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# The empty chair

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translated by  
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*(excerpt in English)*

## Characters

Tourist 1

Tourist 2

The Balinese

*Surrounded by darkness, a series of carefully stored scenic objects from several Balinese dance dramas (figures, masks, costumes, gamelan musical instruments, etc.), including that of a very touristy performance, the Ketjak fire dance. A sort of metal candelabra stands out, almost two meters high, covered in soot, with several arms and platforms for the fires. The tourists and the Balinese appear, terrified, seeking refuge, each one concentrating on her/his<sup>1</sup> smartphone<sup>2</sup>. The tourists carry a plastic bag with incense sticks and small snacks, typical of the island, and a paper bag from a boutique. Due to their different origins, the language of communication between the three characters is English – a quite basic and not always correct English, since none of them is a native speaker<sup>3</sup>*

Level 5

No

5

5

Yes

Oh my god

4 point 9

Not 5

Almost

Almost 5

Oh my god

I can't believe it

5

Yes

Almost

God

5

5

Oh my god

Yes

Yes

Oh my god

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<sup>1</sup> The order of feminine and masculine forms does not indicate in any case preference for any sex.

<sup>2</sup> The smartphones must have a constant presence during the performance: their touchscreens and flashlights stand out amidst this dimly lit environment. Apart from staying informed about the alarm status, looking for vocabulary and sending and receiving messages, especially the tourist couple use them to take videos and photos – from time to time in the form of selfies –, add comments and upload them to a social network. That causes pauses, interruptions, and distraction.

<sup>3</sup> Depending on the distribution of the text among the characters, the dialogues can be adjusted to the chosen point of view regarding changes in pronouns, possessives, and verb conjugations.

It's so awful  
Are we  
Are we safe here  
I hope so  
No time  
No time to  
To  
To choose  
Yes  
To choose  
No time  
We have  
We have to wait here  
Until it's over  
Oh my god  
Level 5  
No no no no no  
It's unbelievable  
5  
Yes  
Almost  
Oh my god  
5  
5  
I never thought that it would come to that  
So  
Yes  
Well  
What can we do  
Nothing  
Wait  
Wait here  
That's all  
It's a theatre  
Isn't it  
A part of it  
Where they keep things  
The stage  
The stage is outside  
For the dances  
Typical Bali dances  
We have seen one  
The Fire Dance  
Look  
One moment  
Here  
No

Yes  
Here it is  
Ketjak  
Fire Dance  
Fire and Trance Dance  
That's what we saw  
And you have the key to this space  
My brother  
His work here  
Only little  
Little work  
Sometimes  
I'm scared  
God  
I'm so scared  
We all are scared honey  
It's unbelievable  
Nobody could imagine that  
Nobody  
Anyway  
It was stupid to plan a trip right now  
Well  
We met each other  
Yes  
We are not alone any more  
We didn't know each other before  
You know  
Really  
Yes  
That's great  
Oh my god  
I'm so scared  
It's terrible  
Things are going so fast now  
Suddenly  
Suddenly  
That's not true  
Not true  
No  
This is for the fire  
Isn't it  
Yes  
They put fire here  
And here  
And here  
Many  
And all the singers sit around

On the flour  
Outside  
In concentric circles  
100 or more  
The monkey chant  
My brother sings also  
Does he  
Yes  
Sometimes  
Oh really  
The monkey choir  
Yes  
Tjak tjak tjak tjak tjak tjak  
Yes  
That's what we saw  
Last week  
Now it's over  
No performance  
For the moment  
For the moment  
Or for ever  
Please  
Don't say that  
We don't know  
That's true  
We don't know  
Maybe  
We should pray  
Pray  
I  
I never do that  
Neither do I  
We never pray  
You know  
We do  
Every day  
Balinese people start the day with offerings  
We are grateful  
We say thank you for the food we eat  
For the water we drink  
For the air we  
We  
You  
You breathe  
Breathe  
That's it  
For the air we breathe

That's our tradition  
Our religion too  
We know  
But it's too late now  
Too late for offerings  
Too late to pray  
Do you think so  
Yes because  
We are not religious anymore  
You know  
Our traditions are  
Mostly  
We came here to see what religion means  
Religion and tradition  
We lost all that  
We are free  
Free  
Yes  
Free from what  
Free to do what  
Exactly  
Well  
Free to move around  
To look around  
To do tourism for example  
Global tourism  
And here  
Change rates are good  
You get a lot for your money  
You feel comfortable  
Nice people  
Nice food  
Good weather  
A beautiful place  
A wonderful experience  
And we are free to appreciate it all  
Surfing  
Diving  
Motorcycling  
Jet-skiing  
The sea and the mountains  
It's nice everywhere  
If your mind is open  
And if you are free to do whatever you want to do  
Move around  
Look around  
You know

It's nice  
It's fun  
It was a lot of fun  
Until now  
And we met each other  
That's it  
You and I  
We met each other  
Yes