

Here Boris stops:

...Hey Vadim... remember the one with the purple hair?!

Vadim laughs embarrassedly.

...Anyway, I've seen Vadim here with many different women and so I can tell you honestly that of all the women he's been with, Olga is by far the best!

The wedding guests murmur their agreement.

...And I'll tell you why: It's no secret to anyone that our bride is beautiful... that goes without saying. But what you may not notice from a distance — it comes when you know her more closely — is how intelligent she is. How intelligent and how polite...

The wedding guests smile their agreement.

...So I'd like to drink to her beauty, her intelligence, her politeness. Vadim, I know you're smart enough to realize what you have in Olga. May the two of you have the best of everything... May your family be joyous and happy... May you live and love as long as you see fit... May you have as many friends as you need... As many children as you can manage... And as much money as you choose to deserve. And most importantly: May everything in your life happen when it should... no sooner, no later!

Boris raises his glass:

To Vadim and Olga! he says.

For the next few seconds the sound of toasting fills the room as the guests touch their glasses to as many other glasses as they can reach. Happily, they swallow their champagne.

Boris also swallows his champagne happily.

But then, suddenly, Boris makes a distorted face as if he has consumed something toxic. Looking suspiciously at his emptied glass he yells out:

It's bitter!

Yeah! somebody else yells, Bitter!

Soon everybody is chanting in unison: Bit-ter! Bit-ter! Bit-ter!

Taking his cue, Vadim grabs Olga and kisses her long and passionately: One...! the crowd chants, Two.....! Three!

Vadim and Olga remain embraced, kissing heatedly.

...Four.....! Five.....! Six.....!

I look at my watch and shake my head:

Here we go again! I think.

...Twenty-two.....! Twenty-three.....!

