PLAY A TUMOUR IN THE HEAD AND AIR POLLUTION

A Translation of
Dušan Jovanović's Igrajte Tumor v Glavi in Onesnaženje Zraka

by

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Play a Tumour in the Head and Air Pollution is a drama in three acts written by the Yugoslavian playwright and director Dušan Jovanović in 1971-1972. The original version is in Slovene, the language of Yugoslavia's northernmost province, Slovenia, where the dramatist (a Serb by birth) has lived since the age of twelve. Play a Tumour... was first produced in Celje, Slovenia, by the well-known experimental director Ljubisar Ristić. Later it was also staged in Belgrade.

The play was written to direct attention at what Jovanović regards as the "mortality" at work in society, and uses theatrical performance itself as a metaphor for the structures of social and political life. The action centers on a revolt by the avant-garde members of the Slavia Theatre company, who eject the other actors, barricade themselves inside the theatre and carry on bizarre experiments aimed at overcoming the fatal banality of conventional theatre and everyday life. The play's outer action and inner psycho-political life are subtly interwoven.

Although rich in stage action, the play focusses strongly on problems of the nature of language and thus presents interesting challenges to the translator. This translation is intended to provide the English-speaking reader with a significant example of the concerns which engage a leading playwright in the cultural and political milieu of contemporary Slovenia. It is therefore a complete and faithful rendering of the original, rather than a free adaptation intended for staging before Western audiences.

The play's first act takes place in a realistically presented newspaper office, where the lock-out at the Slavia Theatre is discussed.
and attempts are made to find out what is going on there. The second and third acts, set on the stage of the theatre itself, show the activities and experiments of the "rebels" and their interaction with two investigators, a policeman and a journalist, sent in to discover what they are up to. The play's striking ending involves not only a metaphorical "crossing over into death" by the two investigators but also a confrontation of the audience with the basic mystery-problem of socio-theatrical reality.
## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ABSTRACT</td>
<td>ii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INTRODUCTION</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>PLAY A TUMOUR IN THE HEAD AND AIR POLLUTION:</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Act One</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Act Two</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Act Three</td>
<td>91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NOTES</td>
<td>118</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BIBLIOGRAPHY</td>
<td>119</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Dušan Jovanović was born in Belgrade in 1939. Since 1951, however, he has been living in Slovenia, the northermost province of Yugoslavia. He took a degree in English and French from the University of Ljubljana in Slovenia's capital, then went on to study directing at Ljubljana's Academy of theatre, radio, film and television.

As a freelance director he has worked over fifteen years in all the Slovenian theatres, and has been guest director at many other Yugoslavian theatres. His productions have appeared frequently at both Yugoslavian and foreign festivals. At present he is the artistic director of the Slovenian Youth Theatre in Ljubljana, and in 1983 was a visiting professor at New York University.

As a writer Jovanović has published nine plays and collections of plays in Yugoslavia, and eight of his plays have appeared in periodicals there. He writes in both the Slovenian and Serbo-Croatian languages, and for television as well as for the theatre. His plays have won much recognition both at home and abroad, having been performed in many Yugoslavian theatres and in Italy, Australia, and the United States.

Jovanović's plays vary considerably in style. One of his earliest, *The Fools* (1968), an 'angry' play influenced by John Osborne, deals with a fictitious revolution whilst at the same time portraying real persons in real places. *Generations* (1977) is a conventional drama in the Chekhovian style, dealing specifically with the relationship between culture and politics. His highly successful *The Liberation of Skopje* (1977) and *The Brothers Karamazov* (1980) are founded on historical and political determinism. His latest play is *Military Secret* (1983), first performed at the Slovenian theatre in Trieste, Italy. It contains less physical and scenic movement than his other works, dealing as it does
with states of mind and the state of language in the agony of a society approaching its end. The play involves research into animal language in an attempt to make it translatable into human language terms and to put this to political and commercial use.

**The Liberation of Skopje** and **The Brothers Karamazov** were given an international tour and performed in Sydney, Perth, and Melbourne, and in Washington, New Jersey, Denver, Los Angeles, and New York. In New York **The Liberation of Skopje** was hosted by the St. John the Divine company and **The Brothers Karamazov** by La Mama. The company which undertook this self-financed tour was almost entirely made up of Slovenian actors, though the group is based in Zagreb, Croatia, and the plays were performed not in Slovene but in Serbo-Croat, the official language of Yugoslavia. The name of the company, "KPGT", is an acronym based on the words for "theatre" in four of the Yugoslavian languages: "Kazalište" (Croatian), "Pozorište" (Serbian), "Gledališče" (Slovene) and "Teater" (Macedonian).

It is sometimes said in Yugoslavia that the theatre functions better than industry. The factories themselves are a major market for the season tickets sold by the various national (i.e. provincial) theatres. These well-subsidized national theatres are, according to Jovanović, "unprovocative",¹ staging as they do a repertoire of fairly conventional modern, European and national classic works. The less institutional, smaller cultural or youth centre theatres, on the other hand, generally have enough money for only minimal production budgets. Their audiences, drawn from all strata of society, are larger than those of the national theatres, however, so that productions can be practically self-sufficient. The Slovenian Youth Theatre, where Jovanović has been the artistic director for
the last three years, is one of these. Like other such companies, it is made up of serious people trying to stage productions of a high artistic standard and contemporary relevance. The Slovenian Youth Theatre gives performances in schools, as well as many others specifically for adults. The company itself is composed mainly of young actors fresh from drama schools. The national theatres, on the other hand, give tenure to their company members, a fact which often inhibits experimental work.

Apart from some degree of necessary self-censorship, theatres are connected with theatre councils, which "help" decide which plays may be performed. These councils consist of members drawn from the theatre itself as well as delegates from other institutions and even from industry. Until recently, the theatres have been able to choose these external delegates themselves. Now, however, they are nominated from without and the theatres are instructed to invite these nominees.

When it was first written, Tumour in the Head... was offered to the Slovenian National Theatre. Following common practice, a referendum was held among the members of the theatre to decide whether it would be produced. For this purpose, one-hundred and twenty copies of the play were distributed to all the workers in the theatre, including the technicians. All one-hundred and twenty copies were "lost". The head of the theatre at that time was a Serb from Belgrade Television.

The play was eventually performed in Celje, a small town north-east of Ljubljana. Because of the nature of the play, the Celje theatre became a psychological battleground. A war of nerves went on throughout the rehearsal period. The theatre's technical staff in particular objected to the play's being produced and various acts of sabotage followed. Cables were cut, the
sound cabinet was burgled, music tapes were stolen. The night before the first general rehearsal, the stage floor was painted a bright green and was left this colour throughout the ensuing three months of rehearsal. Some of the actors remained loyal, but others frequently failed to appear at rehearsals. Nonetheless, the production was a successful one, both in terms of its realization of the author's intentions and of public acclaim.

Thematically, *Tumour in the Head*... is very complicated, with several layers of action and of sensibility. The theatre itself is presented as a metaphor of society, and the play deals with the theatre both as a social and cultural milieu and as the focus of the personal and professional concerns of those working there. The author asserts that the stimulus to write the play was "a need for change, a need for something revolutionary to happen to overcome the so-called dead or grey banal situations or repetitions of this dullness in everyday life, in the theatre." In Yugoslavia, the political system has been producing revolutionary political and social changes since 1945, but in the playwright's view, "We didn't change the values. Nothing happened to children. They have become, I think, even worse in some ways." For Jovanović, the deep need for change in human sensibility is the essential theme and task of the theatre.

The characters in the play who are inside the Slavia Theatre are involved in efforts to try something new. Their primary obstacle is an imaginary "dead line", a situation where nothing more can happen, where they feel as if dead, or empty of possibility. The people in the theatre are constantly confronted with the police, the newspapers and so on—in short, with people who bring them up against this "dead line", 
a line which perhaps can never be crossed. At the end of the play
there is presented a theatrical, imaginary version of this line, which
any individual, it is implied, can make the decision to step over. It is
the playwright's intent that each spectator and the audience as a whole
can interpret this "crossing over" in their own ways.

For the author of the play, there is a mortality deep in the structure
of society. "I think that a kind of slow death is happening to everything,
that people are becoming just functions of the system or of everyday life.
They just don't have enough energy, enough possibilities, enough courage,
enough need if you like, to become something else." The overwhelming
nature of this situation is shown when Križnik and Levstik die theatrically
at the end of the play. Their "death" is "a kind of utopia, a kind of
obsession, a religious way of feeling space." Križnik and Levstik do not
die in the classic scenic way. When they realize they are dead, they still
live on. This is meant to be a kind of provocation for the audience, as
is the play's ending, which has no definite conclusion, no explicit thematic
statement, no ideological point or message. Indeed, in talking about the
play, Jovanović frequently refers to "provocation".

The two extremely different settings in the play are themselves
intended to be a kind of confrontation. Act One, whose setting is a news-
paper office full of desks and clutter, presents a welter of superficial,
commonplace language, facts and concerns. The Editor-in-Chief, playing
the role of presiding censor, has the function of making sure things stay
that way: "Don't dramatize!" he says repeatedly.

In contrast to the everyday triviality of the journalists in Act
One, those inside the Slavia Theatre in Acts Two and Three are "digging
deeply inside themselves, trying to think, to feel, quite different things, quite new things, to come to some really relevant point of their lives," says the author. A kind of double opposition of these two worlds is thus presented in terms of locale, language, subject matter and significance.

The very choice of a journalist and a policeman to conduct the investigation into the "splendid yet awful isolation" in the theatre makes certain points in terms of their motivation. First, they are the only ones who are interested. Second, the police are concerned with the various accusations of drug-dealing and drug-taking, immorality, mysterious night excursions into the vicinity and strange activities involving children. The other motive of the police, perhaps less immediately evident to a Western reader, is their concern with the political danger inherent in the theatre's "revolt" and in theatre itself. The journalist, Križnik, is the most clearly positive non-theatre character in the play, because he undergoes a transformation. At first he is perplexed by what he finds inside the theatre, then amused. But then, slowly, he comes to an awareness that he is "dead".

To a spectator watching the "rehearsals" of Act Two, says Jovanović, the Actors, the Director and the Dramaturge "must, I suppose, seem a little bit crazy." What they are doing can easily appear unimportant, even strange, and often simply funny. Dular and Palčić, then, are at once wretched and comical, yet in some way sympathetic. Their comicality stems from their obsessive determination to wring every drop of sensation they can from an exercise or rehearsal. They also have that childishness so common among theatre people.
The dramaturge, Palčić, is trying to liberate the Actors' imaginations in the realms of language and sensibility, hoping to find vocal sounds that correspond with certain bodily states and sensations. But his effort to find some other language or means of poetic expression "which surpasses, or overcomes, the banal meaning of outworn words, is like the whistling of the birds," says Jovanović, that is, intellectually meaningless but at the same time significant and disturbing.

In the character of Ida, the author explores Pirandello's double truth, the actor's problem of dual identity. Says Jovanović: "As a living woman she is not pregnant, but as an actress." The actress is performing a projection of her inner desire and "this other ego is pregnant." When the Doctor kills the imaginary child, he is killing the desire, the projection.

In contrast, the actor Košćak is ignorant, inchoate, indecisive. He can fully realise neither where he is nor what he is doing. He stutters, mumbles, cannot express himself. The playwright sees many actors, even good ones, as having a personal and professional reality of this kind. They are dependent on words from outside themselves to give them something they can grasp as their own, see as themselves: "They need the words to recognize what they feel or think," says Jovanović.

The Stage-Doorkeeper and the Caretaker are a kind of Lumpenproletariat invested with a certain potent authority, representing in fact a segment of society which has a growing power in some socialist countries. More specifically, they here represent the growing power of theatre technicians and support staff to terrorize the artistic workers in the Yugoslavian theatre, as instanced in the difficulties which beset the first production
of the play in Celje.

The connections between the play's outer theatrical action and its inner psycho-political life, and between its specific political and cultural levels of action, the author recommends should be handled discreetly in production. For example, the mere fact of double-casting certain of the required eighteen actors facilitates the communication of such connections in the play's subject matter. According to the playwright, the play also needs a director and actors who are willing to experiment, to take risks. Such a director Jovanović was fortunate to find in Ljubisar Ristić, one of Yugoslavia's leading and most experimental directors.

Ristić insisted that the first act be performed elsewhere than in the theatre, in a space resembling a newspaper office. The audience was then transferred to a traditional theatre to see the last two acts. The main characters were precisely and realistically portrayed according to type, also to help point up the strong contrasts between them. The actor playing Knez, to cite an obvious example, was actually played by an older, more conventional actor, who was very proud of his role and delighted in carrying a 'real gun'.

A few words about some of the problems of language are necessary here, not only because this is a translation of a play from a foreign language but also because such questions are imbedded in the content of the play itself. George Steiner's description of language as a "third universe midway between the phenomenal reality of the 'empirical world' and the internalized structure of consciousness"^2 obviously applies to all writing and speech acts, and therefore to all playwriting. When we consider this "median quality, this material and spiritual simultaneity, that makes of
language the defining pivot of man and the determinant of his place in reality, we can make a ready transfer to the specific situations of the play at hand. The consciousness of the characters in the newspaper office is very different from that of the characters locked inside the theatre. The former determine, and are determined by, the surface realities of both events and language. But they are cut off from the events—and the reality—inside the theatre. Here, a group of theatre folk have shut themselves away from superficial social reality in order to seek a deeper reality, a transcendence of their closed circuits, primarily through experiments with language—in particular spoken language.

The theatre vitally represents "the dual mode of human existence, the interactions of physical with spiritual agencies" contained in language. In divergent ways, Dular and Palčić hope to find their deeper realities by rediscovering something akin to the lost Ur-sprache which "bodied forth... the original Logos, the act of immediate calling into being."

We see Dular with Ida, for example, working down through conventional language to a level like that of Jakob Bohme's "sensualistic speech—the speech of instinctual, untutored immediacy."

He also uses the ancient methods of ritual to try to "bring a sleeping power to life," working with mantras, whose words and intonations must always be perfectly correct for the right magical effect to be produced. It is not surprising, even quite logical, that this modern shaman would use the reconstructed language of Esperanto, whose very name, as Steiner reminds us, "has in it, undisguised, the root for an ancient and compelling hope." Dular's improvisation of building and destroying a "house" could be seen as symbolic of the Tower
of Babel: "If man could break down the prison walls of scattered and polluted speech (the rubble of the smashed tower) he would again have access to the inner penetralia of reality," says Steiner.\footnote{8}

Palcic, like the Merkabah mystics, is searching for the cipher of the cosmos, "an absolute idiom or cosmic letter—alpha and aleph—which underlies the rent fabric of human tongues,"\footnote{9} or the cosmic Word or Logos, which is "like a hidden spring seeking to force its way through the silted channels of our differing tongues."\footnote{10} Unlike Dular, he takes Kelper's mathematical approach, combining it with the harmonics of celestial music: in his case, bird-song, which in ancient times (see Teiresias, for example) was often regarded as the language of prophecy. For good measure, we can even see the influence of Timothy Leary in the Doctor's use of psychoactive drugs and in Palcic's attempt at space migration.

Any translator must needs share Palcic's concern that "the mechanical problem of discovering a mutually acceptable communication channel cannot be separated from the problem of the sentence."\footnote{11} The translator too must discriminate between the "deep structures of meaning, structures buried by time or masked by colloquialism, and the surface structures of spoken idiom."\footnote{12} In Act One of this play, so wholly reliant on contemporary cultural reference: and the surface structures of social language, there is the danger that even the surface meaning, and consequently the deeper, may be lost in translation.

The choices open to the translator of any play from one language to another will vary widely. In general, however, they range from a so-called "literal" translation to what is usually called an "adaptation". There are
arguments for both these extremes of approach. The case for something like literal translation is forcefully put by Vladimir Nabokov:

In the first place, we must dismiss, once and for all the conventional notion that a translation "should read smoothly," and "should not sound like a translation" (to quote the would-be compliments, addressed to vague versions, by genteel reviewers who never have and never will read the original texts). In point of fact, any translation that does not sound like a translation is bound to be inexact upon inspection; while, on the other hand, the only virtue of a good translation is faithfulness and completeness. Whether it reads smoothly or not, depends on the model, not on the mimic.13

At the same time, a play, especially, invites the translator to "adapt" it, not only to its new language but to the theatrical conventions of the new culture or historical period. The choices of the translator of drama are significantly comparable—though hardly identical—to those of the stage director and the actors.

My choice here has been to work considerably nearer to Nabokov than to free adaptation. I have tried to provide a readable, complete and faithful translation of the language of the original. My purpose has been to convey to an English-language reader the essential meanings and quality of the play as a piece of dramatic writing, while simultaneously (though secondarily) suggesting to a prospective director or actor some of its possibilities for performance. It has also been a part of my purpose to provide a useful and interesting example of the concerns of a contemporary playwright in the cultural and political context of Slovenia today.

Finally, I should add that, because of my own background, I have used predominantly the spellings and idioms of British rather than North American English. All proper names have been left in their original form, as the
choices of characters' names carry no strong implications in themselves, and any Anglicization of them would entail too personal a choice. To leave the Slovenian names in their original forms serves also to emphasize the play's cultural context. To avoid possible confusion in pronunciation, however, I have deleted the "j" from the proper names "Slovenija", "Slavija", "Savinja" and "Lydija". I have also found it necessary to break up somewhat the long, involved and frequently compounded sentences of the original Slovene, most particularly in the author's stage directions (or directorial discourses) in order to improve their clarity and to bring them a little closer to the syntactical conventions of English playwriting. The lack of indefinite or definite articles in Slovene has required some contextual decisions that can only be verified in rehearsal. The author's flexibility, which stems from his own directorial experience and awareness, quite rightly is intended to accommodate prospective directors and actors. In doing this, however, he fails in some instances to accommodate the non-professional reader. Thus, for example, when he offers several alternatives for the word "bier" in describing an important stage prop in the final scene (namely, "couch", "platform" and "catafalque"), I have opted for consistency.

Two small problems remain to be mentioned briefly. One is that the character of Belič in Act One is (the author informs me) subtly written as a homosexual. Without the usual clichés of language, however, this is difficult to convey in the written text. The other difficulty is found in the way the Managing Editor concludes his telephone conversations and the telex report with phrases that are in fact popular song titles from the period 1950-1954. The playwright himself acknowledges that even a Slovenian
reader would miss this nuance. Other song titles have been substituted. The author's casual mention in conversation that the play was meant to be set in the early 1950s is difficult to take altogether seriously, especially since other particular references in the play do not jibe: for example, the politicians Tepavac and Dubček, referred to in Act One, were only widely known in the late sixties and early seventies.

From the author's comments and from the text itself it is clear that any translator, reader or director of this play must be alert for the ways in which this drama "may conceal more than it conveys." For the play contains not only a kind of theatricality that goes beyond verbal language, but also "a clear sense... of the numinous as well as the problematic nature of man's life in language."¹⁴
PLAY A TUMOUR IN THE HEAD AND AIR POLLUTION

A Play in Three Acts
by Dušan Jovanović

In memoriam: a cockroach killer

Palas aron ozinomas baske bano tudan donas
gheamel cla orlay berec he pantaras tay
Cast of Characters

PRODUCTION EDITOR
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF
MANAGING EDITOR
SECRETARY, (Draga)
JOCO, a photographer
KRIZNIK, a reporter
VESNA, a reporter
REPORTER 1
REPORTER 2
ERRAND GIRL
BELIC
LEVSTIK, a Police Inspector
KNEZ, an actor
LYDIA, Knez's wife
IDA, an actress
KOŠČAK, an actor
Company of Actors in the Slavia Theatre
DOCTOR Černigoj
DULAR, director in the Slavia Theatre
PALČIČ, dramaturge of the Slavia Theatre
STAGE-DOORKEEPER, (Roman)
CARETAKER, (Hector)

The actors from the First Act also appear in the Second and Third Acts. This is important, not for economy's sake, but
to serve the play's deeper meaning. In all, exactly eighteen actors are needed.

The actors playing the following roles do not double:

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF, SECRETARY, KRIŽNIK, LEVSTIK, KNEZ, IDA,
DOCTOR, DULAR, PALČIČ, STAGE-DOORKEEPER, CARETAKER.
ACT ONE

The editorial office of "The Daily News." A typical newspaper office with typewriters, telephones, etc. I have only prescribed the most important stage actions. The rest I leave to the director and actors, whose decisions will depend on their production concept for the play. The actors could, for example, be continually moving about the space, leaving and re-entering the office on specific errands or on random impulse. On the other hand, their movements could be less realistic, forming a more static stage picture though with a constant level of appropriate "tension." I have similarly limited my comments on the dialogue.

MANAGING EDITOR: (on the telephone) Right, Chief, O.K.! No dramatizing!
REPORTER 1: (to REPORTER 2) I'm phoning down to the bar. What'll it be?
REPORTER 2: Gin and tonic with lemon.
MANAGING EDITOR: It is harmful! I agree!
REPORTER 1: Don't you drink cognac any more?
REPORTER 2: Can't. Doctor's orders. "Don't drink cognac!" he said.
MANAGING EDITOR: (puts down the receiver with a sigh) "Don't dramatize!"

It's all right for him to say "Don't dramatize". Those people are slaughtering each other right and left, and we're supposed to sit on the side-lines like Dubček.

REPORTER 1: New lifestyle then?
REPORTER 2: New, my arse. I can't take it, it gives me the shits.
VESNA: (rummages through a pile of newspapers, then to MANAGING EDITOR)

Those people in the South have whipped up a nice sensation out of this one. Just look at these headlines.

REPORTER 1: (telephoning) Tončka? Editors' office here. Send me up a hot lemonade, a gin and tonic, and a packet of Marlboros. (Puts down the receiver.)

MANAGING EDITOR: I'm going to read him this, Vesna, for a bit of a laugh!

(Takes a pile of newspapers and lifts the receiver.)

ERRAND GIRL: (ENTERS, delivers the post to Vesna, EXITS) Hello. Post for "Tell Me Your Troubles".

VESNA: Thanks.

SECRETARY: (picks up the receiver) Judnić? Yes, one moment. (To PRODUCTION EDITOR) Jaka, take it... the Socialist Federation of Workers. (PRODUCTION EDITOR lifts his receiver.)

REPORTER 1: Where did you pick up those scars?

REPORTER 2: Concrete stairs, with some Northerner behind my back, and a few fancy tricks...

MANAGING EDITOR: (has a connection at last) I'm just going to read you a few things to bring you up to date.

PRODUCTION EDITOR: (into the telephone) At seven, right. An end to political pressures. Great! (Hangs up.)

MANAGING EDITOR: (reading from newspapers) The Serbian Fighter: "The Slavia, Slovenia's oldest and largest theatre, on the brink of chaos."
The Croatian Spring: "Sensational riot at the Slavia theatre." The Croatian Evening News: "The Avant-Garde has barricaded itself inside the Slavia Theatre and cut all connections with the outside world."
The Political Express: "A director and his clique of actors throw the rest of the company out onto the street." The Freedom: "Who is really directing the gala production at the Slavia?"... and so on and so forth.

VESNA: (to REPORTER 2) Here, handsome, here's something for you. (Reads.)

"Dear Edwina. I'm 18 years old and still very shy. When men come near me my heart starts racing, and my face turns red right away. I wouldn't mind if my face went a bit red, but I go as red as a beetroot. I should add that my face is already red by nature. Maybe that's due to high blood pressure, because mine's 160. I'm scared to go to the doctor. What can I do?"

REPORTER 1: Send her to me. When I put mine in her hands she'll go white.

VESNA: Oh, you pig! (She laughs.)

ERRAND GIRL: (bringing the drinks) Gin and tonic, hot lemonade, Marlboros.

REPORTER 1: Thanks.

(EXIT ERRAND GIRL.)

MANAGING EDITOR: (puts down the receiver) Fucking hell. "Objectively, calmly, let's give it time." Disagreements in cooperative management, theatre in artistic crisis, dilemma in the house of Thalia. What kind of headlines are those? God! You can't write like that!

PRODUCTION EDITOR: He's got nothing to do but scratch his balls.

SECRETARY: (replacing the receiver) Smith, reporting the arrival of more foreign correspondents. Ronconi from Rome, MacDonald of the BBC, and Pulman, Spiegel's Belgrade correspondent. They're at the Hotel Lion and they want contacts.
VESNA: All I'd like to know is, how the hell can fifteen artsy wallies throw thirty-five people out onto the street!

MANAGING EDITOR: How? Oh, come on! (To PRODUCTION EDITOR) Import taxes up 4%. Two columns, eight spaces, subtitle: "Individuals and businesses must pay another tax on top of customs duty and federal value-added taxes to maintain the balance of prices and customs transactions."

REPORTER 1: What about the skirts in the north?

REPORTER 2: Huh. A house-party in the sticks. I get plastered. I ask some lover-boy: "Who's that pussy?" and the ponce goes pissing looney and fucks me off down the concrete steps!

REPORTER 1: Shit!

CHIEF: (ENTERS) Comrades! Let's be quite clear about how we handle the Slavia theatre affair: no dramatizing. We wait for the parliamentary hearing, the union's resolutions, and the meeting of the theatre advisory commission. Clear?

ALL: Clear.

(EXIT EDITOR-IN-CHIEF.)

PRODUCTION EDITOR: (to MANAGING EDITOR) You know, these actual price increases are going to be bloody obvious, aren't they? Look at the difference: automatic washing-machine with up to twelve programmes, one thousand and fifteen new dinars, including tax, and it used to be nine hundred and twenty-five.

SECRETARY: (lifts the receiver) Yes, I'll tell him. (To MANAGING EDITOR) Porenta in Paris wants a summary of what's going on at the Slavia Theatre.
MANAGING EDITOR: I'll dictate a report for the telex. Take it down.

REPORTER 1: (to PRODUCTION EDITOR) "Film director Boštjan Hladnik makes threats." Three column heading, page 6. Continue in type. Figure in space for a 4x2 picture.

MANAGING EDITOR: On the evening of the ninth of January, following a performance of Shakespeare's Richard II, a real fight, with swords, rapiers, and spears, breaks out among the artists of the Slavia Theatre. Rival factions have formed: the traditionalists and the avant-gardists. The latter, led by the director, Dular, the dramaturge, Palčič, and a Doctor Černigoj, set up a revolutionary committee for the Slavia Theatre. They throw two-thirds of the theatre company out onto the street. On the morning of January 10th the avant-garde group announce the involuntary retirement of the other thirty actors and directors, and barricade themselves inside the theatre. The revolutionaries bring in some of their relatives, mostly children, and cut off all contact with the outside world. Strange things keep occurring in the theatre - too many to describe. Your last column on the elections was excellent. Say hello to your girlfriends. "Chéri je t'Aime, Chéri je t'Adore!" Yours, Managing Editor.

REPORTER 2: Vesna, read me my horoscope. Sagittarius.

VESNA: "You have allowed yourself to be lulled by promises. Insist on the plain truth. Very soon what you have been desiring for so long will at last take place." (They both laugh.)

SECRETARY: (lifts the receiver) Yes?

VESNA: "Unexpected expenses will get you into trouble; you are to go on a short trip."
REPORTER 2: Huh, what a load of baloney. Aren't you ashamed of yourself? You'll ruin the whole edition with that boring stuff.

SECRETARY: (covering the phone) Pssst. An anonymous call. (To the caller.) I see. You don't want to divulge that. That's a pity.

REPORTER 2: Do you know how to say in Esperanto: Miss, can we get together tonight?

VESNA: No. How?

REPORTER 2: Fraulino, ĉu mi povas ĉi vespere kunveni?

VESNA: It sounds so lovely. My back goes all tingly.

SECRETARY: (putting down the receiver) He says he's got proof those people in the theatre are going out at night and kidnapping people, and he says we'll be getting a list of people missing from the district. Apparently, some of them are children. His theory is, the avant-gardists are either cannibals or they're taking hostages.

MANAGING EDITOR: Nonsense. A pack of lies. They'll take the list of missing people and write "economic emigration" on it. They've gone to be gastarbeiteris. No-one's eaten them, they're better off than we are.

REPORTER 1: What are they up to, what's behind it all, why are they sealing themselves off like that? Can anyone explain it to me?

REPORTER 2: It's obvious. They're having sexual disputes.

PRODUCTION EDITOR: It's a circus. They're a bunch of clowns, comedians, drunks, misfits, spear-carriers - stupid little show-offs crawling with complexes, trying to attract attention at any price.

MANAGING EDITOR: (to REPORTER 1) Hey, Marjan, this won't do, you know, this crossword vocabulary of yours. It's too difficult.
REPORTER 1: (doesn't hear him) Idiots. They'll have to give up sooner or later. Hunger will open the castle's iron gates. (To MANAGING EDITOR) What won't do?

REPORTER 2: Maybe they're on a hunger strike.

MANAGING EDITOR: For Christ's sake, who knows what "Ariman" is?

VESNA: The babies need food. The little babies will be the ones who suffer.

REPORTER 1: "Ariman" is the principle of evil in the religion of the ancient Persians. (To PRODUCTION EDITOR) They'd give up soon enough if the water and electricity boards cut them off.

MANAGING EDITOR: (reads) Oriental water-pipe - "negrila". One of the oldest Italian families - "Este". What do you mean, making it hard for people like that?

PRODUCTION EDITOR: Let them commit suicide. I don't care. I like football. They can drop dead.

REPORTER 1: This is a pocket-dictionary for aesthetes and intellectuals. It's not a crossword puzzle for the masses.

MANAGING EDITOR: Well, it should be.

CHIEF: (ENTERS, and remains by the door) Ladies and Gentlemen.

Please - no dramatizing. The situation is extremely complex. A web of private interests, personal hatred, games of prestige, generation problems, ideological-aesthetic concepts beyond social control, and so on and so on! But not one performance. Who's going to take responsibility? Who's going to raise his voice and say: "This is a violent gang of insurgents, we demand their liquidation! If nothing else will do it, bring in the army!" Who? Who'll raise his voice for
freedom for the avant-garde, for a dynamic, daring, radical solution? For a new kind of theatre? They will! Let them do it themselves! Why don't they state publicly what they want? Why don't they put their ideas to the test of democracy? Why are they hiding like mice in a hole? (EXITS.)

REPORTER 1: Another gin and tonic?

REPORTER 2: I can't. I've just told you, it twists my guts. I tank two or three in the morning just to pull myself together. My hands tremble, my legs are like jelly, my voice is all nervous. You know how your nerves fuck up your insides like you're going to go out of your mind.

REPORTER 1: Don't I know it. (Into the telephone.) Whiskey. Yes, Ballantines. And a hot lemonade.

VESNA: (to SECRETARY) Listen what reader Branka Tomazič writes.

SECRETARY: O.K., Vesna, I'm all ears.

VESNA: "I recently bought a roll of Bristol toilet paper, a product of their packaging factory in Ljubljana. All the paper on the roll was symmetrically shot through with holes, more like a net than a piece of paper supposed to be used for we all know what. Please do something so someone will finally step on those crooks' toes." (She smiles.) Isn't that lovely?

MANAGING EDITOR: (telephoning) Slavia theatre? Daily News here. Let me talk to the director, Mr. Dular.

REPORTER 1: How's the coin collection going?

REPORTER 2: It's a joke; I've been losing all the time lately. Thirty quid at Toni's on Saturday.

REPORTER 1: Toni's cards are lousy.

PRODUCTION EDITOR: (whispering to MANAGING EDITOR) Say you've got confidential information for him, otherwise they won't put you through.

REPORTER 2: Stancić picked up his balls and banana!

SECRETARY: Here's the list, Vesna. Read out the hit parade for me, will you?

MANAGING EDITOR: If Mr. Dular's busy, give me Mr. Palčić. It's to your advantage.

VESNA: My Sweet Lord - George Harisson, two s's.

SECRETARY: I know.

PRODUCTION EDITOR: (to MANAGING EDITOR) What's up?

(MANAGING EDITOR shrugs his shoulders.)

VESNA: "Dry your tears, my love" - Boba Stefanović.

REPORTER 2: Stancić's nothing but a whore. Fucking ambitious.

VESNA: "She's a lady" - Tom Jones. "You don't want to be mine any more" - Krunoslav Slabinac.

MANAGING EDITOR: This is the fourth day he's been tied up... That's impossible! When is he going to be available then...?

REPORTER 2: When the waiter came over to give us the bill, all of a sudden Stancić was busy drawing some shitty pictogramme on Olga's serviette.

VESNA: "Black Magic Woman" - Santana.

MANAGING EDITOR: Look, boys, you just keep messing around! You'll damn well get it in the end. Just remember I told you that.

VESNA: "Lonely Days" - Bee Gees.

REPORTER 2: I could barely swallow that bull-shit over the bill, but do you know what he did then?
REPORTER 1: What?

PRODUCTION EDITOR: (to MANAGING EDITOR) It's that keeper of the stable door again. Tell him to go to hell.

VESNA: "Which way you going, Billy." - Poppy Family.

REPORTER 2: Olga took my car to drive him to the looney-bin, and we had to take a taxi to Šentvid...

MANAGING EDITOR: You'll be very sorry! You'll be sorrier than that. You just remember that! (Crashes the receiver onto its hook.)

VESNA: "San Bernardino" - Christie. "When I'm dead and gone" - MacGuinness Flint.

MANAGING EDITOR: That stage-doorkeeper's the stubbornest son-of-a-bitch I ever heard. He was fucking me about like some bully-boy. Phone as much as you like, you won't get past that watch-dog.

PRODUCTION EDITOR: I've been saying all along, those arse-lickers are bloody crooks. They're doing the whole thing to sell more tickets to their feather-brained circus acts, that's all. It's nothing but publicity. This whole performance is a bloody great fake, you mark my words.

REPORTER 1: (to the SECRETARY) What's the matter, Draga? Are you depressed? Has some smart-Alec made you unhappy again?

SECRETARY: What's it to you? Mind you own business, will you?

ERRAND GIRL: (ENTERS, bringing the drinks. EXITS) Whiskey and hot lemonade.

MANAGING EDITOR: The whole town's talking about that theatre, and we're in the ridiculous position of knowing practically nothing. We've got no facts. Empty-handed; totally ignorant. Those whores are quiet as
mice. The only things you can really know are what you see with your own eyes, that's the bleeding pain of it. The goddam problem is, you can't understand a bloody thing.

PRODUCTION EDITOR: I'm telling you - it's all blackmail. Out-and-out blackmail. A lock-out doesn't happen just like that! We'll see what they're really up to when the right moment comes.

REPORTER 1: You don't need to have complexes, Draga, just because you're short and not very sexy. Anything does me.

SECRETARY: Will you shut up for a change?

REPORTER 2: (to VESNA) We're off fishing on Saturday. You coming with us?

VESNA: Where to?

REPORTER 2: The Savinia river, somewhere between Celje and Žalec.

MANAGING EDITOR: (lifts the receiver) Yes. What hashish? How much hashish? Who to?

REPORTER 2: The Savinia's full of sturgeon, dace, wall-eyes, and whiting. Not so many grayling, though.

REPORTER 1: (to SECRETARY) I'll give you some free advice! Keep in shape, be refined and gentle. Look after your curves and stand up straight. Every little bit helps.

MANAGING EDITOR: This is already the second order. And it's for five kilos again?

REPORTER 2: We could go up from Podvin too. Salmonidae are prevalent there: brook trout and rainbow trout. We'll go in my car.

VESNA: I'll think about it...
REPORTER 1: I'll let you into the secret of beauty. Make use of the little God gave you. You've got big blue eyes. Good. With careful make-up you can remodel them into a unique beauty asset! Cultivate your fabulous smile. Make use of that sonorous voice. Varnish your nails in an unobtrusive colour, and wear an interesting ring. Be sparing with your gestures.

MANAGING EDITOR: They're paying in gold? You don't say! And what are your names, you and your salesman friend? Oh. You can't tell me. You've been very helpful. My undying gratitude. (Replaces the receiver and collapses with a sigh, depressed and tired.) Hashish! What a load of bull! Some anonymous liar is trying to make out he and his friend have already sent off their third five kilo packet to the Slavia Theatre.

REPORTER 1: Draga, dear heart, let's not quarrel. What are you doing tonight?

SECRETARY: Knitting socks.

REPORTER 1: Who for?

SECRETARY: The poor.

REPORTER 1: The ones from Banjaluka?

SECRETARY: No, the ones from Palestine.

REPORTER 1: Golda Meir can look after them tonight.

SECRETARY: Not tonight. She's got her period.

REPORTER 1: Well, if you run out of wool or your needle breaks, just give me a call! I'll be glad to rise to your assistance.

SECRETARY: Your needle couldn't cope with my knitting.
CHIEF: (ENTERS) I've said it before and I'll say it again! No dramatizing. At this very moment the affair is moving beyond the realm of the merely theatrical. It is rapidly becoming a cultural scandal of undreamt-of proportions, with clear political implications. This is what's interfering with democratic negotiation, the fundamental principle of our society. This juicy morsel has fallen right into the laps of the Western press. Those gentlemen have a sudden intense interest in Slovenian culture and Slovenian theatre. I'm not going to receive them. Not me. Who'll take the responsibility? Who? At least half of these drivelling, idiotic sensation-mongers are capitalist agitators and CIA spies. It's our duty to view events through a political prism, not to be influenced by shallow impulses to dramatize reality. This theatre business is a side issue. It's a stupid, moronic scandal involving a handful of highly suspicious maniacal extremists with a different ideo-aesthetic orientation from us - no more and no less! Until the responsible officials and the appropriate socio-political bodies take a position on the matter, it is our duty to find out the objective political dimensions of this cultural incident without any exaggeration. Is that clear? I hope I have been sufficiently precise. (Sneezes and EXITS.)

PRODUCTION EDITOR: (stands) Johannes Gutenberg, 1398 to 1468. German printer, generally thought to have been the first man in western civilization to use moveable type. His invention has no connection with the device that had long since been in use in Korea, since it is independent of it. Others, for example, Laurens Janszoon Koster, have also claimed the honour of being the inventor of the printing press,
but without success. We know very little of Gutenberg's youth. He probably organized a printing shop in Strasbourg in the year 1448 with the financial support of the goldsmith Johan Faust, who later dissolved the partnership and demanded the return of his investment. This did not bring Gutenberg to his knees, however, for with the help of a second partner, Conrad Humery, the press continued to flourish. His first publication was the famous Gutenberg Bible, which he began printing about 1450 and completed around 1455, and which is called by some Mazarin's Bible, since modern researchers discovered the first copy in the library of Cardinal Mazarin. This Bible is a brilliant achievement in printing. With its coloured initials and hand decoration it is still the epitome of precision and quality. The whole world knows it and I know it, and no-one can take that away from me - no-one, no-one. I know it. Thank you. (Sits.)

MANAGING EDITOR: Want a smoke?

PRODUCTION EDITOR: Kents get on my nerves. I can't stand strong smells.

MANAGING EDITOR: Marlboros are like sawdust.

PRODUCTION EDITOR: Maybe, but at least they're not too strong. They suit me O.K. I get through more than sixty a day.

MANAGING EDITOR: You leave bloody long butts, though.

PRODUCTION EDITOR: That's healthy. The sign of an elegant smoker is he always throws at least half the cigarette away.

MANAGING EDITOR: You think that's necessary?

PRODUCTION EDITOR: All the tar collects in the last one-third. Poison!

MANAGING EDITOR: I know all these theories, but they don't worry me.

PRODUCTION EDITOR: Do you chew the filter?
MANAGING EDITOR: No.

PRODUCTION EDITOR: I do. I bite it with my teeth, roll it round my mouth, wet it with my tongue. Fuck, in the end it's all in bits, slimy, bitter, soft - doesn't even drag any more.

JOCO: (ENTERS) Wow, they're fighting all right! Boy, are they fighting! Cheers.

REPORTER 1: Who's fighting?

JOCO: Sorry, I've had one too many. Who's fighting?

REPORTER 1: Yes, who's fighting?

JOCO: Actually, the ones inside are fighting and the ones outside are fighting.

REPORTER 2: Joco, pull yourself together and tell us what's going on.

JOCO: I've taken two dozen pictures. Fantastic stuff! I'm just off to have them developed. I'll be right back.

MANAGING EDITOR: Joco! Jesus Christ, man, where's the fire? Tell us who's fighting.

JOCO: This morning a crowd of people started gathering in front of the theatre. Hanging around out of curiosity, you see, and the T.V. shooting all over the place with three cameras. Then the rejects showed up. What a laugh!

VESNA: Honey, who showed up? What rejects?

JOCO: Jesus, the dismissed, the humiliated, the insulted. Redundant, thrown out on the street, socially ostracised, and so on - actors, of course! They're demonstrating. With their ex-director at their head they're demanding their trade union rights. They're marching all over the place waving placards. Everyone's having a great time. Fun and games all over the place. (Gives a little laugh.)
MANAGING EDITOR: What about the people watching?

JOCO: To cut a long story short: I've never heard such a racket. Worse than a football match. And right out in the open, just imagine! The crowd broke into applause. And then Knez started reciting.

REPORTER 1: What did he recite?

JOCO: All kinds of stuff. Cheers. I'm off to get the film developed.

MANAGING EDITOR: Joco, wait! Who had a fight?

JOCO: Kriznik's coming any moment. He'll tell you. (EXITS)

(KRIZNIK appears.)

MANAGING EDITOR: Tell us everything, step by step.

KRIZNIK: I've got enough material for the leader, a report and a commentary. Piles of it.

VESNA: Tomo, we don't know anything. Report, please.

KRIZNIK: You should have seen it! Indescribable. At half past nine the locked-out actors tried to break into the theatre by force. They'd dragged along iron bars from somewhere. Like the middle ages. One, two, and ram the door with the iron bars. Suddenly, the defenders inside appear on the balcony and roof-top of the theatre wearing weird coloured rags, smothered in powder and make-up, and start pelting everybody with smoke-bombs and tear-gas. The people outside go wild. Smoke and fog and all hell breaks loose. People who up to this point have only been hecklers literally go frantic, absolutely wild. All of a sudden they push the locked-out actors aside, and before you can look round the whole pavement on the opposite side of the street has been dug up, and the crowd is attacking the theatre with granite blocks. Someone shouts: "Let's burn the rats out", and
all of a sudden they're lighting torches. Some of them run through
the smoke to set fire to the theatre. And then the police ruin
everything, they come in with truncheons and break up the whole works.
Then, when the firemen come storming in with all their paraphernalia,
spraying everything in sight, the bunch inside the theatre start
swearing at the crowd and playing rock music over the loud-speakers.
Finally, an ambulance turns up, loads up the wounded, including Knez,
and drives them off to hospital.

SECRETARY: What happened to Knez?
KRIZNIK: He was hit in the head by a stone from the crowd.
SECRETARY: Did he really recite?
KRIZNIK: Really.
PRODUCTION EDITOR: So now what?
KRIZNIK: If you're asking me, I haven't a clue. I only know what I've seen.
PRODUCTION EDITOR: What'll you write?
KRIZNIK: I'll write what I saw. Listen to you, you're funny.
MANAGING EDITOR: Write a photo report for the front page. Right across the
whole page. It's all yours.

REPORTER 1: What about Eastern Pakistan, Vietnam, Tepavac's visit, the
meeting of the City Council?
MANAGING EDITOR: Dress up the news for the sixteenth, no pictures.
VESNA: Have you got anything on tape?
KRIZNIK: I'll give it to you. I've got an ocean of crap. But the tapes
are useless, you know.
VESNA: Go on, turn it on.
(KRIŽNIK starts the tape. The ramming of iron bars on wooden doors and the smashing of glass is heard.)

VOICES: One, two, three! Bloody louts! Swine! You're gonna get one in the gob. Hold the bar. Hit it, you buggers!

(The trampling of a hundred different feet running back from the doors and forwards again.)

KNEZ: (reciting ecstatically)

It is white as I told you
That which is dark
As a black raven...

(A fire-cracker explodes.)

I didn't try to get a company calendar
That's why I seem like a poisoned thorn to you!

(Coughing, sneezing, shrieking, running steps, swearing.)

VOICES: Bloody swine, get the devils with stones, with stones!

KNEZ: The whole of Israel, cudgels in their hands,
Still now angry with me, grin,
Champions all and their followers
Behind a bush, in ditches, behind fences.

(A gust of roaring carries away his words.)

A WOMAN'S VOICE: Manca, Manca, Manca!

A MAN'S VOICE: Let's burn the rats out! Let's burn the rats out!

KNEZ: But I do not bow my head
Nor ever will I!
Fearlessly I still proclaim:
You are a blind man, but oh, you deceiver!
CROWD: Burn 'em out! Burn 'em out!

(We hear a flaring of torches, sneezing, coughing, screaming, the sound of running steps, cursing, the sound of granite blocks striking a wall, a woman's hysterical weeping.)

KRIŽNIK: (switches off the tape recorder) It's all the same old crap.

MANAGING EDITOR: Go and write it up. Time's getting on.

KRIŽNIK: This is going to be a sensation. Hot stuff! (EXITS.)

REPORTER 1: Draga, here's something for you. (Reads.) "A man, still single, middle-aged, 5 foot eight, of good character, well-situated, own car, wishes to become acquainted with an honest farm-girl between 24 and 32, good-looking, who enjoys farm work, if possible a singer, marriage not excluded."

SECRETARY: Too bad I don't fit the description. No ear for music.

REPORTER 1: You enjoy farm work though, don't you?

SECRETARY: Not with someone like you.

ERRAND GIRL: (to PRODUCTION EDITOR on entering) Display ad texts. (EXITS.)

PRODUCTION EDITOR: (reads) "Cascade - cream shampoo. Fresh on the market. Gives a rich, thick lather, easy to rinse, softens your hair, makes it manageable and shiny. Cascade is made from six different natural plants, pleasantly perfumed, soothing and antiseptic. In a plastic tube, for 10-12 shampoos. Cheaper and better. See for yourself."

(Puts it down.)

CHIEF: (ENTERS) I am once again compelled to make my position clear. Do not dramatize! What are we playing at, good people? What are we playing at? At this very moment the world is shaken by revolutionary activity of historic dimensions in Africa, Asia, and Latin America,
wars raging in Indochina and the Near East, the world struggling with the massive problems of hunger and under-development, racism and neo-colonialism once again rearing their ugly heads, far-reaching constitutional changes being debated on a federal scale, everyone confronted with the dilemmas of economic migration, stabilization, bankruptcy and so on and so forth. With these massive mountains of burning and insoluble questions facing us at this moment of history - what do you think is actually going on? Theatrical scandal and internecine violence. This is not the way. This is not the solution. Shouting and violence, demolition and destruction. We'll gain nothing, solve nothing. Let them work, let them show by their labour what they can do, what they know, and what they want. Then we'll discuss and negotiate. Calmly, considerately, in the spirit of co-operative self-management. Don't you agree? Am I not right?

ALL: That's how it is all right - That's absolutely right - of course.

(And so on.)

(EXIT EDITOR-IN-CHIEF.)


VESNA: Draga, there's only Housewife's Corner left to do. Have you got a minute?

SECRETARY: Yes, of course.
VESNA: I'll dictate the menus.

MANAGING EDITOR: Hello. Is that you, Janez? Yes. Listen, what do you think will come out of all these riots?

VESNA: Saturday: rabbit in cream sauce, bread dumplings, salad.

MANAGING EDITOR: Nothing? What do you mean, nothing?

VESNA: Sunday: beef broth with marrow dumplings, veal cutlets parmesan, puréed potatoes, spinach, cherry slices.

MANAGING EDITOR: Are you waiting for the debate in parliament? Or a special session? What about the commission they've set up to solve the theatre crisis?

VESNA: Monday: sheep's cheese, spring onions, bread, stewed fruit.

MANAGING EDITOR: Have they started negotiations with the insurgents?

Yes, well for Christ's sake, who's negotiating, and how? You're negotiating?

VESNA: Tuesday: kohlrabe and potato soup, rice soufflé with cherries, milk.

MANAGING EDITOR: O.K., that's fine, Janez, I'll give you a man. With pleasure, naturally! The parliamentary commission is behind us, of course!

VESNA: Wednesday: fried frankfurters, potato salad, fruit juice.

MANAGING EDITOR: Oh, they're making conditions? Go on. Really... who'd have thought... fancy that.

VESNA: Thursday: mushroom soup with semolina dumplings Czech style, new potatoes with cheese, beef.

MANAGING EDITOR: Naturally, of course there's nothing certain... of course I'm not going to spread it around...
VESNA: Friday: green bean goulash, gnocchi, beef steaks.

MANAGING EDITOR: Good, it's all arranged, then! You'll get in touch...
Right... I'll have a man ready. That's right! No question of bloodshed yet. The thing has to be done thoroughly, I agree! Danke schön! Danke! "Auf Wiedersehn, Sweetheart!" "Shake, Rattle and Roll!" (Hangs up.)

PRODUCTION EDITOR: What's new?

(ENTER KNEZ, his head bandaged; accompanied by his wife LYDIA.)

SECRETARY: Mr. Knez! Take a seat, Mr. Knez. Take a seat, Madam.

KNEZ: No, thank you. I do not care to sit. My wife and I have just dropped by in passing. She came to fetch me from hospital.

MANAGING EDITOR: What can we do for you?

KNEZ: I wish to inform you that what you are writing in your cretinous, corrupt newspaper no longer bears any resemblance to reality. It has passed the limits of credibility.

REPORTER 1: How do you mean, Mr. Knez?

KNEZ: I have been working in the Slavia Theatre for twenty-five years now - twenty-five years, gentlemen, that's a fair portion of a man's life. After twenty-five years of artistic experience, I and my colleagues are being cast out of our profession - out of the theatre - by a handful of conceited maniacs. Out of my second home, my right, the greatest love of my life, my dream and my reality, my refuge and my song. My soul was burned out on those boards, my youth was left there, my tears and perspiration poured out there, my foam and blood spat out there!

PRODUCTION EDITOR: A little more clarity wouldn't harm your story.
(ENTER JOCO.)

LYDIA: I forbid it, do you hear? I forbid you! My husband is an artist, a Slovenian actor who has slaved for your sakes!

KNEZ: Lydia! (The woman falls silent, as though cut off.) Your journalistic chit-chat about "dilemmas" and "misunderstandings" is nothing but transparent ignorance and bull-shit. What do you hope to gain by such prattle? It's nothing but sand in the eyes of the cultured public and our loyal audience!

SECRETARY: Mr. Knez, please don't get excited...

MANAGING EDITOR: Do try to restrain your feelings, Mr. Knez.

KNEZ: I didn't come here for a coffee morning - I came to protest, do you hear me? I came to look you frankly and honestly in the eyes, so I can see who you are, what you are, what kind of people it is who treat men's souls as pigs do their guts!

SECRETARY: Mr. Knez...

KNEZ: And I wasn't far wrong! A prize collection!

REPORTER 2: Just spit it all out, go on. You'll feel better. It helps.

REPORTER 1: What do you think of the director, Mr. Dular, and his philosophy of drama as ritual?

LYDIA: Ha! Ritual my arse!

KNEZ: Lydia! (LYDIA falls silent.) I'm not telling you what I think of his philosophy of drama, young man, there's not the slightest point. Anyway, you can see for yourself what he thinks of my philosophy of drama! (Pointing to his bandaged head.) He thinks it should be smashed out of me with stones! Take a picture of this head, photograph this dramatic philosophy of Dular's, photograph
this battered Slovenian actor cast out onto the street by those hooligans, his face soiled, his skull broken. Go on, take a picture of this!

JOCO: But I've already photographed you, Mr. Knez. (Offering him a photograph.) Look, this is for you, a souvenir. And this one, that's when you were reciting.

KNEZ: (puts the photos in his pocket) Publish this evidence, publish it on the front page. What's going on is a scandal. It's against the statutes, against the constitution, against all laws. What on earth are you waiting for, you and the government? Just you let the police remember who it was they attacked!

(KNEZ and LYDIA EXIT: JOCO throws the photographs onto the table and goes out after them.)

REPORTER 1: (telephones) Tončka? Another double whiskey. (To the others) Anyone else want anything?

VESNA: Coffee. Any more? One, two, three coffees.

REPORTER 1: Double whiskey and three coffees. (Hangs up.)

VESNA: (to SECRETARY) Do you like him?

SECRETARY: Who?

VESNA: Knez.

SECRETARY: I don't know... I do... I do.

VESNA: Those eyes... they're so alive, so warm, so magical, they won't let go of you.

SECRETARY: That's why she's...

VESNA: A hysterical monster.

REPORTER 2: She's a great woman! What are you bull-shitting about?
REPORTER 1: Fuck drips from her eyes.

REPORTER 2: Dribbles is the latest expression.

REPORTER 1: Idiot. I bet she digs your eyes out with her bristolls when she comes.

ERRAND GIRL: Post for you. (Gives MANAGING EDITOR a letter and EXITS.)

MANAGING EDITOR: (opens the letter) Look - and now this! Listen.

(Reads.) "Relatives, friends and acquaintances of the theatre artists who have voluntarily imprisoned themselves in the Slavia Theatre; we appeal to you. We ask you to find the earliest and most effective possible solution to this critical situation, which has united all devoted servants of the art of theatre. We wish to express our deep concern for the health and well-being of these isolated people, and in particular of their young children, who are sharing with them the hardships of this tragic situation. We join the legitimate protest of these our friends against the hitherto intolerable conditions in the Slavia Theatre, which have provoked such a radical and extreme reply from our friends, who, once again, deserve our warm devotion, support, and admiration. We thank you." (MANAGING EDITOR raises his eyes.)

REPORTER 2: Do these types think we're a social welfare institution, or what? Fuck them, let them write to "Tell Me Your Troubles."

REPORTER 1: "Tell Me Your Troubles" will send them her cure for diarrhoea: Gunner Jaring.

VESNA: Jaring's too busy with El Sadat and Golda, poor sod.

SECRETARY: But Golda's "indisposed" today...
VESNA: Let's send her a remedy by telex: mix half vinegar, half water, add an oak-leaf, a plantain, a beech-twig and boil... then set aside. Drink while still warm.

MANAGING EDITOR: (answering the telephone) Yes, Janez... Fantastic... So everything's arranged... Bravo, bravo! I'll send you Križnik... Križnik! He's writing a front page spread. I'll hold him back, don't worry. So you two arrange things then... You're coming in about half an hour... It doesn't matter at all, he'll wait for you here... "Bye Bye Birdie!"

ERRAND GIRL: (ENTERS) Double whiskey for the gentleman and three coffees.

MANAGING EDITOR: (to ERRAND GIRL) Whiskey for everyone, I'm paying.

ALL: Hooray! Hooray!

MANAGING EDITOR: A bottle of whiskey and soda, with ice. You have something too, Ančka. On me.

ERRAND GIRL: Thank you, sir. (EXITS.)

MANAGING EDITOR: I should probably let you know what we're celebrating. We are celebrating a modest professional victory. The Slavia affair has started to go our way. What I'm about to tell you must remain strictly confidential internal information. On behalf of the parliamentary commission set up to solve the theatre crisis, Inspector Levstik has been conducting secret negotiations with the break-away group in the Slavia. One of the results of the negotiations is that the people inside the theatre have agreed to receive an investigative delegation, but with the stipulation that there won't be more than two investigators and that they must not be
experts on theatre. And lastly, they've arranged for Inspector Levstik and our reporter, Zoran Kriznik, to be allowed into the theatre tonight.

VESNA: No!

REPORTER 1: Christ!

SECRETARY: That's incredible...

MANAGING EDITOR: Yes. I don't have to spell out what that means to us. Kriznik will be the only reporter on the inside, on the spot, finding out everything there is to be found out.

REPORTER 2: But why Kriznik?

PRODUCTION EDITOR: Because he doesn't hang around everything in skirts like you.

REPORTER 2: Shut it, frustrated sod!

VESNA: Big mouth!

MANAGING EDITOR: It's been decided that way, so that's all there is to it. Discussion over.

ERRAND GIRL: (ENTERS) Whiskey, ice, soda. (EXITS.)

MANAGING EDITOR: Now, chin up. Your health! Cheers!

ALL: Cheers!

BELIČ: (ENTERS) Hello. Celebrating?

MANAGING EDITOR: Oh, Peter, hello! Take a seat. Will you have a glass?

BELIČ: No thanks, dear, not just now. I'd like to have a word with you.

MANAGING EDITOR: Yes?

BELIČ: Nothing much, dear. I heard Kriznik is going to the Slavia and I...

MANAGING EDITOR: What? Who told you that? Where did you find that out?
BELIČ: Easy. My brother's on the commission.

MANAGING EDITOR: Good Lord, you've no idea what a shock you just gave me! It was only confirmed less than 15 minutes ago, and here you are already...

VESNA: I know what he's here for - Kriznik'll have to take along roses!

BELIČ: Not roses, a letter.

MANAGING EDITOR: What letter? Who for?

BELIČ: Ida's locked up in there with them, you know. I'm worried sick, I really am. I want to persuade her to come out. She's pregnant.

I've already told you.

MANAGING EDITOR: Are you going to get married then?

BELIČ: She won't. She only wants the baby.

PRODUCTION EDITOR: And you think you're going to sort all that out with just a letter, brother?

SECRETARY: Roses. Vesna's right, roses would do the trick!

VESNA: Lily of the valley brings good luck - that's why they give them to people going on a journey.

BELIČ: I've written a letter, here it is. Here.

REPORTER 1: Everybody knows that lily of the valley means innocence.

You can't send those to her, unless it's her birthday. Then your bouquet would be saying: my love is pure and sincere.

BELIČ: I'm already losing my mind. I've at least got to get her out, at least that. I think everything would be easier then, somehow. I don't really know what they're up to in there, but I'm sure it's not for her. She's just got to come out as soon as possible!
MANAGER: Križnik'll take your letter for you, if you think it'll help.

REPORTER 2: Carnations have got the most meanings: red - burning, pure love, pink - stay with me always, yellow - you don't even deserve my contempt.

BELIČ: Go on, give me a small glass then, but not too much. It goes straight to my head. (REPORTER 1 pours him one.)

SECRETARY: I think you ought to be tougher with her. It seems to me you're too soft, Peter. She needs a firmer hand.

BELIČ: Firm, soft, it's all the same. She's as stubborn as a mule. But she's really sensitive too. I'm scared she'll suddenly commit suicide.

REPORTER 1: Oh no, not that, mate. Actresses are mares. You can't make them feel a thing.

BELIČ: No, listen, you don't know her. This director's screwed her up completely. Stuffed her full of fixations.

PRODUCTION EDITOR: (making a vulgar gesture) He's stuffed her, eh? (They all laugh, except BELIČ.)

BELIČ: You don't understand what I'm saying. I mean, she talks a lot. She talks about happiness, freedom, life and death. She cries buckets, drinks like a fish, does yoga. In short, she's somehow gone to pieces. I mean, in pieces inside. That's why I said I wouldn't be surprised if she didn't suddenly slash her wrists or gulp down half a litre of vitriol. That's no life for a pregnant woman, is it?...

REPORTER 2: Of course not, mate, that's a dog's life! (Grrs.)

MANAGING EDITOR: You're exaggerating, Peter. Don't worry so much. They'll come crawling out of their hole, you can bet your boots. Then all of
a sudden everything will be O.K.

BELIČ: (anxiously) Ida's a child! She believes in the transmigration of souls, if that tells you anything.

SECRETARY: What?

BELIČ: It goes like this: the soul is immortal, and it moves through time to the sound of divine music, in the forms of a man, a squirrel, a robin, a lizard, a butterfly, an elephant, a worm, a boar, and an ape.

VESNA: No!

REPORTER 1: Oh, go on - she doesn't really think that!

BELIČ: Yes!

MANAGING EDITOR: That's interesting. It means she's sure of a ready-made after-life.

PRODUCTION EDITOR: That's another story then!

BELIČ: Of course. The most that could happen to her is that she'd turn into a flower or a spider. That's the problem. It really bothers me that I can't explain it to you properly.

REPORTED 2: I understand, I understand.

PRODUCTION EDITOR: Of course, you do have a point. What would you do with a spider?

BELIČ: I've had such a hard time with her lately, I've been pretty scared sometimes, I can tell you. When she looks at me with those mad eyes and her voice starts this weird trembling, and she begins to sing ever so softly about the sweetest secrets in the world, my insides freeze. It's a pretty uncomfortable feeling I can tell you.

REPORTER 1: I can believe it.

VESNA: Why don't you leave her in peace? Let her go her own way?
BELIČ: I can't live without her. It's terrible. I really go through it. Sometimes I have this dream that I'm locked up in an Olympic swimming pool with a syphilitic ape, surrounded by a two-hundred-metre-high wall made of living rock. With a pregnant syphilitic ape in heat!

PRODUCTION EDITOR: Ida?

BELIČ: No. A real, hairy ape.

PRODUCTION EDITOR: Oh dear, that's awful. Do you want me to ask Freud what that means?

BELIČ: It's horrible, horrible.

REPORTER 1: What else do you dream?

BELIČ: That I'm Frankenstein, and I'm skiing the giant slalom on Black Mountain. (They all laugh uncontrollably.)

REPORTER 1: You - and the giant slalom!

BELIČ: Me - and the giant slalom, yes...

MANAGING EDITOR: (still laughing - they are all in an exceedingly good mood) Come on, let's you and me go down to the bar for another round, Peter. Then we'll run over to see Križnik and give him your letter.

(They exit amid laughter. For some time the place remains empty, then KRIŽNIK enters, a letter in his hand. He is tired. Perhaps somewhat nervous. Suddenly, he makes a decision. With a premeditated gesture, he tears the envelope and opens the letter.)

KRIŽNIK: (reads) "Dear Ida. Cockroaches are dangerous, they carry all kinds of disease and often contaminate food with bacteria. The
best way of getting rid of them is to take a small brush and smear a piretrum-based insecticide around their hiding-places. If you've got a lot of cockroaches in your flat, or even if you've only come across their eggs, stop up all the cracks and holes in the floor and walls immediately. Then the method is the same as for wood-worm.

Yours, Peter."

(KRIŽNIK remains seated for a while in silence.)

LEVSTIK: (ENTERS) Cheers.

KRIŽNIK: Cheers. (Pause.) When are we pushing off?

LEVSTIK: We'll meet on the other side of the street at five past midnight, by the side entrance of the Slavia Theatre.

KRIŽNIK: Right. Don't forget your police revolver, Inspector.

(For a while the men remain silent, looking each other in the eyes.)
ACT TWO

The setting is the stage of the Slavia theatre. Apart from the props used by the members of the company in their exercises, the stage is completely bare. There are no flats, no curtains, no furniture. The travellers are lowered and visible from the stalls. Horizontal and vertical lighting pipes and instruments are also visible. Subsequent movement of them during the performance should be done freely, whether by stage-hands or lighting assistants.

In this act, like the first, I have consciously avoided specifying how the mise-en-scène or the ground-plan should be arranged. The placing of the action, in terms of "downstage", "upstage", "left", "right", "off", "on" and so on, I leave almost entirely to the director. The prescribed entrances and exits are significant points in the stage-manager's plot, and these should be taken into account, although I still allow for the possibility of changes.

The use of simultaneous action should be understood as intended to convey both literal reality and artistic method. In this respect, my requirements follow, for understandable reasons, a systematic line. How to highlight in turn particular moments of intensity in the parallel actions, how to unfold the basic ideas, how to coordinate simultaneity and interdependence of action, how to organize tempo, rhythm and atmosphere - these, of course, are up to the ensemble. Sitting at a desk it is impossible
to prescribe exactly when a certain word should be spoken or a certain action performed. The answers to questions of optimal content and formal time-structure will doubtless unfold during the production work itself. The patterns of movements and utterances of the groups of actors rehearsing under DULAR and PALČIČ have not been selected haphazardly. However, it is also quite likely that during intensive rehearsal more effective solutions may well come to light. Permit me to ask, then, that all eventual improvisations on a given theme, or even radical variations or substitutes from which other consequences might follow, take into account the basic content and formal structure from which the suggestions in the script arise.

The director, DULAR, is rehearsing with a group of Actors. KRIŽNIK is interviewing PALČIČ.

Somewhere in the stage space is a bucket filled with a blood-red liquid. DULAR is standing near the bucket holding a huge white towel. One by one, the bare-armed Actors break away from the group. Each steps forward in his own way and dips his finger, hand, or both hands into the bucket. Some wash themselves long and carefully, others only touch the colour. The ceremony continues with the Actors wiping their hands on DULAR's towel, and then forming a circle. Having done so, they first tread lightly on the spot. Then, starting slowly but with increasing speed, they begin to rotate on their axes. This rotation is accompanied by a rotation of the whole circle. The result is a spiralling movement at a fixed distance from the centre of the
circle. At the same time, the Actors strictly maintain the distances between each other. DULAR controls the tempo and rhythm of the spinning by singing the vowel "o" in various ways. His singing becomes increasingly hypnotic, more and more ecstatic. He moves to the inside of the circle, runs from actor to actor, shouts at them, instructs or corrects them, touches them, spins around them, whispers indistinct words. Sometimes he places himself in the centre and assumes god-like poses, in which the blood-red towel is prominent. At these moments his calculated singing becomes an almost inarticulate yelling. Slowly but surely, his trance affects the Actors: cries of "o" break out here and there, some prolonged, suffering, orgiastic, others short and painful as though striving to attain a certain state, as when approaching the ecstasy and satisfaction of separation and oblivion. Still others of the Actors' cries suggest fury, cursing, rebellion.

The spinning reaches its climax. One by one, the actors can no longer maintain it. They totter and fall inside the circle, raise themselves convulsively then drop onto their elbows and knees, their bodies shaken, trembling and moaning. DULAR throws himself into the arms of the last Actor to remain standing. They embrace vigorously, triumphantly. Winding themselves in the blood-red towel, they sway to a simple rhythm, elatedly singing their high "o". At last, even this Actor slips to the floor, the group quietens, the murmuring converges into a single note. Then DULAR says: "The first path, the Resting-place, Darkness."
Then he adds: "Sssssssssssssssssssssssssssssssssssssssss". The group picks this up.

DULAR kneels down, and points at individuals and smaller groups with different rhythmic patterns of his "sss". At the same time, he crawls towards a large red leather or plastic bag lying on the floor. It is long and wide enough for all ten Actors to crawl inside, which they do. This gigantic sausage then proceeds to cry out, roll, twist, undulate, and so on. Finally, it comes to rest and is quiet.

KRIŽNIK: How long have you closed the theatre for?

PALČIČ: An indefinite period.

KRIŽNIK: Why have you done this?

PALČIČ: It's a reorganisational crisis.

KRIŽNIK: What about? What has caused the crisis?

PALČIČ: Crisis. - The point in the progress of a disease when a change takes place which is decisive of recovery or death. The word is of Greek origin. The theatre is becoming exhausted, dull. Spiritual and bodily disintegration is setting in. The theatre is playing with people, with time, energy, and material. A short-circuit, you understand?

KRIŽNIK: For example?

PALČIČ: For example: in underwater drilling, oil erupts. Thousands of cubic metres of oil escape. The vaporous constituents evaporate, oil emulsifies in the water and water in the oil. The first eruption disperses into the sea, the following one doesn't mix with the water. It won't burn. It's thick and black as pitch, and floats on the
water in a thick layer. Certain aerobic bacteria slowly oxidize this sediment into CO$_2$ and water. Problem, crisis, emergency—call it what you like—it is necessary to take action, to find a remedy!

KRIZNIK: Remedy? How?

PALCIĆ: First and foremost we are curing the actor, who is the root, the stem, the chlorophyl of the theatre. We are adapting him to the new conditions of his environment, in the air, in the water, on the land. We are trying to effect a certain change in his way of comprehending, in the structure of his perception, in the system of his reactions.

KRIZNIK: And what are your methods for doing this?

PALCIĆ: Oh, all sorts! Tricks. The word is of English origin: A crafty or fraudulent device; an artifice to deceive, a stratagem, a ruse, a wile; gipsy crafts, sorcery, the devil's work—hee-hee-hee.

KRIZNIK: The theatre is closed, the public is becoming alarmed. There are no performances. A lot of people are outraged. The public is asking, what in fact are you doing in this closed theatre?

PALCIĆ: There are no performances and there will be none, do you understand? There will be none. Even if the public explodes, there won't be.

DULAR: (he has seemed so transported by his business with the towel that we are not a little surprised when he starts to speak, which he does without looking round, quietly, devoutly.) Performance is a lie, a nauseating lie. I want to get rid of this overwhelming shudder that fills me with the feeling of the already-known, the déjá-vu. I need
a dark, resounding, empty auditorium with actors completely to myself. Once again, Once again you'll be on the inside, quite close. When you're close, you tear at the roots. You begin to float. You might whisper something, you might look someone in the eyes, you might ask someone for something. Together we lick, bite, hold out pieces of silence, shouts, words, movements. If you are inside, everything is so transparent, willing, soft, elastic. Close. Closer. Closest. Magic. Is what you are dreaming the trail to the unknown, the new inside you, as yet unexpressed outside yourself? Rinse pain and delight from your mouth and thoughts. While murmuring MANTRAS, turn to the unburdened layer of the perpetually mobile. Performance is a lie. A disgusting lie.

(KRIŽNIK would have perhaps like to ask him something, but he is afraid. Everything continues as though nothing had happened.)

KRIŽNIK: (to PALČIĆ) The closing of this theatre has become a burning cultural and political issue. Everybody is writing, talking, debating about it. It's even been on the daily agenda of parliament.

PALČIĆ: All too often, parliament neglects factor G. Dr. Spearman discovered this, it's used in psychotechnique. Factor G is measured in the treatment of symbols: of numbers, spatial performances, language. I recommend factor G.

KRIŽNIK: Is it true that you keep the actors locked up day and night?

PALČIĆ: Locked up? Well, that's an inappropriate way of putting it. We have already gained positive results by changing over to a boarding-school system. Latin origin: an institution providing pupils with school and board.
KRIZNIK: What right have you to kick the majority of the company out onto the street? By whose authority did you do this?

PALČIČ: We don't need them. They are well-known specimens of all too familiar models. Experiments fail on them. The brakes go on. Signs of the forbidden are in evidence. The location of anxiety, pressure and isolation is at last defined. When hot and cold water are poured on them, when they are given massage and group breathing exercises, "brainstorming", touching and other methods of stimulation, they fail completely to be inspired. Let them act on TV. Let them squeeze their pimples to make themselves beautiful. I've got my own boys, my own girls, I've got my own selection. You know what I mean? It comes from the Latin word, it means: choice, alternative, option.

KRIZNIK: What are you doing with these boys and girls?

PALČIČ: I'm preparing them for the ascension. I'm trying to pull them away from the fatal influence of the earth's gravitation.

KRIZNIK: What does that mean? Specifically.

PALČIČ: It means we lack air. We're suffocating in carbon monoxide and dioxide, in sulphur dioxide, in dangerous aerosols. In a very short time the pollution of the atmosphere by dangerous gases, ozonation, and solid particles, will reach a critical degree of concentration. I'm opting out.

KRIZNIK: What connection do these ideas of yours have with the theatre? I mean, wouldn't it be better to take a walk over to the Science Institute and discuss it all with them?

PALČIČ: Air pollution is the theatre's problem too.

(DULAR laughs derisively. KRIZNIK notices this.)
KRIZNIK: When you dismissed the conservative elements in the theatre, you, Mr. Dular and Dr. Černigoj were a united front. Is that solidarity still strong?

PALČIČ: Absolutely, on the surface. But actually our views on essential points are moving apart. I am a scientist and a theorist, Dular is a mystic and a practitioner.

KRIZNIC: Mr. Palčič, I have the feeling you haven't quite got both feet on the ground.

PALČIČ: That's true, sometimes I do take off. (He starts whistling.)

(The STAGE-DOORKEEPER rushes on to the stage, pushing LEVSTIK roughly and triumphantly ahead of him. He holds the Inspector in a jiu-jitsu grip, twisting his right arm behind his back and holding his head back with a firm grip on the Inspector's luxuriant hair. LEVSTIK obligingly submits, though you couldn't really say he likes this degrading position, for with a wide variety of cries, groans and the like he allows us easily to imagine his dissatisfaction with the course of events. The DOCTOR runs over. DULAR and PALČIČ are confused and embarrassed; the DOCTOR is also somewhat startled. In short, they all behave with a strange indecision.)

DOORKEEPER: I caught him trying to break into the Doctor's office. That's not nice. It's very unbecoming, ain't it? He was sneaking about with a torch and a picklock in his hand.

LEVSTIK: Let go of me. Let me... (A cry of pain.)

PALČIČ: My God, Roman, you're using force again.
DOCTOR: There's no need, Roman... (To LEVSTIK.) Excuse this... I'm really sorry, really... very sorry.

KRIZNIK: (to PALCIC) Please tell this gentleman once more to let go of Inspector Levstik's arm.

(LEVSTIK groans.)

DOORKEEPER: (furiously, stubbornly) He wanted to break in! Gospel truth! That I don't allow! I've never liked burglars, never, all my life I've hated them.

DULAR: Roman, the Inspector is our guest, we invited him...

(LEVSTIK shrieks.)

DOORKEEPER: The police didn't ought to be breaking into strange examining-rooms - especially not them!

DOCTOR: Roman, please.

KRIZNIK: Why do you have to beg this thick-headed orang-utang? Order him, for Christ's sake! Order him, do you hear?

DOORKEEPER: (to KRIZNIK) You watch what you're saying, mate, right?

I'm the stage-doorkeeper here. Does that mean anything to you? A nobody waster like you ain't going to call me "orang-utang". Just so we're clear. Cops or no cops, we've got to have order! I've got my duties, I'm not denying that. But I've got my rights too, and I know exactly what I'm doing and why I'm doing it. I'm the one who maintains law and order in this building, not the police! That's what we agreed, ain't it, Doctor?

KRIZNIK: I can't imagine a better guardian. Really magnificent!

(LEVSTIK yells.)

DOORKEEPER: Shut your gob.
PALČIČ: (ashamedly) Roman gives us a lot of help, believe me. He's a capable fellow. Inspector, you were too hasty. Perhaps you really shouldn't have done that. It wasn't fair... to... just like that, unescorted...

DULAR: (trying to smooth over the unpleasantness) A mistake, a misunderstanding, that's all. It's all quite harmless—ridiculous, you could say—but more than anything, simply absurd. Roman is feeling a little irritated and restless from his unceasing vigilance. He's been over-exerting himself. Please don't misunderstand him. He just worries too much and works too hard, that's all...

DOCTOR: He's nervous, nervous. That's quite clear. I'll give him some tablets, prescribe a little rest, and then you'll see how pleasant he can be. You won't believe it: he'll be quite another man. Inspector, you must try to understand him. He's a splendid young man...

(LEVSTIK lets out a groan.)

DOORKEEPER: (not understanding the suggestions, highly excited) He wanted to break into your examining-room, Doctor! I'm not supposed to allow that, am I! I don't like snoops, Doctor! This cop's working for the devil! Mr. Palčič! Mr. Dular! He's a dangerous man! There's still time to do something—otherwise it'll be too late!

PALČIČ: (nervously) Have you gone out of your mind, Roman? Please, pull yourself together.

DULAR: (also nervous) Doctor, do something, for God's sake do something!

(LEVSTIK yells.)
DOCTOR: (in an intimidating whisper, like hypnosis) Roman, your arms are heavy, your arms are tired... Roman...

KRIZNIK: What's the matter with you? Have you all gone off your heads? Are you scared of him? Are you really not going to tell him to let go of this man?

DOORKEEPER: (Listening to no-one, becoming increasingly excited) Evil spirits have a sixth sense, Doctor! They have! That's why he was there!

PALCIC: Let go of the Inspector at once.

DULAR: Roman, pull yourself together. Roman, let go of him!

DOCTOR: (hypnotising again) Your fingers are soft and woolly. Your fingers are greasy, Roman. Hot. Hot. Your fingers are melting, Roman...

DOORKEEPER: (defends himself hysterically) He'd find everything. This fiend would dig everything out, chuck it about! He'd find everything! Leave him to me, before it's too late! I'll do him in! Me! You won't have to get your hands dirty! I'll do it all...

(LEVSTIK screams. DULAR and PALCIC rush at the STAGE-DOORKEEPER, stop his mouth, bring him to the ground, and drag him out. KRIZNIK rushes to LEVSTIK and helps him to his feet. The DOCTOR runs off to the control box and seems to talk into a microphone, for we hear his strong, calm voice over the loudspeakers: "Attention, attention! Liquidate immediately...." Perhaps the DOCTOR becomes aware that the onstage loudspeakers are switched on, for there is a sudden crackle, followed by silence. The group of Actors, who have long since crawled out of the bag and
have been following the situation with growing interest, are at this moment seized with panic. They rise. Their startled murmuring suddenly becomes a loud, frightened protest, threatened and dislocated.)

ACTORS: No! Not the stock! Don't let it be liquidated! No! No! We must save it! Let's help! Everyone help! We're all coming. Ooooooooh. Not that! My God. My God! It's ours. Ours! We won't allow it! We won't allow it!

(Shrieking hysterically, the group runs off to PALČIČ and DULAR; only IDA remains crouching to one side. She approaches KRIŽNIK and LEVSTIK, who is just coming to his senses. Then she stops. She is trembling all over, greatly agitated. She really is pregnant.)

LEVSTIK: (excusing himself) He jumped me from behind! He crept up on me, I didn't even hear him. Son of a bitch! I'll expose this whole gang. I'll teach them a lesson they'll never forget! I'll punch them in the kidneys. I'll put a rocket up them, I swear. I'll make mincemeat of them! Swine! (He seems about to cry.) He really offended me, you know, Križnik. I feel really humiliated! I ache all over.

KRIŽNIK: What did you want to go and break into the examining-room for?

LEVSTIK: That's just it! I didn't want anything at all. I was wandering about looking the place over. Just taking a little stroll.

IDA: (sings) I'm a little bee. My home's a little hive.

I buzz through the air and I sing my little song
I float in the breeze, fall asleep on a flower,
And my dear little son will be so brave and strong.

(Sobs.) He won't! He won't be brave and strong! He won't...
(Weeps and sings at the same time.) Instead of milk, I'll give him
honey, while I suck the pollen.... (Bursts out crying.)

LEVSTIK: Calm yourself, miss. Tell me what's troubling you. You can trust
me. Go on, don't be afraid. There's nothing to be afraid of.

IDA: (frightened, whispering feverishly) The Doctor's mad, Inspector.
I can't bear it any longer. He's possessed! He does dangerous
experiments on us. It's not because of me... if there wasn't this
child in here I wouldn't worry at all... I'm afraid for the child...
If I think... (Bursts out crying.)

KRIZNIK: Ida! Ida!

LEVSTIK: (coldly, unmoved) What is the Doctor doing?

IDA: He's treating me with cobalt rays. I'm afraid it will harm the baby...
The baby's sensitive... It makes me go cold. I don't feel well, you
see. I often feel sick, something's pressing me... Some of them have
to smoke... Not me! I won't! It makes me throw up! He gives us
tablets too, but they're not the right ones, you see, the baby needs
calcium and vitamins... I feel like something's sinking, peeling off
inside me, it's bursting, Inspector, really--cracking, I can hear it
ripping, and my insides itch... I want to go back, get out, to my
mother, 'cos I can't be here, I really can't. I haven't even got any
nappies, I haven't even got clean nappies! The baby needs sunshine
and care. I want to get out! But they won't let me, I know they
won't! I know it!
LEVSTIK: That's strange. Who won't let you?

(At that moment the DOCTOR comes onto the stage. He has been listening the whole time to IDA's outburst.)

DOCTOR: (completely calm, severe) Don't believe a word she says. It's disgraceful! The girl's quite simply inventing it. Your mind's wandering, Ida.

LEVSTIK: I'm not sure I believe you, Doctor. I don't quite know what to think. What about that guardian of law and order of yours? Was his mind just wandering when he attacked and damn near massacred me? Why did he do that? Was that pack of artistes just inventing things when they were screaming about some kind of stock? Are you saying it's theirs and they won't allow it? Was that person over the loudspeaker just ranting when he ordered some kind of liquidation? Liquidation of what? Was that your voice, perhaps? What got these people so excited? What have you got hidden in your examining-room? Nothing? Or is it perhaps something very important indeed? Was my mind just wandering yesterday, Doctor, when I was listening, quite skeptically, to peculiar anonymous phone calls trying to convince me there were certain very unsavoury aspects to your activities here? So... Is Miss Ida simply raving too? Very nice. You're going to have quite a bit to answer for, Doctor.

DOCTOR: Anonymous calls! That's pathetic. You can go into my examining-room right now if you want. You won't find a thing.

LEVSTIK: Yes, I can well imagine!

DOCTOR: What is it you actually want, Inspector? What are you accusing me of? What do you expect to discover in my examining-room? A stockpile
of drugs? You're mistaken. Everything I do, I do by hypnosis. Please take the key to my examining-room. Inspect everything!

LEVSTIK: And what are you doing, then? What are you really engaged in here? Why hypnosis? What kind of hypnosis?

DOCTOR: By means of hypnosis, I can put people into certain psycho-physiological states—states of illness, you might say—that serve the artistic requirements of the director and the dramaturge. I'm not working for myself, Inspector. I'm working entirely under supervision. These are not independent experiments!

LEVSTIK: And what, might I ask, are the "requirements" of Messrs. Dular and Palčić?

DOCTOR: They are various. Generally, they fall into the category inducing states of disintegration. Sensations of confusion, decomposition, possession.

LEVSTIK: What? Why that kind of thing? Can't you work without that? That's dangerous—harmful! It's criminal! You're a doctor! Your work is to maintain health. A sound mind in a sound body. Doctors are supposed to cure, not make people ill!

DOCTOR: They're only imaginary patients, Inspector. Illness under hypnosis is just an illusion. (Snaps his fingers.) You do that, it vanishes. Evaporates. Completely safe, no harmful effects.

LEVSTIK: But Ida is pregnant! Your treatment of her is cruel and irresponsible. You'll answer for it, remember that!

DOCTOR: Don't be stupid, nothing will come of it. I've told you, it's all nothing but fiction. Ida's baby's a fiction too. She's artificially swollen. Hysteric pregnancy. Dular is experimenting according to
the Polanski-Albee method. Conception under hypnosis. It's my baby. Dular's and mine. I can flush it out whenever I feel like it.

IDA: You son of a bitch! You filthy shit! Liar! Liar! Aaagh! Aaagh! Bastard. Quack. Big nobody! No, I won't abort! This is my baby, my flesh and blood! I can feel it tickling me, sucking, kicking! I feel ill, I'm going to throw up. I won't let you... Oh... Oh...

(Runs off.) Oh! Oh!

DOCTOR: That's all part of her role. She's acting, simply acting. Rehearsing, practising, call it what you like. She has these labour pains every day. It's her profession. Her daily bread. You understand me?

KRIZNIK: I know Ida's really pregnant! She lay in bed with a man and got pregnant! What Albee! What Polanski! What method! You can fool the others, but you can't fool me! Fraud!

DOCTOR: When did you last see Ida? I mean - before you came to the theatre.

KRIZNIK: About a month ago.

DOCTOR: Now tell me. Did you notice any visible external sign of pregnancy? Any whatsoever?

KRIZNIK: (uncertainly) I don't remember.

DOCTOR: You didn't. You didn't, I assure you! And you know why? No, you don't. Because the stomach that looks like the stomach of a pregnant woman in her ninth month swelled up in less than a week! Artificially inflated. And tomorrow it will already have disappeared! (Snaps his fingers.) Like that.

LEVSTIK: We'll see, we'll see.

KRIZNIK: You're lying.
LEVSTIK: (to KRIZNIK) I don't understand a damned thing.

(DULAR and PALCIČ return with the Actors. The Actors are singing: we have already heard them somewhat before this. They are singing a children's song.)

ACTORS: (ecstatically)

It's good to forgive,
if you don't, badness stays in your heart,

isn't it so? isn't it so?
isn't it so? isn't it so?

It's good to relax,
if you don't, anger rises to your throat,

isn't it so? isn't it so?

PALCIČ: Prepare them, Doctor. We've got to get on with the rehearsal.

We've already wasted enough bloody time. We can't afford to lose a minute more.

DOCTOR: (beckons the Actors, once again all hypnotist) Come on, boys.

Slowly. Step softly. Light legs. Light, I said.

(The Actors close in tightly around him like rugby or hockey players before a match, embracing, heads bowed low, rocking and murmuring indistinct words.)

DULAR: (to PALCIČ; protesting sharply) I haven't finished my exercises yet. You'll have to wait.

PALCIČ: Not likely. Don't you start again.

DULAR: I'm going to rehearse to the end now. Now.

PALCIČ: Dular, don't make problems.

DULAR: But I will!

PALCIČ: You won't. (Moves towards DULAR.)
DULAR: Back with your cloven hooves!

DOORKEEPER: (ENTERS. Authoritatively, in a loud voice forbidding contra-
diction) Palčič is going to work now. It's his turn. He's in more

(They all stiffen. The STAGE-DOORKEEPER exits ceremoniously.
LEVSTIK suddenly dashes after him with a wild yell. PALČIČ
claps his hands. The Actors arrange themselves in two groups,
a smaller group of two, the rest in a larger one.)

PALČIČ: Project O M Z A, key one, keyhole alfa. Let's repeat the one and
the same situation, please...

(PALČIČ starts chirping like a bird. His speech is mixed with
bird-song, whistling and similar sounds. These voices range
from eagles to sparrows, titmice to parrots - he can use
anything. PALČIČ gives the keywords very obviously to the
smaller and larger groups of Actors, between whom a dialogue of
sounds slowly develops. PALČIČ breaks this off by chirping,
then gives directions and suggestions, corrects them, questions
them, agrees or disagrees with them, and so on. In short, apart
from isolated words from PALČIČ in English, such as: "No, not
like that - Once more - Repeat that, please - Yes, yes, excellent,
remember that - Well, you see, you can do it - That'll be a
solution - That, keep that" and so on, the whole conversation is
made up of the previously described bird language. Basically,
the flow of dialogue is shaped by the smaller groups of Actors
trying to establish "rational" communication with the larger.
The problem is that the smaller group is not in control of the
language it is using, it is almost a "foreign language" to them. Consequently, both Actors make enormous efforts to discover an articulatory pattern that will correspond to the meaning structure of their "communication". The larger group of Actors does not, of course, "understand" the performance of the smaller. This can have the most varied psychological effects, such as fear, mistrust, hatred, disgust, contempt, and so on. However, it is evident to us that the intentions of the smaller group are completely friendly. The smaller group is in difficulty. Their message sounds something like this in translation: "Hi, gang. We're your friends. We're experiencing some difficulty. We'd like to have a talk with you".

DULAR: (pulls KRIŽNIK aside, offended) Let's sit over here.

KRIŽNIK: (struck) What on earth's that? What's that all about?

DULAR: (ironically) Mr. Palčić has written a play that deals with the efforts of two cosmonauts to decode the secret language of the inhabitants of some alien planet, and to establish a dialogue with their civilization.

KRIŽNIK: I see. What's the play about? What are they discussing?

DULAR: (still strongly ironic) You're asking too much. I'm just as much an outsider as you are. The play's not finished yet. Palčić writes it during rehearsal. In Lincos.

KRIŽNIK: Pardon me? What did you say?

DULAR: Lincos: lingua cosmica.

KRIŽNIK: I see.
PALČIČ: We're going to have to research the code. You need to help more. You're not daring enough. You don't take enough risks. Your concentration is slacking, it's drying up, shrinking instead of opening. That's why the patterns are repeating themselves. Inspiration is not technique. A conscious effort of the mind is needed to reach beyond the already attained, the already known. More development, more active participation. Let's start again. Group A, the key-word.

(The dialogue flows in Lincos; PALČIČ interrupts them vehemently. He is not satisfied. He shouts at the Actors as if they were dogs.)

PALČIČ: The mechanical problem of discovering a mutually acceptable communication channel cannot be separated from the problem of the sentence. What you're doing is gossip, blah blah, shit. Cattle could be trained faster than you. Apes would show more intelligence. Each code has its own meaning, you have to negotiate the meaning, keep that in mind. Let's start again. Let's try key 7-group A, keyhole gamma-group B.

(PALČIČ begins his energetic chirping, Groups A and B resume and, following his technique, a lively conversation begins. PALČIČ is excited in the extreme. "HELP US. HELP US!" Chirping. "YES, LIKE THAT!" Chirping. "OUR AIR IS BAD, BAD!" Chirping. "WE'RE SUCCFACATING, THERE ISN'T ENOUGH OF IT!" Excited chirping. "WE'RE SUCCFACATING, SUCCFACATING!" A concert of excited chirping. "Let's go, group B is reaching a conclusion! LET'S HELP! Through all channels. Let's go, let's go, everyone." Ghastly, europhic, general chirping.)
KRIZNIK: (to DULAR) I don't understand. What does this Palčić want?

What's this air he's talking about?

DULAR: Palčić is a well-known specialist on UFO's. He has connections with intelligent beings in the universe. His theory is that because of the steadily increasing air pollution we're all going to have to move to another world.

KRIZNIK: Where to?

DULAR: He maintains he has scientifically gathered data on a civilization that is already prepared to take us.

KRIZNIK: Impossible! What are you talking about! Why is he writing a play, then? Why doesn't he just move? Why doesn't he just fly away?

DULAR: Apparently there's still something missing, something he hasn't worked out yet. The exercises he's doing with the actors are supposed to discover the missing link in his Lincos. Poor bloody lunatic.

PALČIČ: (on the edge of hysteria) All our languages are closed systems, just like those constructions we practised at the beginning: signalling smells and radiation, the Braille abc, Morse code. Within the framework of these sign systems we crucially lack the fundamental stereotype of a primitive logos of microcosmic dimension. Log 2 and pi are just our little provincial devices - we can hardly expect to reach a real understanding through them.

(PALČIČ chirps long and passionately, demonstrating his thesis.
A proper debate develops. The Actors become excited, inspired, angry.)

DULAR: (extremely agitated. He jumps to his feet and, like a child excluded from the game, dances jealously and bitterly around PALČIČ's

(PALČIČ and his Actors neither see nor hear him. They are chirping.)

DULAR: This idiot thinks he's going to succeed. But I'm going to blow my top sooner or later. He's eating away at my actors. He's ruining them. (He mimics their chirping.) He's knocking down everything I'm so carefully building up. All my effort for nothing. I keep having to start again and work against the damage he's done. I'm always back where I started. I never get anywhere! You fart! You'll never succeed, Palčić! You least of all!

(The DOCTOR appears.)

DOCTOR: Dular. Quiet. We agreed you wouldn't interfere with each other. Am I right?

DULAR: Do you hear him, Doctor? Do you hear him? He'll ruin everything. He cribs, he steals, he destroys. If the mantra isn't intoned correctly it's no good. He'll have everything in bits with this bloody mathematics of his. It's impossible to bring a sleeping power to life without worship and purification.

DOCTOR: Dular!

(There is a sharp, whistling, piercing tone. It rises and falls, a venomous little electronic thing resembling the squealing of an incorrectly tuned loudspeaker system. The sound can barely be heard. You can't be sure if anyone present can hear it. The sound keeps disappearing and reappearing until
the arrival of the CARETAKER.)

PALČIČ: Codes Help, Discussion and Change are still unconnected. The number of converging hypotheses is too small. Far too small. Release all the brakes! To the limit. To the limit! Let's go! They can hear us. More! More! They understand us!

(A high-spirited clamour is set off, with every possible variation on the theme.)

KRIŽNIK: What's a mantra, Doctor?

DOCTOR: A mantra is a particular kind of yoga based on the effect of a word or sound. The word yoga comes from the Sanskrit root yuy: connect, unite, enslave. The key to the mantra and its magic power is similar to the ancient Greek conception of the theory of music. If it is a known basic tone of concrete substance, shape or body, we can disintegrate that body or substance by its application.

DULAR: (more and more exiled) It's dangerous, Doctor! Stop him. This dilettante is playing with fire. (He suddenly dashes into the centre of the group and, evidently in a trance, ecstatically sings a secret song.)

Palas aron ozinomas
Baske bano tudan donas
Geheamel cla orlay
Berec he pantaras tay.

(The effect of the text and melody is fantastic. Some of the Actors freeze to the spot and immediately join in with DULAR's singing. Quick as a flash two groups form. One under DULAR's leadership, the other under PALČIČ's. One lot sing, the others chirp. The competition for victory is fanatical, passionate, but
brief. More and more Actors join DULAR. Finally they are all singing the secret, thrilling, magical melody. All but PALČIČ, who is still chirping. At last, even he gives up and succumbs. The piercing electronic sound reaches forte, then cuts out.)

PALČIČ: (defeated, he hisses through his teeth in exhausted rage) Swine. Fucking swine.

(All is momentarily silent, then we hear cries of despair and pain. The CARETAKER enters wildly, shoving the powerless LEVSTIK in front of him. He has restrained him exactly as the STAGE-DOORKEEPER did.)

CARETAKER: (a dangerous imbecile: his retarded laugh is quite something) Look what I found. I brought him along to show you, before I beat him up.

(LEVSTIK yells, the CARETAKER grimaces.)


DULAR: (tactfully) Hector, please explain to me what you've got against the Inspector. What's he done to you to make you treat him so roughly?

CARETAKER: (with his special laugh) He was ferreting around in the furnace room. He's sniffed through the whole basement. He was fucking about around the installations - pipes, machines, everything. So I gave him such a kick up the arse my foot went numb. (LEVSTIK shrieks.) I've been slaving to death here, working out my system for five years now, without a word of a lie, and this dummy comes along and starts screwing it all up. (He grimaces, LEVSTIK groans.) I'll murder him.

DULAR: You won't be doing anything like that right now.

KRIZNIK: Do something, Mr. Dular. You can see Inspector Levstik's suffering.
DULAR: Easy, Križnik, easy. All's well that ends well. Patience is a divine balm. Hector is an exceptionally intelligent man. His intelligence borders on genius.

PALČIČ: He's a dangerous lunatic. An incompetent second-class caretaker.

DULAR: He's a self-taught genius. An inventor. In five years he's improved the central heating system so much it can be used simultaneously as a furnace and a refrigerator. You just press a button and it's hotter than hell. Then it goes down to a temperature of minus seven Celsius. Doesn't it, Hector? Just right for hibernating.

CARETAKER: (touched, he grimaces) That's how it is, Mr. Dular, I can't deny it. (LEVSTIK moans.)

KRIŽNIK: Perhaps, then, I might just ask this genius to pardon Inspector Levstik. He'll certainly understand that the Inspector will reform. He's a good man at heart.

(The CARETAKER is seized by a fit of laughter.)

DULAR: Of course he'll understand. Hector, if you let the Inspector go, you may test the functioning of the freezing system.

CARETAKER: (releases LEVSTIK; his face lights up) Oh, can I really? Can I put it on maximum?

DULAR: Yes. On maximum. But only for five minutes, just enough for the gentlemen to see what you can do. All right? Then you must turn the heat back on.

CARETAKER: (with a bound he is on his knees in front of DULAR, gratefully kissing and slobbering over his hand) Thank you, Sir! Thank you very much!

DULAR: You're welcome, Hector.
CARETAKER: Thank you very much, thank you very much! (EXITS, happy as a lark.)

LEVSTIK: (roars in such an authoritative voice that the Actors obey at once) Line up! Everyone! Straighten up! Silence! Eyes right. Keep still!

(Without exception, KRIŽNIK included, they all stand immobile as candles, beautifully even in perfect military formation.)

LEVSTIK: STILL! That's right. Just don't move an eyelid! I'll be back in five minutes. Maybe sooner, maybe later. (EXITS.)

(For some time the line stands as if turned to stone, then they slowly begin to show signs of exceptional discomfort. An almost imperceptible trembling begins. They are trembling with cold. We must remember that the Caretaker has turned on his famous - 7°C. hibernation system. The chattering of teeth, twitching of heads and limbs, shivering, and light stepping increase. Finally, they even begin to let out the typical sounds that accompany suffering from the cold. Then they start talking, whispering.)

ACTORS: Ooo... brr... aaaaah... It's cold... Freezing... Ooh, that Hector,... We'll freeze this time, that's for sure... I can't feel my toes any more... Move... Move... (And so on.)

DULAR: (somewhat unexpectedly) Let's go with STAGE two, REST home. Slowly. Two steps forward.

(The Actors, all but one, follow his directions.)

DULAR: Turn to the right.

(The Actors turn ninety degrees, so that they are parallel in profile to the footlights.)
DULAR: Move away from the centre, forwards or backwards.

(The Actors space themselves a good step apart.)


(The Actors take up the humming Mmmmmmmmmmm softly. At the same time they begin to lean forwards, their bodies completely straight. Very slowly, like jumpers doing ski-jumps. The last in line reaches such an angle of inclination that he falls forwards against the person in front of him. A chain reaction is set off and the whole row collapses like a row of dominoes. They are all on the floor. Immobile as a pile of building material, they hum their Mmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmm.)

(At this moment three parallel actions begin.

1. PALČIČ tears himself away from his chilled shivering. With this action, something resembling inspiration is triggered. An unseen power forces him around the space in every direction, his eyes looking upwards. We feel exactly as though he were communicating with someone or something. He makes efforts to comprehend; he glares; now and then his efforts are rewarded - it is clear to us that he "understands". Naturally, he is twittering, whistling, and chirping the whole time. This is Lincos in action.

2. DULAR selects one of the actors from the group humming on the floor, and the two of them immediately begin to build a "house" from the "frozen" bodies of their friends, carrying them as if they were beams. They set up four corners, then raise up four more "beams" on parallel sides, and the "house" is ready. They
do all this with strict, rational, economically measured
movements, but at the same time there is a sort of ritual in
their behaviour. They admire the "house" they have built.
Then, indicating that they are cold, they decide to go into
the house to get warm. As they sit inside, they hear the wind
outside. The wind, growing stronger, becomes a gale, a storm
with thunder and lightning. All this is produced vocally by
the Actors built into the "house", as well as by DULAR and
his friend. The "house" trembles, totters and finally collapses
on top of the two builders, who remain lying under the "ruins".
(3. KRIŽNIK and the Actor who remained in line next to him can
no longer bear the severe cold and start jumping about to warm
themselves up. While they are jumping, KRIŽNIK quite casually,
without any preamble, starts interviewing this Actor. Their
conversation runs as follows.)

KRIŽNIK: Would you accept an Oscar?

ACTOR: I shit on all the Oscar jury members, and on Oscar's grave.

KRIŽNIK: So you wouldn't.

ACTOR: That's right.

KRIŽNIK: You've already been awarded the Prešeren prize, haven't you -
and accepted that too?

ACTOR: I wasn't conscious of what I was doing. I might have been drunk,
I might have had a cold arse - or I could have been hypnotised.

KRIŽNIK: Do you regret it, then?

ACTOR: My face is still stained with tears. It makes me feel ill.

KRIŽNIK: How are your relations with your colleagues?
ACTOR: Fucking awful. Non-existent. They're a bunch of stooges. Know what I mean?

KRćšNIK: What are your views on the problem of being a small nation?

ACTOR: I think it should be even smaller. Each village a nation unto itself. The smaller the nation, the fewer the problems.

KRćšNIK: Have you got any problems?

ACTOR: Oh yes. None.

KRćšNIK: Does that bother you?

ACTOR: Eternally. You've no idea how I suffer.

KRćšNIK: Really?

ACTOR: What, you don't believe me? Do you want me to bite myself in the cock to prove it?

KRćšNIK: You couldn't do that.

ACTOR: Oh yes I could. Yoga makes you a contortionist.

KRćšNIK: Who do you spend your time with?

ACTOR: The dead.

KRćšNIK: Dead people?

ACTOR: And with birds, and machines, and people too. And with gods.

KRćšNIK: What do the gods say?

ACTOR: Gods don't say anything, they're gods. Gods have complexes.

KRćšNIK: And you haven't?

ACTOR: That's exactly the difference between them and me.

KRćšNIK: You're in love with death, aren't you?

ACTOR: What's that supposed to mean? Have you ever fucked death?

KRćšNIK: Not me. What's it like?

ACTOR: Terrible. She comes but I don't.
KRIZNIK: Anything else in that connection?

ACTOR: Yes. In that connection, everything's pointless.

KRIZNIK: Did you sleep with her?

ACTOR: No, I fucked her, I didn't fall asleep.

KRIZNIK: Do you consider yourself immortal?

ACTOR: I know if I am, but I'm not telling you.

KRIZNIK: Please tell me.

ACTOR: How are you asking?

KRIZNIK: Nicely.

ACTOR: All right then. I'm not immortal. Because I'm still dead. I'm a spirit. Don't you believe me?

KRIZNIK: How did you manage that?

ACTOR: By recognising it, of course.

KRIZNIK: When did you notice?

ACTOR: A few days ago.

KRIZNIK: Has anything changed at all since then?

ACTOR: Oh, sure!

KRIZNIK: What?

ACTOR: I wouldn't know how to explain. I'm not allowed to say. Not another word.

KRIZNIK: How do you explain to yourself the fact that you look as though you're alive?

ACTOR: Explain it yourself. That's your problem, not mine.

KRIZNIK: Fuck your mother.

ACTOR: Fuck your two mothers. And your two stepmothers, too.

(They stop jumping, and stare hostilely at each other.)
KRIZNIK: A man only has one mother!

ACTOR: Wrong. A man has any number of mothers. Any number.

LEVSTIK: (roaring like an angry lion, highly irritated) What's this? Didn't I tell you to remain where you were? Is this a whore-house, or what?

(They all stiffen.)

LEVSTIK: It's impossible to conduct a proper investigation under such conditions. Why are all the doors locked? Why have the windows been barricaded? Why doesn't the telephone work? I'll soon teach you. Scum! I'm going to lock up the whole lot of you, then you'll each be singing your own little song. Not in a choir. Each one by himself! I've got a system too, don't worry. A bit of beating-up, a touch of hunger and thirst, a little light in the eyes, a bit of insomnia and extortion - and then a selection. Criminals - to prison, lunatics - to the madhouse. Someone had better run and repair the telephone right now. I need reinforcements. I want arrest warrants.

(At that moment the STAGE-DOORKEEPER and the CARETAKER wheel a giant perambulator onto the stage. In it are some eight almost identical Children between one and four years of age. When LEVSTIK catches sight of his mortal enemies, his anger evaporates. He smiles with embarrassment, and moves timidly out of their way!)

CARETAKER: The rounds.

DOORKEEPER: The rounds. Parents, play with your children.

(The Actors come to life delightedly. Shouting happily, they dash over to the Children and pick them up out of the pram. All kinds of different games begin: on the floor, in the pram,
using every possible corner. The Children chatter, cry, laugh. The small groups of parents and individuals are happy with the little ones. They carry them in their arms, play with them, stare at them in silence, nurse them, take them for walks, caress them, and so on. Here, let the Actors improvise the wording that goes with or refers to what the children say. Let the children's text be spoken by the parents, in other words by the Actors only, or have it recorded on tape.

(LEVSTIK walks around in a confused state. He examines things, plays with the children and their parents. Obviously soft-hearted, he is moved and fascinated by the children. DULAR calls IDA over to one side. She has crept in who knows when and has been watching the parents' games with envy. Now she bursts into a hysterical, painful weeping. DULAR whispers to her, trying with gestures to get her to understand something. PALČIĆ tears himself away in disgust from these base tribal rituals and EXITS. From time to time we hear him over the loudspeaker, letting out some fortissimo effect in Lincos. The STAGE-DOORKEEPER and the CARETAKER look like happy, understanding park wardens. They stroll about among the groups, smiling and supervising the games. The actor KOŠČAK is unhappy and alone. KRIŽNIK goes over to him and draws him aside. During the first half of the visit the following run parallel: the tape of the Children, KRIŽNIK's dialogue with KOŠČAK, IDA's weeping and DULAR's silent comforting. During the second half, the Children's games continue, together with DULAR's and IDA's exercise, and PALČIĆ's loudspeaker effects.)
PARALLEL ACTIONS, DIALOGUES:

CHILD 1: Like dis, we swing, don't we?

CHILD 2: You haven't got Leggo and things like that on the boat.

CHILD 3: Pah, poof, it's going to fall down.

CHILD 4: Quick, a shark. It's by your leggy, it'll bite you.

CHILD 5: I'm on a chair, so it won't.

CHILD 6: We've got a lovely house, haven't we?

CHILD 7: Breda, want have car?

CHILD 8: It can't eat me, see, it can't.

CHILD 1: I'll put dis ober, I'll be right back.

CHILD 2: Where are the sweets, I said.

CHILD 3: You've got another two, and the paper, too.

CHILD 4: Here they are, sweets, see.

CHILD 5: Open, this, on the end, yes, this way.

CHILD 6: Yes, see what I'm opening it with.

CHILD 7: Turn it round, then it will.

CHILD 8: It won't.

CHILD 1: Tell her give us a knife.

CHILD 2: No, a nail-file.

CHILD 3: Yeah, with this.

CHILD 4: Auntie Lada, open it.

CHILD 5: I don't think Auntie Vida will let you.

CHILD 6: What about this knife, try this.

CHILD 7: It's doing it.

CHILD 8: It won't, it won't.

CHILD 1: Now let me do it.
CHILD 2: Me too.
CHILD 3: Hey, don't rock me, look, Breda.
CHILD 4: I'll show you I can move my finger.
CHILD 5: Do bum bribe.
CHILD 6: Bare.
CHILD 7: Bare biscuit.
CHILD 8: Quick, let's get on the boat, hurry up.
CHILD 1: Got a lubbly blanket, and toys, habn't we?
CHILD 2: I remembered something, Breda.
CHILD 3: Are you in the house?
CHILD 4: I remember something, Breda.
CHILD 5: Peep-bo, peep-bo.
CHILD 6: Wait.
CHILD 7: This way, and like this.
CHILD 8: Lalala lalala.
CHILD 1: Merman - oh - oooh.
CHILD 2: Mummy.
CHILD 5: I'll be even better.
CHILD 6: That's what hedgehogs are like. Wo-oo-If.
CHILD 7: That was just a joke, wolf.
CHILD 8: You'll see now.
CHILD 1: Sasha's in the bafwoom, he's coming right back.
CHILD 2: O-oooolh.
CHILD 3: Look, he's yelling.
CHILD 4: O-ooooh.
CHILD 5: I'm frightened.
CHILD 6: Gimme the house.
CHILD 7: No, I thought of it first.
CHILD 8: E-eeeee. E-eeeee.
CHILD 1: Now, see!
CHILD 2: We're both wolves, aren't we, Sasha?
CHILD 3: No, tigers.
CHILD 4: O-oooooh.
CHILD 5: O-oooooh.
CHILD 6: Go away, I'm going to eat you up.
CHILD 7: A-aaaah, I don't like you, you... A-aaaah.
CHILD 8: No, I'm not getting down.
CHILD 1: No, you know what, we do dis, we lib togedder.
CHILD 2: Yes.
CHILD 3: O-oooooh.
CHILD 4: No, we're friends now.
CHILD 5: Oh, this one's carrying the house.
CHILD 6: This one too.
CHILD 7: I'm not doing it right this way.
CHILD 8: You don't see me.
CHILD 1: You don't eat me up, I go in your, my house.
CHILD 2: Over there. I'm not eating you up. We're friends.
CHILD 3: We're friends, aren't we?
CHILD 4: We'll attack other people.
CHILD 5: Come on, you be an elephant.

CHILD 6: Yes, I have my house and you have yours.

CHILD 7: I'm taking these plates down, I'll put them on the piano, like that, I'm going to build a house for me.

CHILD 8: You have to get chairs, then.

CHILD 1: Yes. I got some.

CHILD 2: Sasha.

CHILD 3: The house has to be all closed if you want to be an elephant, like that, so I can't see anyone. I show you, like that, no, come out, I show you.

CHILD 4: No, I'm going to sit down, you cover me.

CHILD 5: But you have to be half in the house, only your legs or your bottom. Otherwise you won't be an elephant.

CHILD 6: Yes I will. Yes I will.

CHILD 7: Like this, yes, see, I have to cover your head so they won't see you, and your cardigan. There you are, see.

CHILD 8: You can't see me, you can't see me.

CHILD 1: You peep out a bit.

CHILD 2: Put your bottom down.

CHILD 3: Go on, you be an elephant, we play nicely.

CHILD 4: More Leggo pieces there.

CHILD 5: No, I don't want to.

CHILD 6: Ring-a-ring-a-roses.

CHILD 7: What a lovely kingdom I've got.

CHILD 8: Which one do you want?

CHILD 1: Yours.
CHILD 2: No, it's too low for you.

CHILD 3: That's too low for me, see, I'm going to look at books, see, I have to look at books.

CHILD 4: Are we hedgehogs, yes?

CHILD 5: You won't go home, then, all right, we'll play then.

CHILD 6: If Auntie Lada moves the cushion, we'll hide under the piano.

CHILD 7: Or we can hang on the light.

CHILD 8: Eeeeeeeeee. It's going fast like a burning jet-plane, and it falls on the rocks, and everyone's dead.

CHILD 1: Hunts and hunts and hunts and hunts and hunts and hunts.

CHILD 2: I'm a little ball, a little stripey ball, a ball, a ball.

CHILD 3: That's good, have it on a string, shall I?

(KRIŽNIK goes over to the actor - we'll call him KOŠČAK - who feels out of place in the midst of the children's chatter. He is more uninterested than embarrassed, more limp, empty and dull than strange. KRIŽNIK addresses him.)

KRIŽNIK: You haven't any children, have you?

KOŠČAK: No, I; well... no...

KRIŽNIK: Are you married?

KOŠČAK: That... no, no... what...

KRIŽNIK: Don't you like children?

KOŠČAK: I don't know... I couldn't... I...

KRIŽNIK: Have you ever been in love?

KOŠČAK: What?... Why? I don't work... like that...

KRIŽNIK: Do you like your parents, sisters, brothers? Your friends?

KOŠČAK: Listen, man... I don't know... I haven't got anyone... I can't, I... that... like...
KRIZNIK: What interests you in life, then? (KOŠČAK is silent; he stammers a little.) Acting? The theatre? Why are you an actor?

KOŠČAK: It's hard to say... listen... probably... little things... not worth mentioning... I'm not telling you! What's it to you?

KRIZNIK: How do you reconcile the profession of acting with such indifference, caring so little?

KOŠČAK: I really don't know... I don't know, I'm telling you, I... I'm, well, I...

KRIZNIK: An actor has to be at the centre of life. An actor should love, have ideals.

KOŠČAK: I don't know that either... maybe... I, I... a man never, I haven't... er... er...

KRIZNIK: What kind of parts do you like best?

KOŠČAK: That's difficult... I... sometimes... if I were... so difficult, I don't know...

KRIZNIK: Do you follow the professional literature, watch T.V., watch your colleagues on film or in other theatres?

KOŠČAK: Of course... I... well, ... er... I don't know... sometimes, man, I can't, of course that... er... er...

KRIZNIK: What made you decide to become an actor?

KOŠČAK: I... well, I did... I wouldn't... a long time ago... well... er... er, since I was little... er... er... well, I...

KRIZNIK: What meaning does the theatre have for you in your life?

KOŠČAK: Er... er... everything... it's... it's... so... so... I don't know, you know. I know I wouldn't... er... be able... without it, I don't know why... it's... (Bursts out crying weeping buckets full.)
KRIŽNIK: It's all right. Thanks. Thanks very much. It'll get better, won't it? (Pats him on the shoulder.) Of course. It'll get better. You just press on, hang in there.

KOŠČAK: (between sobs) Will you... er... publish... a picture too?

KRIŽNIK: Yes, a picture too. And a picture. Don't worry.

(DULAR has finally managed to comfort IDA. We don't know what they've been talking about, it's just obvious that she feels somewhat better. Now that she is in a better mood she is ready for the rehearsal. DULAR begins playing the scene to her, earnestly and unrelentingly.)

DULAR: I'm falling. I'M FALLING. I'm faa-lliiiiiiing. The first "ah" is a deep inhalation, almost an inarticulated cry. Let's go!

IDA: Ah...

DULAR: I said inhalation, inspiration, get it? Not exhalation! You draw breath into yourself. Let's go...

IDA: A-a-ah...

DULAR: Once, you articulate just once with one spasm. Careful. You're in front of a precipice and you suddenly realise you've stepped out into nothingness. A cry follows: Ah...

IDA: Ah, -ah, -ah.

DULAR: I want the impulse. I want the reaction to a step into nothingness. What comes after that step into nothingness? A fear of falling, a fear of being injured, of a terrible blow? How do you physically feel the void, the first reaction? Surprise? Horror? Is that in the very first reaction? Have you had time for any kind of discovery at all? Is the first "ah" conscious or instinctive?
IDA: Ah-ah-ah.


IDA: Ah-ah-ah-ah-ah-ah-ah-ah-ah-ah...

DULAR: More, more. Don't gargle! Clean! More!

IDA: Ah-ah-ah-ah-ah-ah-ah-ah-

DULAR: Good, good, good...

IDA: Ah-ah-ah.

DULAR: And now put together: F-a...

IDA: F-a, fa-a, f-a.

DULAR: Add the second part of the falling -iiiiiiii...

IDA: F-a-lliiiiiiiiing.

DULAR: A long vowel, a long "i", long, get me? Exhalation, out... a cry, without hope, unrepeatable, the last cry of your existence, a fall from the fifth floor into an abyss, into nothingness, to your death, you know that, you know, now you already know, now you finally realise, now it's quite apparent... -iiiiiiii... 

IDA: Iiiiiiiiiiiiiiiii. Iiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiii... 

DULAR: More, more, longer. Now combine the first, second and last. Let's go, more, more, good... It grows slowly - No, an inconclusive intonation to the vowel... yes, yes, yes!

IDA: F-a ...lliiiiiiiiiiing. F-a ...lliiiiiiiiiiiiing.

DULAR: Watch one thing: that 'ng' is the end, the end, a brief, modest effacement. There isn't time, nothing remains, 'ng' is the cut-off, darkness, a brief sound, as brief as possible, you switch off, expand: 'ng'!

IDA: F-a ...lliiiiiiiiiiiiing. F-a ...lliiiiiiiiiiiiiiing.

IDA: F-a ...lliiiiiiiiiiiiing!

(IDA falls. At the same moment a gun goes off. Very loudly. One of the Actors collapses to the floor, dead. Everyone is astounded, stops what he is doing. PALČić runs forward and says: "Someone's up there!" They all look up, not daring to breathe.)

KNEZ: (somewhere in the flies, off) This is Knez. Can you hear me? The hour of vengeance is at hand. It's time to settle accounts! I'm going to kill every last one of you! Everyone! But not all together. One by one. Slowly. So you'll suffer. I want you to suffer. (He laughs like a phantom.) Who's next? Who wants to follow him? Eh?

(At that moment a general panic breaks out. Cries of: "Save the children! Get the children out of the way! Take the children somewhere safe! and so on. The Actors and others help put the Children into the pram. The STAGE-DOORKEEPER and the CARETAKER quickly wheel the Children out.)

KNEZ: I've got you in my sights. All of you! I can choose whoever I want. Anyone want to volunteer? Come on. Let's have someone! Courage.

(The gun goes off again, an Actress collapses to the floor. KOSČAK rushes over to the dead body and bursts into tears. They all huddle against the walls, trip over, fall down, try to find protection, cover themselves with things, crawl under platforms and so on. In the midst of the worst panic, DULAR's song is suddenly heard. To the panic-stricken people on the
stage, the mysterious syllables represent the only possibility of getting rid of their distress, fear, and danger. They all join in, singing enthusiastically, with faith and hope, like a spell, a protection, an attempt to enchant the criminal in the flies.)

ALL: Bagati lace bachabé
Lama cahi achababé
Karrellyos
Lamac lamec Bachalyas
Cabahagy Sabayos
Baryolas
Lagoz atha Cabayolas
Samahac et Famiolas
Harrahya

(KNEZ laughs. Satanically. Scornfully. The gun goes off once more. Another Actor falls to the ground, dead.)
ACT THREE

Night. A strange silence. Everything is asleep. The stage is empty. Only KRIZNIK is to be seen sitting, occupied with his tape-recorder. He presses buttons, knocks it, gives it a shake. He listens to it. Nothing. The apparatus is mute.

The DOCTOR ENTERS. He is tired and sleepy. He yawns, without putting his hand to his mouth.

DOCTOR: Aren't you sleeping?
KRIZNIK: No.

(A short pause.)

DOCTOR: It'll soon be morning, won't it?
KRIZNIK: (looking at his watch) I don't know. My watch has stopped.

DOCTOR: No-one ever knows what time it is here. (Smiles to himself.)
Well, you get used to it. Anyway, it makes no difference. Does it?

(A short pause.)
KRIZNIK: I don't know.

DOCTOR: Still, I sometimes wish I might live to see morning. (A short pause.) We need the morning to be morning. Don't we? Morning is meant for waking, waking is meant to be wakeful, wakefulness is meant for activity, and being active in this world is everything we do, every kind of action. Like a ball unwinding, the thread runs, winds, collects in knots. We knit, knit, knit some more, weave, but what will come of it all we have no idea. Each morning is a morning, it's just a waking. That's why it shouldn't be unusual. It mustn't be
a surprise or a shock, a derailing. It's really a time of transition from the blessedness of dreaming, from the gentle torpor of the limbs, muscles, thoughts, from that delightful self-sufficiency, inactivity, safety within one's own body, to a time of lying in wait, a time of foreignness. The time of wakefulness is the time of illness. The time of servitude. When we leave behind the safe warm shelter of our nocturnal convalescent-homes, our excursions into freedom, and return to our day-time working consciousness, at first we only remember what we are with difficulty. We grope to discover our story, to remember our trials. In our state of wakefulness we recognise something that has without doubt been deposited here, has accumulated, been put away, something which nothing in this wakeful state can efface, wipe out, or deny, something which will have to be resumed this morning - continued, driven onward to the point of exhaustion. Where to? How? Why? (A short pause.) Yes. Mornings are terrible things. We can be glad we won't have to wake up this morning. Can't we?

KRIŽNIK: (presses the buttons on his tape-recorder) I was recording you while you were talking.

DOCTOR: And?

KRIŽNIK: Nothing. Empty. There's no recording.

DOCTOR: (smiles to himself) Perhaps the batteries have run out. (Yawns.)

Or maybe it's something else. (EXITS.)

KRIŽNIK: (to himself) The batteries couldn't have run out yet. It's not possible. They were new only the other day... Well, I'm in a nice mess now. All those things I taped, down the drain... every last one of them. (Turns off the microphone, puts it away, then presses the button again.)
KRIZNIK'S VOICE:

The batteries couldn't have run out yet. It's not possible. They were new only the other day... Well, I'm in a nice mess now. All those things I taped, down the drain... every last one of them.

(KRIZNIK turns off the tape-recorder; he seems deep in thought. For some time everything is quiet. Then ENTER DULAR, in pyjamas. He is holding a fan. He is hot, so he is cooling himself.)

DULAR: Hot, eh?

KRIZNIK: Fairly.

DULAR: Close, too.

KRIZNIK: Yes, close.

DULAR: I told Hector to get the heating going so at least we wouldn't be cold. Like an oven, isn't it? It's running off me. My birth-mark is smarting. There's a stifling dizziness in my sticky skull, it's palpitating in straight lines - just about a centimetre above my forehead - it's ticking diabolically, so that my scalp, sticky with salt, rises and falls, jerking and quivering. My breath follows the heartbeat. From time to time my nostrils take in such a damned strong scent of vine branches that for a moment the inner walls as well as the hairs moisten with delight, then immediately droop and wrinkle sadly. The heat burns into my flesh like steam. It stews it, relaxes it, it spins a web, then stirs it up in delicate, imperceptible, sweetly releasing spasms. I narrow one eye, widen the other pupil, force it to strain painfully so the capillaries burst and tiny sparks shoot out in swift lines, golden blue, hot stars
vanishing in smoky vapours, ripping the sky above my eyes into a zig-zag. If you've got your eyes so terribly wide open, it suddenly seems like you've got no head, no cover, no roof. Your flesh becomes unreal, your bones evaporate, you are breathed by light, your body dismembers, you disperse into space, infinity receives you, your blood suddenly becomes air, your brains are steam, you're swimming in rays, merely seeing without knowing, a light outside a home, a beam without a sun. (Pausing for a moment, he looks at KRIŽNIK.)

We're friends, aren't we?

KRIŽNIK: We are, yes.

DULAR: There, you see. (A short pause.) And we'll become even better friends, won't we? (KRIŽNIK says nothing.) We will, we will. Think about it. We're a bit hot. Apart from that everything's all right, isn't it? We're doing quite O.K... (KRIŽNIK says nothing.) You know, I like you. Do you believe that? More than the Inspector, though he's not a bad fellow. But once a policeman, always a policeman. Isn't that right?

(KRIŽNIK remains silent. ENTER PALČIČ, whistling Gershwin's "Rhapsody in Blue". PALČIČ whistles, DULAR fans himself, KRIŽNIK presses the buttons on his tape-recorder.)

PALČIČ: (not in the least agitated, his reproaches strangely mild) You used your putrefaction to get the upper hand over me, didn't you, Dular. You'd like to destroy me with rot and stench, because you know I'm allergic to the pollution of the air, earth, and water. I admit it, I'm suffocating. But I'll survive. I haven't got much farther to go. You just carry on. Umbrellas, sweets, detergents,
nappies, money, buttons, letters, documents, medicines, all kinds of rags, helter-skelter, everything all over the place, books in boxes along with dirty towels and sanitary towels, snotty handkerchiefs, bloody, dirty sheets stained with food remains, handbags, cigarette butts, syringes, greasy pieces of paper, wilted vegetables, unwashed dishes, gobs of spittle, broken objects, mouldy cheese, torn bags of salt, piss, soured wine, everything remains lying wherever it falls. It all piles up, one thing on top of another, going mouldy, disintegrating, stinking - anything still healthy or edible is poisoned by the disgusting stench. Everything peels off, sloughs away, decomposes. Your people, too. And you. But you won't get me. You know you won't get me, don't you?

(DULAR cools himself with the fan, silent; PALČIČ starts whistling Gershwin's melody. ENTER LEVSTIK. He is naked to the waist. Under his left armpit is slung a leather holster with a revolver. In his hands he carries his jacket, shirt, and tie. He looks tired out. He stares hostilely at DULAR and PALČIČ. They move slowly away, each in his own direction.)

KRIZNIK: They're softening me up for something. Marinading me, the bastards.

LEVSTIK: I just can't catch this Knez. He's already shot more than half of them. Have you noticed the way they all die? Like insects. Not a sound, not a murmur... Silently. Just go out. Pouf.

KRIZNIK: We've got to get out. Out of this building.

(LEVSTIK is silent.)

KRIZNIK: Isn't there any way of escaping?
(LEVSTIK shakes his head.)

KRIZNIK: How long have we been here? How many hours? They could have come for us, they could come and see what's happening, take an interest... How can they be so indifferent? They can't abandon us both... They're the ones who sent us.

LEVSTIK: (whispering) One of these people here brought Knez into the building. It was all set up. Someone opened the door for him and let him in. This shooting was pre-arranged. Ordered, get me? Knez didn't break in, they invited him. You and I didn't break in either, they invited us too. You and I were pre-arranged in just the same way. Everything here is arranged, get it?

KRIZNIK: What do you mean, arranged? Arranged with who?

LEVSTIK: With your superiors and with mine. With our colleagues, our friends, our co-workers. With the top police, the top press people. The ones who sent us.

KRIZNIK: What possible connection can there be between them and these maniacs here?

LEVSTIK: There must be some connection. Something - I don't know.

KRIZNIK: (stares at LEVSTIK in alarm) But why you and me in particular? What do they want from us? What are they planning to do with us?

LEVSTIK: I don't know. (Shrugs his shoulders.) Maybe they're already doing it... You said before that they're working on you. "Marinading me, the bastards," you said. What did you mean by that?

KRIZNIK: Nothing particular... It's a kind of feeling, you know, something, almost... hanging in the air. Nothing tangible.
LEVSTIK: A kind of feeling, yes. They've got us in a marinade. Even before we arrived they had us in a marinade, but especially afterwards. It's so obvious: all these farces with Ida, with the Doctor, the children, Hector, Knez - one and the same marinade.

KRIZNIK: (takes some cigarettes out of his pocket and rummages in his clothes, looking for a light) Got any matches? (LEVSTIK throws him a box; KRIZNIK uses about five matches, none of which light.) They're damp. Practically soaking.

LEVSTIK: I told you, we're in a marinade. We're being pickled. In hot piss. (Stands up, stretches, and starts to laugh.) Don't you worry. I'm going to take a shower. (Gathers his things and EXITS.)

(KNEZ enters immediately afterwards. He moves quietly with cat-like steps. In his hands he holds a carbine with a telescopic sight. For a while he quietly watches KRIZNIK, who is fussing over the tape-recorder. Then KNEZ coughs. KRIZNIK turns round.)

KNEZ: Hello.

KRIZNIK: (hesitates a little) Hello.

KNEZ: How are you?

KRIZNIK: Thanks. So-so...

KNEZ: So-so?

KRIZNIK: Yes, so-so.

KNEZ: How are you managing the smell of the corpses?

KRIZNIK: (feeling somewhat cornered) I can't smell anything much...

(Smells, sniffs.) Perhaps I've got a bit of a cold...
KNEZ: (suddenly sharp) Stop babbling! (Pause.) The smell gets on my nerves, I'll have you know. But you like it. Carrion! (A little more friendly.) They told me to come here. No instructions. I do what I like. I do what I must. I work as long as there is work to do. They want it that way, you understand? (KRIŽNIK is silent.) Is that clear?

KRIŽNIK: Clear, clear.

KNEZ: Fucking bastards! They're experimenting, you know? They're playing with me, and with themselves. I know they're watching me. They've got me under surveillance, following my every move, impatient, waiting for the moment when I reach a decision, step over the line. When will it happen? Where is the line? That makes me uneasy. Will I step across it or not?

KRIŽNIK: (timidly) What's your objective, then?

(KNEZ shrugs his shoulders; KRIŽNIK takes heart and continues.)

KRIŽNIK: I mean: what do you really want, then?

KNEZ: My objective isn't my own in the everyday sense of the word. What's actually mine is only a miserably small part of that purpose of mine. The aim in that miserably small amount is scarcely to be guessed at. The unpeeling of that guess occurs all by itself, the husks shed by the events intertwining with the revelation of their purpose. Sooner or later, these purposes of mine concoct themselves into a bloody story. That's how I find myself here, for instance, in this place - in some idiotic, comical, violent symmetry, under duress from some kind of guards, doctors, sorcerers, murderers, bouncers, bought souls, well-trained and pampered lackeys, sons of bitches and mutes
in slippers and rags, whose dying is something sadly quiet and completely a matter of course. All of a sudden I know that what I want to do is exactly what these men must not permit: I want to cross the line. They've guessed at what I want. Maybe they even know, hope, that I won't succeed, and are afraid of me. Fear mixed with hope, and then this wonderful, cautious, colourless hostility. They don't like me, just as they don't like hailstones - the ones as big as eggs that batter the young crops to the ground and destroy the harvest. They're waiting for me, the bastards. It does me good when I feel them spying on me, little ants crawling through their spinal marrow and travelling their armpits, secretly and oh so lightly tickling them in their suitably fat white backsides - and they grind their correctly fitted false teeth and feel their bones knotted all over, and their charred, empty, cavernous eyesockets - with something quietly, too quietly, flowing out of them. It makes me feel good that they are in that spellbound state, with all that saliva in their mouths. (Speaking differently.) It's only exercises, all of this, you know, Križnik. Nothing but acting exercises.

(KRIŽNIK is silent.)

KNEZ: The performance is yet to come. Then I'll be watching and you'll be taking part.

KRIŽNIK: (carefully) What will I be playing, if I might ask...?

KNEZ: Oh, it'll be something... Nothing stylised, don't worry. Some kind of tumour in the head... Some kind of dead body... Something will turn up. If not, we'll write it down on your skin to make it easy for you. You won't find it difficult.
KRIŽNIK: When do you expect the performance to start, approximately?

KNEZ: Practise, man, practise. Practise makes a master. Everything else will take care of itself... (Cocks the carbine, makes a sign with his hand, EXITS.)

(At that moment something happens to KRIŽNIK. Something stings him. Something gently shakes him. He changes in some way. He is no longer the same as he was just a moment before: he presses on his tape-recorder. A mad, coarse, expansive, vital, animal-like, subterranean voice is heard. KRIŽNIK rises to his feet and starts singing and dancing.)

KRIŽNIK: Everything's spinning in wild dizziness
in the infernal midday heat of the sun
trees scents birds singing smoke corpses sirens
I open wide the little door I turn off the safety switch
I bend I start up into the air I hear thunder I see lightning
I drop the crank handle I knot the string I press the button
I turn round I collide I bend I leap to one side
I jump off I rush past the crest of the mountain
I kick the cover I move the plate I climb over the fence
and I let gooooooooo

and I let gooooooooooooooo
and I let gooooooooooooooooo into the depths
yes into the depths
yes into the deeeeeeeeeeeeeepths
yes.
(KRIZNIK sits down exhausted. He turns off his tape-recorder. ENTER IDA. Without her stomach. She is Ophelia-like, except her version is without flowers and singing.)

IDA: (strokes KRIZNIK's hair) My milk's pressing. (KRIZNIK is silent.) Do you want to try it? I'll nurse you if you're thirsty.

KRIZNIK: Have you had the baby? What was it, a boy or a girl?

IDA: It's really pressing me. It hurts, you know.

KRIZNIK: Boy or girl?

IDA: Milk coagulates in this heat if no-one drinks it... I've got as much as you want...

KRIZNIK: Is the baby... healthy?

IDA: Milk, as much as you want. It's streaming out, I'm all wet... look. Go on, touch. Oooo, I'm like a cow where that's concerned. (She pronounces her r's incorrectly, divides the words into syllables, stresses them incorrectly, plays with them.) Milk cow. Mil-ker. A real-ly heal-thy dai-ry cow. Look how full that is, how hard it is, taut, well-stuffed, isn't it? Not everyone has them like this, do they? (laughs.) Touch if you want, go on, go ahead. A walking dairy. (giggles.) When I was little, Mummy once said to me: You're dribbling like a cow. (She plays.) Ida not a cow, is she? Ida not a cow, is she?

KRIZNIK: (perhaps somewhat sentimentally) Ida not a cow. She's not.

IDA: Want a kissy? Just one kissy.

(They look at each other for a while, then KRIZNIK calmly, slowly, and gently kisses IDA, without touching her with his hands. It also happens that IDA sits in KRIZNIK's arms, pulls
out her breast from her dress and offers it to him. KRIŽNIK
touches it with his lips. It all takes place as if in church.
As if it were the host. IDA starts singing "gospel" blues.)

IDA: Mother pure, love me,
mother innocent, love me,
mother wonderful, love me,
I give you my voice, I give you my voice...

Fount of happiness, disperse,
seat of knowledge, descend,
healer of the sick, empty yourself,
I give you my voice, I give you my voice...

(The sucking is at an end. IDA now speaks more composedly,
coolly, containedly.)

IDA: I know a place we could run to. You'll like it. A roof shaped like
a fan, white, glittering. It looks like the velvety corpses of exotic
birds, whose warm stomachs bring life out of fragile egg-shells.
Under the skin of this roof ripples a perfect pattern of noises,
movements, meanings. There are places with shining surfaces and
rounded edges, with sparkling, fresh, new objects; furrowed, shorn,
gleaming people, barely audible velvet words, sharp loquacious looks.
In that familiar homeliness swim the debaucheries of cold passion,
the delights of comfort, pitilessly protected by the thin blade and
greasy throat of blow-pipes. There are flowers in crystal vases,
too, carefully tended finger-nails, ice in glasses, huge pictures on
the walls. That's where proper children are made. Absolutely proper.
That's the price. Will you pay it?
KRIZNIK: (gets up. We have the feeling he's considering) No.

IDA: (she hadn't expected this. She tries to contain herself) Is that your last word?

KRIZNIK: Yes.

IDA: You won't have time to regret it, my dear.

KRIZNIK: I know the formula for killing cockroaches. I won't be bored.

IDA: I wish I could believe that. (EXITS.)

(ENTER the STAGE-DOORKEEPER and the CARETAKER loaded up with pails of water, rags and brooms. They zealously set to work cleaning, chatting at the same time. Their words are mainly intended for KRIZNIK. We can sense that clearly enough, although the two men don't bother to look at him.)

DOORKEEPER: Yes, yes, that's how it is, just like that... A hedge round the house isn't enough. I've been telling them that all along...

"There's no money. There's no money!"

CARETAKER: (once a lunatic always a lunatic) It was exactly the same with the boilers. We've lived to see it. Now you won't have to lock up any more.

DOORKEEPER: A door and this greenery, that's rubbish. It's just not enough, that's all there is to it.

CARETAKER: It would be if there was a concrete pillar with ellipsoid wings standing in the middle.

DOORKEEPER: Or an iron pole with a sharp point on top.

CARETAKER: That's dangerous.

DOORKEEPER: It would make a man flinch, of course.
CARETAKER: What sort of man would ask himself what those strange constructions are doing in the middle of the park...

DOORKEEPER: A man in the hedge looking at the sharply pointed iron pole doesn't think about his mum...

CARETAKER: Of course not...

DOORKEEPER: He doesn't think about Coca-Cola, he doesn't think about sausages...

CARETAKER: That sort of man only thinks about the pointed iron pole...

DOORKEEPER: But if this pointed iron pole has a diameter of...

CARETAKER: About a centimetre and a half...

DOORKEEPER: A silvery colour...

CARETAKER: Similar in section to a proper octagon...

DOORKEEPER: With blade-like edges, sharp enough to shave with...

CARETAKER: With a conical tip, a needle, as long as twenty-five centimetres...

DOORKEEPER: And it rotates on its mobile rotary head like some kind of injection...

CARETAKER: Or some new type of radar antenna...

DOORKEEPER: If that kind of iron bar is on top of all that, and moves like an eel as well...

CARETAKER: If it winds up...

DOORKEEPER: ... jumps here and there...

CARETAKER: ... bends...

DOORKEEPER: ... leans forwards...

CARETAKER: If it twists like a lasso...

DOORKEEPER: If it hasn't even got as much spine as a thin weeping willow...
CARETAKER: If a pole like that trembles, vibrates in a frequency that depends on how far away from it you move...

DOORKEEPER: And how fast you move...

CARETAKER: And in what direction you move...

DOORKEEPER: And last of all, if a pole like that also gives out some kind of sound signals...

CARETAKER: ... which are very simple at first...

DOORKEEPER: ... but then more and more complicated, and the moment you want to touch it they get really alarming...

CARETAKER: Then you have a perfect right to ask, is a pole like that a normal pole...

DOORKEEPER: ... or is a pole like that an unusual, an uncommon pole after all.

CARETAKER: You stand there staring, and the thing hisses at you...

DOORKEEPER: ... and occupies itself with... your presence.

CARETAKER: And if a pole like that isn't on its own, if it's in the company of similar objects, then your self-confidence disappears even more...

DOORKEEPER: Your eyes flick from one to the other...

CARETAKER: You count them and you're amazed...

DOORKEEPER: God be with us, you think, that's not a hedge any more. That's something quite different.

CARETAKER: That must be some system of installations performing the function of a hedge.

DOORKEEPER: Ah, yes.

CARETAKER: Ah, yes.

DOORKEEPER: It clutches your heart...
CARETAKER: It starts worming around in your stomach, makes you want to go to the toilet...

DOORKEEPER: Oh, yes. I'd rather have a mad dog than a hedge like that. What about you?

CARETAKER: Need you ask?

(KRIŽNIK is at first visibly eaten up with curiosity. Then he sits down and somehow, God knows how, lives through to the end of their conversation.)

DOORKEEPER: We've just about finished cleaning up, don't you think?

CARETAKER: Course we have. We'll have to do it again after the performance anyway...

DOORKEEPER: What a fucking life. Forever cleaning, there's no end to it...

(As the STAGE-DOORKEEPER and CARETAKER EXIT, the EDITOR-IN-CHIEF, SECRETARY, DULAR and the DOCTOR come onto the stage. They are all pleased and in a buoyant mood, like employees before the unveiling of an important object. Cheerful, ceremonious tones mingle with anxiety, precision, responsibility and a hard decisiveness to carry out a plan to perfection. The EDITOR-IN-CHIEF is the boss here too. The SECRETARY immediately goes over to KRIŽNIK.)

DULAR: I must say, it looks promising. I've no complaints. (Points at KRIŽNIK.) He joins in. He's interested. He tries hard. He doesn't cause problems.

SECRETARY: (to KRIŽNIK) My little heart of gold, how sweet he is. I've brought you some chewing-gum.

(KRIŽNIK declines with a faint shake of the head.)
CHIEF: Has he dramatized anything?

SECRETARY: I've got some whiskey, too. Draga knows. She knows what you need. (She pulls out a bottle and a glass from her handbag, and pours it for him, KRIŽNIK drinks with long gulps.)

DOCTOR: At this stage of development a tumour nearly always affects the state of the organism, causing a general weakening, decline in appetite, secondary anaemia, loss of weight and so on - you get a complete picture of organic degeneration. The carcinoma azofagusa reduces the organism to a state of insufficiency. A certain depression is inevitable, indeed completely normal in this situation.

CHIEF: Good. That means we are far enough along for preparations to begin.

DOCTOR: Absolutely, sir. Absolutely.

CHIEF: Good, good. We've got the right chap. I wasn't mistaken. I'm proud of you, Križnik. Just carry on. Only without dramatizing. That's harmful and quite unnecessary. If you've any requests... You've got a tongue. Speak up.

(KRIŽNIK considers.)

CHIEF: Well?

SECRETARY: Well, pussycat... Would you like anything else?

DULAR: We're friends, aren't we? Just say so.

(KRIŽNIK hesitates.)

DOCTOR: Now, now, Križnik, don't let's be prejudiced.

KRIŽNIK: (drains his glass) Is this my last wish?

(Everyone seems a little embarrassed.)

DULAR: The last shall be first and the first last... (A painful silence.)
KRIŽNIK: (unbelievably serious, whispering) Kiss my arse all of you.

(This statement elicits a liberal measure of good humour from those present. They all laugh, quite forgetting about KRIŽNIK)

CHIEF: (when the mirth has abated somewhat) Has the Inspector finished with Knez?

DULAR: No, sir.

CHIEF: What's the idiot waiting for? He'll ruin everything for us!

Incompetent, second-rate policeman! (He is furious.) I demand one hundred per cent concentration, efficiency and perfection from the people I work with. My orders are law, remember that!

KRIŽNIK: Don't dramatize, Chief. Never dramatize.

CHIEF: Smash that cripple's gob. And be quick about it, otherwise I won't answer for my actions.

(The DOCTOR goes over to KRIŽNIK and touches him; KRIŽNIK quietens down.)

CHIEF: Where's Levstik now? What's he doing?

DULAR: I don't know, sir. He's probably taking a shower. He's always in the bathroom.

LEVSTIK: (off, somewhere above in the flies) Here I am. Up here. To the left above the bridge. I've got him in my sights, sir. I'm doing what I can. Be patient just a bit longer.

(They all look up. From the opposite side of the bridge comes KNEZ's scornful laughter.)

KNEZ: (off) I'll send him down to you right away, don't worry. (Laugh.) It makes him dizzy up here. He'll fall all by himself... Hang on, Levstik, take hold of the railing. (Laugh.) It's worse than seasickness.
(First the casing of an old reflector comes crashing down onto the stage. They all jump away as though scalded. Then we hear exactly six shots from LEVSTIK's police revolver. All is silent for a few moments. Then, KNEZ's carbine barks out two short, efficient shots. A few more moments of silence and uncertainty. Necks are stretched rigidly upwards. At last, Inspector LEVSTIK arrives on the stage, calm, pale, covered in "blood".)

LEVSTIK: There won't be any performance. I've got two bullets in my body. One in the head. The other one under my heart.

CHIEF: (roars as loudly as possible) There will be a performance! Dular! Get everything ready. Give your directions. Let's go.

(They all exit in a hurry, only KRIŽNIK and LEVSTIK remain.)

LEVSTIK: (hesitates) Will you give me a sip?

KRIŽNIK: (drinks) No, I won't.

LEVSTIK: (offended) It's all right, I...

KRIŽNIK: I know it's all right, I know it is. I'm not giving whiskey away... to a swine like you. (He belches, it has probably already gone to his head.) Excuse me.

LEVSTIK: I'm thirsty...

KRIŽNIK: So what? It's my whiskey. I'm not the council water supply. This bottle's not a policeman's pacifier, mon ami, this is completely private property.

LEVSTIK: (weakly) You're angry because I didn't tell you everything...

But I...

KRIŽNIK: Be quiet, if you don't mind. What's it to me?
LEVSTIK: But I shouldn't have... You see, I really shouldn't have... I...
KRIZNIK: I don't give a damn about 'I', get it? Just be quiet, quiet!
LEVSTIK: They've forbidden me. I still mustn't... I...
KRIZNIK: Shut up, man, shut up!
LEVSTIK: (getting more and more excited, as KRIZNIK keeps jumping on his words) I tried to warn you...! I gave you clues... Admit it...!
KRIZNIK: Shut it once and for all, shut it!
LEVSTIK: Admit it, admit I warned you! I'm going to disappoint you, I know I am...
KRIZNIK: Shut your gob. Shut your gob!
LEVSTIK: I'm really going to disappoint you, but I have to keep quiet.
KRIZNIK: Then keep quiet, will you!
(They both fall silent. IDA enters with two other Actresses. They are carrying a small bath with water, sponges, soap, towels, deodorants, in short, everything needed to bathe someone. They put these things down near KRIZNIK.)
IDA: (to the Actresses) Is everything ready?
(The Actresses nod assent.)
IDA: O.K. (Pulls out a small bell from somewhere and rings it three times.)
(KRIZNIK and LEVSTIK don't take any notice of the women. At that moment the CARETAKER and STAGE-DOORKEEPER bring a kind of bed onto the stage. More specifically, it is a bier, festooned with flowers, stuffed birds, swords, candles and similar frippery. When they have arranged it all they disappear again. IDA again rings the bell three times. Now our friends arrive,
softly, on tip-toe, one behind the other: the EDITOR-IN-CHIEF, DULAR, DOCTOR, SECRETARY, VESNA, BELIČ, First Actor, Second Actor, PRODUCTION EDITOR, CARETAKER, and STAGE-DOORKEEPER. Each carries an identical little child and a chair. They arrange themselves silently right and left. All this is carried out rather ritualistically.)

CHIEF: You may sit.

(They all sit down, the Children in their arms.)

CHIEF: (turns to IDA) Can we begin?

IDA: Yes, sir.

CHIEF: Start the music.

(They all tilt their heads upwards. From high above a huge bird-cage is lowered slowly like a flag. In it sits PALČIČ in a dignified lotus position, while from the loudspeakers ripples the gentle morning-song of birds. The two Actresses next to IDA spray fresh air from canisters. When the batten with the cage halts, the music on the loudspeakers dies away. Now PALČIČ will have a chance to show what he knows too. He chirps. Briefly, but beautifully. The EDITOR-IN-CHIEF makes a hand-signal for IDA to begin, then he too sits down.)

IDA: Stand up.

(KRIŽNIK and LEVSTIK stand up.)

IDA: Undress.

(KRIŽNIK and LEVSTIK exchange glances.)


IDA: (basically she is very pleasant and patient, but she knows how to
You must, dear... look, we've prepared a bath for both of you... Don't you like having a bath?

KRIŽNIK: I do, but on my own... There are too many people here...

(LEVSTIK is as silent as a fish. The audience on the stage follows the events enraptured.)

IDA: That's exactly why you must be nice and good. You mustn't be naughty... Now undress yourself nicely... before the water gets cold.

KRIŽNIK: It's already freezing... I'll catch a cold.

IDA: It's not cold, test it.

KRIŽNIK: (tests the water with his elbow) It's warm.

IDA: It's just right. Not too hot and not too cold.

(PALČIČ starts warbling.)

KRIŽNIK: But I'm embarrassed...

IDA: Oh, there's no need to be, we're all adults after all. Every one of us has seen these things before.

KRIŽNIK: But why does it have to be me? I really don't like having baths too often.

IDA: Undress.

(KRIŽNIK realizes she is serious, and that he can no longer put it off. He looks at LEVSTIK, who is already getting undressed. The undressing takes place at a comfortable pace, no-one is pushing them. Finally they are in nothing but their underwear. They stand.)

KRIŽNIK: (looking as though he is going to cry) I'm not going any further, I can't.

LEVSTIK: I can't either.
IDA looks at the EDITOR-IN-CHIEF questioningly. He signals to her not to insist.

IDA: O.K., so let's begin.

(Now IDA and the two Actresses set to work bathing both men very gently and carefully. This lasts until the whole thing has been carried out quite thoroughly. PALČIČ warbles. The audience onstage watches with great anticipation. When the bathing is at an end, IDA's assistants bring two shawls from the afore-mentioned bier, then all three accompany their clients to the bier. With the help of all three women, KRIŽNIK and LEVSTIK manage to get onto the bier or whatever it is. Their heads are supported by thick pillows, and we have the feeling that after a very long time they have found happiness once more. IDA and the two Actresses EXIT. At that moment the audience onstage begins very slowly to move with their stools towards KRIŽNIK's and LEVSTIK's bier. At last they are all crowded together around the bier staring intensely at the two unfortunates. KRIŽNIK is bothered by this. He lifts himself onto his elbows, as does LEVSTIK. They look at the people surrounding the bier.

KRIŽNIK: (straining to concentrate, as though he wants to discover something, get it clear, but without much success) I've come to a decision... No. I have the feeling... You, Levstik. Does it seem to you that everything is as it should be...

LEVSTIK: How do you mean, as it should be?

KRIŽNIK: Don't you feel...? Don't you feel - something's not quite right.
LEVSTIK: Oh? What?

KRIZNIK: I'm trying to collect my thoughts... I'm trying to remember the words swimming in my memory like a school of fish in the water. Everything's dim, blurred, watery... My tape-recorder. My tape-recorder that wasn't broken. It wasn't broken, but it still didn't record. It didn't record anyone but me. In the end it didn't even record me any more...

LEVSTIK: Machines are cranky. You can't trust machines. Technical things always let you down. Man is the most efficient machine.

KRIZNIK: But... but... that's not the point. I gave... I mean... I gave up too. This bathing and this... lying here... on this stage...

LEVSTIK: What's wrong with it? Why does it bother you?

KRIZNIK: It doesn't now... it doesn't really bother me. But... When Ida... before that, you know, I wasn't... I was... I didn't have the right feeling... as if I wasn't... already, already wasn't there... but present in some other way... When she touched me with the cold sponge, something... as if I'd jumped into the sea. Dived into the sea. And I was swimming and swimming down past a huge jagged green rock. And I thought it was strange that I didn't need air. I did it without air... As if I were... Well... and... and I swam towards the bottom. I only felt the pressure... As I was swimming I counted... I counted seven – just think – seven layers... seven layers of water. I was helpless: I was just swimming towards the bottom. With no purpose, no will, with strong strokes towards the bottom. At the transitions you feel the pressure increase. The transitions between the layers. Suddenly everything turned around. I was still swimming in the same direction,
but actually everything had turned around. Where the bottom had been I saw the surface, and the sky above it. But what had been the earth, the shore, when I left, was now the bottom of the sea. As if I were swimming inside a hollow globe and someone outside it was turning it round a hundred and eighty degrees. (He falls silent.)

LEVSTIK: And then?

KRIŽNIK: Then I swam to the surface and breathed air.

LEVSTIK: And now?

KRIŽNIK: Now, I'm here, I can see, smell, I'm breathing, and talking.

I'm talking with you, aren't I?

LEVSTIK: Yes.

KRIŽNIK: Of course. You've got two bullets in you. One in your head, the other under your heart. You're dead, aren't you? (LEVSTIK is silent, the spectators are absolutely rigid with attention.) Admit you're dead.

LEVSTIK: No more than you are.

KRIŽNIK: And I can speak perfectly fluently with you. With no trouble.

Normally. Like the dead to the dead.

(PALČIČ warbles.)

KRIŽNIK: If that's all true, then it's probably also true that all the people watching us are our brothers in death.

(There follow outbreaks of death-love. Love among the dead is something special. We can only conjecture how this is shown externally. And nonetheless it must be shown. IT IS AFTER ALL A PERFORMANCE. The spectators onstage receive KRIŽNIK and LEVSTIK into their brotherhood with passionate
expressions of affection. BELONGING TO THE SAME THING is no small matter. Then IDA and her assistants return. The women are carrying buckets of glue. The rite consists of their all taking turns at pouring and smearing glue on themselves until there remains no clothing that is not thoroughly glued. They help each other, laugh among themselves, exult, joke, smear their cheeks, pat each other's behinds, chase each other, pull apart. This activity is an inexhaustible fount of the DELIGHT, the joy, in PLAY. Finally someone starts singing a cheerful melody with enthusiasm. Everyone joins in.)

ALL: (singing)

We're gluing ourselves, gluing, gluing, gluing.

We're gluing ourselves, gluing, gluing, gluing.

(During the singing and buffoonery the Actors actually stick themselves to each other, until they are all stuck fast together to become one mass of flesh. This lump begins slowly but surely to move towards the apron of the stage, stares at the auditorium and orgiastically sings its WE'RE GLUING OURSELVES. As the group steps over the curtain line and reaches the extreme edge of the forestage, all the lights suddenly go out simultaneously: Darkness. The curtain falls in the dark. The song stops, abruptly cut off. Over the loudspeaker we recognize the voice of KNEZ.)
KNEZ: (shouting) Križnik, Križnik. Križnik. (Whispers.) Can you guess how I'm going to cross the line?

(Light comes in slowly, the curtain rises, the Actors move silently back onto the stage.)

END
NOTES

1 Personal interview with Dušan Jovanović, 25 July 1983. All subsequent quotations of the author are from this interview.


3 ibid., p. 81.

4 ibid., p. 58.

5 ibid., p. 62.


7 Steiner, ibid., p. 60.

8 ibid.

9 ibid., p. 67.

10 ibid., p. 64.

11 Dušan Jovanović, ibid., p. 68.

12 Steiner, ibid., p. 61.


14 Steiner, ibid., p. 61.
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