

# **The Bridge**

By: Jeton Neziraj

**Narrator**

**John, fourteen years old**

**Nora, thirteen years old**

**Man / the Stranger (John's dad)**

**Mom (John's Mom)**

**The MAN of the Forest (Nora's dad)**

**Villagers of the Forest and the Hill...**

## SCENE ONE

*(In the background a bridge with shining stones. On the two river banks, in distance can be seen the houses of the Hill and on the other side the houses of the Forest. Villagers of the both sides are crossing the bridge with their working tools, while the children are playing different games. The low gurgling sound of the water can be heard. Narrator appears from background as if he was “germinated” from the bridge...)*

### **NARRATOR:**

Once upon a time. Once upon a time... There was a beautiful village settled between two river banks. On one side a Hill lied and on the other side was the Forest. The two parts were linked by a strong bridge built from the most precious stones of the earth, which were shining in the sun with all colours of rainbow. The villagers from both sides of the bridge used to live and work together, the children used to play and learn together. They were poor, oh how helpless were these poor, but they were happy and proud because of the bridge... The bridge was full of people that were passing through. Nora and John used to go out every evening for fishing, but, to be honest, they rarely caught a fish... Indeed, since the water of river was cold, almost there wasn't any fish... But they went for fishing...

*(On the bridge John and Nora are fishing.)*

JOHN: Have you ever heard about the goldfish?

NORA: What do you want to say with “goldfish”?

JOHN: Yes of course, the goldfish. There's a goldfish and if you can catch him, he will fulfil you three wishes.

NORA: Only three?

JOHN: Yes, but how many wishes would you like to have? As for me, it would be enough if he fulfils me only one wish...

NORA: And which wish is that?

JOHN: Hmm... it would be said only to the goldfish.

NORA: Why don't you tell me?

JOHN: I'll tell you later. Now pull the fishing rod, it's seems that we got a fish?

*(Nora pulls the fishing rod and pulls out an old shoe.)*

JOHN: It could easy have been a goldfish!

NORA: Do you really believe that there's a goldfish?

JOHN: Yes of course. You've never heard the legend about the bridge?

NORA: No.

JOHN: So, the legend says that this bridge with these shining stones was built by the “goldfish”! When a local boy had caught a goldfish, he demanded from the goldfish to build this bridge with shining stones and he dedicated it to a girl he loved that lived on the other side of the river.

NORA: I have never heard about it. Did you make it up right now?

JOHN: No, ask the others, everybody knows it. I wonder why your parents haven't told before you about it!?

NORA: I'll ask them tonight. So, that's why you like fishing. It's for sure that you hope to catch the goldfish?

JOHN: Yes! Why not, if it exists then... Perhaps I can catch him...

**NARRATOR:**

They really never caught any fish. But all in all it doesn't matter, they were only children... And they were smart children! They were good in school and they together discussed a lot of things. John's mom and dad didn't get along that well, but somehow they made it. None of them worked and their financial situation was terribly bad... They were the poorest of them all.

## SCENE TWO

*(At John's house. John is sitting at the table with nothing in his plate and waits.)*

JOHN: Mom?

MOM: Not yet!

JOHN: When?

MOM: Very soon.

JOHN: When is that very soon?

MOM: Very soon, very soon!

*A Man enters.*

MOM: Here at last!

MAN: Nothing new!

MOM: How come nothing?

MAN: Except this.

***Man pulls out an apple and shows them. Mom takes the apple from his hand and puts it in the John's plate.***

JOHN: I thought that we were waiting for the potatoes to be cooked?

MOM: There are no potatoes. No potatoes, no bread, no candies, there's nothing when you have a lazy dad like this yours.

MAN: This word lazy...

JOHN: Word "lazy" comes from the language...

MAN: You eat your apple or you'll be left without it.

MOM: Leave the kid alone.

MAN: I'll leave the kid alone, but you should leave me alone, too.

MOM: It's my fault that I've married you. Where are the emeralds and gold that you've promised me before the marriage?

JOHN: Where are the chocolates that you've promised in the morning?

MOM: *(to John)* Eat the apple and watch your step.

MAN: I always keep my promises. Those things I've promised, I'll bring them some day.

MOM: Oh, "some day"!

MAN: Well yes, some day when I find a job...If I don't have a job I cannot earn any money. And to get a job it's very hard.

JOHN: This apple has a worm inside.

MAN: Shut up and eat your apple...

JOHN: What about the worm?

MAN: Certainly you shouldn't eat the worm.

MOM: If you continue like this, one day we'll be forced to eat worms too.

JOHN: I've heard that some people have already started to eat worms.

MOM: Maybe, but they probably put some salt and spices on top. But we don't have any.

MAN: I don't like this humour of yours. Simply, we are not that bad. One day, which means very soon I will find a job and then...

MOM: And then...?

JOHN: And then?

MAN: And then will have food to eat? And then for you woman I'll bring the most beautiful emeralds in the world and for you my son, the sweetest candies that exist somewhere...

JOHN: It sounds exactly like in the dream that I saw one night...

MOM: I'm fed up with these useless hopes...

MAN: You will see that these aren't useless. Your emeralds will have the shine of the rainbow bridge stones...

*(Man moves towards and kisses John in his cheek and then he kisses Mom in her forehead. John wipes his cheek, while Mom tries to push him away).*

### **NARRATOR:**

That night John went to sleep hungry. But that's nothing, he got used to that. In the morning he ate a soup which was not that delicious that his mother cooked with the oak leaves from the forest. Days and nights were passing by... Nothing was changing in the happy village where people lived in harmony. Nothing happened until that night with rain and fog that had covered the entire village... That night...the stranger showed up out of nowhere from the fog. That night ... even the eyes of the moon were covered and couldn't see anything... He came...

## **SCENE THREE**

*(Foggy night. The Stranger enters. He is covered with a heavy black woollen smock and even his face cannot be seen.)*

STRANGER: *(Alone)* It doesn't matter... I really have to do it. I am not afraid, I am not afraid... One stone less doesn't change anything. The bridge remains as it was, but my life will change once for all. A stone that shines will cost a lot without any doubt. Oh, it will cost so much and once for all I will say goodbye to the poverty... Goodbye poverty. Yes,

yes, I will do it. Nobody is around. Nobody will see me. It's dark and even the moon is not a witness. Only the fog. And the fog will keep the secret. Then in the morning the secret with the fog will be gone. Nobody will ever know, nobody will ever understand. I will do it, I will do it... I am a brave man, I am not afraid of anyone...

*(He pulls out a pickaxe from a bag and hits with a pickaxe one of the bridge stones. He pulls a stone out and puts it inside a bag and then leaves in the darkness.)*

**NARRATOR:**

Nobody has seen anything. He came and went away with the fog. The morning came as pure as a tear... The early roosters woke up the villagers that slept the night away undisturbed. The coughing of the men that woke up could be heard here and there in two parts of the village; on the Hill and on the Forest. John's dad got up early to go down into the town and to look for a job...

**SCENE FOUR**

*(Early in the morning. The rooster's song can be heard. The Man walks carelessly along the road. He stops when he notices that a stone is missing from the bridge. He becomes alarmed. He starts to shout.)*

MAN: A stone is missing from the bridge! a stone is missing from the bridge...

*(Mom, John, Nora, Man from Forest and many villagers are coming shocked and as if they do not believe what they see.)*

MAN: Oh what a terrible sight!

MOM: Are we dreaming!

JOHN: Oh, what a sad sight!

NORA: Ominous morning!

MAN FROM FOREST: What am I seeing!!

MAN: Who could have taken it?

MOM: Whoever might be, let the shame follow him for the rest of his life.

MAN: Or, it might have fallen into the water!

JOHN: Let's try to find it in the water.

MAN: The water is muddy and we can not see anything. The rain that fell last night and the snow that is being melted in the mountains have turbid the water.

MOM: What shall we do? We have to do something!

MAN: Let's wait until the river is cleared. It is sure that it has fallen into the river.

JOHN: But we cannot wait, even some more stones can crumple.

MAN FROM FOREST: The bridge is very strong, I don't think that the bridge because of a stone can crumple.

MAN: We should wait, we don't have anything else to do.

NORA: The missing of this stone is terrifying me!

MOM: Don't worry, everything is going to be alright.

MAN: Nothing can happen to the bridge.

MAN FROM FOREST: Never!

MOM: Never.

MAN: Never.

**NARRATOR:**

Men and women from both sides of the river went away frowning... Oh, how unhappy were the villagers on that day. Weariness and sadness was everywhere. But they were united and they decided to remain united. That stone that was taken out from the bridge was as if someone had tore apart their hearts, or at least the liver or any guts from the stomach. That night the people couldn't sleep well. During the night they woke up from nightmares that they saw about the bridge, about the missing stone, about... dreadful dreams that scared them...

## SCENE FIVE

*(At the Man's house. John is readying his fishhook for fishing. Mom is cleaning the house. The Man is sitting and smoking.)*

MAN: That stone is not a simple stone. It's a magic stone, I'd say. It's a precious stone. We have to find it and return it to its place. Otherwise, the bridge without that stone looks ugly. I hope it has fallen into the water, or... To be honest, I doubt that it has fallen there!

JOHN: How? But you said that it must have fallen into the water?

MAN: I said but... We'll see it very soon.

JOHN: And where else it can be, dad, if it's not in the water?

MAN: It could be taken by anyone from the other side? The people from Forest were always mean.

JOHN: How you dare to say that. If they were mean, then we were mean too. Aren't we the same village, aren't we the same people?

MAN: We are and we are not.

JOHN: Are we or we aren't?

MAN: For many things we are, but we aren't for all things?

JOHN: Well, for which things we aren't the same, for instance?

MAN: Don't ask me such questions anymore. I doubt, simply, that the stone was stolen by someone among them. That's it.

*(Mom while cleaning finds a tied black bag.)*

MOM: What is this black bag here?

MAN: *(jumps suddenly)* Don't touch it.

MOM: Why, is there anything inside?

MAN: Nothing...

MOM: Then why am not allowed to touch it?!

MAN: There's nothing important in it, it's a coal.

JOHN: Coal?

MOM: Coal?

MAN: Yes, coal. I thought that I might sell it in the Market on this Sunday.

JOHN: But as far as I know there's no coal in our village for many years? Where did find it?

MAN: This is the last piece... I almost got hurt while digging for it and with difficulties I found this piece! I hope I can sell it. But if I cannot sell it now, then I will sell later, when the winter comes.

MOM: Why, do you think that you can make money out of this piece of coal?

MAN: Yes, there is so little coal in the market and it costs a lot.

*(Mom shrugs her shoulders in disbelief. John continues to work on his fish rod.)*

## SCENE SIX

### NARRATOR

Three days passed and the river water still was muddy. And the villagers seemed that they began to get used with the missing stone. They went back to their ordinary duties. The village got back its joy after that terrible day... But the morning of the other day conquered it with misfortune. A villager while passing the bridge in that early morning was astonished when he saw that one more stone was missing from the bridge. He became rigid and began to tremble. He tried to call for help, but he has lost his voice from the fear and from the terrible view that he has seen. Later, when he recovered a bit, he has released a deep and long shout "ooooh what an unfortunate day, one more stone is missing from the bridge...!" The villagers from both sides of the river were awakening and as they were in their pyjamas they ran to the bridge. In pain, the men smoke cigarettes while the women uprooted their hairs. The mess and unclarity has conquered the village from both sides. Because of the annoyance the sun has left earlier than on the other days. The night has fallen darker than usually. Whilst the moon, oh, the moon from annoyance didn't show up that night. She shed only a tear on the mountains...But this wasn't the end of suffering those poor villagers. On the fifth day the third bridge stone was missing, while on the sixth day three more stones were missing... Can you imagine, the beautiful bridge without its ten precious stones... What a horror. What a disaster. Oh, what a calamity and a mess were on that particular day... on that morning when the water of the river was completely clear...

*(Near the river. The villagers are assembled and they are watching the river.)*

JOHN: We can't see the stones anywhere.

MOM: Neither on this side.

NORA: Nor on this.

MAN: It means that the stones haven't fallen in the river, but someone has taken them.

JOHN: Yes!

MOM: Who has taken them?

JOHN: We must find it.

NORA: We will find sooner or later.

MAN: But how?

JOHN: I don't know.

NORA: We have to do something.

JOHN: We have to save the bridge.

NORA: We have to save the bridge.

**NARRATOR:**

Yes, they had to something. But nobody knew what they had to do. It was useless to find other stones and to put them in the bridge, in the place of missing shiny stones. Something it has to be done as soon as it was possible, otherwise... Oh, I can't tell what happened. The worst possible thing happened. The worst thing happened, the one that nobody could ever believe that it could happen. After a rainy night, the water of the river overflowed the banks... and as it was in haste it crumbled... yes it crumbled the bridge. The poor bridge tried to stay on the banks of the river, but the stones that were missing have weakened her strength. Oh, how much the bridge tried to stay where it was that poor bridge! It fought against the rain until the morning and just before the sun rose the bridge collapsed. Before it crumbled to the water, she released the last loud rumbling sound like a thunder and then it fell. It fell, the most beautiful bridge collapsed, the bridge with the most precious stones in the world.

## SCENE SEVEN

*(The villagers are assembled and sad are watching the collapsed bridge.)*

MAN: How sad.

MOM: The poor bridge. Look at the stones in the water, they have lost their glaze.

JOHN: How shall we pass across?

MAN: I don't know.

MOM: We have to do something.

JOHN: On the other side of the river is the school. I have to go to school. In fact, I have to go today.

MAN: Until we find a solution, you cannot go to school, and they cannot come to this side and we cannot go to their side, too. On our side their meadowlands cannot be mowed, and we cannot bring home the firewood from the woods that we own on their side.

MOM: And how can we live then?!

JOHN: *(Moves aside)* On that side is my school. Nora lives there, too. How will I meet her? How will I live without her?

MAN: You see, they have come to the river bank too.

MOM: Of course, they feel bad for the bridge.

MAN: Maybe, maybe... Let's the time itself tell the truth about those lost stones. I've told you before that the lost of the stones was man's deed. A sneaky hand stole the stones.

JOHN: But until we do not know who was, then we cannot blame anyone.

MAN: It's true. And we'll know the truth very soon.

JOHN: But, can't we build a new bridge?



MAN: It's not such easy thing to do. This was a magic bridge. And for building it again, then we have to find all the stones; these stones that are in the water and those stolen ones. So, if we try to build a new bridge with different stones then we have to have to work very hard and we'll have to do a hell of a job. A bridge needs to have big stones, which should be carved with a lot of skilfulness. It's not easy job to build a bridge...

MOM: How pity! A couple of days ago I left my shoes at the shoemaker on the other side. And now until we build a bridge I can't take them. I hope that he will keep them.

JOHN: But, dad, why don't go and look for the lost stones. They must be somewhere...

DAD: The must be somewhere, but are we supposed to know where? We can look for them for many years in vain...

JOHN: Oh, how bad for us.

### **NARRATOR:**

Both sides of the village were slammed by a deep annoyance. People were annoyed because of the bridge that didn't exist anymore. Everything seemed abandoned and without meaning. They had lost the dearest thing that they had. After a few days of silence and guessing, a wave of gossiping begun to spread on both sides of the river. Both sides were blaming each other for crumbling of the bridge. The villagers of Forest were saying that they have seen someone from Hill that stole the stones during the night, while the villagers of Hill were saying the opposite, that they saw a villager from Forest as he stole the stones. Which was the truth? Whose fault it was? How to find the guilty person?! The villagers of the Forest began to hate the villagers of Hill, and the villagers of Hill began to hate the villagers of Forest. Thus, everybody began to hate each other, everybody accused each other. There were a lot of built-up rage, detestation and cruelty... What about love? It seemed that love was gone, was lost, as if it never existed... What about John and Nora? Through a lot of difficulties they managed to meet one day... They went above the village and they met on the banks of the river.

## **SCENE EIGHT**

*(John and Nora are on the banks of the river.)*

JOHN: I was afraid that you might not come here.

NORA: I was thinking the same about you.

JOHN: You look well.

NORA: I don't believe you. You are trying to please me.

JOHN: No, really. What do they say on your side about the bridge?

NORA: My dad has told me not to say a word about the bridge with the people of the Hill.

JOHN: Really? That's what my dad said to me, not to talk to anyone about the bridge with the people of the Forest!

NORA: It's okay then, it's better to talk about other things... Let the elders deal with the bridge...

JOHN: No, Nora, we should talk about the bridge.

NORA: What should we say? Why should we talk?

JOHN: We should do something.

NORA: My dad said that when you'd return the stones that you have stolen...

JOHN: What? The stones that we have stolen?

NORA: Yes. They think that you, villagers of the Hill, have stolen the stones.

JOHN: It's a miracle. But our people think that you have, the villagers of the forest, have stolen the stones... It's a miracle.

NORA: But, the truth lies somewhere. Someone has taken those stones.

JOHN: Yes, but until the guilty person cannot be found, then we should not accuse each other by pointing the finger. It's better to try to find a solution than to accuse each other.

NORA: Our people are saying that there won't be a solution until we find all the stones.

JOHN: Our people are saying the same thing.

NORA: Now I have to go... I don't have much time.

JOHN: But Nora, you just came...

NORA: I can't stay any longer. Goodbye...

JOHN: Wait, when will we meet again?

NORA: I don't know... I don't know whether we will meet....

JOHN: Nora, wait... Nora...

*(Nora leaves. John is left alone at the stage.)*

### **NARRATOR:**

Poor John. He lost Nora, the one that he loved immeasurably. He loved her like a friend, of course... And like John and Nora were parted a lot of other children... The adults hated each other and that hatred transmitted to the children... It seemed that John was lonesome. He really didn't hate anyone. He wished that the bridge should be rebuilt and that he could go to school, so he could see Nora and to go for fishing together again... He didn't believe at all in gossips and for many nights he was staying awakened making plans for building a new bridge... He used to talk to his age-mates and asked them for help, but as it seems nobody could help him. The forest and the Hill would live forever apart. He would never see Nora... Oh, how sad it was... The days, weeks and months were passing and the people slowly began to forget the bridge. Nobody talked any more about building of a new bridge. The winter came much more terrible than before. The villagers from the Hill didn't have a place where they could take firewood. One day John ran to the river bank and shouted in anger to the villagers of the Forest.

## **SCENE NINE**

*On a bank of the river. John comes running and then shout to the other side.*

JOHN: It's not right. You should help us. It is very cold and we need firewood. Bring us some oaks... People, it's not right to behave like this. How did you forget such easy that we were the same village and that we used to live all together? You should help us. You should not allow us to get frozen from the cold.

*From the other side of the bank some ironical and cynical laughter could be heard.*

## **NARRATOR:**

From the Forest nobody paid attention and nobody took seriously John's shouts and calls, except Nora. Touched deeply, she ran to her dad, which in those moments was getting warmed near a warm stove.

## **SCENE TEN**

*(The Man from the Forest is near a stove and is getting warmed. Nora approaches him running.)*

NORA: Dad, we should help the people from the Hill. They are freezing from the cold...

The MAN from the FOREST: Let them get frozen! They deserved it. They had to know about the winter even when they decided to steal the bridge stones.

NORA: But dad, we still do not know who has stolen those stones.

The MAN from the FOREST: It is known. Who else would steal those stones?

NORA: But dad...

The MAN from the FOREST: Why are you worrying so much about them? I don't care if they are freezing. Even we don't have better situation than them. You see, for how long we couldn't go to the other side and mow our meadowlands because of the bridge and now our animals are starving. The hay we have reserved will be over very soon.

NORA: Well, then, dad if we help them and give the firewood, maybe they could give hay for our animals...

The MAN from the FOREST: The council of the village has decided to cut off temporary all kinds of communications and cooperation... So...

NORA: But this is not right!

The MAN from the FOREST: Why do you want to get involved in this? You are still a child and you don't have a right to get involved in elders job. Go to your room and leave me alone.

## **NARRATOR:**

And thus... Both sides, the Hill and the Forest suffered the consequences of the missing bridge. One side didn't have firewood and the other side didn't have enough hay for their animals! Only Nora and John still were hoping about the bridge... they were hoping that the stones can be found and the bridge would be rebuild again. Only those two believed and nobody else. The days were passing as the snowflakes of that cruel winter. But one day... Here it is what happened one day... It was a common day, a cold day as all the other days of that terrible winter....

## **SCENE ELEVEN**

*(It's snowing outside. It's cold. John and Mom are in the room. John is ill and is covered with a blanket, while Mom is sitting in corner of the room and is freezing.)*

JOHN: Is it still snowing, Mom?

MOM: Yes.

JOHN: I am freezing.

MOM: I know. Perhaps your dad has found a piece of firewood and when he comes back we can start a fire.

JOHN: When will dad come back?

MOM: Very soon.

JOHN: When is that very soon?

MOM: Very soon, very soon.

JOHN: If we had the bridge, we wouldn't be in this bad situation, mom?

MOM: Of course, not. We'd carry firewood from the Forest on the other side.

JOHN: Mom, can we burn the coal?

MOM: Of course. Why are you asking?

JOHN: I thought we could burn the coal that my dad is keeping in that black bag inside a cellar.

MOM: Where is the bag?

JOHN: It is in the cellar, under some other household junk. I have seen it.

MOM: That coal can keep the fire for two or three days. I have forgotten about it.

JOHN: Me, too. But the cold brought it to my mind...

*(Mom goes out of the room, as the Man enters the room.)*

MAN: If you come out of that blanket and start to move, you wouldn't feel the cold so much. I was walking until now and I don't feel the cold at all.

JOHN: But I am ill, dad. I am coughing the whole day long.

MAN: Really? Why didn't you kindle a fire?

JOHN: Because there no firewood left, dad.

MAN: I thought there are some small pieces of firewood.

*(MAN goes to hang his coat. MOM enters with the black bag. She opens the bag in the middle of the room. Instead of expected coal, there is a shining stone of the bridge. Everybody is astonished.)*

MOM: Oh, dear God.

JOHN: A shining stone of the bridge!!!!!!

MAN: Who the hell opened this bag!

MOM: I opened it. This is the bag of "coal" that you wanted to sell in the Market. But you never sold it.

JOHN: How did it happen that this stone came into our house?

MAN: This is none of your business. Put it back.

MOM: Wait, this stone was found in the bag that was supposed to have the coal. You lied to us?

MAN: That's how it had to be.

JOHN: Dad, you always taught us not to lie.

MAN: You don't understand this.

MOM: There's nothing to understand here, everything is obvious. You've stolen a stone from the bridge.

MAN: I didn't steal it, I took it.

JOHN: What's the difference?

MAN: Well, I took it, or if you want me to say I stole it. Yes, I stole it. I did it for you. God damned it. We were starving, and... This is the first stone that was taken from the bridge. I stole only this one. But it must be others who did the same thing as I did.

JOHN: But why daddy, why did you such a thing?!

MAN: For you my son, for you and for your mother. I was hoping that I will sell it and make some money. I wanted to buy you the biggest chocolate in the world, and for my wife the most beautiful emeralds ever...I wanted to see you happy. God damn it. I was looking for a job all over but nobody would hire me. When I returned home both of you were looking at me as if it was my fault that I couldn't find a job. Could you imagine how I was feeling. I was thinking that I wasn't good dad to you my son and a good husband to you my dear wife. I was completely worthless. I was good for nothing since I couldn't make you two happy. So, that night, I decided to steal this stone hoping that I would sell it as a precious stone. But the next day, its glow completely vanished and this stone turned into an ordinary stone with no value at all. But again, I was hoping that someday the glow will come back to the stone...Everyday I would sneak out and go to the basement to check on stone, but nothing changed, it remained regular stone...God damn it...I'm good for nothing.

JOHN: Oh daddy, I was always happy and proud that you were my dad. Why did you think such a thing?

MAN: (crying) I'm worthless... I was never able to make to you two happy. I'm nobody, that's what I am: nobody and worthless...

MOM: Don't say that.

JOHN: You mean a lot to us. What a sad and happy moment, because at least one of the stones from the bridge is found.

MAN: I'm nobody...

MOM: Cut it now, don't complain. What should we do now?

MAN: What do you mean "what should we do now"?

MOM: Well yes, what should we do with the stone?

JOHN: To return it.

MAN: No way. So they will find out that I stole a stone? Never. No way...God damn it. I'm completely worthless.

MOM: You are really worthless. You are a loser. You thought that with stolen things you're going to make us happy.

MAN: Shut your mouth.

MOM: You shut your mouth. Stone-thief. Bridge-destroyer.

MAN: Stupid woman. You too are an accomplice in this theft. Many times when we were passing by the bridge you envied the stones...Once even you have proposed to me to seal one stone.

MOM: That's not true. It was a joke.

MAN: Ah, a joke! Usually you are not such a joker.

MOM: Loser.

MAN: Stupid woman.

JOHN: Stop. Wait. Daddy you have to return this stone.

MAN: No way.

MOM: So everybody would say to us that we're a family of thieves.

MAN: Exactly. It's a moral issue. I won't be able stand the insults afterwards.

MOM: Yes really, to live with a stain all our lives.

JOHN: Daddy, it's better for you to admit your mistake, then to be left without bridge.

MAN: Absolutely no. After all, it wasn't such a bridge...

MOM: Well yes, an old bridge that will some day collapse from a storm.

MAN: I can't do that thing. No way.

JOHN: You should dad. You should do it. Maybe they will forgive you. I'm sure they will forgive you.

MAN: I don't want them to forgive me. The stone will stay here. Returned to its place. I'm sure that glow that the stone had it in the bridge will return someday...

JOHN: This stone won't shine if it's not in the bridge, daddy...

MOM: Really?

JOHN: Of course...

MOM: What a pity!

BABAI: What a pity... *(he pretends that he is crying)* I'm a loser... I'm worthless...! However, I'm not going to return the stone.

### **NARRATOR:**

It wasn't possible to convince him... John's attempts were useless. It was like talking to the wall. Dad didn't admit it. John did the impossible and finally succeeded to meet Nora.

## **SCENE TWELFE**

*(On the bank of the river. John is waiting. He is freezing. Across the river appears Nora.)*

JOHN: Nora!

NORA: Why did you invite me?

JOHN: We have to talk about something very important.

NORA: Say it.

JOHN: I want to tell you a secret. But you have to promise me that you won't tell it to anyone else.

NORA: OK. I promise.

JOHN: I have found a stone from the bridge.

NORA: What?!!

JOHN: A shining stone...!

NORA: Where did you find it? How did you find it?

JOHN: I've found it... at my home... my dad took it. But since the stone was cut from the bridge it had lost its glow, and my dad couldn't sell it.

*(Nora laughs loudly.)*

JOHN: This is not funny.

NORA: I am sorry, but this is very funny.

JOHN: Why?

NORA: Because... Well, then I will tell you a secret. Even in our house we have stone from the bridge. My dad stole it.

JOHN: Really?

NORA: Yes, we realized it few weeks ago, but it was impossible to convince my dad to return it to the bridge. Even our stone doesn't have a glow at all and became ordinary stone. But dad hopes that the glow will return someday, that's why he insists to keep it at home...

JOHN: The same thing is with my dad. There's no chance to convince him.

NORA: I think that the villagers from both sides of the river have the other stones... At least thirty stones were missing before the bridge collapsed... It is sure everybody is hoping that someday the stones will gain back their glory and then they could sell them...

JOHN: I am sure about it. But we have to make a plan. Because they are afraid to admit the mistake they've done.

NORA: And what if...

*(Nora and John began to talk in low voice.)*

### **NARRATOR:**

They made a plan! Hmm, how skilful children were they. Both ran through their own side of the village and went to their homes, and then they invited all the villagers to gather at the river bank. John addressed his words to the villagers of Hill that "the villagers of the Forest has decided to give them firewood for heating", while Nora said to the villagers of Forest that "the villagers of Hill has decided to give them hay for their animals!" The villagers of the both sides ran quickly toward the river bank, in a hurry they built a beam and then they were together again...!

## **SCENE THIRTEEN**

*(The villagers arrive from both sides of the river. The silence is overwhelming. They look each other in anger and mistrust.)*

A MAN from FOREST: Where is the hay that you will give us for our animals?

MAN: Where is the firewood that you will give us for heating?

A MAN from FOREST: Why did you invite us?

MAN: And you, why did you invite us?

*(John and Nora are sitting on the stone and look at them from above.)*

JOHN: Wait...

NORA: We have invited you!

A MAN from FOREST: What is this, a children's game?

MAN: John, come down from there and go home. You are still not recovered.

JOHN: We have found the stones!

NORA: The blazing stones from our bridge.

*Silenced overwhelmed.*

A MAN from FOREST: Nora, go home... I will tell you something when we got home.

MAN: John, don't make fun anymore... Go home.

**NARRATOR:**

Neither John nor Nora went home. On the contrary, they addressed to the villagers some strange words as if those words came out from the books... "All we..." John said, "We all are guilty for destroying the bridge, which once was the pride of our village. Everybody is guilty a little bit. It is not important who has taken the stones from the bridge. It is certain that the one, who has build the bridge with these precious stones, was a wise and clever. He knew that greedy people someday would take them from the bridge. Those stones glowed only in the bridge, when they were near to each other and they wouldn't glow out of the bridge. At your homes everybody among you has an ordinary stone and nothing more... Those ordinary stones are worth only when they are in this bridge. So, you should decide, if you want to keep these ordinary and worthless stones at your homes or you want to have a shared bridge with the most shining stones in the world?! You'd be forgiven for the mistake you made when you took away the stones, if your return them and if you start to build the bridge again... If you showed your greediness when you took the stones, now you have to show your courage to return them back... So, who'll be the first one to return the stone?" After these John's words... Oh no, as if it was an earthquake... Everybody was deeply touched... Even they shed tears... Tears, and then a deep silenced overwhelmed the place... But after that silence, something happened that hardly someone would believe it...

*(After a short silence, a Man raises his hand).*

MAN: I want to return the stone I took.

A MAN from FOREST: What... You took a stone?

*(The silence follows.)*

A MAN from FOREST: And I will return the stone I took...

MAN: What... you took a stone, too?

*(Other villagers raised their hands.)*

**NARRATOR:**

It came out, without any exclusion; each villager had taken a stone by himself! And on that day, they decided to forget their enmities and hatred that they had toward each other and they promised that they will return to the life which they had before the bridge collapsed. The villagers of the Forest immediately brought firewood for the villagers of the Hill, meantime the villagers of the Hill brought hay to those of the Forest for their



animals. After a little while, when the snow began to melt, they went down to the river and pull out all the stones of the crumbled bridge and they rebuilt it. And very soon after the stones were put in the previous places, they began to shine again... Oh, what a pleasure it was to see the bridge shining again...! The villagers could cross again the river, while the children could play together and become friends again...

## SCENE FOURTEEN

*(Near the bridge. Man and the Man from Forest are sitting near the bridge and talking. In the background, John and Nora are fishing.)*

MAN: Before I got married I've promised to my wife that I would buy to her the most beautiful emeralds of the world. But in fact, I was very poor. Then she continued to blame me for not buying her those emeralds... Certainly, I was in trouble. So, I decided... I thought, I should take a stone from the bridge and I'd sell it... God damn it, It's not such a big deal if I take a stone....

A MAN from FOREST: To be honest with you, I did the same. Always when I was passing by the bridge I was thinking how rich should I be if I had only one stone from this bridge... And when I realized that a stone was missing from the bridge, I got courage and said to myself "why shouldn't I take a stone!?" It's not such a big deal.

*(They both laughed.)*

MAN: But it was a stupidity what we did.

A MAN from FOREST: A stupidity that hardly can be compared to anything else...

*(MOM enters.)*

MOM: (To the MAN in blameworthy voice) How come that you are still here, you should be ashamed. For half an hour we should be ready for the wedding, and you have stuck here the whole day long.

MAN: Uh, I have forgotten about the wedding.

A MAN from FOREST: What will you do about that wedding, would you send a gift?

MOM: Forget the gift, we don't have anything.

MAN: We are very poor, my dear.

A MAN from FOREST: *(humorously)* Why don't you take a shining stone from the bridge... Just sell it and make some money. Then you buy a gift for wedding and later you might have some money left to buy emeralds for your wife...

MAN: *(humorously)* Hush! You scoundrel.

MOM: *(to the MAN)* I don't want your emeralds. You are good for nothing. You are big nothing...

*(MAN and A MAN from FOREST are laughing; meanwhile the woman goes out shouting.)*

MAN: What did you do to me! But don't worry, everything will be OK when I tell her about the new job that I have find. With the profits that I will gain from this job, maybe I'll be able to buy her those emeralds...

A MAN from FOREST: I wish you luck, my friend. Goodbye.

MAN: Goodbye.

*(MAN and the MAN from FOREST leave).*

JOHN: It's moving, it's moving...

NORA: It seems it's a big fish.

*(JOHN pulls his fishing rod and it comes out that he has caught an old shoe. Nora laughs.)*

JOHN: It doesn't seem that today is a lucky day.

NORA: You didn't tell me that if you catch the goldfish someday, what will be your wish that you'll ask?

JOHN: You, really, want to know?

NORA: Yes.

JOHN: Then close your eyes.

*(Nora closes her eyes and ears.)*

JOHN: Only your eyes, not ears.

*(Nora takes off the hands from her ears. John kisses her in her cheek. Nora blushes. Opens her eyes.)*

NORA: This is your wish?

JOHN: I will ask the goldfish to keep this bridge...

NORA: Is that all?

JOHN: Maybe, but...

NORA: What?

JOHN: I will tell some other day...

NORA: Why did you kiss me?

JOHN: I don't know, it just happened...

NORA: Close your eyes now.

*(John closes his eyes.)*

NORA: Open your eyes now and pull the fishing rod to see how it looks like when you catch a fish...

JOHN: Wow... it's really a big fish...

NORA: Pull it quickly...

JOHN: It's a big fish...

NORA: Come on don't let it go...

*(They leave the stage dragging the fishing rod...)*

**NARRATOR:**

In fact, neither this was a fish. It was a shoe or better to say it was a disgusting boot... But even that they didn't find a fish on that day and never before, JOHN and Nora found something else... *(Winks to the audience)* You know what I mean...

**The End**