

Tekst 3

De volgende tekst is het begin van het eerste hoofdstuk van The Sweetest Dream, een roman van Doris Lessing.

An early evening in autumn, and the street below was a scene of small yellow lights that suggested intimacy, and people already bundled up for winter. Behind her the room was filling with a chilly dark, but nothing could dismay her: she was floating, as high as a summer cloud, as happy as a child who had just learned to walk. The reason for this uncharacteristic lightness of heart was a telegram from her former husband, Johnny Lennox — Comrade Johnny — three days ago. SIGNED CONTRACT FOR FIDEL FILM ALL ARREARS AND CURRENT PAYMENT TO YOU SUNDAY. Today was Sunday. The ‘all arrears’ had been due, she knew, to something like the fever of elation she was feeling now: there was no question of his paying ‘all’ which by now must amount to so much money she no longer bothered to keep an account. But he surely must be expecting a really big sum to sound so confident. Here a little breeze — apprehension? — did reach her. Confidence was his — no, she must *not* say stock-in-trade, even if she had often in her life felt that, but could she remember him ever being outfaced by circumstances, even discomfited?

On a desk behind her two letters lay side by side, like a lesson in life’s improbable but so frequent dramatic juxtapositions. One offered her a part in a play. Frances Lennox was a minor, steady, reliable actress, and had never been asked for anything more. This part was in a brilliant new play, a two-hander, and the male part would be taken by Tony Wilde who until now had seemed so far above her she would never have had the ambition to think of her name and his side by side on a poster. And *he* had asked for her to be offered the part. Two years ago they had been in the same play, she as usual in a serviceable smaller role. At the end of a short run — the play had not been a success — she had heard on the closing night as they tripped back and forth taking curtain calls, ‘Well done, that was very good.’ Smiles from Olympus, she had thought that, while knowing he had shown signs of being interested in her.

But now she had been watching herself burst into all kinds of feverish dreams, not exactly taking herself by surprise, since she knew only too well how battened down she was, how well under control was her erotic self, but she could not prevent herself imagining her talent for fun (she supposed she still had it?) even for reckless enjoyment, being given room, while at the same time showing what she could do on the stage, if given a chance. But she would not be earning much money, in a small theatre, with a play that was a gamble. Without that telegram from Johnny she could not afford to say yes.

The other letter offered her a niche as Agony Aunt (name still to be chosen) on *The Defender*, well paid, and safe. This would be a continuation of the other strand of her professional life as a freelance journalist, which is where she earned money. She had been writing on all kinds of subjects for years. At first she had tried her wings in local papers and broadsheets, any place that would pay her a little money. Then she found she was doing research for serious articles, and they were in the national newspapers. She had a name for solid balanced articles that often shone an unexpected and original light on a current scene.

She would do it well. What else had her experience fitted her for, if not to cast a cool eye on the problems of others? But saying yes to that work would have no pleasure in it, no feeling she would be trying new wings. Rather, she would have to steady her shoulders with the inner stiffening of resolve that is like a suppressed yawn.

How weary she was of all the problems, the bruised souls, the waifs and strays, how delightful it would be to say, ‘Right, you can look after yourselves for a bit, I am going to be in the theatre every evening and most of the day too.’ (Here was another little cold nudge: have you taken leave of your senses? Yes, and she was loving every minute.)

■ Tekst 3 De volgende tekst...

- 3p 3 □ Geef van elk van de onderstaande uitspraken aan of deze in de loop van de passage juist of onjuist blijkt te zijn.
- 1 Frances is normaal gesproken geneigd tot somberheid.
 - 2 Frances heeft niet altijd vertrouwen in het optimisme van haar ex-man.
 - 3 De twee brieven op haar bureau staan symbool voor alles wat het leven Frances heeft geleerd.
 - 4 Frances stelt zich voor dat Tony Wilde's keuze voor haar niet alleen te maken heeft met haar acteertalent.
 - 5 Frances zou er moeite mee hebben de haar aangeboden betrekking bij *The Defender* te aanvaarden.
 - 6 Frances is vastbesloten de haar aangeboden rol aan te nemen.
- Noteer het nummer van elke uitspraak, gevolgd door "juist" of "onjuist".