

# The Zebra

## ACT I

John arrives to his and Edward's flat. He finds a letter from Edward. Beside himself, John tries to reach out to Edward, touch his heart. But Edward has made up his mind. It's over.

A few months earlier Edward is tormented by his inner images of John being tortured in jail in their homeland. His benefactors Anna and Disa try to calm him down and reassure him that they will succeed with their plan to get John out of jail. He will be reunited with Edward, here, in the new country. Love overcomes everything.

During a dinner at Anna's and Disa's place, Lena, and her partner Kaj admire Disa's efforts to persuade the authorities to set John free. Edward, burdened by his anxiety and longing for John, finds it difficult to participate in the light-hearted conversation. He draws aside, despite Kaj's attempts to cheer him up. Anna and Disa worry about Edward's predicament, while Lena finds it difficult to hold back her jealousy over their commitment.

The dinner ends abruptly when they get the news that John has been released and soon will be put on a flight that will bring him here. Disa triumphs. Victory! Soon the whole world will know about their success.

Almost breathless by their expectations, Anna, Disa, Lena, Kaj and Edward gather at the airport to welcome John. Realizing the seriousness of the moment, they listen eagerly to Anna's instructions on how they shall behave towards John. Trauma is no small thing.

Suddenly John stands in front of them. Dumbfounded by his looks, and his behaviour, the company freeze to the spot. Edward hurries forward to meet him. John, moody and tired after the trip, insists that he won't have this fuss. Edward apologizes and disappears with John, to the frustration of the others.

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## ACT II

Alone in their new home, Edward and John are overwhelmed by their feelings of finally being able to love each other, openly and freely. Unexpectedly Edward is disturbed by John's lack of gratitude to Anna and Disa. Their moment of love ends abruptly.

Edward seeks out Disa to apologize for John's manners at the airport, but Disa avoids the subject. Instead, she focuses on how much they miss him in their home.

Edward and John are late for Disa's birthday dinner. Impatiently Edward waits for John to get ready, declaring that they must adjust to local customs. John won't listen to that. What happened to the dream of the free Zebra that cannot be tamed? Edward loses his patience. Leaves.

Lena is just asking why Edward comes alone to the dinner when suddenly John shows up. And he has brought them a delicacy. Despite Edward's efforts to stop him, John insists that they must taste the sheep brain that Edward has cooked. Everyone is trying to hide their uneasiness. The growing tension erupts in a chaos of forbidden emotions. When John accuses them of looking upon him as "the other", they disappear. Alone, Edward and John realize that an abyss has begun to open before them.

Desperate and confused over his changed feelings for John Edward approaches Kaj who has been waiting for him. Edward is carried away by Kaj's credo about how important the freedom of choice is in one's life and gives in to Kaj's seduction.

Kaj is packing his things. He is ready to move on with his new life, despite Lena's desperate attempts to persuade him to stay. When she realizes that her rival is not a woman, but Edward, her veneer of tolerance cracks and is replaced with rage and despair.

Alone, John realizes that he has been pushed into the role of "the other", and that Edward is about to leave him. Now he must try to turn the tide before it's too late.

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Edward and Kaj present themselves as a couple to Anna and Disa, who try to remain neutral. The new pair manages to get away just before John shows up, feverish of remorse. Moved by his pain, and disappointed that their project has failed, the two women try to convince John that Edward will return.

Anguished, Edward writes his farewell letter to John. Somewhere, in another place, he meets John one last time in their dream about the free Zebra who, liberated from fear and shame, is galloping over the savannah.

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