

HUMANITIES INSTITUTE
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6.9 on the Richter Scale (2016)

NAE CARANFIL

OVERVIEW

Auteur Nae Caranfil (b. 1960) is a highly acclaimed director, one of the first of the Romanian New Wave that emerged right after the fall of Ceausescu's totalitarian regime in the 1990s. The son of a reputed film critic, Caranfil graduated from the Theatre and Film Institute in Bucharest in 1984. During his youth, he took music lessons and drew comic sketches, talents that he has used for writing the score and the script of most of his films. His tragic-comedies about the Western dream have gained him not only national but also international recognition: the Critics Award for *Sundays on Leave* (*Țăriceștii*, 1993) at Montpellier Mediterranean Festival; Golden Bayard Award for Best Screenplay for *Dolce far niente* (1998) at Namur International Festival of French-Speaking Film; and several accolades for *Philanthropy* (*Filantropica*, 2002). His other productions are *Asphalt Tango* (*Asfalt Tango*, 1996); *The Rest is Silence* (*Restul e tăcere*, 2007), for which he received a Gopo Award (a highly prestigious national award in Romania, similar to the Academy Awards in the US); *Closer to the Moon* (2014); and *6.9 on the Richter Scale* (*6.9 pe Scara Richter*, 2016).

Film *6.9 on the Richter Scale*, released in 2016, is an 'apocalyptic comedy' sprinkled with some tragic notes, which addresses the nation-wide dread of earthquakes like the one that took place in a mountainous region north of Bucharest on March 4th, 1977, with the Romanian capital suffering the most severe damages and the highest number of fatalities and injured people. The film was nominated for eight awards at the Gopo Awards in 2018, winning five of them (Best Original Music Score, Best Sound, Best Costume Design, Best Production Design and Best Hair and Make-up).

Background Caranfil wrote the script in 2010 based on the 'news' at the time, heralding the end of the world on December 21st, 2012. He admitted that he did not do any research on earthquakes for this movie because 'he lived them all', and joked that the next one 'would happen after the official premiere of his movie'. In his view, 'everything can and deserves to be treated with humor', and 'earthquakes make no exception' because, especially the personal ones, 'can bring about a new beginning, a new energy, a new life'. In one of his interviews, Caranfil also referred to one of his favorite movies (*All that Jazz*) and the influence that Bob Fosse had on him in the making of *6.9 on the Richter Scale*.

CINEMATIC NARRATION

Caranfil seeks to render cinematic poetics, which he thinks resides 'not in the language, but in the metalanguage, namely what is beyond rhetoric and cinematic imagery'. As he has it, the way the story is constructed is very important, and therefore, the story 'pursues a musical line rather than a narrative one' in this movie.

The storyline follows the protagonists' emotional turmoil and difficulties in a non-linear and dislocated mode, which emphasizes the 'apocalyptic' effect. It is interspersed with either Tony's nightmares or excerpts from the musical in which he plays Orpheus.

The camera frequently zooms in and out or is shaky (in the nightmare scenes), a technique that Caranfil uses to create a sense of the instability and chaos that affects the characters' world, as well as to add tension to the scenes.

SYNOPSIS

6.9 on the Richter Scale tells the story revolving around Tony and Kitty's troubled relationship after five years of marriage, which deteriorates even more once they move in a block of flats with high seismic risk. One day, during the rehearsals for the *Orpheus and Eurydice* musical in which Tony plays Orpheus, his father, who abandoned him when he was five, suddenly turns up, claiming to be very ill and asking for a

final favor. Tony lets himself be carried away in his father's pack of lies, and convinces his wife to go to a hotel for a few nights as a way to reawaken their passion for each other. Kitty soon realizes Tony's hiding the truth about his father's real use of their flat, which worsens their relationship. In addition, she suffers from depression and outbursts of anger while Tony obsesses about the likelihood of a high magnitude earthquake, and plans to separate from her. When Relu, a real estate investor, offers Kitty a job as an interior designer, she makes some life-changing decisions such as seeing a psychologist for her emotional and self-confidence problems, as a result of which she moves away and puts an end to her marriage.

MAIN CHARACTERS

<i>Tony</i>	A young actor playing his first lead role as Orpheus in a musical
<i>Kitty</i>	Tony's wife, and an unemployed interior designer
<i>Daddy</i>	Tony's father, now a retired pilot
<i>Bambi</i>	A beautiful young student doing a degree in Psychology
<i>Robert</i>	One of Tony's acting fellows and close friend
<i>Relu</i>	A real estate investor

CHARACTER ANALYSIS

Tony

Tony comes across as a young man struggling with both his professional and personal life. As an actor, he plays in a musical without any passion and conviction, an attitude, which is also transposed to his personal life as he is unable to relate to his wife.

Obsessive Ever since he woke up because of a light earthquake, Tony is obsessed that he may become a victim of a higher magnitude one. He has frequent nightmares about his flat collapsing while he is running out to save his life. He keeps bringing up the subject of the earthquake with Kitty and his friends, and gets upset and anxious to see that they do not take it seriously.

Coward When he fails to tell Kitty that he wants to split up with her, Tony uses Daddy's offer to do it for him. After the musical premiere, he realizes that Kitty has left him and that he no longer wants to separate from her. However, when he sees her designing Relu's flat, he does not have the courage to talk to her and ask her to come back home. Yet again, he accepts that Daddy does it for him.

Gullible Although he appears to be outraged by Daddy's demands, Tony lets himself be quite easily convinced and goes along with the scheme of a man who abandoned him when he was five years old. He takes his father's word about his identity based on a photo that he has of him as a child. He does not doubt his father's story about his cancer diagnosis either. On the contrary, he asks the doctor treating his father for his stroke not to give 'false hopes to a dying man', but the doctor tells him that apart from the minor stroke, his father's blood tests show that he is in good health.

Kitty

Kitty is a young woman, with a creative streak, which does not impress her husband as she hopes it would. She has lost her job, hence her self-confidence and sleep, and turned into a nervous wreck. She is also a heavy smoker. Kitty gets extremely suspicious and jealous although she has no evidence that Tony cheats on her.

Oversensitive Kitty overacts and throws an angry fit, eventually bursting into tears, almost every time she has a discussion with Tony. Her excessive sensitivity clouds her mind as happens, for example, when she accuses him of having an affair with the actress playing Eurydice, judging from 'the passionate look' he gave her on stage.

Sentimental Kitty longs for passion and affection. Although she strongly opposes the idea of Daddy using the flat for his affair with Bambi, when he says he needs it for one more night to split up with Bambi in a 'gentle manner', she gives in right away. She explains to a bewildered Tony that she 'can understand the nice way', adding: 'If I were to break up with you, I would also take care not to hurt your feelings'.

Resilient Kitty's decision to leave Tony in the end is illustrative of her resilience. Kitty often has a low emotional state, getting overwhelmed and crying easily, but once she manages to tackle her feelings with the help of a therapist, she turns into a strong, independent woman, who finally finds the strength to leave a partner who cannot offer the love and attention she needs.

Daddy

Daddy is a sixty-five-year-old man, a kind of Don Juan who behaves disrespectfully as regards his age, marital status, and his own son. He exudes self-confidence and charm, flirting with young women by making sexist jokes and innuendos to amuse them.

Womanizer In spite of the fact that he is married, Daddy seizes every chance to flirt with young women and to have brief 'stopovers' with those accepting his advances. He is so proud of his most recent conquest that he presents Bambi to his son to convince him to help him 'not to miss such a beauty'.

Self-centered Daddy's only concern is to make sure that Bambi will fall for his charm. He unscrupulously turns Tony and Kitty's marital crisis to his own advantage, by suggesting that they could go to a hotel 'to revive their romance' while he lies to Bambi that their flat is his place.

Manipulative Daddy skillfully influences Tony to do exactly what he wants from him. Tony eventually becomes aware of his father's lies and threatens not to help him anymore, but Daddy always finds the right words to lighten the conversation and his son's mood, thus managing to get his support in spite of his grumblings.

THEMES

FAMILY The theme of family is analyzed through Tony and Kitty's dysfunctional relationship. Few scenes show Tony and Kitty talking to each other in an affectionate way. Her tone is constantly nagging and aggrieved whereas his tone is often cold, sardonic and taunting (especially when she tells him about the Feng Shui principles she applied to the interior design of their flat and when she accuses him of cheating on her). Tony is the dominant partner, though psychological, not physical, force. He appears to have shaped the family format to his own convenience, as shown by his rather dismissive attitude when Kitty shows him the north-west corner 'left empty' for children. She repeats the word 'empty', but he keeps being more preoccupied with the news about the catastrophic damage in the event of an earthquake of a high magnitude. Kitty's bitterness in this scene hints at her wish to have children, and, seemingly, his decision not to, which highlights the deepening rift between them. Tony's emotional detachment from his wife's dramas, his plan to divorce her and his father's unexpected appearance in their life gradually lead to the disintegration of his family by the end of the movie. By contrast to the traditional family (Daddy's wife has to accept his romantic escapades without conditions), the modern family (Tony and Kitty) fails to survive in similar terms. In the absence of romantic love, communication, support and understanding, Kitty realizes she can be happier as an independent woman in the end.

MARRIAGE The movie pursues Tony and Kitty's estrangement from each other after five years of marriage. The light earthquake that only Tony feels one morning and the stronger aftershock that he fears may be also interpreted as a metaphorical reference to the unresolved tension affecting their life as a couple. Unable to understand Kitty's erratic and psychotic behavior as symptoms of depression that requires a psychotherapist's professional advice, Tony hardly makes any effort to be more sympathetic towards his wife's frail mental state caused by her lack of job and purpose, and consequently, insomnia. He does not even get involved in the purchase of their new flat, which then becomes a further source of a contention when they discover that it is located in a red tagged block (a red circular stamp placed on the facades of the buildings likely to collapse in an earthquake of a magnitude 7 or higher). When Kitty shows

him around the flat, whose interior design she wanted to 'keep a surprise' for him, he shows little interest. On the contrary, he obsesses about the seismic risk of their flat, and reproaches himself for giving her 'the freedom to do what she wanted' and that she could have at least 'informed herself' before spending all their savings on it. They start arguing until, like in most of the scenes showing them together, Kitty bursts into tears and keeps to her own obsessions about her 'being fat and ugly' and his cheating on her.

FATHERHOOD The theme of fatherhood is looked into from two different perspectives. Firstly, there is Tony, who seems to refuse being a father for reasons he avoids addressing and discussing with his wife. Secondly, there is Daddy, who abandoned Tony when he was only five years old, and thus, refused to assume his parental responsibility. It thus appears that it is not necessarily Tony's professional career that holds him back from becoming a father, but his own unresolved trauma from a childhood marked by his father's abandonment. What is more, as the story events unfold, Daddy's impromptu return has not been intended with the aim of making amends and rebuilding family connections. It turns out that Daddy is interested in his son only because he needs him to lend him his flat for one of his romantic escapades with a beautiful young woman, his last 'chance to happiness'. To convince Tony, Daddy claims that he has not got much to live because of his terminal cancer. When his lie is uncovered, however, Daddy plays cool and tries to teach his son how he should 'handle' women, including Kitty, for an exciting life even if he is married. Daddy himself admits that he has come to fulfill not a father's role, but rather a wish Tony made when he was little to have 'an elder brother'.

SEXUALITY The movie scrutinizes sexuality in its overt form as well as its repressed, inhibited one. Sexual explicitness is present in the scene showing Tony's nightmare about his father and Bambi having sexual intercourse in his flat that collapses because of a high magnitude earthquake. As for the repression of sexual instincts, Tony clearly notices other women's sex appeal, as the case is with Bambi, whom he cannot help staring at even in the presence of his father and his wife. Kitty wishes the romantic passion between her and Tony be rekindled, but, for example, when he tries to take her skirt off one evening, he does it with some difficulty. Instead of letting herself be carried away in the moment, Kitty throws a tantrum blaming herself for being 'ugly' and having 'put on weight', and him for either not finding her attractive enough or for 'having someone else'. Judging by Daddy's amoral behavior and his encouraging Tony to follow suit, the movie highlights how a misogynistic view of sexuality is perpetuated from father to son. By contrast, social conventions and expectations inhibit (Kitty) or frown upon women's extrovert sexual desires (Bambi).

LOVE Tony's role as Orpheus in the *Orpheus and Eurydice* musical juxtaposes the two mythological characters' love story with his own. The loss of love, then found and lost again, is the underlying theme of the movie. The story begins with Tony and Kitty in a marital crisis, and his unexpressed wish to split up with her. Kitty, in turn, feels frustrated because Tony does 'not look at her with the passion' she thinks he does when it comes to other women. There follow a few scenes that show a timid attempt by the two protagonists to reconnect, still unable to revive the love and passion that Kitty longs for. In the final scene, Tony passionately sings his musical part from the flat balcony down the street where Kitty looks confident, holding her suitcase, and on the point of leaving him. Tony smiles apologetically as if asking for another chance. Kitty smiles back, as if saying that his long-awaited gesture has come too late; yet, she neither appears to leave nor return to the flat. The movie has thus an open ending, with Kitty and Tony's love story left in a state of limbo, perhaps with the aim of showing that, unlike their mythological counterparts, it is not up to a god (Hades) but only to them to change the course of their love.

CRISIS Caranfil's movie projects a world in profound crisis by focusing on the characters' struggles, decaying morality, commercialization of art and looming environmental disasters. The intra-textual reference to Orpheus' descent into hell may be associated with Tony's recurrent nightmares about an imminent earthquake, a hint at the changes that are to occur in his personal life. They also reflect a reality of Romania's capital city that risks being devastated again, should an earthquake with a magnitude higher than 6.9 on the Richter scale happen, as seismologists warn the population about on the televised news. Tony, on a personal level, and the authorities, on a social level, turn a blind eye to the consequences that their inaction may entail. More precisely, Tony's marriage goes through a serious crisis, but instead of trying to change his dismissive attitude towards his wife, he puts further pressure on her frail state of mind

by confirming her unfounded suspicions, lying to her, or rebuking her for buying a flat under seismic risk. As for the authorities, they just have buildings all over the capital (and the country) red stamped to warn residents that their block of flats is likely to collapse in the event of a high magnitude earthquake, while little to no investment is made to strengthen such buildings or safeguard the living areas around them.

DEPRESSION Kitty suffers from emotional instability, lack of self-confidence, sleeping problems and negative image of her body. Bambi, who does a degree in Psychology, is the one who identifies them as 'clear signs of depression' and warns Tony about the motivational books about happiness, self-confidence and diets in Kitty's bookcase. Tony incredulously dismisses Bambi's theory and says that Kitty only goes through 'a temporary rough time', briefly mentioning her jealousy, 'crying for no reason', being 'under the impression that she has become fat', and 'not having a job'. On hearing this, Bambi insists that 'depression is not merely a sadder mood, but a serious illness' with 'grave consequences', 'if left untreated': for example, the person in question may end up 'taking pills'. She offers to give him the contact details of a friend psychologist, but Tony doubts that Kitty will agree to see him. The next scene shows Tony and Kitty in the psychologist's office, with Tony sitting on the patient's sofa, and talking about his problems (exactly the same as Kitty's). Instead of realizing Tony's real motive behind their visit to the psychologist, Kitty worriedly reinforces everything her husband says, which makes the psychologist nod his head towards Tony as if acknowledging that he cannot be of help in their case.

JEALOUSY Kitty has frequent pangs of extreme jealousy which make her lose control of both her emotions (she breaks down in angry tears) and language (she makes mean remarks about Tony's former female acquaintances or she suspects him of meeting other women behind her back). For example, one afternoon she finds an old address book in which Tony had some of his ex-girlfriends' phone numbers. She obsesses about one particular name (Zdreanta – Rag) and accuses Tony of still being in touch with her. Kitty's jealousy reaches paroxysm the evening Daddy calls for Tony's help because Bambi locked him inside the flat when she realized that he was not the real owner. Kitty gets very upset with Tony as he has to go and help his father out of the flat, and begs him to return quickly. When she phones him to ask him why it is taking him so long to get back, Tony—who, in the meantime, stopped to chat with Bambi whom he finds sitting at the bottom of the stairs—says that his father was upset and he could not just leave him. Kitty imagines that Tony and his father are definitely 'planning to see some tramps'. All in tears and feeling neglected, she yells at Tony over the phone to stay where he is because she is not going to open the door for him.

OBSESSION The theme of obsession is addressed in relation to Tony's recurrent nightmares about a forthcoming high magnitude earthquake that will cause his flat to collapse. From the very first scene, in which he wakes up because of a light earthquake that nobody else seems to have felt, to the end, Tony's growing fear of a higher magnitude earthquake affects not only his sleep but also his relationship with Kitty. To his wife's despair, he keeps watching TV for the breaking news to give people a short notice about an imminent earthquake, which could buy them some time to go out of buildings and save their lives. Whenever Tony thinks or hears about earthquakes, he pays attention to nothing else but that, which makes Kitty lose her temper since she takes it as his complete disinterest in her as a woman. Hence, she starts obsessing about 'being fat, ugly and old', which ends up in her rejecting any of his timid attempts to calm her down, and in him losing his patience and wishing he could find the courage to split up with her. Tony's neurosis becomes evident as soon as he and Kitty move into a new flat in a red-stamped block. From that moment on, Tony desperately follows the televised discussions and forecasts of the natural disaster likely to strike again a quake-prone city like Bucharest and gets irritated with Kitty for not understanding how serious the matter is.

OLD AGE Daddy's middle life crisis is highly illustrative of the theme of old age. In his mid-sixties, Daddy behaves as if still very young and free from familial responsibilities. When he first introduces himself to Tony as his long-lost father, one might expect that he has now come to make it up to the son he abandoned when he was only five years old. However, instead of showing remorse and asking for his son's forgiveness, Daddy talks his son into going along with his 'fun plan' by telling him that he is terminally ill and that 'he will not have the heart to take away his last chance to happiness'. Then, his behavior is extremely selfish and inconsiderate of the havoc he creates in Tony and Kitty's relationship, troubled as it already is. Daddy also shamelessly conditions his return home by making his wife promise

that she will never ask him again 'where or with whom he has been' or 'what time he will be back'. Daddy cannot accept that he has grown old and has to 'settle down', but uses every opportunity to lure young women into his bed through his charming personality.

DECEPTION The relationships that Tony has with his wife and his father are both marked by deception. Instead of being honest with Kitty about the real reason behind his father's unexpected visit after years of absence, Tony follows Daddy's advice and takes her to a hotel on the pretense that their passion could be rekindled outside the routine of home. This happens right after the evening out at the restaurant when Tony invites Kitty out to break up with her. For Daddy, deception is an art. He tells lies so naturally that Tony does not even suspect that his father manipulates him grossly. The truth comes out eventually and Daddy's lies are exposed one by one. Tony becomes so exasperated and frustrated with Daddy that he calls him 'an old pig', 'Frankenstein', and even asks him if his saying that he is his father is not yet another of his lies.

PHILANDERING **Philandering is defined as** to have casual or illicit sex with a person or with many people. The theme of philandering is clearly explored through Daddy's behavior in the presence of young women and his escapade with his latest conquest, Bambi. The first time Daddy and Tony go out for a beer to talk about business, Daddy cannot believe that Tony does not join him in flirting with his fellow actresses: 'You behave as if you were not my son'. Daddy says that he has expected that, due to the fact that Tony is an actor, he 'would be more open to this kind of thing', and concludes, unconvinced that he is 'happily married'. As the story unfolds, and Tony gets to meet Bambi, he no longer seems to be committed to remaining faithful to his wife. He is so attracted to Bambi that he does not hesitate to stare at her even if Daddy and Kitty are also present. The night Tony runs into Bambi, sitting at the bottom of the stairs, after some time chatting, he tries to kiss her. Bambi, however, pulls herself back and says, 'It wouldn't be fair'. Tony asks, 'To whom, my wife?' Bambi replies, 'To your father'. The underlying message of this part of their conversation seems to be that women, even in the position of mistresses, remain faithful to their partners, whereas men cannot. Similarly, Daddy's wife comes to see him in hospital but 'has decided not to ask for any explanation, 'So I am not going to ask you anything until I see you back on your feet', which clearly shows that she is aware of her husband's affairs.

SCENES

A light earthquake Tony wakes up because of an earthquake he has just felt. Half asleep, Kitty, his wife, tells him that it was just in his imagination. He turns on the radio which breaks the news of an earthquake 4.3 on the Richter scale. Tony wants to get out of the flat quickly for fear that an aftershock may follow.



The new flat As Tony and Kitty move to a new flat, some workers place a red stamp on the façade of the block. Tony gets very apprehensive since that means that the building is under high seismic risk, and likely to collapse in the event of a high magnitude earthquake.



Presenting the new flat Tony is more taken with the TV news showing a seismic expert's opinion on the likelihood of a high magnitude earthquake than with Kitty's presentation of the flat that she designed on Feng Shui principles. They argue and Kitty accuses him of having an affair. He leaves the flat for his rehearsals at the theatre.



The ballet rehearsals Tony and Robert watch the ballet rehearsals, wondering whether the play will be ready by the premiere date. Robert points to a man sitting in the audience and says that rumors have it that he is an English talent agent, whom the theatre manager has invited to see Lorena, the heroine.



The English talent agent The agent takes a seat next to Tony, who greets him in English. The man answers in Romanian and introduces himself as his father (Daddy). Tony is shocked to hear that man is his father, the 'pilot', who left when he was five years old. Over a beer, the man invites Tony to make a business deal together.



The business deal Daddy asks Tony to allow him to sleep over his place for a few days until he finds a place to rent. Tony cannot see what kind of business deal that is, but Daddy says that it is their chance to get to know each other and for Tony to make up for the alimony money he received from him.



Introducing Daddy Kitty is looking through an address book and writing a phone number on her palm when Tony and Daddy enter the flat. Tony introduces his father to Kitty and tells her that they have to put him up for a few days. Daddy hands a bunch of flowers to Kitty, who then excuses herself to go to the kitchen to put them in water.



Kitty's accusation Kitty calls Tony in the bedroom to ask him whether his father is staying for dinner. When Tony says that Daddy is going out with a 'super hot' young woman, Kitty loses her temper and accuses him of cheating on her with the women whose phone numbers she found in his address book.



Dinner out with friends Tony is having dinner with some friends from the theatre. He is upset and drunk, complaining about Kitty's behavior and saying out loud that he will just give her a little more time to settle in their new flat and then ask for a divorce. Robert encourages him to do so and find himself some 'fresh meat'.



The nightmare Tony has a dream about receiving a phone call from a seismic expert he has seen on TV. The expert notifies him that he has got sixty-nine seconds to leave the building before the next earthquake. Tony desperately runs out of the flat, panting down the stairs while checking his watch.



Rehearsals Tony rehearses his separation speeches for Kitty with Robert, who pretends to be her. Tony is called on stage for rehearsals. The choreographer and the director both give Tony some instructions on how to make himself more credible to the public.





Shopping for a present Daddy picks Tony up from the theater and goes shopping for lingerie for Bambi, his girlfriend. He asks Tony to invite his wife to a hotel for a romantic outing and lend him his flat because he wants to spend the night with Bambi there.



Attempting the separation speech Kitty is surprised that Tony took her out to a restaurant and suspects that he has got something on his conscience. He begins his speech, but when he reaches the point to tell her he wants to split up with her, Kitty cannot hear it because of some noisy customers. Instead of repeating that part again, Tony invites her to spend the night in a hotel.



Kitty's nervous breakdown Tony has some difficulty in taking Kitty's skirt off, but their romantic moment is instantly ruined as she breaks down and blames herself for having put on weight. Tony tries to comfort her, but she hides in the wardrobe and comes out only after he sings a soothing song to her.



Another nightmare Tony has another nightmare of the flat shaking because of a high magnitude earthquake. He takes his suitcase and hurries to the door while he is telling Kitty that he is leaving her. Kitty tries to stop him, but he will not listen and slams the door behind him.



Meeting Bambi The next morning Tony meets Daddy at the reception. Daddy has paid for the night and two more, but Tony refuses to stay at the hotel any longer. To convince Tony to help him continue his affair with 'this miracle' woman for a few days more, Daddy takes him out on the terrace to meet Bambi.



A father-son dispute Daddy comes to see Tony at the theater and check his opinion of Bambi. Tony lashes out at his father's 'shameless' and age-inappropriate behavior and asks for the flat keys back. As Tony remains adamant, Daddy retorts that his days are numbered because he suffers from cancer.



A noisy neighbor Tony gets back home where he finds Kitty with a pillow covering her ears and smoking angrily because of the noise coming from another flat. Tony goes to talk to the neighbor, and he promises that the noise will stop in half an hour. Back to the flat, Tony makes Kitty pack a few things up to go to the hotel.



An involuntary night out Kitty checks Tony's phone and confronts him about the 'flat is free' text. Tony explains his father's situation, but Kitty gets infuriated and insists on going back home. As they do not have the front key to the building and the hotel door is locked, they wander to a park nearby. There they meet some students who know Tony from the theater and invite them to stay for a drink.



A surprise visit Tony calls his father to tell him that he and Kitty are paying them a visit as they have nowhere to sleep. Bambi asks Daddy to give the guests some clean bed sheets for the living room sofa. Tony has another nightmare about an earthquake destroying his flat.



The morning talk Kitty asks Daddy to leave their flat immediately, but he begs for one more night because he would like to separate from Bambi in a gentle way. On hearing this, Kitty changes her mind and justifies her decision to Tony by saying that 'it is very important how one chooses to break up with someone'.



Relu's initiative Tony gets home and finds Relu, the noisy neighbor, talking to Kitty in the living room. Relu says he is a real estate developer and has come to collect 100 lei from the owners of each flat in the building to bribe 'someone in the town hall' to have the block's red stamp removed.



The chat on the stairs Tony is woken up from another nightmare by his father's phone call about Bambi's having locked him in and leaving with the key. On his way to the flat, Tony runs into Bambi sitting at the bottom of the stairs. Bambi says she cannot stand being lied to, and then, as they continue to chat, she warns Tony about Kitty's depression.



At the psychotherapist To have Kitty see a psychotherapist without her being aware of it, Tony pretends to need professional advice for himself. Kitty reinforces everything he says, by telling the psychotherapist that she has also noticed all the symptoms he mentions.



Asking for advice Tony looks for his father at the swimming pool to find out if he broke up with Bambi. After they chat about women in general, Tony tells his father about his lack of courage to split up with Kitty. Daddy offers to be the one who breaks the news of separation to Kitty, and Tony agrees.



An ideal spectator Tony follows Robert's advice to fix his eyes on an ideal spectator so as to find enough motivation to perform well in a show that he considers 'ridiculous'. While he (as Orpheus) is singing to Eurydice on stage, he notices Kitty, who is watching him intently. He cannot take his eyes off her the entire first act.



A change of heart During the interval, Tony retires to his room and tries to contact his father on the phone, but without success. On his way to the stage for the next act, he sees his father talking to Kitty, who looks very upset. After Kitty is gone, Daddy informs Tony in a cheerful tone that his mission was accomplished.



Nowhere to be found Tony rushes back home to talk to Kitty, but she is not there. He calls Robert to see if he has got any news from her, worried that she might do something 'foolish' since she sent him a 'goodbye' text and switched off her phone. As he is checking around the house, he receives a phone call.



At the hospital Bambi tells Tony that his father had a stroke during one of their sex games. Daddy's wife arrives at the hospital, too. The doctor comes in and advises Daddy to take better care of himself and cut down on excesses at his age. Tony has a private discussion with the doctor and is shocked to find out that Daddy's blood tests show no sign of cancer.





Over a coffee Tony and Bambi have a coffee together, and he tells her that her affair with this father has to end. She says that it has because she is leaving with a scholarship for the US in a few days, and that Daddy has known that ever since they met. Tony realizes that his father has told him only lies.



Back to the psychotherapist's office Tony tells the psychotherapist that his feelings for Kitty have 'strangely' changed ever since he stared at her during his performance and noticed 'something in her eyes he has never seen before'. He says that even his nightmares about earthquakes have stopped and that he cannot take his mind off her since she left.



A chat with a neighbor Tony is taking the rubbish out when one of his neighbors asks him if his wife is feeling better after 'having turned the gas on' and being saved by their neighbor, Relu just in time. Tony goes upstairs to talk to Relu, but he finds there only the workers and the interior designer, who happens to be Kitty.





Another lie Tony just wakes up from another nightmare and finds Kitty packing some of her things. She tells him that Relu has made them an offer on the flat and that they can split the money in half. Daddy comes in, too, and after some heated exchanges, Tony realizes that his father did not talk to Kitty about his intention to leave her, as he promised.

Leaving Tony Tony tries to make Kitty reconsider things, but she is determined to leave him. She says she is seeing a therapist who has helped her feel better and more confident; she also says that Relu has offered her a contract to design the flats he buys and that she can no longer live with a man who does not love her.



A final performance Tony gets out on the balcony and sings his Orpheus' part from the musical with great passion. Some onlookers applaud while others shrug and make the sign of the cross. Tony raises his eyebrows as if wondering if he has convinced her. Kitty stands in the street and smiles back at him, without moving.

