police are on the trail of the potential suspect.*

Constable: What is it, Mr Maršík? Is anything torturing you?

Maršík: *But the newspapers don't have a clue.*

Týc: The Constable has been talking to you for a while now and you haven't reacted. What's wrong with you?

Maršík: Well, you know. There's always something. Reporters cover paper with writing and still can't fathom the reality.

Constable: That's the way it is. Fancy a game of cards?

Týc: Make it an exception, then.

Maršík: We could have a game. *They won't let me fall...*

Týc: Give it a proper shuffle, Constable, will you?

Constable: Sure I will. We'll have three pints of beer!

Innkeeper: In a moment!

Maršík: *I'm their man, aren't I? We've known each other for ages.*

Týc: Let me, I'll deal the cards.

Maršík: Well, you have given it a nice shuffle. Colour?
(they play cards in the course of the dialogue)

Constable: Well.

Týc: Tell us a story, Maršík...to make us laugh.

Maršík: *That's it, I can make people laugh, that's why they like me.*

Týc: What was the story with that landowner lady about?

Maršík: I... I don't know anything about a landowner lady... Seven of hearts!

Innkeeper: Now, three pints of beer, here they are...

Constable: Double, like hell! He says he knows nothing! Can you hear him, Innkeeper? Suddenly he knows nothing...

Týc: What a joker!

Maršík: *Why this story, of all?* Constable, on my honour...

Constable: Let's have a drink? Cheers.

Maršík: Re! Here we go! *(their cards smack on the table)*

Týc: Hah, this one. What was her name? You told us about her.

Maršík: *As a matter of fact, I can talk about women.*

Constable: Holy hell, that's a bummer...

Maršík: It doesn't matter! Now pull out the right one!

Constable: Take it slow, you can't urge me. Always stick to the rules.

Týc: He's always like that. It takes him forever to decide...

Constable: Now, show us.

Týc: So what was the story about her? The one in red dress?

Maršík: *(wins)* Oh dear me, chaps, it's gonna be expensive!

Constable: Damn it...

Týc: I am a bit out of practice...

Constable: Maršík, tell him since he's so curious!

Maršík: Her name was Berta Stiburková, but I don't know why you need to know...

Constable: Stiburková, you say... And where was she from?

Maršík: Yes, please. Berta Stiburková. From Mšeno.

Týc: From Mšeno. No landowner lady called Berta Stiburková lives there.

Maršík: Excuse me, Mr Týc, if I say so.

Týc: We went to Mšeno last week and there lives no woman of such name.

Maršík: She could have moved out. She's got a sister in Valašské Meziříčí, she told me about her... (*gets up*) But I have to go now.

Constable: Come on, fellows, there's no need to argue. And how much did the lady donate to you? Roughly speaking, a lot?

Maršík: Do you need to know this, too?

Constable: Just take your seat again. Now, how much was it?

Maršík: Me?

Týc: Speak up, man, when Constable asks you! Well?

Maršík: It looks as if I was actually being interrogated...

Týc: And what have you thought? That this is a chat, perhaps? She gave me some five six hundred crowns. *It's still not the end*

Maršík: *of*
days, is it?

Constable: Some five, six hundred crowns... And she gave it to you in exchange of what?

Maršík: *There are quite a few things still unknown.* Just like that...

Týc: Just like that. For pure love. Mm... Listen, man... You have spent five thousand in the last month. We have proof that you paid three times two hundred only here in the pub...

Maršík: *Actually I didn't want the money in the first place!*

Týc: Then a wine bar in Prague, too...

Maršík: *I wanted to get rid of it... to keep my head clear.*

Týc: The Europe Hotel...

Maršík: *I carried it over like a cat carries its kittens.*

Týc: The Rosenbaum's lounge...

Maršík: *and longed to see it leave me.*

Týc: The cinema Na Poříčí...

Maršík: *... and leave me alone.* Gentlemen, I -

Týc: But you withdrew seventeen thousand four hundred crowns from the bankbook at the bank.

Maršík: *It's enough to tell me one word and everything takes a major turn.*

See, that was for a relative of mine...

Constable: A relative, interesting. Maršík, on the second day of last month you placed an ad...

Maršík: *I should tell them about that villa which appeared before my eyes...*

Constable: Týc, what was the wording?

Týc: Will an intelligent man succeed in finding a girl or a widow...

Maršík: *It had pantile roof and a turret on which a weathercock kept turning...* But I didn't write it -

Constable: Right. It was written by Vladimír Podhorský.

Týc: A certain Madam from the Lesser Town did confirm that. This Ms Válová, who was murdered, served at her place, you know.

Constable: And a railway watchman reported that you took up this false identity. Get up! And hands up! Týc, search his pockets.

Týc: Maršík... tell us the truth how it all occurred. Allow me to also search your shirt... I'm being honest with you. It'll be of great advantage for you... Here it is. Twelve thousand.

Maršík: Mr Týc, I have never suspected you'd treat me like this...

Týc: Maršík!

Maršík: *He betrayed me.*

Týc: You'd better confess. It's very much taken into consideration and you can ease your conscience –

Constable: Leave him alone! You cannot handle these with kid gloves ...

Maršík: *Everybody has betrayed me. They pretended to be friends and in fact...* I... I don't have anything to confess. I have no idea what you want from me.

Týc: As you wish. I meant well.

Constable: Do you know Alžběta Vállová?

Maršík: As to her, I very well...

Constable You've done her in! Josef Maršík, I am arresting you in the name of the law for a premeditated murder of Alžběta Vállová. ...

Maršík: I... I did it... But I didn't want to!

32. In the courtroom

Judge: Defendant, please rise. In the name of the Republic! The Regional Criminal Court and the jury, after this hearing, have reached the verdict as follows: The defendant Josef Maršík is guilty and therefore sentenced to death. ...

33. His wife's visit before of the execution

Maršíková: God bless, Josef.

Maršík: *It's weird. As if only a few years have passed since we were at the fair together.*

Maršíková: I brought you cake.

Maršík: *We had some gingerbread and shared a laugh.*

Maršíková: A bundt cake.

Maršík: *She was pretty. Rosy cheeks. Everything has changed so much...*

Maršíková: I go house to house doing laundry... they are kind to me. I was afraid that when...

Maršík: *But she is the only one who means well with me.* I know. What about the old man? Do you have a place to stay?

Maršíková: Dad is ill. He's not renting the place after all. No one would come for summer now.

Maršík: And what about the kids?

Maršíková: Kids behave themselves. Our girl romps around and the boy is as sensible as an adult.

Maršík: Make him study. He's got a head for it and could go far. We can't afford to give them a fortune. But they can still get an education.

34. In the morning before the execution

Alžběta: *Wait, you go nowhere. Flies are pestering me and clinging to my face, you know?*

Maršík: *But I have to get off here!*

Alžběta: *You stay here with me!*

Prison guard: Get up!

Maršík: *I must go!*

Alžběta: *No!*

Prison guard: Get up!

Maršík: Can you hear it?

Alžběta: *You are staying here with me.*

Prison guard: Get up!

Maršík wakes up soaked in sweat

Prison guard: Well, Maršík, get up. I've got black coffee for you. Get up.

Maršík: I feel so cold. I'm even trembling.

Prison guard: It'll soon be over. Have some coffee. Will you have a cigarette, too? Any other wish? We'll fulfil any wish of yours today.

Maršík: I'd like to see my kids once again... Or perhaps I wouldn't. I'd set a bad example for them. You know... I... when I was in the army, once I received a license to leave and I met a blonde in a red dress down town. We got talking and this lady in red dress...suddenly I was sitting on her balcony and she was bringing me something to eat, I saw her flashing below in the flowerbeds, her hips, oh dear me, were bouncing... I ate and looked out of the balcony to see soldiers, my friends who passed by, you know – they waved to me and said: "Look, Maršík, you said nothing but see?" You know, it's this type of woman who has an answer for everyone. I felt cheerful and comfortable around her. Do you believe me?

Prison guard: I'd like to believe that.

Maršík: As a matter of fact, I don't tell lies, you can ask whomever you want to...Everybody saw us together!

Prison guard: I believe you.

Maršík: Sir, sir... and what if... when I am no longer around, what do you reckon...? Will the engine still run along the tracks and will people still

go to the cinema... know what I mean, will everything be the same as it was before...?

Prison guard: Nothing will be, no such things will exist, everything will be over.

Maršík: Really? Really, aren't you telling lies?

Prison guard: Why should I be lying, there will be nothing when you're gone, you can count on that, Maršík.

Maršík: So you see. *Nothing will exist.* There will be nothing without me. *There will be nothing. There will be nothing without me.*