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PRISM *international*

VOLUME SEVEN NUMBER THREE

Drama Issue

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Notes on Contributors

ERNST BARLACH: see page 4.

MARKETA GOETZ STANKIEWICZ is Associate Professor of German and Advisor to the Comparative Literature programme at the University of British Columbia. At the time of his death last year, B. Q. MORGAN was Professor Emeritus at Stanford University. He was an outstanding scholar and translator of German literature.

GEORGE BIRIMISA lives in New York, where four of his plays have appeared off-Broadway. With two other actors, he has presented *Daddy Violet* elsewhere in the United States as well, and in February he takes the play on tour along the Canadian and American Pacific Coast.

BRIAN SHEIN's first publication was a story in our 7:2. Another of his stories will appear in a future issue. He is a student at the University of British Columbia. *Kafka* was first presented last year at the University of British Columbia, and will receive a new production at the Vancouver Playhouse Theatre Company's Stage Two in February.

Photos

BOB FLICK's cover photo is a montage made up of Ernst Barlach sculptures, Brian Shein, and actors Val Romilly and Leanne White. His photos also accompany the plays by Barlach and Shein, the latter of whom is shown holding a deck of computer cards. GEORGE BIRIMISA supplied the photo of himself on page 82.

Ernst Barlach: AN INTRODUCTION

MARKETA GOETZ STANKIEWICZ

THERE HAS HARDLY BEEN a theatre season in Germany since 1950 that has not seen the premiere of a play by Ernst Barlach. In part, this revival may be connected with the general desire to rehabilitate artists who suffered in one way or another under Nazism. Ernst Barlach, who was born in 1870 and died in 1938, is to be counted among these, but his situation is particularly complicated. For a short period after 1933, his works of sculpture were displayed in German churches and other public places, and hovered on the verge of acceptance as great "Germanic" art. Barlach himself, watching in gloomy terror what was happening to his country, neither sought favours from the new regime, nor did he openly oppose it.

The dictators seemed curiously unable to make up their minds on what to do about him. There was no open controversy, no open denouncement of his art. Contracts were simply broken, planned performances of his dramas cancelled, exhibitions closed down, his works disappeared from public view, some were even destroyed. Yet Goebbels himself was said to own two of Barlach's pieces of sculpture and the leader of the movement attacking "degenerate art" was a secret admirer of Barlach's work. As for the artist himself, he spent the last five years of his life in silence, his house having become an isolated retreat in which he lived "in a type of siege." His ambiguous position must have caused this searcher for truth to suffer especially cruel anguish.

But more than this perplexing question, it is the belated awareness of Barlach's stature as a rare double talent that has sparked new interest in his plays. His woodcuts and sculpted wooden figures have had international acclaim for many years. His plays, however, are only now beginning to receive similar notice abroad. Since a complete edition of his written work was not available until 1959, and since four of the eight plays he wrote are still untranslated, it may still be some time before Barlach is recognized as a unique talent, like William Blake — one with equal power as a visual artist and a playwright. Indeed, Barlach saw an organic connection between his dramatic characters and their counterparts in wood. "I am convinced," he wrote in a letter in 1926, "that I can work

meaningfully only after my plastic talent and my writing ability, each for itself, has found its own form." He could envisage the persons of his dramas only after giving them life on paper or in wood; conversely, he could sculpt characters only after giving them words on paper. In *The Poor Relation*, Hans Iver's agony is summed up in a drawing which shows him standing alone in the harsh light of a lamp, surrounded by grinning mediocrity, crudeness, and lies.

Although his plays received a certain amount of academic attention in the art-hungry twenties, and even though *The Flood* won the Kleist prize in 1924, his plays had little success on the German stage. One reason was the penchant of producers and actors for heaping on heavy symbolism, ignoring or distorting his earthy humour and stifling his flair for entertainment. (A tendency still to be observed in a certain type of Barlach admirer.) Barlach himself complained when *The Flood* closed in 1927 after a disastrous premiere: "Have those producers gone completely insane that they make oratories and mysteries out of my dramas, instead of entertaining plays? There is a mountain of humour in *The Flood*, I should think, but they make it into a mole-hill. And then this dogma of 'Barlachian plasticity'! Actors are put into sacks and disguised as scarecrows. Nowhere are there such boring stagesets as in my dramas."

Another reason is our urge to classify genius. We seem to have reserved the Renaissance for versatile talents, and are likely to regard as a dilletante a modern man who works in more than one creative field. Barlach's reputation as a dramatist may have suffered because of his fame as a sculptor.

The third reason is more elusive. Man shuns laughter when final questions are at stake: our image of the mystic's features bears no smile. Barlach, though reputedly a man of gloomy countenance, not only smiles when, like Jacob, he wrestles with the angel, but laughs aloud. And while his laughter may be bitter, angry or sad, it may also be kindly or outright hilarious. If our image of the God-seeker is being revised by these contemporary dramatists who seek to define man's condition through a mixture of comedy and despair, entertainment and grim assertions, the Barlach revival becomes part of this search.

Barlach foreshadows Beckett, Ionesco, and other contemporary dramatists whom we call (perhaps for the wrong reasons) playwrights of the absurd. Like them he confronts and teases the audience with constant questions about the nature of man and the masks he wears to hide from his real condition. But Barlach's characters

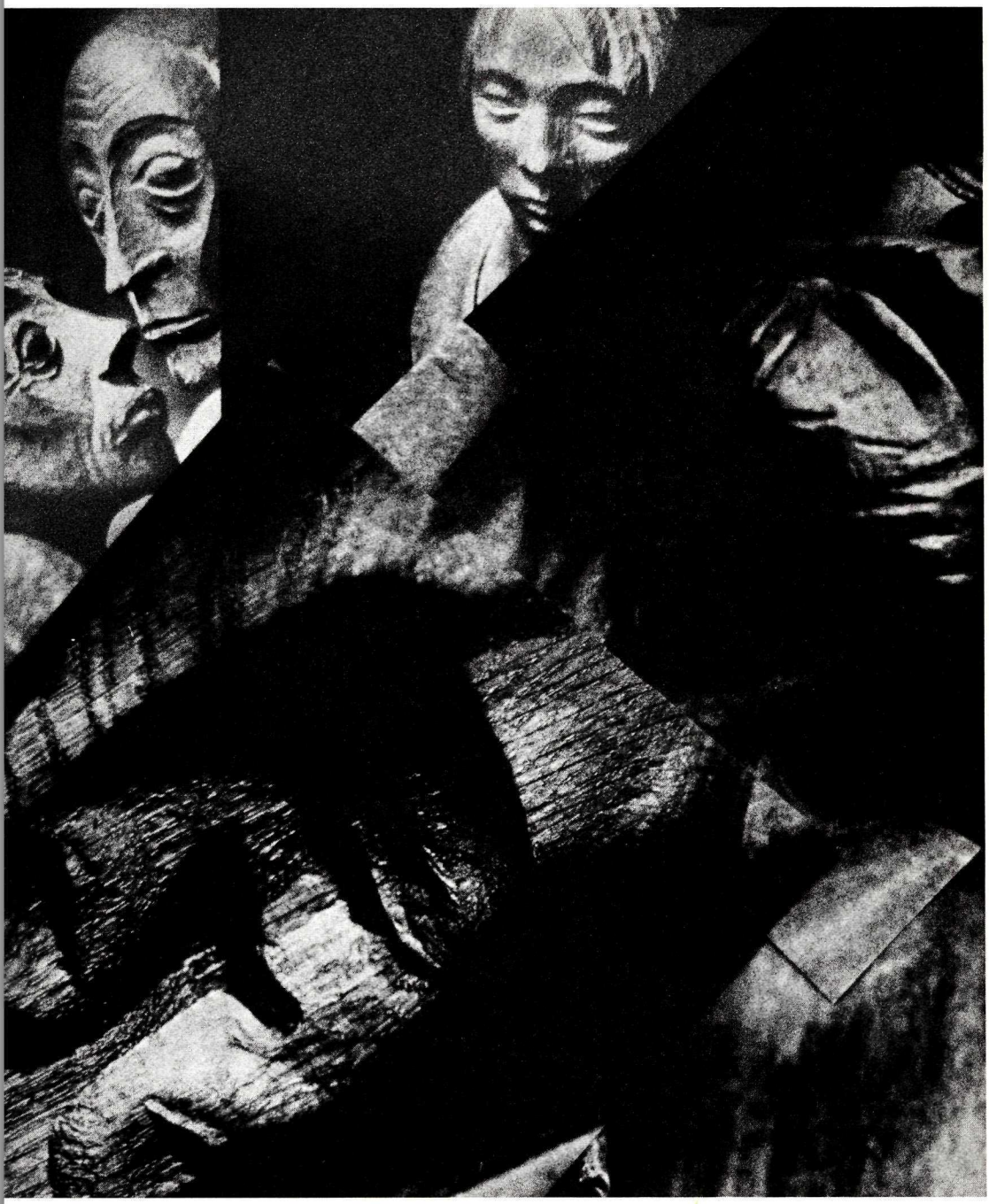
go a significant step further; or rather, they take what Garcia Lorca calls "the rider's leap into uncertainty." Some event shocks each of Barlach's dramatic heroes "out of the naïve trust in his existence." Suddenly there is a loss of identification with the "role" he played in life hitherto; he arrives at the anguished realization that he is only a feeble part of some other power or reality of which he can catch only erratic glimpses. "Don't you ever have moments," Hans Iver asks of his antipode, the Philistine Siebenmark, "when you, a poor relation, see the lofty lord in his splendour sail past? What I mean is: You feel it within yourself, as if something were approaching you with which you begin to sense a relationship. Your heart stops, you gasp for air, and you bellow like a beast in your misery."

This anguished (and totally misunderstood) question is asked in *The Poor Relation*, the second of Barlach's dramas, which has been translated here. Written in 1917, it is particularly interesting today because it touches on most of the problems the modern dramatist is forced to cope with. There is a young woman, like Lydia in Eliot's *The Cocktail Party*, who leaves her shallow world and sacrifices her life for something in which she believes. There is a self-assured, efficient citizen, compelled by an indescribable event to confront the bare facts of his existence — a forerunner of the two gentlemen in the avant-garde *Striptease* by the brilliant young Polish dramatist Mrozek. And as O'Casey says of his Dreamer in *Within the Gates*, there is in Iver's spiritual struggle "the stir in life that brings to birth new things and greater than those that were before."

Hans Iver is one of the most interesting characters in modern German drama. When he first appears on stage he speaks like a man who has learned from Camus' Sisyphus: "All roads are right, you just have to keep going." He seems to have attained the logic of absurd reasoning, "the higher fidelity" of the man who, knowing "that the night has no end . . . is still on the go." But at the end of the play, he commits suicide. Such an act, as Camus says in his essays on Absurd Reasoning, indicates that Iver has confessed to having recognized "the absence of any profound reason for living, the insane character of that daily agitation, and the uselessness of suffering." "Does your little bit of light give you pleasure?" Iver asks his lantern before he decides to die. "Or wouldn't you rather drown?"

It should, however, not be forgotten that Barlach's dramas carry their philosophical, metaphysical and social burden very lightly — contrary to the opinion of some critics. For the most part the plays are delightfully entertaining and excellent theatre if directed in

Barlach's sense. The mystic shares in the humorist's jokes and the philosopher yields just enough to the man of the theatre — a rather rare collaboration — especially if we think of German drama in general. To say that Barlach is a religious dramatist is true but misleading. Brimming with the pagan's sensual vigour as well as the atheist's dialectic intellect, his dramas move around a metaphysical centre which, although unreachable, makes its presence constantly felt and gives the dramas their unique quality. The characters themselves perceive in fleeting moments a flash of God who, as Sem explains in *The Flood*, "hides behind everything, and everything has narrow chinks, through which he shines, shines and flashes. Such delicate chinks that you never find them again if you turn your head even once." This peculiar merging of realism and mysticism, the momentary projection of an elusive bridge of faith which arches over a far from reputable world — no more tangible and lasting than a rainbow over a muddy street — is the chief ingredient of Barlach's dramatic style.



FIRST APPEARANCE IN ENGLISH

the poor relation

a play in five acts

by

ERNST BARLACH

translated from the German by MARKETA GOETZ STANKIEWICZ

in collaboration with B. Q. MORGAN *and* JACOB ZILBER

CHARACTERS

Miss Isenbarn	Mrs. Keferstein	Stine
Siebenmark	Sailor Bolz	"Lady Venus"
Hans Iver	Griewank	Captain Pickenpack
Voss	Jan, landlord	Sieg, customs official
Engholm	Thinka, landlady	Guests, Passengers

I

(An Easter day on a heath overgrown with bushes, near the upper Elbe. Miss Isenbarn is hidden in a fir clump and singing. Then she suddenly falls silent and waits.)

SIEBENMARK Yes, you're right — it was a glorious Easter day.
MISS ISENBARN Dear God!
SIEBENMARK That's the third time today you've called God — He probably knows why — *I don't.*
MISS ISENBARN No, you wouldn't!
SIEBENMARK Come out of there now, you voice; my ears are full, my eyes are hungry.
MISS ISENBARN Don't you see me at all?
SIEBENMARK Not at all.
MISS ISENBARN But you do believe it's me?
SIEBENMARK Nobody else, I'll swear to that — just you!
MISS ISENBARN I? Who?
SIEBENMARK My fiancée, who else?
MISS ISENBARN And a bit of Easter, too — you know that?
SIEBENMARK Where *you* are, there's both Easter and Pentecost for me. Do you want the blue Easter sky to turn grey with jealousy when it hears what you said to me once? Remember?
MISS ISENBARN What?
SIEBENMARK You said you were tired of being yourself; that's how you caught me. If a man means so much to Miss Isenbarn that she'd like to be changed into him . . .
MISS ISENBARN Don't you ever get tired of being yourself? *(Comes out of the bushes.)* Do you know what? — Today I'm walking with Easter, not just with you; are you jealous?

SIEBENMARK Of such an old bore? No danger! But it's true, this is the way Easter Sunday should be.

MISS ISENBARN But it *is* a day, not a has-been!

SIEBENMARK All right, if that's the way you want it. *(Starts to look at his watch.)* We still have . . .

MISS ISENBARN If only I could kill your watch!

SIEBENMARK Then you'd have to kill me with it — if I took a notion to miss the boat today — it would be a mad rush to Hamburg tomorrow morning, and probably too late to get from there to the steamer at Cuxhaven — and so: "with my watch in my hand" — can't you think of a rhyme? After all, you're good at that today.

MISS ISENBARN Have you been noticing it?

SIEBENMARK You've been carrying on a monologue ever since we left; it makes me feel as if you were talking to a third person who's made of air but keeps step with us.

MISS ISENBARN I'm sorry. Why should I deny it, today I feel quite super . . . human, in a sense. The simple fact that we're enduring such a sensible walk on paths seemed dreary to me. You really are a good sport to let me tear through the bushes without losing patience — but that's how it is — in this weather something gets into me and I don't even blush:

> Crown of all living, bliss without end
> That's wind and shining sun, our friend.

Today you mustn't make fun of me for this, not today. — Listen — but put away that watch.

SIEBENMARK *(does it)* Well?

MISS ISENBARN Resurrection is *not* an empty word — just look around you.

SIEBENMARK Should I listen or look — first you say: listen; then: look around. But it's true — nature . . .

MISS ISENBARN I feel as I've often felt, but today it's quite different. It seems as if things were flowing into my soul from many distant places, as if something shining and strong, that has got lost, was finding its way back, as if things quite ancient and alien became young and familiar again. Really, as if I were being resurrected!

SIEBENMARK Miss Isenbarn, my fiancée, you don't need to be resurrected, my darling, you're alive enough for me, completely so!

MISS ISENBARN But no one asks me whether I want to be.

(Hans Iver approaches slowly, then hurries past; they look after him.)

SIEBENMARK *(calling)* Oh — pardon me, it's just four o'clock, isn't it? I'd like to make sure.

IVER Yes, yes, high time!

SIEBENMARK No, I mean was it just four o'clock — would you mind taking a look?

IVER *(looks at his watch)* Five after four.

SIEBENMARK Thank you kindly. *(To Miss Isenbarn)* Then our day has two hours to go — why don't you sing a song?

IVER *(whirls around, but turns away again; as they look at him in puzzlement, he asks)* This is the way to Lüttenbargen, isn't it?

SIEBENMARK Just the opposite, I believe that's exactly where you came from.

IVER It's easy to lose your way around here; didn't — the young lady — I heard singing away off, and I thought: what kind of a person is it . . .

SIEBENMARK Yes, you're right, this lady is the singer; by the way, we're going to Lüttenbargen too — you really are going the wrong way — this is the road, maybe you'd like to join us?

IVER No time — sorry.

SIEBENMARK I'm sure there's no shorter way.

IVER I know — two hours, my God! High time! *(Hurries away).*

SIEBENMARK But you're going the wrong way, man!

IVER All roads are right, you just have to keep going.
(Disappears.)

SIEBENMARK He's in more of a hurry than we are — and he said "my God" too; maybe he's in a hurry to be resurrected. It looks as if a steamboat's just arrived; the one we'll be taking on its return trip. It'll be pretty crowded.

MISS ISENBARN I think that's wonderful: a world traveller, occasionally at least — taking a cloud to be smoke from a stack!

SIEBENMARK Yes, you're right — by the way, I don't like the looks of that cloud at all.

MISS ISENBARN Wonderful!

SIEBENMARK Why, you want to get wet?

MISS ISENBARN No, but I'm looking forward to the wind that's part of it; how the lights on the Elbe will dance in the dark — and when you're sitting below on the lower deck and the water's rushing above behind the hull like . . .

SIEBENMARK Like what?

MISS ISENBARN What do *you* think?

SIEBENMARK I'll think up a comparison to top all others! You'll

have a part in it too; I'll embalm your primness. The one who comes up with the nicest comparison gets a wish, agreed?

MISS ISENBARN Fine! *(They disappear behind the hill.)*

(Enter Mrs. Keferstein with Engholm.)

ENGHOLM *(desperately)* I really can't say anything more.

MRS. KEFERSTEIN But you said maybe I wasn't so very sick — you *are* a doctor, aren't you?

ENGHOLM I only advised you to consult a specialist on stomach troubles; I really don't know anything about it, I'm no physician, only a doctor — good gracious, nearly everyone's a doctor! *(Maliciously.)* But surely you want to take the pretty path to Holm, have a nice time — good-bye! *(Tips his hat.)*

MRS. KEFERSTEIN No, certainly not, Mr. . . . I just want to enjoy the sunshine, I have *no* other intentions. As for Holm — completely out of the question. I told you, if I walk a lot . . .

ENGHOLM Well, there'll be a bench in a little while.

MRS. KEFERSTEIN Where? Please show me . . .

ENGHOLM Around the corner to the right, I believe — you'll see for yourself — unfortunately I'm going straight ahead. *(Hurries away, calling back:)* There's been sickness at home all winter long, I have to run. . . .

MRS. KEFERSTEIN The same with me; listen to me! *(Engholm disappears.)*

(Sailor Bolz, a vigorous greybeard, passes by.)

BOLZ All alone on the hoof, Ma'am?

MRS. KEFERSTEIN Nice fresh air . . .

BOLZ *(stopping)* Yes — isn't it though? This is what I call a real Easter.

MRS. KEFERSTEIN You feel sort of funny in this solitude, do you think it's quite safe here?

BOLZ De-fi-nite-ly, Ma'am! That is to say — it could happen that you'll happen to meet monarchs on these here sandbanks.

MRS. KEFERSTEIN What sort of monarchs?

BOLZ Monarchs? Why, damme — monarchs are monarchs. They've got their coats lined with their armies if they haven't got a shirt on. Would you like to walk a bit? We can make a little detour, there's a real pretty spot — you have to see it! But lots of sand, Ma'am —

MRS. KEFERSTEIN Oh well, a person should be able to sit down once in a while.

BOLZ When the good Lord gives us such nice air, why not do a bit of airing, undoing, unbuttoning — let's go right in here; a nar-

row path, I guess, but you've got a pair of dainty feet; I saw that right away.

MRS. KEFERSTEIN Won't you get too bold?

BOLZ Don't worry, Ma'am, my name is Bolz, and no Bolz has ever been guilty of saying a word too many.

MRS. KEFERSTEIN I don't like too much talking either.

BOLZ Same here, Madam — now let's go, nice and quiet, keep straight ahead — *(They disappear.)*

(Voss, an unshaven gentleman of fifty, dressed very modestly, enters in conversation with Hans Iver.)

VOSS Tell me, what's going on today, where are all these people coming from?

IVER Do you want anything else?

VOSS I see — you feel I could do with some small assistance should I wait to be urged?

IVER Don't you know that today is Easter?

VOSS How should I?

IVER Good — I haven't anything myself. *(Maliciously, as Voss keeps standing there.)* What is it you want anyway? Who are you?

VOSS Manufacturer of corrosive alkaline hydrates, my name is so and so.

IVER *(looking fixedly at him)* Is there anything weighing on your conscience? When a man makes such complicated statements — unusual ones — an anonymity like this . . .

VOSS Weighing? I weigh what I sit on — otherwise I can't help you.

IVER Anyhow, you're in the know, and if I was too rude on my part . . .

VOSS Heavens no, it's quite all right.

IVER Aren't you laughing? I mean to yourself? It seems to me that you're grinning without showing it.

VOSS I really don't want to know what's on your conscience.

IVER You know . . .

VOSS I say forget about it!

IVER Well then, let's see. *(Draws out his wallet.)* Here's your share. But, you *are* an educated person, aren't you?

VOSS Right, I was a school teacher; and now get this: my youth — I mean the youth of a young man's fancies, didn't go with my profession; something happened that lost me my job, but luckily I kept my pension.

IVER And now you just bum around?

VOSS You could say that. My family has no use for me, all they want is my pension.

IVER And your corrosive alkaline . . .

VOSS Hydrates manufacture?

IVER Is a symbol, eh?

VOSS Right. You can etch everything off with it. Varnish, paint, illusion, everything. You know your way about, you know what's what. So let's have it. *(Iver hands him a coin.)*

VOSS Thanks — and you?

IVER I? You want to know who I am? To give you something to etch away? No soap! I should think, if your acid were genuine, you'd get to rock bottom without questioning. Take a guess!

VOSS A bit of a wind-bag — but from a good family — how's that?

IVER Bull's eye! You couldn't have said anything better; from a *very* good family — yes, but run-down, gone to the dogs.

VOSS I thought so right away. So don't refuse my small assistance. *(Returns the coin.)*

IVER Thanks, if that's the way you want it; Dad's one of the top twenty, in all modesty.

VOSS You can tell! In the end it's exactly the same if you're destroyed by the fancies of Spring or Fall, isn't it?

IVER You know — I've lost my way — or else I was put into this jail here *(points in a circle)* because of some stupidity of mine.

VOSS Is that what's weighing on you?

IVER *(astonished)* Don't you understand that?

VOSS Understand why that should weigh on you?

IVER If you suddenly see it all, and you yourself have to admit that you're a bastard? A ragamuffin by nature and disposition doesn't take it that hard, but if you have all that sensitive taste on your tongue, the odour of elegance in your nose!

VOSS Oh, I see — you mean that also as a symbol too?

IVER *(with hauteur)* Right, I belong to those who button up their coats, so that you don't easily get a chance to touch them between the ribs.

VOSS Naturally.

IVER And so — ugh, finally you can't stand your own smell any longer, you smell like a stranger to yourself. Have you ever had lunch with people in the saloon? And thought to yourself: Ugh, what manners, what a way to eat; rather go hungry — than fill up that way — eh? To do everything like them; come in, go out, smack lips, loll around, even be a part of — something like that — and

afraid that that's going to last; realizing that slowly on that bench you're balancing yourself over into equilibrium and contentment — with *that* gang?

VOSS No, never have.

IVER I believe you. But it's weighing heavily on me, and I can't help it. In my sleep I begin to dream that I've stolen something, and during the day it seems to me that they're after me for murder. Nice, isn't it?

VOSS You'll have to get used to it.

IVER Oh yes — no thanks! Do you think the story of original sin is complete nonsense? No, there's something to it. Is it for no reason at all that you're tricked and denied in such a way by your own distinguished relatives like myself, and tossed out in the cold?

VOSS As we are?

IVER Well, men like me out among men like you.

VOSS Mmm, that sounds edifying. But I think even if you deny it, somehow the hook — I mean a hook according to our concepts on this side — probably got stuck in your honourable flesh, with your own help; as for example, even if you didn't commit a murder . . .

IVER Oh, yes, I did commit a murder.

VOSS Come on, that's out of the question — but —

IVER *(crossing his arms)* Well, what about it, I'm really curious. *(At the end he exits hurriedly.)* Two times two is four isn't it? No, you gang of beggars. Four is four and nothing else. Two of you together never amount to anything decent; you remain a double half forever. *(Rapidly.)* You've got to watch out or you'll get chopped into two halves in no time. Better be a decent nothing than twice one-half. *(Calling back.)* And by the way: if only you'd heard the nightingale sing, as I did!

II

(The upper part of a high bare hill on the heath; one can see a few upper twigs of the thicket; sunset; biting air. Hans Iver is standing on the top, his hands in the pockets of his overcoat; he looks at the sun, moves away but turns back again, and stands still for some time. Expressionless. Then he draws a revolver from his pocket. At the same time a piece of paper drops out; he picks it up and puts it indifferently back into his pocket. At that moment voices are heard, and Hans Iver hides the revolver and slowly walks away. Miss Isenbarn and Siebenmark appear on the opposite side.)

SIEBENMARK I think that's just great — here I've been taking the greatest possible pains for an hour to make you talk and I didn't get a word out of you.

MISS ISENBARN I take it you didn't notice anything special about me, seeing that you're trying to amuse me with the verses of darkie songs?

SIEBENMARK Aren't you feeling well?

MISS ISENBARN Do you know how I feel? One thinks: Heavens, where does this lead to, where is the life and the earth that could use up such super-abundance! I could weep when I realize that all this must disappear again, that all this is too much, and that it will go down the drain. *(A threatening gesture.)*

SIEBENMARK I heard you talking to the sun, and now you're showing him your fist? Never mind, calm down, and don't make my leave-taking harder than necessary. *(With outstretched arm.)* Tomorrow I'll be floating out there.

MISS ISENBARN Baby will weep.

SIEBENMARK She will?

MISS ISENBARN I think you'll be back, those steamers are so punctual.

SIEBENMARK Thank God — fairly so . . . are you glad? But it doesn't matter. I'm no expert on the future and I don't engage anyone's emotions for a certain date.

MISS ISENBARN By that time I'll probably be sensible again — and anything like today mustn't happen again.

SIEBENMARK Why not — as long as over and over — how did you put it? — sensible.

MISS ISENBAUM It won't happen again. Today there might have been almost enough to make something good, but what shall I do

with it today! Didn't you want to think up some comparison in my honour? Have you thought of one?

SIEBENMARK Yes, listen! The rushing of the water behind the hull of the boat always sounded to me like the roar of groundless, eternally obstinate irrationality, through which we must painfully pick our path.

MISS ISENBARN But wasn't it supposed to have something to do with me?

SIEBENMARK That's coming. Since you've been with me the uncanniness of the world has become nothing but your background to my mind. Ten mutual commandments arise between us in the midst of chaos. The ten commandments meant for me nail up the mystical world with definite demands and promises — so I can light up every corner of my life like a room — its lengths and limits are assured. That's all right, isn't it? Haven't you come off pretty well?

MISS ISENBARN And isn't there anything uncanny about me for you, isn't there anything strange any longer? — nothing?

SIEBENMARK You know what I mean.

MISS ISENBARN Now I'll tell you how the splashing of water behind the hull of a boat seems to me: it's like the marching and throbbing of the blood in the veins of the greater life around us in which we drift.

SIEBENMARK You know I can't get any picture from that.

MISS ISENBARN Shouldn't one be ashamed to lead such a miserable life?

SIEBENMARK Miss Isenbarn, I think you've been dreaming! You're talking nonsense!

MISS ISENBARN I assure you: Today I feel the possibility of the other — the better — and starting tomorrow until the end I think that a half, a third, a quarter of it . . .

SIEBENMARK *(has been listening absently; she is silent)* What? Excuse me, I suddenly remembered an important conference I have tomorrow morning.

MISS ISENBARN An important . . .

SIEBENMARK Why yes, with Puttforks & Co. The boss is still making trouble, but I've thought up a plan, and that's how it'll work.

MISS ISENBARN By the way, just say the word — my money is your money. I talked about it to mother. I can have it any moment — so can you — just say the word. I'm quite serious!

SIEBENMARK Aren't you rather amusingly serious? But we'll talk about it later. Don't be angry, I didn't mean to mock; but a man

has his troubles weighing on his mind; and, aren't my troubles ultimately your troubles too?

MISS IBENBARN But whom shall I tell about *my* troubles? By the way, I *want* to mock.

SIEBENMARK You're right, go ahead and mock until you feel good again. I console myself with the thought that I'm your governor after all. Come — let's go on, it's getting dark, and the wind you love has become cold. *(They disappear.)*

(Enter Bolz and Mrs. Keferstein.)

MRS. KEFERSTEIN Through no fault of mine — you!

BOLZ Ayah — as far as that goes — our pastor told us this morning to put our spiritual books in order on festive days like this, and to check whether by any chance we haven't any unpaid debts with our Saviour. But I'm thinking, since my coal comes from England and my accounts are mostly settled with England, and — because England gets along so well with the Saviour, that's for sure, why, they could make out with each other as a lump sum what I've got to pay and to get . . .

MRS. KEFERSTEIN Do keep quiet, that's awful to listen to.

BOLZ I was going to say too, if everybody's going to talk about debts, I'll leave everything the way it is now until some day the big English account is settled. Then in that way the Saviour can get his share — just look — back there that grey shining thing, that's the Elbe, and the place where that church steeple stands is the Braak, my boat's tied up there, and way at the back is the tower of Buxtehude.

MRS. KEFERSTEIN Do you travel far?

BOLZ Nope, at my age I don't look after nothing but the coastal shipping — well, a bit up to Denmark and down to Holland — and like that. If your husband needs some coal again, keep me in mind. Dependable service, ma'am — de-pen-da-ble! Here's my card.

MRS. KEFERSTEIN Do you think he saw anything?

BOLZ Who — that little fellow who was stalking around in the bushes? Don't even think of it!

MRS. KEFERSTEIN He saw everything, believe me.

BOLZ Well, then he got his fun out of it, same as us!

MRS. KEFERSTEIN He looked offended.

BOLZ Well, it's a funny thing, too — all at once . . .

MRS. KEFERSTEIN *(nudges him. A shot is heard)* What was that? A shot? *(They listen.)*

BOLZ Heavens, what a noise. It was down there not far from our spot.

MRS. KEFERSTEIN Oh God, that young man . . . I hope nothing happened to him.

BOLZ What the devil could have . . .

MRS. KEFERSTEIN Don't you hear anything?

BOLZ Nope, but maybe we should have a look down there, let's go a bit closer, it could be a silly joke; there are lots of people who don't know how to behave decently. *(They walk down; as they are disappearing Voss is heard calling.)*

VOSS Come over here quickly, there's a man lying in the bushes, come on over here. *(A gust of wind.)*

III

(Inside the inn of Lüttenbargen, low ceiling; dusk. Through the windows one can see a steamer passing on the Elbe. From the right to the middle of the room there is a bar; a person can reach both its corners; its corner post, approximately in the middle of the room, serves as a support for the beams of the room above. At the wall one can open a flap-door in the countertop, and behind the bar there is a door leading to the interior of the house, to the kitchen and the staircase to the upper rooms. The outside door is to the left. The last daylight from outside falls on four or five tables. The window panes are slightly clouded, tobacco smoke lingers in the air, forming layers and floating across the heads of the guests who are seated having coffee. Jan, the innkeeper, serves them awkwardly. One can see that he does this only on Sundays. His wife, Thinka, is busy behind the bar; Stine the maid, in her Sunday best, is moving about between the tables. Three adolescents are putting their heads together over their cups and talking in low voices. Griewank is sitting at the same table listening inconspicuously.)

FIRST ADOLESCENT I simply can't believe such a thing! *(Goes on murmuring)* You see, things are happening which a God has no right to permit. I'd treat him like a Negro does his idol, I'd spit at him . . .

SECOND ADOLESCENT You've had religious experience, every word shows it.

ANOTHER GUEST What's the matter here? *(to Jan)* Am I going to get my coffee soon? I want to take the steamer . . .

JAN Oh, you c'n drink lots o' coffee before that — but please be

patient, we've had a bit o' trouble. You see, a man sprained his ankle, up in the dunes. I guess it ain't too bad. *(Eyeing the ceiling.)* He's lyin' there — upstairs. Here, Sir, here's your coffee.

GUEST How on earth can you sprain your ankle in the sand! Nonsense!

JAN Ayah — I dunno neither. They brought him in through the back door, an' they was holdin' him up. He's pretty mad — guess he's in pain.

BOLZ *(coming down from upstairs through the inner door, to Thinka)* Nothin' much, just a bit bloody, let him get some sleep. Gimme a glass o' beer an' two bits worth o' liquor. *(sits down with Griewank)* Hi, Asmus.

(Griewank nods. Mrs. Keferstein and Voss also enter through the inner door. Thinka talks to them hurriedly. They come out from behind the bar and sit down separately.)

MRS. KEFERSTEIN *(to Jan as he brings her coffee)* When does the last boat get into Hamburg?

JAN This is the last, but you c'n easily finish your coffee.

MRS. KEFERSTEIN What are you doing *(softly)* with that one upstairs?

JAN Take it easy, I'll see to everything.

THIRD YOUTH As far as I'm concerned I refuse to believe in God, until He can be demonstrated scientifically.

SECOND YOUTH What? Are you crazy?

THIRD YOUTH That's beside the point; if there *is* a God, you've got to be able to believe even if you're crazy. Or aren't lunatics supposed to have any God — h'm? What I say is: demonstrate! In the test tube and with doors locked — not before! I want you to know that I'm a vegetarian! Eating meat leads to tyranny!

(Finishes his coffee in a fury. It is getting darker, Thinka puts on the light. Siebenmark and Miss Isenbarn enter and sit down. They look around and listen.)

BOLZ *(to the youths)* Gentlemen, please don't take no offence but God ain't almighty.

SECOND YOUTH He is too!

BOLZ *(forcefully)* Then I'll ask you somethin': Can he steer North-South? You see, he can't do that.

GRIEWANK I'll tell you what's the matter with your North-South. Look, Peter, you don't even know what a fathead you are, an' if you knew that, then you wouldn't be a fathead. *(To the youths.)* If he knows how stupid he is, then he ain't stupid. But if he ain't

stupid, then he can't know he's stupid. That's the way it is with his North-South. You see, Peter, just that!

SIEBENMARK *(to Jan)* What do I owe you?

MISS ISENBARN Must we . . . ?

SIEBENMARK Hadn't we better go to the landing? The steamer's bound to come any minute — here . . .

MISS ISENBARN I find it wonderful here!

SIEBENMARK To listen to that nonsense? I'm telling you, they won't stop for a long time. They're only starting.

MISS ISENBARN *(to Jan)* Is it time?

JAN *(looks out of the window)* Nothin' to be seen yet, Miss. I'll just quickly put on the landin' lights — I'll be right back. *(About to go out, Jan meets Engholm who has snow flakes on his hat and coat.)*

ENGHOLM Thank heavens, I'm not too late — or has the steamer left? *(Takes off his glasses.)*

JAN Might come any moment, Sir; or else it might take some time, the weather seems to be terrible.

(Exit Jan. Engholm sits down and nods to Siebenmark. Wind is heard and snow hitting the window.)

BOLZ *(putting money on the table; to Griewank)* My boat's pretty good but my man who runs it does pretty silly things sometimes. I'd better have a look.

GRIEWANK You still runnin' your old Hosiannah?

BOLZ Why not? What you got against it?

GRIEWANK I was just thinkin', when a man gets himself a new wife, he can give up that old tub — when's the wedding?

BOLZ Not for a long time — so long!

GRIEWANK Well, so long then.

BOLZ Evenin', gentlemen. *(Bows and walks out past Mrs. Keferstein.)*

MISS ISENBARN I wish the steamer wouldn't come yet.

SIEBENMARK Your mother will be worried if we're late.

MISS ISENBARN My mother has only one fear, that I might inherit her life. She's had to sit in a snailshell all her life, and so she chased me out and said, It's better to break all your bones than sit in a cage. Yes, that's true; she really gave birth to me, you might say, only after my father's death when I was ten years old.

SIEBENMARK You're in such a good mood I really wish the steamer would hurry up and come.

JAN *(comes back with turned up collar)* You've got lots o' time, folks; the steamer ain't even in Klosterdieck yet.

ENGHOLM But where is it?
JAN Yeh, Mister, where the devil *is* it?
THINKA Don't talk such silly nonsense, Jan!
JAN *(to Engholm)* Ask my wife, Sir, she'll know the answer. I don't want to say anythin' about your wife, but my Thinka's a darn clever woman, Sir. There's still plenty o' snow in the air, an' even a night owl like Captain Pickenpack can't see through it.
(The guests are uneasy, some look out, others order beverages.)
THINKA *(to Jan, softly)* Jan, I think I hear him knockin' up there; you go up and have a look at the little fellow. I ain't got the time.
JAN Girlie, I ain't got any more time'n you. I ast him whether he wants something to drink, and he said "no" — no, he didn't say nothin' 'tall.
VOICES FROM VARIOUS TABLES Do you have any hot water — so we could maybe have a little grog?
OTHER VOICES Two! Three! But make it stiff!
(Activity at the bar.)
ENGHOLM *(sits down restlessly beside Voss)* My little boy's had a terribly long illness, it's left him half-dead, and today it really seemed as if we had turned the corner — my wife herself told me to get out a little. But I didn't really enjoy myself.
VOSS *(passes his hand over his mouth)* Uh huh.
ENGHOLM I suppose your children are grown up?
VOSS Yes, all of them.
ENGHOLM I really can't imagine that — you build a world for those little miracles, as if you were God Himself, you stuff them with your own sacrifices, and they snatch and snap and digest the incredibilities like geese for the market with their feed. Yes, but to think that grown-ups — like — like — join me in a grog?
VOSS Sure, why not? *(Engholm orders.)* Forget about your fatherly worries. There are other teachers in the world besides us: they have nerve. Let me tell you, you'd throw up if you really knew what those children will have to go through — you'd go out and be sick. Just let time take a little jump, and all of us with it. And now your son's lying there above us with a bullet in his chest. Your son, and you know nothing about it.
ENGHOLM Hey, what's the idea?
VOSS The thought makes you sick to your stomach, doesn't it?
ENGHOLM A horrible idea, but only an idea.
VOSS What happened to the man upstairs —
ENGHOLM What *did* happen?

VOSS Your son — let's say *a* son killed himself this afternoon — well, things didn't get quite that far, but he's lying upstairs.

ENGHOLM Terrible.

VOSS Your hair's standing on end, but not very straight, because it isn't your son after all. Otherwise your teeth would chatter. Do you see the kind of desolation we're bringing our children to? Don't you know the story of the man who wanted to kill the whole world because it wasn't good enough for him? But how was he to do it? Then it occurred to him to start with himself, at the other end, so to speak, but who was going to do the rest?

ENGHOLM Were you that man? What was the point?

VOSS *(with a movement of his arm)* Point? Room for better men. Room, man, room! Make new ones, make new ones!

ENGHOLM Well, would you sacrifice yourself if it would make the world better — to save it; would you let yourself be crucified?

(One hears loud knocking on the floor in the upper room.)

ENGHOLM What was that?

VOSS The fellow up there — if you're bent on sacrifices, maybe he's one!

(Thinka hurries out.)

VOICES What was that?

JAN We've got another guest up there in that room — he's a little impatient, probably wants somethin' to drink.

VOICES A knocking guest.

(Miss Isenbarn and Siebenmark have been sitting and saying little.)

SIEBENMARK Don't I still owe you an answer?

MISS ISENBARN Yes, I've been wondering about that. Otherwise you never let business —

SIEBENMARK Of course. Still, this thing made me feel a little funny. You see, it's this way — whether you have money or are sure to get some, under certain circumstances, in business, that's the same thing. You want to help me — fine — but actually you've already helped me. I can figure as if —

MISS ISENBARN But I didn't want to help you at all.

SIEBENMARK What do you mean?

MISS ISENBARN *(getting stubborn)* I can't explain that so simply. *(Impetuously.)* You were a man in whom my little bit of self was to be absorbed — right? But I always wanted to show you . . . never mind; think of my moods! Didn't I make a display, didn't I practically unmask myself before you? All that flowed into you like a brook into the sea. Nothing disturbs your calm. Now I'm ashamed!

JAN *(talking to guests)* The steamer ain't passed Klosterdieck yet; that's all.

A DRUNKARD Passed what?

JAN Yeh, nothin' I c'n help.

THE DRUNKARD No help from Jan, Jan puts his hands in his pockets and keeps his bowels warm in his belly. Jan, Jan, what a hobgoblin you are.

JAN *(to Griewank who is about to leave)* Goin' home, Asmus? Can't you take these folks with you? If that steamer don't come how'm I gonna manage with all these people? And from your place they c'n easily have a horse an' buggy take 'em to the train at Buxtehude.

GRIEWANK Oh, my dear man . . .

(Engholm speaks to Griewank.)

SIEBENMARK Landlord — a word with you!

JAN Ten if you want, Sir, just come over here if you'll be so kind. *(They go behind the bar.)*

ENGHOLM *(to Voss, who is still sitting over his grog)* It's really terrible, I don't know what to do. What will you do?

VOSS Wait, Sir, copy me, wait, until the world gets better by itself. *(There is another knock from above.)*

ENGHOLM Oh yes — and that thing up there as well, I'd already forgotten about it.

(Miss Isenbarn approaches.)

VOSS Yeh, you see, he hasn't got a doctor and a bed in his father's home like your son.

ENGHOLM Do you suppose he's in pain?

VOSS Ask him, but be careful; I nearly got the boot-jack thrown at my head — he seems quite rabid.

ENGHOLM But he seems to be asking for help.

VOSS Sure, sure. Go ahead upstairs.

ENGHOLM What are you thinking of? I've got to try to take care of myself — otherwise, gladly — really.

MISS ISENBARN Why, who is he?

VOSS An Easter lamb, Miss. But he's still kicking — and he's picked himself up again. But it can start again at any moment.

MISS ISENBARN What can start again?

VOSS Why he was the shooter himself — he probably needs two bullets.

MISS ISENBARN And you left him the gun? Tell me — what does he look like?

VOSS Not appetizing; — he'd been lying in the mud and rolled in it. Collar undone — and blood — blood, young lady!

MISS ISENBARN Was it a young man?

VOSS But he's not photogenic.

SIEBENMARK *(approaching)* You . . .

MISS ISENBARN *(to Voss)* Why are you leaving him alone? How can you?

VOSS Ha, how can you! He's frothing, he's spitting, he's kicking.

MISS ISENBARN Well?

VOSS The thing is — he's ashamed of me — for a moment he was bawling right in front of my eyes. He can't forgive me for that, so I'd better stay here.

SIEBENMARK Listen, we have to make up our minds fast. I spoke to the innkeeper just now. He . . .

MISS ISENBARN Did you hear?

SIEBENMARK What?

MISS ISENBARN About that man upstairs who shot himself?

SIEBENMARK Yes, the innkeeper dropped some remark about it — now pay attention, we have to start out on foot, maybe the steamer won't come at all; the landlord assured me it's still possible at low tide, if we keep along the shore as far as — eh —. The old man lives there and from there —

MISS ISENBARN I hear a sound as if somebody upstairs . . .

ENGHOLM I hear it too.

VOSS That's Jan's voice, ladies and gentlemen, nothing else — he wants to have quiet guests, that's all, and he *can* scold if necessary.

SIEBENMARK Now please, we can't let such things delay us.

VOSS Listen, he's scolding back.

SIEBENMARK See? He's causing trouble for these people on top of everything else. It's a good sign by the way, if a man still has the courage to scold like that.

GRIEWANK *(steps forward)* Ayah, I guess I'm ready to . . .

SIEBENMARK Yes, just one moment. *(to Miss Isenbarn)* You're ready, aren't you?

MISS ISENBARN Listen, he's still got his gun with him up there, that won't do.

SIEBENMARK It's not likely. *(Draws Miss Isenbarn to the side.)* We can't let ourselves get involved in all this.

MISS ISENBARN "We — ourselves!"

SIEBENMARK Never mind — after all, we can't be of any help to him. *(The guests, among them Mrs. Keferstein, have got ready and are standing at the door with Griewank.)* Now look, all these

people know what's the matter up there — and no one pays any attention. They're waiting for us. We have no choice, because something has evidently happened to the steamer. And the landlord says it's the best thing we can do.

MISS ISENBARN Those? — surely we don't count ourselves — among those!

SIEBENMARK We — ourselves? We can be glad that we may — getting away from here tomorrow morning will be too late for me.

ENGHOLM *(desperately)* Are you going too, or will you take the chance that the steamer might come after all? What do you say?

SIEBENMARK Getting out, definitely!

ENGHOLM Then we mustn't let ourselves be delayed; come on!

MISS ISENBARN He also says: "we — ourselves." Who's included? Do you like it? I don't.

SIEBENMARK *(in a changed voice)* And what if we did let those people go? Then it would probably be too late to leave today.

MISS ISENBARN We can easily follow them.

SIEBENMARK Good. *(To Griewank)* Just go ahead, we'll be ready in no time.

(Everyone bows and they disappear. Engholm, Voss, Siebenmark and Miss Isenbarn remain.)

JAN *(comes down the stairs, to Thinka)* That little guy nearly threw me out o' my own house.

MISS ISENBARN How are you going to take care of him?

JAN Me? No, Miss, that'll all take care of itself. First I'll pester him, until he goes to sleep, and then I'll settle down near him on the sofa — he isn't goin' to hang himself today.

SIEBENMARK You see how well he's being looked after.

VOSS Right, Sir, quite right; whether he likes it or not, he's got to like it. Most certainly.

JAN Well, folks, if you finished thinkin' things over . . . I c'n give you a lantern to take with you, so you'll be able to go faster. *(Exit.)*

ENGHOLM If you'll be so kind!

SIEBENMARK If the idea of that man torments you so much, I'll make some arrangements with the owner; he'll be treated like a cousin of mine, that's enough for you, isn't it? If "we" trouble "ourselves" with him, it's bound to be something special. "We — Ourselves" — eh?

(Jan enters with the lantern.)

SIEBENMARK *(to Jan, handing him his card)* Here's my address, do whatever you can for the man up there; I'll take care of it — understand?

JAN Don't worry, I know what I've got to do.

VOSS Nonsense, stop this nonsense; he's the gentleman's cousin, the gentleman wants to spend some money on him and he can afford it.

ENGHOLM *(taking the lantern)* Are you going to waste my precious time? *(plaintively)* For God's sake, let's go, I assure you what you're talking about makes me feel quite sick.

SIEBENMARK Then run along — my *dear* Sir — don't wait for us.

ENGHOLM But why should I run along when you're still standing here?

SIEBENMARK I have two more minutes, my own time, you know, not yours!

(Engholm hurries out.)

JAN *(takes the piece of paper)* Well, Sir, if that's the way it's got to be; but if I'm not keepin' you, I'd like to know, should I take him to your rooms tomorrow if he's your cousin?

SIEBENMARK *(furious)* He's not my cousin, not the slightest relationship . . .

JAN He ain't mine either, I c'n say that with a clear conscience.

ENGHOLM *(looking in)* To the right or the left? You can't see any trace of the others any longer.

JAN Straight ahead, always East!

ENGHOLM East, where is East around here? *(Comes in.)*

JAN *(points toward the wall)* Out there — an' then — upstream!

ENGHOLM *(wiping his forehead)* Upstream — how can I in this darkness . . . Why don't you tell me whether to go to the right or to the left when I'm outside?

SIEBENMARK *(interrupting)* Anybody trespassing on my property will be prosecuted. You'd better tell *him* that too *(with a gesture upward)*. I bind you to that — or else . . .

MISS ISENBARN *(takes the card out of Jan's hand and puts it in her pocket)* You've misheard . . . How can you think that *we* allow *ourselves* to be so annoyed. *(To Siebenmark)* There, now I'm ready.

(Walks to the threshold.)

SIEBENMARK What was that — how so, my dear? Tell me — isn't that man up there actually dead? Surely that was what he wanted. You're the one who always brings in spiritual values, and makes such a fuss over this accidental existence — is that remainder still a human being? What has a living person to do with him; his own life can't be of any value to him any longer!

MISS ISENBARN Terrible — what you're saying.

SIEBENMARK What's the matter? — You're trembling, sit down.
MISS ISENBARN You know, the whole time things were whispering inside of me, and now you're making them audible with your hands.
SIEBENMARK Come on now! You only have to be reasonable — would you like to drink something?
MISS ISENBARN Some water — please, I can't walk at the moment.
SIEBENMARK It'll pass.
MISS ISENBARN No, no, that was a shock!
ENGHOLM *(to Jan)* Bring a glass of water quickly, man! Don't you see that otherwise we won't get away at all?
(Jan hurries out.)
MISS ISENBARN Can life become such a sickness that one rages against it? Can it? And one only makes it worse? No! No! *(Sits down, stamps her feet.)* No, it can't, it mustn't — but — you also said it too; to have to live can be worse than to have to die?
SIEBENMARK What — oh — I didn't mean it like that . . .
MISS ISENBARN *We* didn't understand each other properly, that's why. But give me time, I can't walk now.
(Jan with water.)
SIEBENMARK *(takes the glass)* Here, have some water.
MISS ISENBARN Never mind, I don't want any right now.
ENGHOLM *(to Voss)* She doesn't want any — waiting at such a moment until someone wants to drink water!
SIEBENMARK *(looks at Engholm and smiles faintly)* In such a situation *we* have to know how to compose *ourselves* — if you knew what it can mean for me, tomorrow morning — to keep waiting — here.

IV

(Narrow platform leading to the rooms of the upper storey. In the foreground the staircase ends at the bottom, winding in such a way that for a moment one sees the faces of people ascending; further up, the ascending person appears from the side. In the back wall there is a door to Hans Iver's room; another door is in the right wall between the staircase and the back wall. On the left, darkness meets the eye; there the attic of the annex to the house starts; one can vaguely distinguish slanted beams, roof tiles lying on rafters. Various kinds of trash are illuminated when a light is carried past; the chimney leading up from the kitchen is half-hidden like a shaky pillar. Engholm comes up the stairs with a light; at that moment the back door opens, and Hans Iver, cleaned up in makeshift fashion, trying to appear casual, comes out and tries to descend past Engholm.)

ENGHOLM Can I help you in any way?

IVER Thank you, very kind of you — but — thank you really. *(About to go.)*

ENGHOLM *(bars his way timidly)* Didn't you feel sick a while ago?

IVER Just for a while — I'm better now.

ENGHOLM You should maybe be a little more careful . . .

IVER But — Sir, I don't even know you.

ENGHOLM My name is Engholm.

IVER *(introducing himself)* Buttermann — pleased to meet you, Mr. Engelmann. *(Shakes his hand and begins to descend.)* I want to get to the steamer.

ENGHOLM That won't work, you see probably none of us can get away before tomorrow morning.

IVER You don't say, I have my return ticket in my pocket.

ENGHOLM You misunderstand me; evidently something's happened to the boat, we'll simply have to stay here.

IVER Maybe you — not I.

ENGHOLM Don't be silly, you can't even get down the stairs.

IVER Did you invest any money in my legs? Well then, why are you worried about my hams?

ENGHOLM You're staggering!

IVER Imagination!

ENGHOLM You see, without me you'd have fallen.

IVER Well, then it's no use — put me under lock and key.

ENGHOLM *(leads him into the room of which a part of the bed, chairs, a mirror are visible)* Won't you lie down?

IVER *(sitting)* Don't have to — but if you could get me a little something — hot and strong?

ENGHOLM A grog — is that it?

IVER Don't you hear anything? Doesn't your heart ever creak? Just as if crows were flying around a church tower somewhere very far away — yes, get me a grog.

ENGHOLM Of course, that's the right thing.

(Comes to the front and begins to descend; when half out of sight, he hears the key being turned in the lock, the door is closed. He comes back.) Mr. . . . Buttermann — another word please. *(Silence.)* Listen to me — don't be silly, what's the meaning of that? *(Silence.)* For God's sake, open the door.

IVER *(inside)* I've no time!

ENGHOLM But why are you locking yourself in? *(He shakes the door, desperately.)* That something like this has to happen to me! Open up! You hear me? *(Silence. He tries to look through the key-hole, then runs hastily to the stairs, calls)* Landlord! *(Waits and descends half-way.)* Get the landlord to come up quickly, there'll be a disaster!

(Siebenmark appears with Miss Isenbarn.)

ENGHOLM *(points to the door)* He's locked himself in.

SIEBENMARK Is that all? Why, you're quite beside yourself.

ENGHOLM Through the key-hole, I . . .

SIEBENMARK What's he doing?

ENGHOLM I couldn't see anything clearly — where's the landlord?

SIEBENMARK His wife is fetching him, he went to the pigs in the barn.

ENGHOLM Listen!

SIEBENMARK I don't know what that means. Look around, see if there isn't some kind of tool around — a crow-bar or something. Don't be so fidgety, you make me nervous.

ENGHOLM *(searching in the attic with the light. He comes upon "pretty Emil", is startled and illuminates him. It is a stuffed cloth doll, larger than life, the head made of grey burlap with painted eyes, a cork for a nose, eye-glasses of wire, hay for hair and a beard, and sticks stuck in the fingers of the gloves. He touches it and drops it. Then he kicks it with his feet onto the landing.)* Good Heavens, what a monster! A ghost!

JAN *(comes up hurriedly, grips the door knob and calls)* You won't be able to open the window, I've locked it on the outside,

Mister. *(to the others)* I saw him from the yard posing at the window. Some guests fly too high. *(Calls inside.)* You just stay inside, you'll catch cold in your rear end.

(The door is unlocked. Jan opens it. Iver is seen sitting on a chair. Jan and Engholm enter, Siebenmark and Miss Isenbarn remain at the door.)

JAN *(shaking the window)* You see? This door says: nope — matter of fact, I gave it a good broad hint just now.

IVER *(points at Siebenmark)* Your colleague, perhaps, Mr. Engelmann? *(To Siebenmark)* My name is Buttermann.

SIEBENMARK *(approaches)* Siebenmark!

IVER You look familiar to me, your name could be Zwieback. Judging by your double backside, that *is* your name — isn't there someone else there?

SIEBENMARK The lady?

IVER The lady? The lady evidently wishes to remain in the shadow and she's quite right — no — who's that hanging around on the floor back there — another colleague, Mr. Engelmann?

ENGHOLM Engholm — Engholm — not Engelmann. The one back there. *(to Jan)* Fetch that monster to satisfy Mr. Buttermann.

JAN Why, that's pretty Emil — if the folks wish to have a bit o' comp'ny *(drags in pretty Emil)* he's only made o' rags.

IVER Then the company is complete.

JAN He ain't as bad as he looks, he's mostly got cork in his body, and straw in his head — they was a couple o' painters around last year, they came every week, had a lot of fun together; they made pretty Emil. Then, on the Sunday before Whitsuntide, they dropped him into the water, and the people havin' coffee on the shore thought it was a corpse floatin' along an' fetched a boat to save pretty Emil.

IVER Why do you call him pretty Emil?

JAN That was our waiter's name, an' Molly, Molly's the servant girl, Molly said that he was just as pretty as our Emil. So that's what we call him. He c'n sit — see? *(Makes pretty Emil sit on a chair.)*

IVER Let him sit next to me; if he really has cork in his body he's a ragamuffin only on the outside, I wish I were like him in that respect. *(To Engholm.)* You were going to get some grog; *(To Jan.)* or maybe you'll bring up something to drink? Perhaps Mr. Zwieback will have a glass as well? And if the lady isn't too proud . . .

SIEBENMARK *(exchanging glances with Miss Isenbarn)* You'll see . . . we won't be proud.

(Miss Isenbarn sits down at the door outside the room. Jan disappears.)

IVER It seems to me we're a cozy little group — no spoil-sport among us?

SIEBENMARK No fear of that.

IVER *(to Engholm)* What do you think of our pretty Emil, won't you put handcuffs on him? You've got some with you, haven't you?

ENGHOLM *(takes out his card)* Would you please convince yourself that I am no other than I claim to be, if that's any comfort to you.

IVER *(reads)* Dr. Karl Engholm, chemist. Thanks, but how should that comfort me? Did *you* ever kill anyone?

ENGHOLM In any case I have no handcuffs with me, and my only task is to save you from your own uneasiness.

SIEBENMARK We aren't watching confessions nor sounding you out. But if you want to get rid of a burden, you'll find us all amicably disposed and understanding.

IVER Amicably — is it? Isn't it just as possible that I haven't been up to anything at all? But no, of course — you're right.

SIEBENMARK As you like. But after what we know about you it might be the best thing to confide in us.

(Jan comes with a tray full of steaming glasses.)

IVER I'll tell you something, Mr. Zwieback — why confide? *(with a hasty negative gesture.)* I know, I know, for God's sake, I know everything you could explain in ten years — but that's just it, those few words would be quite enough; our mutual confidence is just as good an invention as a songbook for songbirds. Each of them pipes the way it's made. Oh well — here's the grog, just pass it around, right around.

JAN *(handing a glass to each of them)* The travelling lady's here too.

ENGHOLM Who?

JAN The woman, you know — why, *you* know — the woman. She left with old Griewank an' the others — it got too wet for her on the way, an' now she wants to spend the night here — well, Sir, you won't mind a drop for pretty Emil as well, we'll drink from the same glass. Your health, an' may you all have a good night under my roof. *(They clink glasses.)*

SIEBENMARK How so, Mr. Buttermann — I'd like to know why we couldn't sing together in confidence.

IVER Since when is it Buttermann, if you please?

SIEBENMARK So your name isn't Buttermann?

IVER How would I get such a name?

SIEBENMARK So it was your pleasure to fib — don't get so excited — obviously a bagatelle.

IVER Buttermann is dead.

SIEBENMARK If you'd only have a little confidence I could talk you out of this idea of being dead, in fifteen minutes.

IVER Why do people always take you for one of their kind — Buttermann!!

SIEBENMARK May I ask, if you're dead against being a banal Buttermann — what kind of a man are you, or rather, what kind of a man would you like to be?

IVER Don't you ever have any bright moments, Mr. Zwieback?

SIEBENMARK How so — when?

IVER Well, any time. I assume you know what a beaten, buttery, bigotted thing you are. I can presume that, can't I? Eh?

SIEBENMARK Assume anything you like.

IVER Well then, don't you ever have moments when you, a poor relation, see the lofty lord in his splendour sail past? What I mean is: You feel it within yourself, as if something were approaching you with which you begin to sense a relationship. Your heart stops, you gasp for air, and you bellow like a beast in your misery. You — Mr. Zwieback — don't you sometimes bellow at your misery too?

SIEBENMARK In my misery as the poor relation of a lofty lord?

IVER Right. Say yes, and I'll have confidence in you.

SIEBENMARK *(pats pretty Emil on the shoulder)* Fine, that's the only right answer!

IVER How so, what does he say?

SIEBENMARK He keeps silent, obviously he's thoroughly bewildered — it's agreed that he belongs to the company, isn't it? Naturally he has a seat and a vote.

IVER Then your opinion's the same as that of a straw man?

SIEBENMARK Exactly; better to be a full straw man than an empty wind bag.

IVER Wind bag? So that would be my case — maybe — yes — empty, quite empty, unpositive, negative — yet full of desire and hope. But what can a straw man hope for, he's full! *(To Engholm)* Intellectual conversation, isn't it?

ENGHOLM I wasn't listening.

IVER You've better things to think of?

ENGHOLM I have to keep thinking of how my boy is doing. The

cleverer the things you say, the stupider you seem to me; *(furiously)* the whole salvation business is revolting rubbish!

IVER Have *you* killed anyone yet?

ENGHOLM Well, have you?

IVER Sssh! We aren't talking about me. Surely no one's conscience, I guess, is entirely free from a small murder.

ENGHOLM Oh, such sophistries!

IVER Have you an entirely clear conscience? Well, of course, you don't wish to say it, but has everything always been done quite elegantly?

ENGHOLM You are talking about a little murder!

IVER Well, I haven't killed anyone either with an axe. Don't you feel that no one may treat his neighbour as his equal without committing a small murder? Oh well — fiddlesticks, the wind bag is on the go. Finish your drinks! *(to Jan)* We'll have another one. *(Jan exits with the glasses.)*

SIEBENMARK *(to Miss Isenbarn)* If it's getting too cold for you, my dear, you must say so.

(Miss Isenbarn ignores the endearment. Jan is heard downstairs talking with Mrs. Keferstein. They come up the stairs.)

MRS. KEFERSTEIN Oh Lord, I'm drenched, I'm sure I've got chills and fever.

JAN *(points to the closed second door)* That room is assigned to these guests — *(pointing to Siebenmark and Miss Isenbarn)* we've only got this one there left. *(points to Iver's room.)*

MRS. KEFERSTEIN *(approaches)* I have regular shivers. *(Posing)* I can't tell you what I went through; all along through water up to my knees! *(shows her legs.)* At least I can put something dry on my feet, eh? The landlady was going to be so kind and . . .

STINE Mrs. Timmermann sends the stockin's, and she said the lady'd better put on two pairs while she's at it — and here's the slippers. *(Puts down a pair of wooden slippers.)*

MRS. KEFERSTEIN Into these? Oh my Lord! Well then, excuse me for a minute. *(Disappears in the other room.)*

JAN *(aside with Siebenmark)* You don't have to worry at all, Auntie's not to disturb you. Just let me see to that. Everything's O.K.

MISS ISENBARN *(rises)* I'll say good night.

SIEBENMARK So early, can you go to sleep already? At least wait until she's through in there; let's go downstairs for a minute.

JAN The lady's most likely fed up with your neighbour, a thing like that sticks in your crop like a piece o' smoked eel.

SIEBENMARK Do you think he's really wounded? I think he's putting on an act, megalomania or something like that.

JAN Well, if you want me to speak, I'd say he's got somethin' in him that don't belong there. But if he goes on drinkin', he'll soon calm down — so, if you ain't worried otherwise, *(slyly)* you don't have to be afraid of him. *(Goes into Iver's room.)*

MISS ISENBARN What does he mean?

SIEBENMARK He's a boor; but I have to take the responsibility, there's no question about that. My risk! Those were pretty broad hints which you mustn't blame him for. Yes, the room is ours — you should understand that and decide!

MISS ISENBARN But surely not this minute.

SIEBENMARK Oh yes! This minute! With one word you can wipe out everything that came between us today. Can you hesitate? No one ever had the chance you have now to change evil into good with one breath.

MRS. KEFERSTEIN *(appears in wooden slippers, her hair down, without bodice, arms bare, a shawl around her shoulder; happy as a lark, she stamps on the floor to practice walking in her slippers, and comes into Hans Iver's room)* Have you got a spot for a poor old woman — I can't show myself downstairs like this. *(Sees pretty Emil.)* Good God, what kind of man is that? If there's a dance tonight, he'll have to dance with me. *(Shakes hands with Hans Iver.)* That's the idea: don't let them get you down. I'll sit on the bed if you don't mind.

JAN *(to Mrs. Keferstein)* I'll take your things into the kitchen to dry. *(Goes into the room to fetch the wet clothing.)*

MISS ISENBARN Leave the door open, I'll go right in.

JAN *(startled)* The lady seems to be mighty tired . . .

MISS ISENBARN *(to Siebenmark)* Have him tell the woman — *(pointing to Mrs. Keferstein)* that I will definitely stay . . . in the room . . .

SIEBENMARK You don't wish to be disturbed by anyone under any circumstances — do I understand you correctly?

MISS ISENBARN Yes, be kind enough to remember it. Until tomorrow morning — under no circumstances. Goodnight.

SIEBENMARK Goodnight — but you haven't had any supper.

(Miss Isenbarn makes a negative gesture and closes the door.)

JAN *(to Siebenmark while both slowly descend the stairs)* In the catechism it says "But whosoever loves me and keeps my commandments, to him will I do good." As a boy I used to wonder why Mr. Whosoever was just the one to love him and keep his command-

ments. You see, Sir, those women are as full o' mysteries as the catechism — but as time goes on, you get into them, that's for your consolation. *(Both disappear.)*

MRS. KEFERSTEIN If girls behave like women, why shouldn't a woman behave like a girl?

IVER Is your husband downstairs?

MRS. KEFERSTEIN Are you out of your mind — my husband?

IVER Yes, the one who was with you on the heath.

ENGHOLM The lady's really travelling all alone. I know it for certain.

IVER Do you see the index finger?

MRS. KEFERSTEIN Yours?

IVER No — there — there — everywhere. Aren't you an honest woman? But three people know better — the man whom I dreamt up on the heath and who carried me through the sand . . .

MRS. KEFERSTEIN He won't tell anybody — so there!

IVER And I — I won't tell anybody either.

MRS. KEFERSTEIN And the third one?

IVER You yourself!

MRS. KEFERSTEIN Well, she'll be the last one to tell anybody.

IVER But tell me this at least, isn't your honesty a good-looking corpse? The index finger points to corpses — don't you see anything yet? But you'll have to come along to court, there's no way out. The gentleman *(points to Engholm)* is in the secret service, you see, and now at last he's got me.

MRS. KEFERSTEIN Oh, no, are you connected with that kind of thing? That can be quite a lark! But we aren't that far yet; what am I supposed to do there, I don't know anything! God, I've such a fever, just feel my cheeks! Are you afraid?

IVER All you have to do is testify you met me on the heath, or I met you — and how!

MRS. KEFERSTEIN What have you done?

IVER Stepped on a mouse's tail and tore it off.

MRS. KEFERSTEIN I'm afraid that mouse's tail is hopping around in your head and mixing everything up. Don't worry about it, have a look in the mirror and see what a fine fellow you are.

IVER In the mirror! There they stand and show their teeth and hiss; it's you, it's your own self. They're our mocking shadows in the mirror, they're fellows that make the sun vomit green.

MRS. KEFERSTEIN Heavenly!

IVER *(to Engholm)* Where should I sleep, I have to rest; pains I can hardly bear. Please constable, help me.

ENGHOLM Won't you stay where you are?
IVER You give the orders.
ENGHOLM *(sighing)* Oh my little sick Hal, I wish I were with you.
IVER Hal is his name?
ENGHOLM Harold, we call him Hal.
MRS. KEFERSTEIN Oh my, how sad — but just feel my pulse, I'll catch my death of cold if I don't get a proper bed, I really must get into a good sweat.
IVER Does the index finger molest you? Well — I haven't said anything. Of course you want to have my bed. Forgive me if I spit but I have a disgusting taste on my tongue.
MRS. KEFERSTEIN Of what?
IVER Of too much jabbering! Is it a deal, do you keep the room?
MRS. KEFERSTEIN If you feel well enough . . .
ENGHOLM My dear Sir . . .
IVER Haven't you anything to smoke? I have to get rid of that stale taste of myself. Let's leave the room to the lady and her honest corpse. They must sleep well — absolutely — both of them. *(They enter the landing.)*
ENGHOLM *(whispering)* But that's entirely out of place.
IVER I can't take it any longer. The lady seems to me like a favourite racehorse: bang, bang, bang — but under the belly a toothless louse for a conscience. Where are we off to?
ENGHOLM I don't know what to do.
MRS. KEFERSTEIN But I can't keep that awful creature in here — I wouldn't close an eye.
IVER Of course he belongs to us — just throw him out please, right out. *(Pretty Emil is thrown out.)* What about settling down over here on the right? Isn't that a chimney? Nice and warm, God knows — and in other respects not a bad hole, is it?
ENGHOLM There seems to be a decrepit easy-chair, pretty Emil sat on it.
IVER Very good, but dusty — and the wind rattles the roof tiles, listen to it. *(Sits down.)* Just as fat Dr. World used to puff when he put his ear to your chest, and puffed and listened and puffed. He's dead but he was like the world itself, wild and impossible to understand. But when I hear a wind like this I always think it could be the doctor, the world doctor who wants to listen — for God's sake get me a cigarette.

V

(The same place, somewhat later. Hans Iver, sitting between the chimney and the roof in the crooked arm-chair, is smoking. Pretty Emil is lolling on the floor. Mrs. Keferstein's door is closed, as is Miss Isenbarn's. Household noises can be heard from downstairs.)

MRS. KEFERSTEIN *(comes out of the door, as before, in wooden slippers, with her hair loose, a shawl around her shoulder, her arms bare)* All by yourself?

IVER Not quite, you know, we've got rats here; a minute ago one was sniffing at your door — a huge beast, like this! *(shows the size.)*

MRS. KEFERSTEIN And you just sit there?

IVER Well, they don't talk.

MRS. KEFERSTEIN And where's the . . .

IVER Commissioner? Getting some ice for me from downstairs, he's giving me something to smoke up above, and down below I'm supposed to be freezing — *(touches his head and his chest)* half a doctor, you know —

MRS. KEFERSTEIN But you don't have a pillow — I really don't need it, please take it! *(Fetches it.)* There, now raise yourself up; I can't get to sleep, I think I'll have a cup of coffee and see where my things are. Is that better? It's not so bad here.

IVER Do you smoke?

(Mrs. Keferstein takes a cigarette.)

IVER Look, there's that fat rat again.

MRS. KEFERSTEIN Disgusting.

IVER Oh, a rat-life taken as music isn't a note worse than yours: looks for its feed and its pleasure . . .

MRS. KEFERSTEIN I guess you also look for your feed and the other thing.

IVER Yes, yes, I do! But just because I'm a person who's disgusted by it —

MRS. KEFERSTEIN What — and that's why?

IVER Oh, that shouldn't concern you.

ENGHOLM *(comes upstairs with a bowl of ice)* A rat just ran past me — you'd think it was a hundred years old.

IVER *(to Mrs. Keferstein)* Enviable — eh? A hundred years of rattiness!

ENGHOLM When I was a boy on my father's farm I shot them by the dozen.

IVER Good for you! Powder and lead are the best cure for rats. Any superior person is entitled to it.

MRS. KEFERSTEIN I see what you mean.

IVER And?

MRS. KEFERSTEIN You mean yourself, but I must say: thank God that you fainted after the shot, even a rat's life is worth living.

IVER Of course, that's what everybody says; people say: it's worth it. *But just think of those who find us as disgusting as you find these rats — eh?* What about that? It looks nice, the way you blow smoke through your nose. By the way, your neck shows your years, better put something on.

MRS. KEFERSTEIN *(to Engholm)* Are there any people left down there?

ENGHOLM Of course, they're having fun. They're just getting out the record player. The prayer from Lohengrin will be the first record.

MRS. KEFERSTEIN Then I'll run and try to get a coffee. *(Exit.)*

ENGHOLM *(to Iver)* Now then — show me.

IVER What?

ENGHOLM Why, I'm going to put some ice on you. Unbutton your shirt, and let's have a look. *(Brings the light closer and moves a chest to sit on.)*

IVER If you knew what that means: to show! Who knows what it looks like — not even I.

ENGHOLM What if they take you to the hospital tomorrow?

IVER Oh — God forbid! No, don't bother — enough — hands off! For God's sake, I'm almost well, it was a lousy shot, I haven't a trace of fever, I think, and almost no pain — but my heart's racing like mad.

ENGHOLM Now tell me, and I mean this seriously, what did you do? You see, I think you puffed up a little thing into a big bubble out of sheer idealism. Really now, aren't you piling it on a little thick right now?

IVER Certainly, Mr. Chemist, I have a tiny pill of prussic acid in my body.

ENGHOLM Maybe you only think it's prussic acid.

IVER Exactly — it depends on what that certain intestine, the conscience, has to say about it.

ENGHOLM Meanwhile you must have realized that we're not on your trail. Listen: as much as I want to see my Hal alive tomorrow — every heartbeat protests against anything else — it's just as true that we aren't chasing you.

IVER Of course, I've done something, eh?

ENGHOLM My dear sir, that's certainly the obvious conclusion.

IVER A little rascality, no doubt — is that it?

ENGHOLM Which could be explained, corrected and socially obliterated . . .

IVER Explain — understand — that's just it!

ENGHOLM Now tell me honestly: if things really aren't that bad with your — well, let's say — offence, that is: you're not pursued, you're not punishable in a legal sense — what about your self-condemnation in that case? It's moulting; there, you see, you start and agree with me.

IVER Then — you mean my sole motivation would be — fear? *(The record player can be heard downstairs.)*

ENGHOLM *(stopping his ears)* You see, I have a bit of musical conscience in me — and now about that pill of prussic acid — what were you saying — fear? Good God, this is what I think: there's something the matter with you, and if it isn't an unhappy love affair, it can only be some piece of stupidity. And from its "consequences", as they say, you're running — a little far.

IVER And there simply can't be anything else — hm?

ENGHOLM What for example? Or have you lost money? I don't suppose you're a business man?

IVER You know how to hit home! I wonder what you expect in my case — embezzlements, for example?

ENGHOLM Good God, what a sickening whine downstairs, how can you have a sensible conversation with that going on!

IVER You know what? Bring the whole gang up here and then we'll follow up this matter. Seriously — I want to confess, he who has ears to hear, let him hear — Zwieback was going to pull the thorn from my paw a while ago — go and ask him to come up on the run.

ENGHOLM Calm down — why, you're foaming at the mouth.

IVER *(calls)* Mr. Zwieback — Mr. Zwieback!

ENGHOLM That trumpet call will raise the whole house — I'll go, I'll go, but please take it easy.

IVER Hurry up or I'll yell it down the stairs. *(Engholm goes.)* Fresh, good, rotten eggs, spicy, amusing!! You'll get your share, you'll hear what you want to hear!

MRS. KEFERSTEIN *(appears first)* What's the matter, what's happened to you?

IVER I'm supposed to moult — they're looking for witnesses. The murderer wants to make a confession.

MRS. KEFERSTEIN For heaven's sake, then we'll all have to go to court!

IVER Yes, everything will come to light down to the smallest detail, your husband will read everything in the newspaper. You'll have salt sprinkled on your tail so he'll see what kind of bird you are.

(Siebenmark, Voss, Engholm appear, Jan and Stine remain on the staircase. Mrs. Keferstein is about to escape into her room.)

SIEBENMARK Don't you want to listen too?

MRS. KEFERSTEIN I'm tired, I can tell you, if you're going to play Black Jack here — I'm not in the game. *(With a glance at Miss Isenbarn's door)* My conscience is as clear as that lady's, I can go to sleep as fast as she can.

(Slips into her room but allows the door to open gradually wider and wider during the following scene. The record player plays a few more bars, then suddenly runs down.)

IVER Please sit down if you like, but I'm sorry, there are no chairs here.

(Engholm sits down on some object in the dark. Siebenmark remains standing in front of Iver.)

IVER Well then — oh, I see — you smoke too; all of us here smoke, it's so cozy.

(Siebenmark makes a negative gesture.)

IVER You're right — coziness is disgusting in the wrong place. *(Throws away the cigarette.)* Now then — just to help you see how it all came about, you should know that not long ago I — well, where should I start; if you're to understand, the best place would be with Adam and Eve — but then you'd be grey by the time I got to myself. *(Jan giggles.)* But why should you understand, after all, what kind of claim — eh? *(Quickly)* I simply have to tell it in such a way that you *do* understand.

SIEBENMARK I'll take a guess — you've already dropped a hint — your subject's connected with a death, isn't it? Right?

IVER Yes, somebody is no longer living who was previously alive — right.

SIEBENMARK What's his name?

IVER Negendahl — Ne-gen-dahl!

SIEBENMARK Negendahl — good. What about the details?

IVER I suppose I must. It isn't a long story. Negendahl was my friend — you might say — there are times, you see, when one — well, I had driven myself into a feeling of friendship for him — I drifted toward him on a current of vexations. Now there was a

third man — a rather dull fellow but one who put in his oar wherever he could.

SIEBENMARK We're not getting anywhere this way. Who killed Negendahl — did you?

IVER No, he committed suicide. But that's just what I want to explain, why it happened, that's why I'm telling you this!

SIEBENMARK Go ahead, then; I can see what's coming.

VOSS So can I.

IVER I had to put up with the fact that this third one, who must have known about Negendahl something better left unknown, made me, as Negendahl's friend, the door-keeper of his reputation.

SIEBENMARK Door-keeper, I suppose is a paraphrase, is it?

IVER Hell, yes! I spied on him, I scouted him out — I wanted to know what there was to it — well, there really was a neat little baseness.

SIEBENMARK There was? Was the man really a scoundrel?

IVER No more than I and — well. I — let me explain! I brought a sore spot to light by rehearsing it. I played theft with a thief — I had his own case, in disguise, of course — unrecognizable — revealed to him as mine. I pretended to sit beside him in his trap, and so very soon we mutually confessed we were brothers in villiany, That was all I wanted.

SIEBENMARK And then . . .

IVER That would have ended the matter, except for the other one, that third one, against whom I was actually going to defend Negendahl's reputation by means of this test.

SIEBENMARK I understand.

IVER You do? Aha, that's good! Well then, this third one rubbed his oil in the affair, until it began to smell, because never before had a pharisee's mouthpiece screamed itself so hoarse — and the prey was exhausted by the time the chase really got going. There was a little shooting —

SIEBENMARK Then Negendahl shot himself! Is that all?

IVER No, now comes the main point. Negendahl's wife — by the way, a good, almost superior woman — his children wanted to live — you know — live! Understand — if you want to live and you can't, because you haven't anything left. It didn't work, it doesn't work. She scraped along on a shoe-string! *(Siebenmark is about to speak.)* Keep still! Now her instinct whispers to her that I'm to blame for her bad luck — incidentally, on top of all her trouble she landed up in an apartment, which she couldn't leave, where there are whores lounging in the streets and in the houses. And so

her worry about her children made her lose all shame and reserve and breaking the bounds of moderation she forced her way to me and, screaming and yelling, called me a murderer. Besides she also found a lawyer to take action against me — you see, that's the thing — or haven't you been listening?

SIEBENMARK And now you choose to pose as a repentant murderer who can't help himself except by taking his own life? Why haven't you the courage to defend your cause if it's just?

IVER Tell me, aren't you — you, Mis-ter Siebenmark — haven't you ever been ashamed for others? I don't know at the moment how to express myself more precisely.

SIEBENMARK No, only when I'm standing at the monkey's cage in the zoo, then I'm ashamed because of the others who are watching too. Why do you think that?

IVER It really doesn't matter about Negendahl — why should *that* live: Be-ing in these thousand countries to which every living man has a passport — don't you ever choke when you happen to look in the mirror while you're brushing your teeth?

SIEBENMARK What's the point of these questions?

IVER Can't you really see that you — Negendahl — I — Engholm, or mention another million names — that we, all of us, have a very shabby right to stand at the manger of life?

SIEBENMARK I've worked hard enough, I've earned the right.

IVER I suppose you're one of those people like Black Jack back there, whose honour doesn't shout — can't even shout? Maybe you'd rather deteriorate socially and go to the dogs than let your elegant human honour get dirty.

SIEBENMARK I'm afraid we don't quite understand each other, my dear man, what in the world are you driving at? Why — how did you put it — were you ashamed for others, how's that connected with what you did this afternoon?

IVER *(after a pause)* Take off your pants and stand over there in the light — then I'll answer you. I'm supposed to show you my guts. You'd only say: they stink, and not see anything else. No, we'll let it go.

SIEBENMARK I can see we won't get anywhere this way. I see nothing clearly except . . . what it finally amounts to is that you didn't act very shrewdly in that matter with Negendahl — not quite far-sightedly, not expediently, maybe wrongly only in the sense that you set a trap for the man. But as far as I can see, in case this is any consolation to you, you can very well stand to be treated as a

man of honour. Not another word today. Tomorrow we'll be able to talk together sensibly.

ENGHOLM You can reassure him completely about himself.

SIEBENMARK Now be reasonable, don't work yourself up. We'd better interrupt things for today — goodnight. *(He holds out his hand.)*

IVER *(looking at him fixedly)* Man of honour, did you say?

SIEBENMARK Surely, would I, as a man of honour, offer you my hand otherwise? Shake hands!

IVER But I explained everything to you from every angle. You should know that I don't feel like shaking the hand of such a man of honour. I refuse.

SIEBENMARK Think it over quickly, I don't fool around in such matters.

IVER Mr. Siebenmark, Mr. Negendahl, Mr. Engholm, Mr. Buttermann, he, she — ugh — one as bad as the other. A company like this? No thanks! *(Pushes away the hand.)*

SIEBENMARK *(turns away)* Well, you're wounded.

VOSS I've stopped believing he's wounded. He's playing a trick on all of us.

ENGHOLM *(to Voss)* Now listen, didn't you yourself tell me how you found him on the heath?

VOSS I? Yes, I was the first, and he pretended to be dead.

JAN Man, you've still got that gun he was firin' in your pocket!

VOSS Come on now, many a man pulls the trigger and doesn't shoot. I found a scrap of paper sticking out of his pocket, here it is. *(He draws out a slip of paper and holds it up.)*

SIEBENMARK Strange how you contradict yourself. Downstairs they said he had the revolver with him and now you have it — at least give me that slip.

MRS. KEFERSTEIN I have the feeling we're all going to get a little drink, only I don't know who'll pay for it.

JAN *(to Stine)* Stine, where did ye put the jacket he was wearin', it was all bloody. *(To Voss)* The front of the coat was covered with blood, wasn't it?

STINE The coat, yeh, I dried it out — I put it, I dunno no more where I put it. Oh yeh, I know, I hung it up in the closet in that room there. *(Goes to Miss Isenbarn's room and opens the door.)* In that closet there, that's where it's hangin'.

(In the frame of the door stands Miss Isenbarn who has evidently been listening.)

SIEBENMARK There — now we're in for it; instead of peace you

have an uproar. Actually it's not worth talking about, I'm absolutely not offended — after all, why shouldn't I — what?

MISS ISENBARN I was standing behind the door . . .

SIEBENMARK I hope you didn't understand anything.

MISS ISENBARN I did, I didn't miss a word, not a syllable.

SIEBENMARK You're all out of breath . . .

MISS ISENBARN Yes, because I've been listening so hard, I was afraid to breathe. Yes, I'm totally confused, I didn't know, I had no idea anymore where I was. I forgot myself. I heard you and . . .

SIEBENMARK Yes, and this prodigious gentleman . . .

MISS ISENBARN No, I felt as if I myself were talking with you. Thank God . . .

SIEBENMARK *(in a dull voice)* Well, really, if I question myself precisely, it seemed to me I was talking with you all along instead of him. *(Miss Isenbarn suddenly bursts into violent weeping.)*

MRS. KEFERSTEIN *(to Voss, who is about to leave, with a gesture as if she were downing a drink)* We'll get another one, stay here!

VOSS I don't understand anything at all. *(To Engholm)* Do you?

(Engholm does not answer and tries in vain to clarify his attitude to the situation.)

JAN Folks, a good thing Thinka didn't hear that, that kind o' thing gives her a toothache. Come on, Stine, come on, girl.

(Exit with Stine.)

SIEBENMARK A somewhat strange situation, gentlemen. *(Everyone prepares to leave.)*

MISS ISENBARN No, no, please stay, I'm all right now. I'm completely in control of myself again.

VOSS In any case you'll have to excuse me, maybe there'll be dancing now *(with a glance at Mrs. Keferstein)* and a prospect like that makes me dizzy.

IVER But the slip of paper — listen, consider — somebody else's property!

VOSS I don't take it that seriously. *(On the stairs.)* Don't worry!

IVER What are you going to do with it?

VOSS Study the scrawl, I used to be a school-teacher, as you know, that's why it's interesting for me to study what orthographers dead people are. *(The sound of the steamer is heard from a distance. They all move closer together and listen.)*

JAN *(from below)* The steamer's comin'!

MRS. KEFERSTEIN That's a stroke of luck, my things will be dry

by now. *(To Iver)* You watch out that you don't become Black Jack, or have you stopped playing the game?
(Engholm, Voss and Mrs. Keferstein disappear on the stairs. Miss Isenbarn is standing between Siebenmark and Iver, but somewhat closer to Siebenmark.)

VI

(The common room of the inn. Turbulent demands for food and drink by starved and frozen people. At the table on the right a corpulent, jovial man in primitive fancy dress, as Lady Venus, with lady's hat, hand mirror, rolled-up sleeves, and a table cloth draped around him for a skirt, surrounded by admirers and followers. Captain Pickenpack is sitting on the bar with a glass of grog. Siebenmark, Miss Isenbarn, Engholm, Voss, Mrs. Keferstein are waiting in the background.)

LADY VENUS *(drinking a toast to Pickenpack)* And if the world were full of devils — Captain Pickenpack — eh?
PICKENPACK I don't quite know what kind of an "eh" you mean, Mr. Fenus.
LADY VENUS You old grogger — listen: And were this world with devils crammed . . . *(To one of his followers.)* Continue!
FIRST ONE On the "Primus"?
LADY VENUS No, with a rhyme. Cap it with a rhyme!
FIRST ONE Devils crammed, devils crammed? What the devil, for better or worse, I'll manage a verse — I've got it:

And were this world with devils crammed,
'Twould stink of sulphur like the damned.

(Pickenpack laughs.)
LADY VENUS Our Captain's humour starts to wag its tail in his belly, that's why it rumbles like that.
PICKENPACK When you've finished your drinks, ladies and gentlemen, I'll finish too, and the pleasure trip can go on.
LADY VENUS That breaks our agreement. My wit nearly suffered diarrhoea in your service today, I kept the passengers in a good mood for you when we were aground in the snow storm, and you promised that the passengers would be allowed to go ashore where *they* please, and wouldn't have to get afloat sooner than *they* wish

to. Just think: so many mouths, so many tigers, and now — your poor paschal lamb of a reputation on the Elbe!

PICKENPACK My reputation don't get diarrhoea that easily, Mr. Fenus.

LADY VENUS Watch what a stink there'll be in the papers tomorrow —. But I in my virginal venusness feel a sudden urge to man myself, Pickenpack, old grogger, how about it, d'you want to be my lap lord? *(To the followers.)* Put the throne up there! *(shouts; the chair is put on the table. Lady Venus mounts the throne and opens his arms to Pickenpack.)*

PICKENPACK *(pointing to Jan)* Jan's weak side is still more presentable than mine, I guess — go right ahead and get hold of him.

JAN Oh fella — Thinka'll scratch out my eyes, let him try his luck with pretty Emil.

LADY VENUS Pretty Emil? Send pretty Emil here, dead or alive, get pretty Emil to come here! *(Exit Jan with two of the followers.)*

CHORUS OF REVENGE *(following the tune of Oh My Darling Clementine*)* Pretty Emil, pretty Emil, pretty Emil, oh my pet . . . etc.

LADY VENUS I expect all my loyal followers to salute their future Venus-throne mounter with vigorous cheers.

(Pretty Emil, held under the arm by two men, is brought in. Shouting, cheers.)

VOICES A backboner! A night shadow under arrest! He needed to be cured of a tape worm and by mistake relieved himself of his backbone.

LADY VENUS If you are pretty Emil, you certainly give me a scare; how are you going to prove your beauty? The candle of your life is blown out and extinguished. Your legs are as nimble as underpants on a clothes line, your arms belong to a gorilla, and it seems that they used your buttocks in place of shoulders; you're obviously one of those fellows who drink, whose power pours forth from their cheeks — I want another man! *(points to Siebenmark.)* There's one who saves his powers for non-public occasions — let him come up and show his stuff.

(Siebenmark turns away furiously and exposes Iver, who, shoved from behind, involuntarily takes a few steps forward.)

LADY VENUS He isn't willing — so he isn't fit — and I don't like him. But this one! *(Points to Iver.)* That's a holy man, maybe

* "O Strassburg" can be used if German quality is to be kept.

even 'wholly' a hypocrite, and those are the true friends of Venus. Look for the false halo which he lost and bring them both here, let pretty Emil be gathered to his forefathers. *(Pretty Emil is flung aside.)*

(Iver struggles but is dragged forward; from behind a white plate is held above his head.)

LADY VENUS Quite a nice rascal of a holy man, give him some alcohol to swill or he'll drown in his own stupidity.

IVER You're making a mistake, I'll have no part in these absurdities.

LADY VENUS As a philosophically eddicated person you'll surely know, you blessed holy man, that I, as blest Lady Venus, am merely another shape of your most estimable Lord God and Father — now will you obey orders — ha? *(Iver is silent.)* He shows the sulky, I mean the silent, or no, the stupefied holy man. Will you kindly display the back side of your holiness!

(Iver looks around surprised rather than annoyed, until his eyes fall on Voss.)

VOSS You want your slip back now? *(Pulls the paper out of his pocket.)*

IVER Yes, let's have it! *(Starts toward him.)*

LADY VENUS The holy man himself takes the trouble — run, rush! *(The slip of paper is seized by several hands.)* I smell secrets! I won't have any secrets slipping in here. Let me have that slip before it slips out of sight.

(The slip reaches Lady Venus' hands.)

IVER It's my property, Sir.

LADY VENUS *(reads)* A very interesting case of property, the peak of peculiarity — the honour of public derision shall be bestowed upon it.

IVER Oh please — please, listen to me, I don't want you to read it aloud — please!

LADY VENUS Take it easy! Please! These are bitter pleas and Lady Venus loves sweet desires.

VOSS *(loudly)* Read it aloud, we all want to hear it — handkerchiefs, gentlemen. *(Laughter.)*

LADY VENUS Silence now, you human rabble, so that we can lend an ear to our holy man's epistle.

MISS ISENBARN Shame!

LADY VENUS Peace, I say! I, Lady Doctor Venus.

MISS ISENBARN And I say "shame"! *(To Siebenmark.)* Don't interfere, I'm not going to hide.

LADY VENUS An intermezzo between lovers seems to be taking place. We like to hear that kind of thing.

SIEBENMARK But good heavens, you can't wrangle with *these* people!

MISS ISENBARN I thought you were supposed to do it.

LADY VENUS It doesn't seem quite clear why the couple is using taunts as kisses, but since there's no time to investigate, we decree a divorce right down the centre. Each half shall try out another half — pick out some repulsive wretches for that purpose!

SIEBENMARK There you have it, scorn and scandal — let's get out!

MISS ISENBARN You go — I won't.

CHORUS OF REVENGE *(tune: Chorus of How Dry I Am*)* You go I won't, I won't you go. I won't you will, you will I won't . . . *(Miss Isenbarn sits down at a table, her neighbour jumps up startled; Mrs. Keferstein happens to be standing beside Siebenmark.)*

LADY VENUS *(to the one who has jumped up)* You don't seem to have the right repulsiveness — let's have some volunteers!

VOICE Pretty Emil!

LADY VENUS Right, pretty Emil will show her the light, this repulsive cure for modern hyper-love-sensitivity-nervousness will be called: pretty-Emil-treatment.

(Pretty Emil is placed on a chair beside Miss Isenbarn. Siebenmark lights a cigar.)

LADY VENUS Is it a good cigar, sir?

SIEBENMARK May I offer you one perhaps? *(The case is handed over.)*

LADY VENUS This does look like corruption — but if a Venus isn't to be corrupted any longer then the story of the world comes to an end — thanks! *(The case is returned, Lady Venus lights the cigar.)* Otherwise let's hope you feel in the pink.

SHOUTS Read out loud, read out loud!

LADY VENUS *(blows away the smoke)* Excellent. Soft velvet on my tongue that will soften him down too — *down*, I said, not *drown*.

SHOUTS Read out loud!

LADY VENUS Ouff! *(Reads.)* Well then — that is, "well then" isn't written here, that was my addition, because there must be some transition — text continued: "I perceived — I perceived how a ray of light or a spark was infused into a child — a child — and I said:

* "O Strassburg" can be used if German quality is to be kept.

now I am glad, now I am happy that my child has been considered and touched by the light. Now it is safe forever and can never despair, even in the most desperate distress there will never be complete darkness in it — when I considered that, it seemed to me that it would have to be a dream dreamt about me by my mother, although she's dead, and at the same time I was sure in my innermost feelings that this was the way it was — and so she knows and I know, as if she had told me, that I am singed by a divine spark and I go to my deed without despair. He who finds me must not be sad about me . . ."

CHORUS OF REVENGE The fairest spot on earth I have — is the green, old bench at my pa-a-rents' grave.

LADY VENUS *(hitting the paper)* Oh yes, yes, it's true, that's what it says here, I can swear to it! *(To Iver)* Are you yourself the honest finder — you mustn't be sad — in black and white!

IVER *(retreats)* Not my property.

LADY VENUS It isn't? How come, that seems to be a new peculiarity of this peculiar slip.

IVER Not now! Not any longer — I spit on it!

LADY VENUS Spit — would you please explain that.

ENGHOLM It's he himself, don't you get it?

LADY VENUS I'm myself too — you too, we're all ourselves.

ENGHOLM You're veterinarian Boonhaire, and that's all you are. *(Beside himself.)* I'll take you to court if you torture this poor fellow any longer — let's go, Captain, you tell them.

LADY VENUS Are you in such a hurry? Eh?

ENGHOLM Don't ask me — yes, I'm in a hurry. Watch out for the consequences of your jokes.

LADY VENUS What the hell, do we have to deny ourselves a bit of fun? Don't act as if you had big business to do at home — that can be done here too . . . landlord — landlord, show the gentleman the way, but make it fast, he's in a hurry! *(Laughter.)*

ENGHOLM Nonsense, I won't have anything to do with this. You'll hear from me!

LADY VENUS But my dear Sir, we hear from you all the time — go ahead, tell us something — something juicy — if you can.

ENGHOLM I'll tell you something . . .

LADY VENUS Silence, now he wants to say something before he does anything.

ENGHOLM Oh Lord, you're drunk.

LADY VENUS Yes, thank God, my humour isn't a sourpuss like

yours, my nose must be wet inside, then my humour comes out. *(Somebody applauds.)* Who's applauding?
(Engholm is talking excitedly to Pickenpack. Voss claps delightedly.)
LADY VENUS Although you're applauding senselessly you seem to have some sense, what's the matter?
VOSS *(coming closer)* I'm applauding the fate that's letting me experience this day. Bravo, bravo — it's a scream! *(Screams.)* Humour that is, humour, humour! But now, where is — my handkerchief; you see, my nose is also wet inside. *(Blows his nose — offers the handkerchief.)* Would you care to . . . ?
LADY VENUS Nope — thanks a lot.
VOSS Why? Don't be embarrassed.
LADY VENUS My dear Sir — refrain!
VOSS No false modesty — if you have any urge at all —
LADY VENUS The devil, no! Ugh!
VOSS *(pocketing the handkerchief)* I don't get it — it's all the same humour, yours and mine, it all comes out in the same wash. What's that? I serious? God forbid — humour — humour!
(He takes the slip of paper from Venus' hands and retreats.)
LADY VENUS Let's have some musical piss!
CHORUS *(tune of the wedding march from Lohengrin)* At Panama, at Panama — Pa nagged at Ma and Ma nagged at Pa, etc.
IVER *(who has been standing facing Miss Isenbarn)* How did you get here?
LADY VENUS Look at our holy man! The hoofs of his jealousy strike sparks — what a stud horse! Let him step out with pretty Emil — come on, let's have some music!
(Pretty Emil is dragged before Lady Venus who gives orders.)
MISS ISENBARN How did I get here? I have no reasons, I'm just here.
IVER Do you belong here?
MISS ISENBARN Do you?
IVER If I think of the places I've sometimes danced at, they can't always have been nice. But — it's going to be different, I'm going away — will you go with me? *(Laughing.)* The joke is that I've gone already. Do you understand allusions?
MISS ISENBARN No, not at all.
IVER Too bad, otherwise I'd have said: the joke is that you aren't here any longer, either — or am I wrong?
MISS ISENBARN I don't understand you — quite.
IVER But I can't be any more explicit, because of the people — you see, I'd like to know where your real home is.

MISS ISENBARN I understand, you mean . . .
IVER Right, that's what I mean, exactly — we're from the same vicinity, I can tell by the dialect. It's strange that people have to meet this way in alien territory, isn't it?
MISS ISENBARN Strange.
IVER Shhh! Nobody's supposed to know. That place has a bad name with some people, they might crack jokes about it; I'm going straight home, are you coming with me? But forgive me, you don't have to say a word, I know everything.
MISS ISENBARN It's enough.
IVER Completely — so just stay here for the time being — you'll probably have to go through with another dance — good-bye, have a good time!
LADY VENUS They're chatting, are they on intimate terms yet?
VOICES They're talking about dancing.
LADY VENUS That's right — if pretty Emil doesn't mind — let them dance, make room! *(They make room.)* A holy man, a grass bride, and a sack of rags: nice company for a dance.
(Iver stares around for a moment, then looks at Lady Venus, rushes at him in a rage, but falls to the ground and lies there motionless. Confusion; they set him on two chairs, Venus descends and feels him all over.)
LADY VENUS He's all right, he's catching his breath.
MISS ISENBARN He's wounded, he shot himself.
LADY VENUS Because of trouble in love or something else? *(Ascends her throne.)* Did he wish to fertilize the world with his holy blood? — Wasn't it good enough for him?
MISS ISENBARN That's an indecent question.
LADY VENUS Why, isn't the world beautiful? Why should it be better — aren't we all serenely happy?
MISS ISENBARN One could ask how the world could be good if *you* are serenely happy. It's horribly simple.
LADY VENUS Simply horrible, you mean.
MISS ISENBARN No, quite simple, that's what it is.
LADY VENUS Well then, have it your way. The way he's lying there, he is, you might say, a dead preacher in the desert, shouting loudly: come, come — and he feeds them all spoonfuls of nitric acid, so that at least they'll stop being what they are because they can't become what they ought to be! By all means, that's horribly simple. But I won't — I'll drink the real stuff — landlord! *(Jan steps out.)* Any nitric acid in the house?
JAN Nope, Sir, I can't help you there.

LADY VENUS Not a drop?

JAN I c'n swear a false oath on that.

LADY VENUS In that case, there can't be any mix-up — pour me another glass of — beer. I won't be separated from this beautiful world by drinking poison. *(Jan exits.)*

VOICE He's conscious again.

LADY VENUS Attaboy, he's bored being all alone — how did you make out — eh?

IVER *(half erect)* Oh — yes, I'm in good company — good day, good evening, gentlemen!

MISS ISENBARN Don't you know where you are?

IVER I do — good company — all that are here — scoundrels and —

MISS ISENBARN Yes — and . . .

IVER And great magnanimous gentlemen — in spite of everything! What the hell — we have time, you see, we won't bungle the most important matter, we'll let things cook inside slowly. Just look at this fellow with a beard like old Daddy John — beard — gone totally stupid, you might say, but I still feel as if I were among cannibals, look how he bites me with his eyes, they all devour a piece of me, they gulp my blood — maybe I'm a drop of good poison for them. And look at that one, his belly is like a sack of sand because he's full of gas. He's no clod — he's gas. Cut off his belly and you'll soon have to admit: he has it all over me — yes, I mean, that one with the red patches on his face — what do you know, there's one back there — believe me, every minute he gets a fraction more decent — he's cooking slowly, quite gently, unnoticeably, in a few million years he'll be where the word "fine" smells like a violet, almost without scent yet — but at least he doesn't tread on it — he has time.

LADY VENUS Look, the Valkyrie feels friendliness for her fallen friend. I imagine a Valhalla with a huge chimney stack, because with him she won't feel very warm without central heating. *(To Siebenmark)* And what do you say?

SIEBENMARK You mean because of the cigar? Well, it's the third year that I've been smoking the stuff and I still like it.

LADY VENUS Don't we want to listen to what those two are whispering?

SIEBENMARK Beginning of an acquaintanceship, you know, there's much to tell, and the mill grinds at high speed.

ANGRY VOICES He's a blockhead, he should be beaten up, like a water-tap he keeps spluttering right in our faces.

IVER Don't you hear: voices from above — there's an echo inside you, isn't there?

MISS ISENBARN I, me — what am I supposed to do about it?

IVER Yes, you, just you, what are you supposed to do? Let's finish with each other here — *(with a gesture pointing to everyone in the group)* wolves who howl at each other until all are satified. *(Siebenmark approaches.)* Oh, Mr. Zwieback — yes, my dear man. You could kiss the spot where someone — someone — has just been standing — but to gobble supper with him, to make him *common* with yourself, to colour off onto him — better to vomit on him.

SIEBENMARK It seems you're aiming a little at being the lofty lord who sails past — and one falls to the ground — remember? The effect was a failure, the slip of paper couldn't do it either. Have you anything else tucked up your sleeve?

IVER *(rises)* Right, the comedy's over. Thank you for listening. I hope you aren't angry! After all, it was entertaining — eh? Just admit that you took it a little seriously.

MISS ISENBARN How else? Where does the slip of paper come from — and the blood on your coat?

IVER You think a thing like that causes trouble? We've proved our worth in doing much bigger tricks — so you liked the slip of paper in my calculation, idiot that I am, it was merely an insignificant detail. We still don't know our audience.

(Captain Pickenpack has paid in the meantime and marches out. People are getting restless, pay and prepare for departure.)

SIEBENMARK Then the whole story with Negendahl was made up!

IVER Certainly, sir, certainly!

SIEBENMARK Then Mrs. Negendahl doesn't even exist?

IVER Well — and suppose she does! Why worry about it, why wish the dear little ones to grow up in Daddy Negendahl's shadow? No, right out in the sun, little children! Well — it was a joke, that's all. *(To Miss Isenbarn, who is staring at him rigidly.)* Lies are often better savages than those varnished nutcracker truths — goodbye, madam.

LADY VENUS Hold it, Mister Clown, you must give us an encore.

JAN Captain Pickenpack ast me to announce that the Primus is leavin' in two minutes.

LADY VENUS But not before we're on board, I hope.

JAN Yeh, sir, if you count on that you might be like the woman who wanted to have a baby at Easter and it was goin' to be called Louis, but she missed the date an' it came at Pentecost. So she said: it's a slow poke, and called 'm Peter.

LADY VENUS And thus we transfer our entire royal household on board my majesty's ship, including Mister Clown and the Valkyrie, as well as the excited gentleman with his big business.

CHORUS OF REVENGE No finer death
This wide world yields
Than death before the foe,

(marching off)

On sunny meads
And blooming fields

(in the distance)

You hear no cries of woe.

ENGHOLM *(to Iver)* Come along with me, we'll find a place where no one will bother you.

(Siebenmark is talking to Jan.)

VOSS I advise you against it; stay right here. After all, your journey through the world has come to an end — I'm staying here too.

JAN *(in passing to Iver)* You haven't got nothin' to pay — that gentleman *(points to Engholm)* settled it.

ENGHOLM Forgive me — but, well — you know, I must get to my boy. Good-bye. *(Exits hurriedly. Mrs. Keferstein disappears without saying good-bye.)*

JAN Thinka — that's what happens when women folk get mad: you can't get the bedding and beds from her any more today.

VOSS He'll just keep his old room.

JAN *(confidentially)* Well, Sir, the room's occupied again, there's nothin' to be done, you m'st realize that. If the barn would do for you — otherwise there's no time to lose.

VOSS Yes, that's all right. It'll do. *(Draws Iver along.)* It has to be enough if you consider it enough. If you'd like to go to the trouble of showing it to us —

(Voss, Iver, Jan exit. A sound from the steamer.)

MISS ISENBARN What's that?

SIEBENMARK *(with secret triumph)* The "Primus" — yes, it's leaving.

MISS ISENBARN And you?

SIEBENMARK And you — don't talk about me!

MISS ISENBARN You were going to take that trip tomorrow.

SIEBENMARK Tomorrow? Tomorrow is another day, let it take care of itself. You don't care for reasons; I haven't any, either — I don't want to leave. By the way, I coaxed the landlord into serving us a late supper. *(As she is about to object, vehemently)* You can't travel in that company, how can a Valkyrie like you stoop so low?

VII

(The small room for special guests with a door leading to the Common room. At the back a sofa and a table; above the sofa an oval mirror; suspended from the middle of the ceiling an old-fashioned hanging lamp; several tables. Miss Isenbarn and Siebenmark downstage by the window while Jan and Stine are walking back and forth, setting the table.)

SIEBENMARK For the first time in my life I have a sort of liking for the record player. *(Hurriedly.)* Why bother, I see you're tired, don't say anything — I only wanted to make you aware of my state of mind. You see: I myself feel like a record player. My records are the words you spoke this afternoon, a plastic record couldn't be more precise — of course, the music is inaudibly soft inside me.

MISS ISENBARN Everything about me is still in turmoil. I don't know what to do about the silliest things — is this to be a supper?

SIEBENMARK Only if you like — did I tell you — of course I didn't, it occurs to me for the first time that it was something: I might have been six, perhaps seven, when they set up a number of tents outside our gate on the fair-grounds — and, of course, there was also a tent for dancing, and the children jumped over the beams that were in place but without boards on them, and a tall pretty girl fell down and cried. You know, I saw something then I didn't see again until today, I won't ask if you want to know it, it has to be said. I saw *you*, you might say, it was my first deep experience, a shivering premonition of what happened when I saw you in the middle of that human hubbub. You're asking me, without saying so, why I didn't come to your rescue when they were howling around you — well, just because I didn't detect any of that, everything was hazy, only your face like a subdued sun. The childish emotion of that former time, as if blown to me from afar, opened up in me — because a pain was added to your beauty — how should I put it! I burned and ached with desire to share your pain, to feel what you . . . *(More softly.)* It was as if the pain blossoming forth from you would give me greater delight than anything else . . .

MISS ISENBARN Well, but . . .

SIEBENMARK Be hard, be bitter, you're right — but what was it you said this afternoon, you asked me whether there was nothing uncanny, nothing foreign about you for me — didn't you? Yes — much, infinitely much. I brought you here as a lady, but she dis-

appeared beside me. Was I supposed to bandy words with that Venus-veterinarian? I? We? After all, I was a recipient of favours, and his boorishness — well, I thank him, I have to thank him.

MISS ISENBARN Him alone?

SIEBENMARK Oh well — I also thank that other one who was the cause of the annoyance, I thank him as well. By the way, he disgraced you terribly.

MISS ISENBARN To think you can't understand that! We weren't disgraced, but he was, everything turned upside down in the end. The story he told, all right, so it was invented, but only to hide himself behind it. He pretended to shoulder something in order to — to — to . . .

SIEBENMARK I didn't watch so carefully — maybe I'm mistaken.

MISS ISENBARN Imagine what else they'll do to him!

SIEBENMARK Oh no, I don't think he gave up anything good, and the rest of his policy was meant to save his own skin. They're lodging together in the barn, the landlord says — with whom? Well, naturally, he and his accomplice. It was obvious from the beginning they were operating together.

MISS ISENBARN You might as well say I was an accomplice.

SIEBENMARK Dear, my dearest — but you may be right in a way. Think of him what you must.

MISS ISENBARN Didn't you say that my — what you saw about me, had —

SIEBENMARK Yes, it simply tore me open, lifted me into a new realm.

MISS ISENBARN Why weren't you outraged that I was taken in by the "swindle"?

SIEBENMARK The swindle belongs exclusively to him, with you it was a revolution of yourself.

MISS ISENBARN That's it, that's it!

SIEBENMARK And your soul, which had been in a relatively distant haze revealed itself to me. Your mysteriousness made me ache with desire to feel at home with you. You must understand that.

MISS ISENBARN Oh yes.

SIEBENMARK That doesn't sound cheering.

MISS ISENBARN I'm not alive, I don't exist, if what I know of this man is deceptive. That's a living certainty. But you're burying part of me, you cover with earth what you reject.

SIEBENMARK You child! I'll even praise what you think of him, I'll even strengthen you. We'll do something about him — *(warding her off)* not we, all right: you, you alone. He'll need help. Money,

you have money, help him with it; use what you offered me this afternoon.

MISS ISENBARN But you don't believe in him.

SIEBENMARK I believe in you — but in him — you can't demand that.

MISS ISENBARN He won't accept it.

SIEBENMARK With both hands, with great joy — it's just a matter of trying.

MISS ISENBARN No! You know I'm right.

SIEBENMARK I? Do you imagine I'd make a suggestion to you because I think I'm not risking anything? Oh, oh! You think I'm playing a game? All right then, yes, I'm playing, but not the way you think. It churns me up to stand before you as a man to whom you've become so important he simply brushes aside the filthy lucre he otherwise expected you to have. But not to help that man along! No, I only want to put a flower into my button hole to look a little more festive in your eyes.

MISS ISENBARN Wouldn't you regret it?

SIEBENMARK All the more reason to do it now. Why not let the times when you don't give a damn dictate when you should dish it out?

MISS ISENBARN Well said.

SIEBENMARK You've said something like it yourself — but I'm not just repeating; it's fallen on a spot inside me from which, like a lark among thousands, it rises again.

MISS ISENBARN We'll hear . . . what you want to do is good, go ahead and do it.

SIEBENMARK Now?

MISS ISENBARN Should he spend the night with the after-taste of all those humiliations?

SIEBENMARK Well, all right, then I'll tell him before we sit down to eat; it would be enough for me to have you know it, but of course — it has to be complete. And you allow me free play?

MISS ISENBARN Just as you please, but don't make it a little blossom that you pin on yourself, make it a nice big bouquet. Take advantage of your ruthless minutes.

SIEBENMARK Don't worry — after all, they're not all that's involved. Haste isn't necessary — but it *is*, this can't be done too quickly for you, that's why it's got to be done in a hurry.

(Steps are heard in the common room, and Sieg, a customs official in his overcoat, his rifle slung over his shoulder, appears in the door.)

SIEG *(surveying the room)* Jan — are ye — oh, good evenin', I'm not disturbin', am I? I thought Jan was in here.

SIEBENMARK Good evening, the landlord has just gone out.

SIEG *(turning around)* Well, in that case I'll . . .

SIEBENMARK You're not disturbing us. Are you on duty this late? You're a customs official, aren't you?

SIEG Right you are, sir, every inch a customs guard. Sieg's the name.

SIEBENMARK Are you on night duty?

SIEG Yeh, I'm on the go until six in the morning. And this is just half-way, so I usually drop in here to get a bit o' breakfast. Jan too, he says a man should always go sit down. Act'ally I should be staying outside, but the supervisor is lyin' in his bed, an' probably thinks to himself, Sieg's an old official, he knows his 'structions. An' I do, too — I *am* an old official.

(Leans his rifle against the wall and looks for a suitable place among the small tables.)

SIEBENMARK Eh, you know — I'd like to ask you something.

SIEG With pleasure, sir.

SIEBENMARK Would you like to take a look in the barn? There you'll find two gentlemen and the younger —

SIEG Yep, I'll do that all right. *(Takes up his rifle.)*

SIEBENMARK Right. Then please tell the younger one, there's a man here who'd like to speak to him for a moment, here, next door, in the common room, if he doesn't mind, say I have an urgent message for him, a matter of business.

MISS ISENBARN Tell him: a friendly message.

SIEBENMARK Well then — friendly — I'd like to speak to him as a friend. Will you do that?

SIEG I'm on my way, won't take a minute.

SIEBENMARK And then have a glass of beer with your breakfast — on me.

SIEG Thank you, sir. *(Exit.)*

SIEBENMARK There, we got rid of that one. I'll tell Jan to catch him outside or he'll come tramping in here again.

MISS ISENBARN Are you asking him into the — common room?

SIEBENMARK He's unpredictable, he might decide it would be useful to emphasize his tenor with a few gun shots.

MISS ISENBARN There's no need of that, think of *his* need, whatever it may be, and treat him kindly.

SIEBENMARK *(passionately)* His need? Yes, but you do it too, think of *my* need.

MISS ISENBARN *(startled, unsteadily)* Your need?

SIEBENMARK *(impetuously)* In which I am sitting up to my neck. *(Goes to the door and makes sure there is no one in the adjoining room.)* I'm no longer master in our territory; until now, until a few hours ago, it was all right, but now — *(sits down)* bitter need, do you hear — do you understand?

MISS ISENBARN *(moves to the table to arrange something)* It will pass.

SIEBENMARK *(following her)* Who, I wonder, do you think I really am? The other one, my other self, had to swallow a mouthful. And it's being treated worse than a discreditable creature in a fashionable house, about whom no one is allowed to know anything. But it's escaped — and how? You let him loose without realizing it. Your fault! And now the wild man is at liberty.

MISS ISENBARN Is this love?

SIEBENMARK What tone of voice is that, dearest — does the change frighten you?

MISS ISENBARN You mean I set free something different, something new in you? But in me too something different has become free — I too was hidden until then and repressed within myself.

SIEBENMARK Be entirely free and rid of all that was burdensome, be as impulsive as you can and must be! I — I don't want to be anything but you — and, after all, you made me believe this, you don't want to be anything but me. Why should we keep on hiding it? Aren't we like two people who look out of different windows and each speaks of his sun? Things can't continue the way they've been going all day today — we must put an end to it sometime.

MISS ISENBARN But then it will be an *end* and not a new beginning.

SIEBENMARK That's bookish and puzzling.

MISS ISENBARN Yes, that's the way it is.

SIEBENMARK *(softly, thoughtfully)* There have been times when I saw a certain expression on your face — something like a secret happiness, as if you were planning heaven knows what with a kind of spiritual bridegroom. You can imagine how it tortured me. Today I have the impression that this secret someone is really a person. Can you feel what I feel?

MISS ISENBARN You asked me whether your change frightens me? Yes, it frightens me.

SIEBENMARK Perhaps you're even sorry for me in my need? Are you? Is your whole answer to all this no more than that ridiculous trashy admiration for a good-for-nothing? I see a light! Suppose I

were to take a few lessons from the great master? Is that what I lack, that I'm not inflated with adoration and admiration?

MISS ISENBARN What would it mean in that case if I said yes or no?

SIEBENMARK I lack the reflection of the Beyond, that's what it is! I don't know the first thing about performing curtsies before Saint-petermanikins in the shimmer of saintliness. I'm a hardened sinner facing the future's monarchs. That betrays my shortcoming.

MISS ISENBARN If that's the way you see it . . .

SIEBENMARK And how do you see it?

MISS ISENBARN I'm ashamed to talk of it because I don't know any better than you do, but there must be something better. I need time to collect my thoughts.

SIEBENMARK Don't collect your thoughts, never mind what you're ashamed of — blame everything on me, I'll bear everything. *(Sieg returns, but remains standing at the door.)* Is he coming now?

SIEG Nope, sir, he hasn't got the time, he says; but he didn't say what he's got to do.

SIEBENMARK So he won't?

SIEG He said that if it was a friendly business it wouldn't make no difference to you to come out. He's goin' to the river.

SIEBENMARK *(hurriedly)* That makes sense, that's all right with me. *(To Miss Isenbarn.)* The whole house upstairs is at your disposal. No one will disturb you there, you have time . . . and maybe it will take longer than I expect to settle our business out there. *(Exit.)*

VIII

(The river bank, a clear, starry night, the persons standing out blackly — against the river. Downstage, brushwood undermined at the roots, bushes and sandbanks protruding into the water. Hans Iver and Siebenmark enter in conversation.)

IVER Well then?

SIEBENMARK Poor Mrs. Negendahl, eh?

IVER Who? Oh, I see — yes — the poor woman — what about her?

SIEBENMARK I really do think you're morally obliged to help her.

IVER You do?
SIEBENMARK Yes — definitely.
IVER How soon is your wedding?
SIEBENMARK Does that interest you?
IVER To some extent — yes. I assume you'll allow me to meddle in your affairs just as boldly as you meddle in mine?
SIEBENMARK *(laughing)* Mr. — Iver you said, didn't you — well then, Mr. Iver. *(Pats him on his shoulder.)* You seem to be very tired — exhausted, of course. But you shouldn't act out of character; you see, you're beginning to take yourself seriously. A small slip, but a mistake nevertheless.
IVER You're right.
SIEBENMARK You see, I was going to speak about that hypothetical Mrs. Negendahl, and you start talking about my wedding. We should stick to the point, we shouldn't change the tune. Well, then . . . I didn't come just to draw your attention to your indebtedness to this hypothetical woman, but rather . . . *(sharply)* how much money do I actually owe you, you do remember having lent me a fairly large amount some time ago, don't you?
IVER I — you? Oh yes — certainly — I know.
SIEBENMARK Wonderful! You see, I can return it to you quite conveniently. Only it slipped my mind how much it amounted to. What do *you* say?
IVER How much?
SIEBENMARK How many grand? I really can't remember precisely.
IVER But I can.
SIEBENMARK Well? Two, three?
IVER No, five.
SIEBENMARK No, you're certainly mistaken — now I remember, it was seven.
IVER Heavens no, ten.
SIEBENMARK That's all right too — how much was it?
IVER No, twelve.
SIEBENMARK Oh, of course, twelve then?
IVER Tormentor.
SIEBENMARK What did you say?
IVER Give it to me.
SIEBENMARK Oh, my dear Mr. Iver, no one carries that much money on him. I'll write you a cheque.
IVER Tormentor.
SIEBENMARK You don't seem to be very anxious to do business at the moment; how would it be if I were to settle the formalities with

your collaborator in the barn. Do you agree?

IVER Yes, settle it with my collaborator. Have you now had all the fun you wanted, Mr. Zwieback, are we quits then?

SIEBENMARK I should think so.

IVER Good-bye, Mr. Zwieback. *(Bows.)*

SIEBENMARK *(similarly)* I thank you, good evening.

(Both continue in the same direction, disappear, and come back.)

SIEBENMARK By this time we know what value you have among men, but when you're alone with women, that's still a problem.

IVER What do you mean — woman is woman. Whether it's you and your fiancée — or I and Meta or Doris — or — all the same.

SIEBENMARK Do you want me to beat you up? *(Controlling himself.)* Is that so — that's news to me; you see, I'm a little proud of my fiancée — but your opinion, of course, has substance behind it.

IVER Do you deny that in your fiancée you simply recognize yourself, but disguised, in another form, equipped with enticing and exciting attributes.

SIEBENMARK Try another tack.

IVER From the other end of the world there comes something incomprehensible — but you — you think: why, that's Zwieback! And then you call it Mrs. Siebenmark.

SIEBENMARK Are you finished?

IVER Far from it; do you know what's coming now?

SIEBENMARK Watch out!

IVER Well then, I say Mrs. Siebenmark, no more and no less. *(Louder.)* And yet at one time it was something incomprehensible. In your mind you made a self-portrait out of your fiancée and what's more a vulgar one, a flattering one. That must make a nice picture: Mrs. Siebenmark as Zwieback! Good God, what lechery you enjoyed with yourself: put yourself into the dress and body of your fiancée. You personified your fiancée, and now you're thinking of fantasies.

SIEBENMARK *(hitting him)* Go on!

IVER I also know how you puke on the rabble into which you change yourself.

SIEBENMARK *(takes him by the throat)* Go on!

IVER But now things will change: Mrs. Siebenmark will puke on Mr. Siebenmark. *(Shouting.)* You squeezed your rotten self into a better one, you're making her pregnant with filth! Please sir, you're hurting me.

SIEBENMARK I feel a tickle between my ribs when I hit — just continue!

IVER Take the revolver — maybe there's a cartridge left in it — there! *(Hands him the revolver.)*

SIEBENMARK *(takes it)* Go on!

IVER It's all the same: we empty ourselves, pour out our dung and fill others with it. You scratch out the eyes of a goddess and replace them with your goatish ones — you're amazed and astounded, and you say: her eyes are my heaven!

SIEBENMARK All right, pay attention. *(Pulls the trigger in vain.)* Once more. *(Snaps it again.)* But now. *(Pulls the trigger several times, without a shot.)* No good after all. *(Hurls the weapon into the water. They face each other, panting.)* Who feels himself flogged now, the god in you or your inferior self? How do you feel?

IVER Isn't it certain that one day she'll say: I thought it would be different?

(Siebenmark is silent.)

Or did I estimate the lady's value too highly? I dimly sense the possibility that she'll find herself in you. *Herself in you*, and that she will even thank God.

SIEBENMARK Anything resembling you in damned infa — my —

IVER Perhaps you consider me interested? Are you mad? No, no, I can smell quality, remember that — and in this case the nearest manure pile is just right for me: any dung heap will do for a carcass.

SIEBENMARK I'm not listening any longer.

IVER But you can't ignore hot lead, can you? No, in your place, I'd make the very same mistake. Imagine: myself in your place! Which is to say: She and I speak of God and I make her believe that, since I've known her, I believe in God again. But the fact is, with her I smuggle myself in as God, in God's name I scratch shame and reticience out of her soul, and eagerly work on her until she takes pity on my half-cooked hopes and is served to me nicely fattened and fried, sweetly smelling — oh yes, I make her devotion my sweatshirt.

SIEBENMARK I really don't know what you're talking about — *(bursting out)* but that's enough now!

IVER Oh, I'll serenade her — with a spiritual tune, and lead her on to faith in my spirit. So there she lies and languishes to heart's content. Since my spirit needs space, hers is put into the sewer. Bravo, I settle down in the warm nest and fumigate everything that doesn't serve me with complacence.

SIEBENMARK Are you still speaking about yourself?

IVER Do you have something like a suspicion that I might not be unworthy after all?

SIEBENMARK Beast!

IVER Thoughts can't be shouted down, they come creeping through your stomach into your kidneys and then you get gas, see if you don't. But let's keep to our last assumption: Your fiancée is worthy of Mrs. Siebenmark. Eh?

SIEBENMARK What shall I do, you've had your beating.

IVER Denounce me — you'll find out whether your fiancée feels at home with you on the flat ground of your dwelling; what's the matter with you?

SIEBENMARK *(shouting)* No, that's exactly what she doesn't!

IVER That's good, a very superior brand. But now you must do something too. Stand back, hold your breath — do you hear something?

SIEBENMARK *(panting)* Nothing but your trickery.

IVER You almost make me proud — but I know better.

SIEBENMARK What — what? *(Brandishes his fists.)*

IVER Well, who knows, perhaps you seated yourself beside her at the table somewhat too carelessly. Some people can't stand smacking lips at the start. First they have to be pauperized, soul-beggared, salt-depleted — then, yes, then they endure the whole rotten being of another in themselves, not before, not *she*!

SIEBENMARK *(uttering inarticulate abuse)* I won't listen, I can't stand any more, sooner burst, bark, bloat, bellow. *(Rushes away.)*

IX

(Farther along the river.)

SIEBENMARK *(raging, foaming)* She doesn't know! She does know! She knows that you're that kind, that kind, just that kind. — And a man like that has to come along, plant himself in front of her and talk about the wild man on the loose. I'll kill you, you dog, you self, if you keep on running around here any longer, knowing and remembering and not getting rid of this digging up out of yourself the knowledge that she knows it. Maybe she doesn't know after all. *(Furious.)* What? What? What — once more, just once more! *(Wipes off his foam.)* This stuff can be wiped off, but that, that, that! *(Bends down.)* Bow-wow, the whole world has

become bitchy. — Her name is Siebenmark, d'you understand? That's why everything is siebenmarkian: your fiancée and your fiancée's imagination about her engagement and everything, everything! Who's going to rid the world of the siebenmarkian world, a prize is offered! Who'll make Siebenmark's fiancée a fiancée without Siebenmark, but, mark my words, always provided that I — — I — I, that it's still Siebenmark isn't it? — Well then: what for? Anything else coming?

(Iver and Sieg approach together and come around the corner by the bushes. They stop.)

SIEG Oh, I see. The gentleman's talking to himself.

(Siebenmark recoils in confusion for a moment but then turns forward again and goes past the two as if he didn't notice them. Sieg starts to follow him.)

IVER *(holds him back)* Let that man alone. *(Siebenmark turns abruptly and walks toward them with impassioned strides, they dodge, and as he takes a similar turn he stumbles and falls; as he rises Sieg recognizes him.)*

SIEG Why, that's the gentleman who was in the room with that lady.

SIEBENMARK What are you spying around here for?

SIEG I'm on duty, Sir, doing my round to Braak.

SIEBENMARK *(to Iver)* Yes, that was it — that's why I came back. You know — about that money, it occurs to me that I can give you quite a substantial payment. *(Reaches for his wallet.)* And give me a receipt; that's the way it's done and you have to accept that. Here, take it — one, two, three, four — five hundred, I can't manage any more at the moment. Here you are.

(Iver has understood only half of the hasty words. He takes the bills automatically, hardly recognizing them.)

SIEBENMARK *(to Sieg)* Haven't you got a lantern so I can write?

SIEG Right here, Sir. Catch your breath until I've lit it. A while ago you thought the air had ears, didn't you? It's got them all right, it's got them, but no mouth, it doesn't pass anything on.

SIEBENMARK Nonsense, you misheard, I was calling my dog.

SIEG Your dog — and where is it?

SIEBENMARK Ran into the bushes.

SIEG Yes, Sir, there are lots of rabbits up in the mountains. *(The lantern is lit.)* There now, where'll I put it?

IVER *(takes the lantern)* I'll hold it. The gentleman wishes to

write a few figures. Hold this money for a moment, will you. *(Sieg takes the bills.)*

SIEBENMARK *(writing)* There — there — please sign. *(Hands him the pencil and holds the paper before him. Iver illuminates it and reads.)* You're supposed to write, damn it; don't delay me, I have to look for my dog.

IVER *(reads aloud once more)* From Mr. Siebenmark — five hundred — received — then you're really in earnest about it?

SIEBENMARK Cash, Mr. Iver, crisp green bills. Just have a look. What are you hesitating for?

IVER I don't really need it that badly.

SIEBENMARK Not enough for today? I owe you twelve thousand altogether. *(to Sieg)* Did you hear that?

SIEG That much? *(to Iver.)* You lent him all that money?

IVER Silly, he doesn't owe me anything at all, I don't want anything from him. *(to Siebenmark.)* Are you turning me into Siebenmark as well? You probably can't help it: "siebenmarkian world" etc. Remember?

SIEBENMARK Don't fuss so long, come on, sign it — or I guarantee you won't get a penny.

IVER *(to Sieg)* That man's about to marry and he throws money around like that.

SIEG If you really don't need it, you can give part of it to young Mrs. Siebenmark as a wedding present. Then it stays in the fam'ly, see? Again it'll be siebenmarkian money. *(Laughs.)*

SIEBENMARK Oh, it doesn't matter, do what you please! *(Whistles.)* Beast, are you going to obey! *(Rushes off into the bushes.)*

SIEG Well, Sir, then there's no other way, you've gotta pocket it, please take it.

IVER *(with his hands on his back)* You heard me, it's not my money!

SIEG What'll I do with the stuff? *(Calling)* Mr. Mr. . . .

SIEBENMARK *(in the distance)* Bow wow!

SIEG Wait, I'll bring you your money.

SIEBENMARK *(same)* Wait until I come back. Watch out, I bite, Siebenmark, the mongrel!

SIEG If that's supposed to be a joke, I dunno . . . Must see to it that I get hold of him. *(Follows him into the bushes.)*

IVER *(putting the lantern on the sand, crouches beside it, shivering)* One could think: does your little bit of light give you pleasure? Or wouldn't you rather drown? Your light goes out by itself. Who knows, if I lie down in the bushes — I'll devote myself to

watchful waiting, and so we'll quietly rival each other in living and dying.
(He creeps into the bushes, the lonely lantern goes on burning.)

X

(Sand dunes with bushes and heather. Starry sky.)

SIEBENMARK *(whistles)* Come on here, lie down! *(Beats the sand with a club.)* Stand still, beast! What was your name? Siebenmark? Here, take your share of kicks, again, again; there, that does me good, you beast, mongrel that I am!
SIEG *(close by)* Mr. Siebenmark.
SIEBENMARK This way!
SIEG *(steps out of the bushes)* No, sir, that sounded kind o' awful the way you keep screamin' here. Oughta go an' get some sleep an' then you'll be sober again tomorrow.
SIEBENMARK Just the way I'm carrying on, bleating into the night, that does me the most good. After all, I have someone on my conscience — then a man has to drink. By the way, I have to be sick right now, stay here, don't mind me. *(Goes into the bushes.)* How many cartridges do you have with you?
SIEG Five — have to have 'em checked every year. — And then, I was goin' to return your money to you . . .
SIEBENMARK *(re-appears)* You know what? Keep it and leave me in peace, you don't have to mention the money again.
SIEG No, sir, ain't nothin' o' that kind in the instructions — even if I keep quiet, you'll come out with it one o' these days. Are you through now?
SIEBENMARK Silly — I don't want to any longer, good night.
SIEG Nope, sir, that won't work, I can't very well leave you alone, who knows what might happen yet.
SIEBERMARK If you had the toothache I have, you'd put on a lot more of a show, I can tell you.
SIEG But that hasn't got nothin' to do with the money. Whether you've got a toothache or not, I've got to stick with you.
SIEBENMARK Listen, do you believe in God?
SIEG Yeh, I sure do.
SIEBENMARK Have you ever seen Him?
SIEG Ah, don't be silly.

SIEBENMARK Well, you see — such things we don't really know, but people you can see. Do you suppose that things can suddenly get so that you don't know whether you are Sieg or not?

SIEG Yeh, sir, that sure sounds quite sensible.

SIEBENMARK Can't you imagine that I might be someone besides Siebenmark?

SIEG Yeh, I sure could.

SIEBENMARK That's just what you can't do! Nobody can do that, nobody takes the trouble. And the thing is that I'm really not Siebenmark, I'm Sieg, everyone is a Sieg — to you, that is. That can drive a man crazy.

SIEG Well, if you go crazy over that, you'll soon be sensible again — the Siegs aren't batty enough to go crazy.

SIEBENMARK You treat people as if they were yourself, and if you treat them disgustingly, then you know what you deserve yourself.

SIEG Yeh, that's the way it oughta be.

SIEBENMARK Well, not really. Imagine: someone is coming out of these bushes there. Take a good look — like that! And if you take a good look, you'll be calling out: Sieg, where in hell are you coming from? And he comes up and says: Hello, Sieg, how are you, Sieg?

SIEG That's enough to give you the creeps.

SIEBENMARK A thing like that happened to me today, you see. And here's the crazy thing, if others actually *are* different from Sieg, but you see only Siegs in the world — wouldn't that make you take off like a puppy dog that barks at a mirror, and finds a wolf howling back at him? Eh?

SIEG I guess so. Well, Sir, those are ideas . . .

SIEBENMARK Well, good night, Siebenmark! *(About to go.)*

SIEG Good night, Mr. Siebenmark. *(About to follow.)*

SIEBENMARK Where are you going?

SIEG I dunno, maybe here, maybe there.

SIEBENMARK But I don't need an understudy, a spare Siebenmark.

SIEG Just walk straight ahead, then you won't notice him.

SIEBENMARK Well, let's go then. *(They continue.)*

XI

(By the river; the lighted lantern is still standing on the sand. Siebenmark, followed by Sieg, enters and stops before the lantern, startled.)

SIEBENMARK This can really make a man melancholy — I feel as if I've been walking for a hundred years, back and forth, up and down, with Fido Sieg, my dog, behind me. *(Lifts the lantern.)* And what happened at this spot has had at most a little hour to cool off.

SIEG Yes, sir, I guess it holds enough oil for another little hour — but I'd think an hour would be enough.

SIEBENMARK Oh God, in the meantime moss has grown on my head, my memory's shaking its forelock — and yet the light was already present when — what was that about?

SIEG Why, that affair with the young gentleman and the money business of course — I've still got it in my hand — here.

SIEBENMARK Ogodogod, keep quiet, something's dawning on me — just don't go on talking, horrible, horrible — My light was out for so long, for a good piece of eternity, but the lamp keeps watch — and it goes on keeping watch.

SIEG But maybe the other folks are keeping watch too?

SIEBENMARK Oh, don't jabber about affairs that are a hundred-years-old. For an old sleepy dog an hour can have a hundred years in its belly. I want to sleep some more. *(Puts down the lantern. They keep walking along the river.)*

IVER *(from the bushes)* He has rats in his body — and he's running because they bite him, and he doesn't realize they're parts of him.

(He stands before the lantern, bent and frozen stiff, then goes off to the right, but returns, tries it to the left, stops, and shrugs his shoulders.)

Right-left, left-right — left for me is just as right as right, and right isn't any better than left. *(Takes the lantern and holds it up.)* It can't be denied, close to my eyes the old lantern is brighter than Sirius, a bit of lighted blubber outshines the stars. Everyone has to see for himself how to manage so that his miserable, selfish gleam doesn't put out all the heavenly lights. *(Puts down the lantern.)* Yes, yes, you my twinkling double up there and you, clever Siebenmark, how bright you are — and your wobbling in the sky is only a frosty shudder of eternity, and Siebenmark's whole life is merely a fleeting frosty shudder of his eternal being, nothing else. No, it's

obviously correct, we've been recognized. Radiant Voss, are you too shaking your head? Are you laughing? Is the whole of honest Voss down here merely a mocking thought about yourself flashing through your brain? If a fleabite of time ever makes you eternal ones itch, just for a moment . . . but then you crack the flea, don't you? Have your good fun, keep on — you may break wind occasionally, it whirls around and calls itself Voss, Siebenmark, Iver, inflates itself as part of you until the bubble bursts — all of you — you, yellow grandmother, stifle a smile, how far away you are. *(Turns around.)* Quiet father, mild mother — all the rest of you shining souls — *(slaps his forehead)* you are merely buzzing bees in my beehive! Can your light ever go out, blue-green flickering Mrs. Siebenmark? But where does all this go — more to the right — more to the left, that's the question. But there needn't be any going, there is no right, there is no left any longer. God, I thank you, God, for separating all this from me. All that remains is an *up*, an *over*, in spite of oneself — over oneself.

(He creeps back into the bushes. The lantern goes on burning dimly, flickers a few minutes as if it were going out. The curtain descends slowly, then rises just as slowly. Siebenmark, behind his Sieg, passes in silence, disappears and re-appears on the other side.)

SIEG That's enough now, Sir, I'm dog-tired.

SIEBENMARK And I'm sleeping like a log — anything but wake up, anything but talk.

SIEG *(picks up the lantern)* You're quiet now, an' I still have to get to Braak tonight. About that money — *(steps back)* I rolled it up nice an' stuffed it into your pocket when we was stumblin' up the hill in the sand. Look an' see if it's all right.

SIEBENMARK It doesn't matter if it isn't all right. Well, good-bye, then, and many thanks — *(fetches a coin from the pocket of his vest)* drink my health with it.

SIEG Thanks, Sir, with pleasure, it's goin' to be a good swallow, you can be sure of that. So long, get there all right.

SIEBENMARK And you reach Braak.

SIEG *(opens the lantern to put it out, notices Iver lying there, holds the light over him)* If that young man was lyin' here all that time we was walkin' to get warm — well, well, well — what's this? Come over here quick, Mr. Siebenmark, can you see?

SIEBENMARK Yes, a man.

SIEG No, no, it ain't that simple *(Puts the light closer.)* There's somethin' the matter with him, he's torn open his clothes on his

chest — his mouth's full o' blood. I tell you, he was plannin' somethin' like this and waited for his chance.

SIEBENMARK *(takes the lantern and kneels)* Is it possible to see anything? Yes — here it is, see that dark spot on his chest, do you think it could be a bullet hole?

SIEG Has he got anythin' in his hand, a gun or somethin'?

SIEBENMARK I don't see anything. *(Holds the light closer.)* No, no, nothing. Besides, the revolver he had with him, I threw it into the water myself. But even this afternoon they were saying — how, if — only we didn't believe it.

SIEG He's dead, ain't he?

SIEBENMARK Do you suppose he might just be playing a joke on us? Watch out, he wants to scare us, soon he'll rise — or go up in the air.

SIEG Seems to me he's lyin' the way a man only lies for the last time.

SIEBENMARK Wait here, I'll run and get somebody, so we can take him into the house.

SIEG *(puts the lantern beside Iver's body)* Yeh, you go and do that.

(Siebenmark leaves; a few moments later the light goes out.)

XII

(The floor of the barn in Lüttenbargen. Iver's body is carried in by Siebenmark, Voss, and Sieg and laid down backstage on the hay. Siebenmark is the first to go out, Sieg and Voss follow.)

(Miss Isenbarn, distracted, recognizes the dead man; as steps are heard she makes an involuntary movement as if to lock the door; in the doorway she meets Siebenmark.)

SIEBENMARK *(in a dull voice)* Aren't you sleeping?

(Miss Isenbarn points to Iver's body.)

SIEBENMARK Hell — so what! Because I saw the lamps still lit downstairs I had to go looking for you, didn't I?

(Miss Isenbarn is indifferent and silent.)

SIEBENMARK What's going on here? Are you making a big thing of something trivial? It looks as if two were caught, and the poor offender, the third one, can die of shame . . . surely he may ask to be told what he's done?

(Miss Isenbarn remains silent.)

SIEBENMARK *(to himself)* The lady, my fiancée, does have a first name, I suppose; but strangely enough, I never called her by it. It would have been trouble to invent a different one for her at any time. But I guess I should for once . . . *(sharply)* Lena!

(Miss Isenbarn starts, remains as above.)

SIEBENMARK *(to Iver)* My dear sir, will you perhaps condescend to explain what is going on? *(pause. Walks over and strikes the body)* Get up, lofty lord, you have no right to remain silent.

MISS ISENBARN It was me you hit.

SIEBENMARK Ah — are you two so much one? I'd like to chat a little.

MISS ISENBARN We wouldn't.

SIEBENMARK You wouldn't! But how will you take revenge on me except through words — chatting seems to me the only possibility — it's two against one.

VOSS *(putting his head through the door)* I can't find her anywhere. *(Enters.)* Oh, I see — here — well, then no one will have any use for me. *(About to retreat.)*

SIEBENMARK Isn't this your place for the night? I beg you, I implore you, we'll only stay a moment. We won't disturb you in the least, right? We're easy to get along with — no, you mustn't by any means leave here again.

VOSS *(sits in a corner)* Good old Sieg is formulating his report to the country sheriff while on the march. Everything in this land proceeds in orderly fashion. He who is dead is given an extra stab with a pen, or his death isn't colourproof.

SIEBENMARK *(referring to Iver)* If he only wanted to let his light shine, now would be the right time for it, but he has shrouded himself most untimely in darkness. All of us who are gathered here — disciples, collaborators, those of a kindred spirit: master, we are waiting for you! Shouldn't we line up? The most involved murderer, I should think, in front, the bereaved ones behind him, of course, this collaborator here, considering his dark handkerchief, in the shadow.

MISS ISENBARN Murderer?

SIEBENMARK I did, isn't it fitting? Obviously it is. Now let's serenade him. *(To Miss Isenbarn.)* Come now, why such a bewildered face? Could anyone do his job better?

MISS ISENBARN I have to think of something.

SIEBENMARK Think? Haven't we had enough of that today?

MISS ISENBARN Oh — a flight of fancy? Namely: that he killed you — it's he who is the murderer here.
SIEBENMARK And of course after that you want to make me as lively as a jumping jack? Shall we dance? All round him, right around, right around? *(Begins to dance.)* By the way. *(Draws her to the body.)* You should know the truth: before he died he spoke of you, yes, he was, you might say, crazily and madly in love with you. What a couple you'd have made! Clearly — he must rise again! Seriously, he loved you, though in dark despair — no doubt about it. *(Takes a few dance steps.)* No mistake. *(Shouts at the body.)* Get up tumbledoll, think! — Yes, in my mind, I did it. Is a man a murderer if he wishes someone dead? In any other way it wasn't me, dearest, quite positively. But he, with his lofty splendour, he killed me, let's hold on to that. It was "Mrs. Siebenmark", he killed me with that "Mrs. Siebenmark", ran me right through. *(To the body.)* Rise — shall she become Mrs. Siebenmark? Lofty lord, what reserved behaviour, you should act — is negation your only strength — is that your secret?
MISS ISENBARN No — it's his lying there still.
SIEBENMARK You don't say! Are you serious — but why ask! *(To the body.)* Lie there, you hear? Don't you dare — well, we'll see which of us he prefers to obey.
MISS ISENBARN I want to tell something.
SIEBENMARK Forget about it. Words are not pennies you can return, so everything's the same as before. What you once paid me I've put in my pocket — so what does returning mean? Or? Well, you're not thinking of *that*, are you?
MISS ISENBARN I am, everything has changed now.
SIEBENMARK "Behold, all things have become new."
MISS ISENBARN Yes, new, if you want to call it that.
SIEBENMARK That means "old" — this "new"? Right?
(Voss coughs.)
SIEBENMARK Don't be afraid, collaborator, you're not supposed to be a witness. *(To Miss Isenbarn.)* We know how to control ourselves, don't we? *(Whispering.)* He really loved you, I mean it.
MISS ISENBARN *(walks over and watches Iver)* His face is distorted.
SIEBENMARK Didn't you say something ages ago about envying? Or was it your silent thought that entered my head?
MISS ISENBARN Well, I was just going to say — all such phrases —
SIEBENMARK Aren't they? Much is gained if, at least, one keeps still.

MISS ISENBARN But I feel as if I'd died myself — and shaken off everything the way he has.

SIEBENMARK There's only one difference — he's rid of everything. And you?

MISS ISENBARN You mean that I'm getting everything back? Not quite!

SIEBENMARK Not quite? You see, it occurred to me to drop that remark experimentally. So I was wrong, and that's good too.

MISS ISENBARN Do let me finish.

SIEBENMARK The floor is yours! *(To Voss.)* Please, collaborator — keep your mouth shut. *(Threateningly toward the body.)* If *he* wishes to speak with your lips, he's most politely requested to abstain. I want to hear what *you* have to say to me, you alone.

(Miss Isenbarn draws his head toward her and whispers into his ear.)

SIEBENMARK *(in an undertone)* What are you saying — today — after all this — this — very night? *(To Voss.)* Can you believe such a thing? *(To Miss Isenbarn.)* Say it again, maybe I miscoined your words, perhaps my ears were thieves. *(To Voss.)* The thing has become very unpleasant — dreadfully critical — what on earth did she say?

MISS ISENBARN No, let's admit it. *(To Voss.)* He wasn't mistaken — and what can you do for us, since we have to speak our minds to each other?

SIEBENMARK It's quite enough if you pretend to be deaf, and you may even listen, for all I care — but perhaps it would be better — *(to Miss Isenbarn)* we — after all, we ourselves have plenty of room over there.

MISS ISENBARN No, we must finish this conversation *here*. You see — it's to be once for all, for eternity so to speak — and so, even if it's more difficult here *(looks at the body)* than it would be there — it's also safer, because the point is that nothing is to be misunderstood. *(To Voss, who is moving to the door.)* Thank you. You probably know everything anyway — I know, you're pretending — you just act as if — good night.

(Exit Voss, closes the door.)

SIEBENMARK There — now then?

MISS ISENBARN Well, that was the thing I had to tell you. Entirely my decision and mine alone.

(Siebenmark approaches her, doubting, questioning.)

MISS ISENBARN All right — but shut the door tight.

SIEBENMARK *(pointing to the body)* Think of —

MISS ISENBARN *(locking the door)* Do you think he'll awaken? Before, when he was alive, he lay in your mind as if he were in a pit, you hardly saw him, and now when he doesn't see and feel, when he's saved, sacrificed, sublimated, now you're so sensitive, now his presence annoys you?

SIEBENMARK And later on — do you forget a thing like that?

MISS ISENBARN I only meant today. You shall have what you have earned. I'm the way you want me, just so.

SIEBENMARK You keep talking of me only.

MISS ISENBARN Here I can show you who I am. Afterwards — in the room upstairs — do you think I'll be the same?

SIEBENMARK I don't know what you mean. I don't have any desire to brood over it. I'll simply take you at your word.

MISS ISENBARN Do that — it has nothing to do with me any longer.

SIEBENMARK Oho — that's plain isn't it? Do you understand it, has it something to do with Mrs. Siebenmark? Then, then — you know — you would have become Mrs. Siebenmark of your own will, wouldn't you?

MISS ISENBARN I — what is that woman to me? No, I mean something entirely different.

SIEBENMARK Certainly, certainly, that's obvious.

MISS ISENBARN Each is to have his share. Remember what I turned over to you this afternoon — all my property, and now — don't you understand?

SIEBENMARK No. *(Takes her hands.)* What's the matter with you, you've brought me to the point, I've got so far, no more bargaining now.

MISS ISENBARN No bargaining, no, I've brought you . . . there . . .

SIEBENMARK Yes, yes, you're saying it — you yourself. I've got you there, you're saying yourself that you've brought me to the point.

MISS ISENBARN Certainly — yes— I did.

SIEBENMARK *(draws her to himself violently)* At last!

MISS ISENBARN At last!

SIEBENMARK Speak, say it just once more.

(Miss Isenbarn is silent.)

SIEBENMARK The word that pierces me, melts me. *(Looks at her.)* How miserly you are with your face, but you've said it, and it was abundance and overflow.

MISS ISENBARN But I wasn't talking to you.

SIEBENMARK *(lets go of her, steps back)* What's that?

(Miss Isenbarn shrugs.)

SIEBENMARK *(angry)* What could you mean by that?

MISS ISENBARN You have your share, what more do you want?

SIEBENMARK What kind of an "at last" was that? I want to know what kind of an "at last".

MISS ISENBARN At last — now at last it's my turn. This is the way I want it, not any better. I'm at last content with myself. I sense the beginning, at last a beginning!

SIEBENMARK A moment ago — in the room — was it the same thing — you meant to say?

MISS ISENBARN Must one be buried to be done? No, there is beginning and end, mingled, clamped together. *You* can mock the end, you see it and you don't like it, and you have your share in it; but the beginning — leave that alone, that's my property only, the beginning in which I sleep and wake, like a child on the first day. One doesn't know right or left, but one is in its very midst. One's wholly plunged into the obvious in this newness, but now one must learn to see, to creep, to walk, and after that all the rest. My goodness, think of all that's going to happen!

SIEBENMARK *(strained)* Now let's get out of here — come, let me take you to your room.

MISS ISENBARN And there?

SIEBENMARK *(same)* There we'll become reasonable; here all kinds of strange stuff interferes. This is no place for lovers.

MISS ISENBARN Tell me, you're serious in thinking that I'm offering you something in vain.

SIEBENMARK I *am* serious — just as you are — come.

MISS ISENBARN Right away. *(Starts to go back.)* Let me look at him once more.

SIEBENMARK *(pushing her away)* I can't stand such a mixture. Beginning — end? No! Stop it.

MISS ISENBARN The last time.

SIEBENMARK I can't follow you. We want to go where there's life.

MISS ISENBARN Life? Oh yes, where we can plunge into *(maliiously)* "full, foaming life"! *(Runs to Iver's body and kisses it.)*

SIEBENMARK *(pulls her away violently)* You can kiss him?

MISS ISENBARN I did.

SIEBENMARK You seriously think that after this I'll accept your kisses?

MISS ISENBARN *(shakes her head)* Kiss — I you — we each other? Do with me what you want: kissing and all the rest that you people consider part of "life" — but . . .

SIEBENMARK If you're so dead, how can I become warm?
MISS ISENBARN Oh, but I'm warm — feel me — and this warmth is the main thing for you; as long as we're warm to the touch you feel life. Oh dear, what hard work to be happy your way! Need one be happy that way?
SIEBENMARK Do you think I haven't seen for a long time what your aim is? You acted a Valkyrie-scene, bravo! You want to ascend into a higher death from a dead life — Mrs. Siebenmark sacrifices herself to Siebenmark; she has herself buried in Siebenmark to rise again in Iver. These are all hysterical notions. You have the choice between us two.
MISS ISENBARN I may choose?
SIEBENMARK Don't forget that your next word will be as distinct and decisive as a gun shot.
MISS ISENBARN *(Nods delightedly, hurriedly)* Him — I choose him.

(Siebenmark opens his mouth to speak but his voice fails him, he touches his breast with his forefinger as if he were saying: "a hit". Miss Isenbarn is standing between the two, but without taking a step she seems to be moved slowly toward Iver. Suddenly she snatches up the lantern and lights up Iver's face. At that moment the flame goes out and thus complete darkness ensues. After some time the door is opened slowly with a creaking noise. Sober daylight makes the stage moderately bright. The barn is in almost the same state as before, but the three persons have disappeared. Voss and Engholm enter, both in dress coats and top hats, as if coming from a funeral.)

VOSS That's where it was.
ENGHOLM Is that where he lay? A strange encounter at the old spot — I wonder how long ago it was.
VOSS Who knows, we have become old in the meantime. In the past I used to be a ghost rather than anything else, and it hasn't got better as time went on — yes, that's where he lay — on this spot.
ENGHOLM And she?
VOSS She knew how to get out of being found. But finally a note arrived, saying: this is no longer me, signed with her full name.
ENGHOLM And what did she mean by that? Probably became a Catholic?
VOSS Do you think so?
ENGHOLM My own sister, you know, went into a convent and became a real nun. There are such things — what do *you* think?

VOSS There was something else written after her name: "the maid of a lofty lord."

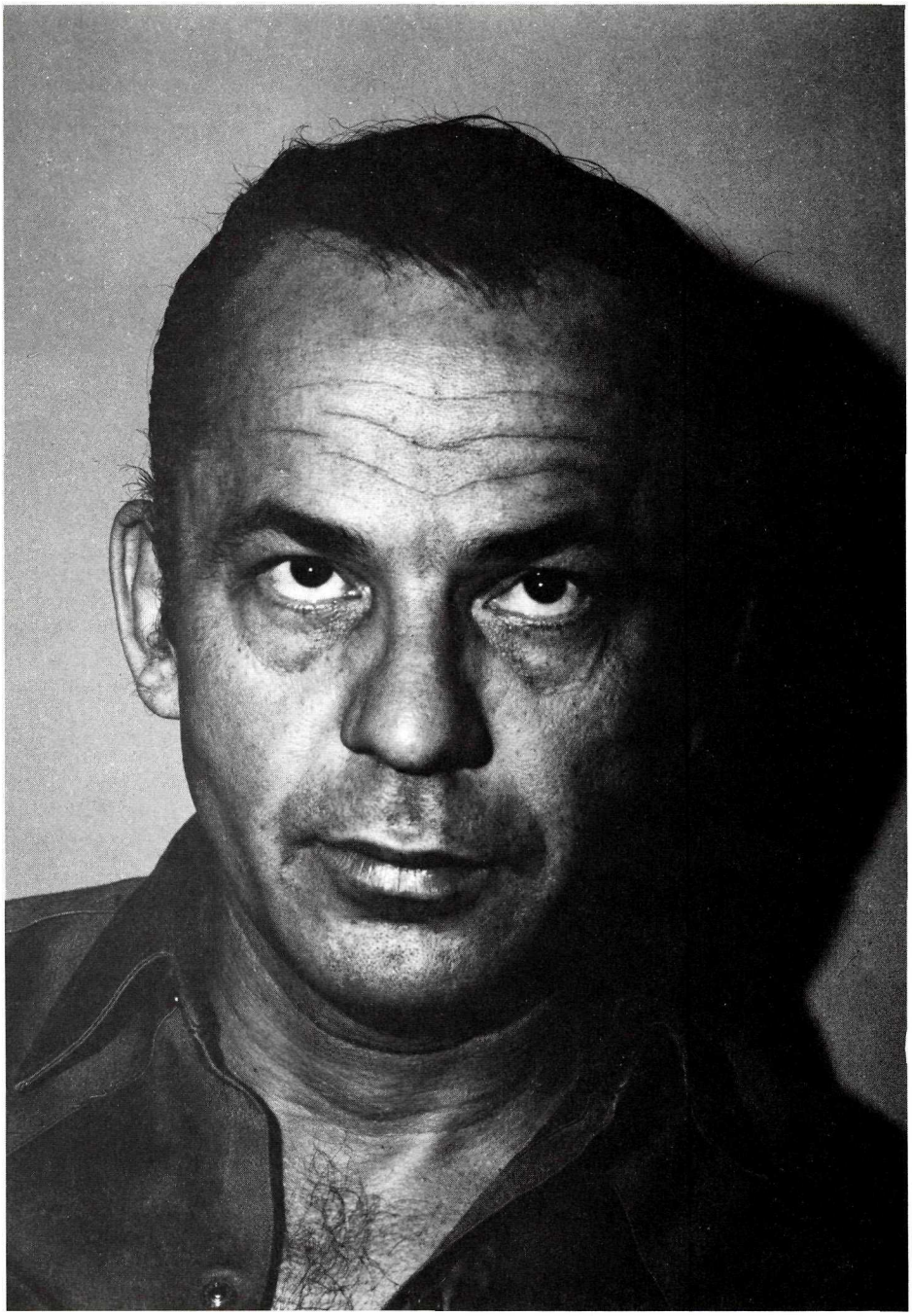
ENGHOLM Well, there you are, what else does that mean but nun?

VOSS I don't think so. The lofty lord was her own lofty spirit — and she serves as a nun — yes, her convent is the world, her life — as a parable.

ENGHOLM Hm? That's debatable — come with me — you still drink grog, don't you?

VOSS Of course — we ghosts . . .

ENGHOLM Ssh. Ghosts, figuratively speaking. That may make an interesting conversation. Come along.



George Birimisa presents

DADDY VIOLET

written and directed by
GEORGE BIRIMISA

music by
RICHARD GRANAT

with

SYLVIENNE STRAUSS ..... *Actress*
GEORGE BIRIMISA ..... *Actor One*
DAN LEACH ..... *Actor Two*

as produced at the Firehouse Theatre, Minneapolis, Minnesota. Other productions have been presented in New York, Philadelphia, Washington. Mr. Birimisa's troupe, with Carole Getzoff as Actress, also presents *Daddy Violet* in February at the University of British Columbia Festival of Contemporary Arts, and elsewhere on the Pacific Coast.

The name of the actor is also the name of the character in the play. I am using the names of the actors in the Firehouse Theatre *production; they created the roles.*
In order to personalize the play I will use the first names of the actors instead of Actor One *or* Actor Two.
When Daddy Violet *is performed it must be involved with the reality of where it is being performed — where it is "happening". The actors must accept the total reality of where they are and the total reality of the audience. The Firehouse Theatre seats 140 people and the stage is a thrust stage with three levels.*
Where is the beginning of Daddy Violet? The Firehouse Theatre was in rehearsal for Arthur Sainer's play, The Thing Itself. *The night that* Daddy Violet *was scheduled to open they were rehearsing rather late and one of their props was a refrigerator that was plugged in. They took every other prop off the stage and covered the refrigerator. Since the opening of* Daddy Violet *is an improv we used the reality of the refrigerator. George Birimisa (Actor One) wanders onto the stage. He goes to refrigerator, opens it. He takes out apples, melon, pears, peaches, bananas, box of candy and puts them on the stage. He finds can of beer in back of refrigerator.*

GEORGE *(Talking to audience)* These are the props for Arthur Sainer's new play that opens next Friday night. *(He smiles. Puts all the props back into refrigerator. Wanders downstage. Opens can of beer. Sips it.)* There's nothing symbolic about this beer — it's just that this is opening night and I'm nervous.
YOUNG MAN We're nervous, too.
GEORGE *(Puts beer on stage. Wanders backstage and comes back with a broom. Starts sweeping stage.)* The Firehouse troupe was rehearsing this afternoon — they didn't have time to sweep. *(Wanders downstage. Leans on broom.)* By the way, I saw the first act of Arthur Sainer's play. I really dug it. *(Goes back to sweeping.)* Oh, you don't have to be quiet. Go right ahead and talk to each other. It'll be awhile before I finish sweeping. *(He continues sweeping. The backstage dressing room is on the second floor, directly above the stage. There's a square foothole in the floor. Actor Two (Dan Leach) is upstairs bent over the hole.)*
ACTOR TWO (DAN) *(Yelling. His voice can be perfectly heard.)* George?
GEORGE What? *(Looks around, confused.)*

DAN Up here!
GEORGE Oh. . . . Yeah?
DAN How's the house?
GEORGE *(Comes downstage. Looks at audience.)* How are you?
AUDIENCE Okay (or) fine, etc.
GEORGE They're fine.
DAN How many?
GEORGE Oh. *(He counts them.)* Seventy. Dan, will you send Sylvienne down?
DAN I don't think she's ready.
GEORGE Tell her to bring the programs with her.
DAN Okay. Sylvienne?
GEORGE *(Turns to audience)* We'll just have to wait. I can't think of anything else to say. Ah — *(George moves downstage. Looks at Young Man.)* Did the Twins win today?
YOUNG MAN I don't know.
ANOTHER YOUNG MAN Yeah, they won the first game and they're tied in the 8th inning of the second.
GEORGE They're in second place, aren't they?
ANOTHER YOUNG MAN Yeah.
GEORGE Did Killebrew hit a home run? *(Sylvienne has entered. She is carrying programs and starts to pass them out. During one performance a young lady helped her pass out the programs. When she is finished she stands near exit puffing on a cigarette.)* Come on, honey.
SYLVIENNE Just another puff.
GEORGE Did you ever see anything like it — that's a New York actor for you. Come on, Sylvienne. *(She puts out cigarette and walks slowly to stage.)* What are you going to work on?
SYLVIENNE My relaxation and radiation.
GEORGE Good. *(Sylvienne goes upstage center and stands motionless. She is working on her radiation exercise. George looks toward the ceiling.)* Dan?
DAN What is it, George?
GEORGE Come on.
DAN Okay, I'm coming. *(We could actually hear his footsteps on the ceiling. A moment later he enters and walks up onto the stage, down the center aisle. George is holding a broom.)*
GEORGE What are you going to work on.
DAN I don't know.
GEORGE You in a good mood?
DAN I feel okay — I guess.

GEORGE Let's see. How about some music?

DAN Good idea. *(George runs to back of theatre where there is a record player. He puts on a Beatles' record. Any hard beat rock will do. Dan begins to dance by himself. Then smiling he goes out into audience and asks a girl to dance with him. He picks out young, swinging looking chicks. It never fails. He escorts her to the stage and they begin to dance.)*

GEORGE Any couples feel like dancing — just get up on the stage. Come on! *(At one performance we had four couples dancing and a young man who tried to get Sylvienne to dance. She refused but was very nice. When the record is over, Dan escorts young lady back to seat and finds another young lady. What is interesting about this particular episode is that the audience talks, laughs and is seemingly not bored. At the end of the second record, George turns off record player. Dan escorts young lady back to seat.)* You in the right mood now? *(Dan nods)* What are you going to work on?

DAN My relaxation exercises. *(He plops down on stage and begins his relaxation exercises.)*

GEORGE Great. I'm going to work on my radiation. *(George runs out into audience. He picks out a woman and/or young girl with a sensitive face. He bends over, about a foot away from her, staring intently. If she won't look back he moves down aisle and starts on another female. If she is wearing glasses he asks her to take them off. If her hand is on her face he asks her to take it away. George reacts to specific individual.)* You have soulful eyes —etc. *(George does this with at least four girls. Then he runs back onstage.)* I guess I better work on my relaxation. *(He puts his hands to his neck. This is the area where George Birimisa is really tense. Actor who plays this role must find out where he is tense and utilize that area. George talks to audience.)* You see, in order for me to fully radiate I must be completely relaxed and this is my area of tension. *(George actually cracks his neck. At every performance it always makes a loud sound. George looks at audience and smiles.)* You see — that is my problem area. Ah — Dan?

DAN What is it, Birimisa?

GEORGE Will you help me with my neck?

DAN Sure. *(Dan gets up. George is kneeling on stage bent forward. Dan gets behind him.)* Come on. Relax your shoulders and back. Now, let your head go, back and forth, back and forth. Ah — that's good. It's better. Now around and around — faster — faster — let your hair fly *(Birimisa has long hair)* now the other way

—come on. Very, very good. Keep going — that's it. Ah — you getting dizzy?

GEORGE Yeah, am I dizzy. *(He looks at audience. He is really dizzy. Dan lies on stage. He puts his feet up in the air. He is barefoot and the audience can see it.)*

DAN Sorry about the dirty feet.

(George gets his beer and moves down aisle.)

GEORGE I'm going out into the lobby and work on my ah — psychological gesture. *(He is practically out the door of theatre.)*

DAN George?

GEORGE Yeah?

DAN How long do you want this to go on?

GEORGE That's a good line — keep it in! Ah — c'mon and help me with my ah —gesture. *(Dan jumps up and follows George. They exit. Sylvienne has been motionless all this time. Now she runs offstage to make sure they are gone. She runs back onstage. She begins to feel her waist and her stomach. She pushes at her abdomen very, very hard.)*

SYLVIENNE Will I ever break the armor? *(Now her hands on her hips.)* Ah — let me see now — ah — tighten my buttocks and ah — boom! *(She does a side bump, barely moving her hips)* Dear me, I've got to — *(Tries again to the other side and then to the front. She is very bad. She runs offstage and finds a man in the audience.)* I bet you don't have any idea how important it is for me to break through? Do you understand? Do you? *(She runs back onstage. She begins to swivel her hips, very slowly.)* One — two — three — four — five *(Does forward bump)* Boom! *(Pauses. Now she swivels her hips again. Faster and faster.)* One — two — three — four — five — six — seven. Boom! Boom! Boom! *(She does three forward booms. Smiling she runs into the audience. Finds another man.)* Ah — do you think if I hummed I could really break through — go beyond the booms? Do you? *(If she doesn't get an answer she goes to another man until she finally gets an answer, that is, encouragement. She begins humming a song as she walks down the aisle. Then she begins to do a sexy dance, shimmy, etc., this is all done as she smiles and relates it to individuals in audience. She isn't very good at it. She is in front of one man as she is finishing. She does a wild bump at him and then runs back onstage. Upstage centre, she crouches and becomes a seed and slowly she blooms into a flower. It is not a very good flower. She breaks out of it and comes to the edge of the stage. She talks to audience but looks up to where she was a moment before.)* Hi! *(Nervous smile.)* She

says her name is Violet but her real name is Sylvienne. Her father teachers anthropology and is at present studying the mating habits of the Hopi. Instead of going to college she came to the Village six months ago. *(Pause.)* She's doing her Michael Chekhov exercises. *(Another pause. She is hoping they know who Michael Chekhov is.)* You know, Chekhov the famous drama teacher? Ah — do you? *(No answer. She runs upstage. She tries to become a flower. Still not very good.)* Shit! How can I be a violet? Violet? Violet! *(She gives up. Comes downstage and looks at audience.)* I guess I better work on my Chekhovian center! *(She stands up straight with her hands at her sides and closes her eyes.)* Where are you? Where is the center of my being? *(She feels her body, exploring.)* I know where it's supposed to be but it just isn't there. *(Looks at audience)* George and Dan are so good on centers! *(Back to feeling her body)* I know it's not in my abdominal cage. Maybe it's in my stomach! *(She walks across stage, hands at side stomach protruding. It's pretty bad. Shrugs her shoulders.)* Not too bad for a beginner! *(Pause)* Now, let me see. I'm going to work on my vaginal center. *(She closes her eyes.)* Yes - - - - - - - concentrate - - - - - vag - - i - - - nal. *(This one is working better. She begins to smile to herself.)* Imagine a string is attached to my vag - - - - - *(She pantomimes a string attached. She opens her eyes. She winks at a man in the audience. Then she runs offstage and jumps into lap of a man. At the* Firehouse *she went to the sixth man in the fifth row.)* Excuse me, Miss . . . . Excuse me. I'm sorry. *(The man she is going to, gets up.)* You sit down. You're the one. *(She sits on his lap.)* Mmmm. You have sexy eyes. *(She takes off his glasses.)* Blue eyes and —

MAN They're green.

SYLVIENNE They're still sexy! *(Of course all of this is ad lib. She gets off his lap. At one performance the following happened.)*

SYLVIENNE What are you doing after the show?

MAN What is your vaginal center doing after the show?

(Sylvienne goes to another part of theater and finds another man and sits on his lap.) I love curly hair. Ah — would you like to pull my string?

MAN *(Here we get various answers.)* I'd love to, baby *(or)* How 'bout pulling my string? *(or)* Let's pull them together. *(Or silence. Sylvienne jumps off his lap, runs onstage quickly.)* Well, that's enough for warm-ups. I better get with it! *(She is back to being a violet.)* Me, Violet! Violet! Violet! *(She begins dancing across stage as a flower as she sings the song* Violet. *Music*

is by Richard Granat and words by George Birimisa.) Vi-o-let! Vi-o-let! Vi-i-ah-i-ah-i-o-let! I am blooming on the side of a mountain very high. I have broken through the rock-encrusted earth and I've pushed through the scraggly weeds. *(She pantomimes pushing out of the earth.)* Violet! Violet! Violet! I can feel the morning sun opening me up and below — below — below — *(She is gesturing in front of the stage, looking down, maybe seeing something she doesn't want to see. She goes back to previous line.)* I can feel the morning sun opening me up and below *(Looking down and still gesturing toward it)* the fog is a solid blanket, hiding the Mekong Delta. Violet. Violet, Violet. The sun is on me. *(She comes to a dead stop as she finishes the song. She goes upstage to original position from where she was radiating. She looks at audience. Even when they applaud after her violet song she still is sad as she speaks her next line.)* Ah — Isadora Duncan did it much better fifty years ago — *(Pause.)* and she did it stark, staring naked. *(Another pause. Almost asking the audience.)* But this is a good showcase.

(George comes striding down aisle from back of theater. He has left broom on the stage. He gets it and takes it backstage. Then he comes downstage. After a moment he looks at audience.)

GEORGE I'm forty-three years old — *(He pulls down his lower lip and shows a missing tooth that is really missing.)* I'm losing my teeth, I've got a bum back and my center is in my crotch! *(He closes his eyes and clenches his fists.)* I've got to get it out of there! *(Pause.)* I am not an object. I am not an object. *(He stands straight, obviously trying to move his center away from his crotch. Puts his hand on his heart.)* My center is in my heart! My center is in my - - - - - *(He opens his eyes. He meets the eyes of the audience. He looks at all of them, every single one. He sees all the faces staring at him. He begins to moan and then he falls to the stage, his head over the edge. He is clutching his genitals in terrible pain and moaning and crying.)*

SYLVIENNE *(Radiant)* Me - - - - Violet!

GEORGE *(After a moment sits up on stage. Looks)* You — ah — what?

SYLVIENNE *(Fluttering her petals that are next to her face. She is looking straight forward)* My name is Violet!

GEORGE You can't be a violet!

SYLVIENNE My name is *Violet*!

GEORGE You want to know something?

SYLVIENNE What, *George*?

GEORGE Don't call me that. You can't be a violet!

SYLVIENNE Why not, George?

GEORGE Because you are not the color of ah — of ah —

SYLVIENNE Violet?

GEORGE Will you say that again?

SYLVIENNE Violet!

GEORGE You called me Violet! *(His body begins to undulate slowly, tentatively. He is turning into a flower. He moves downstage his body becoming graceful, a kind of slow motion dance that is a flower. He is feeling the beauty of his body.)* I love it — yes, I do!

SYLVIENNE *(Watching him closely now.)* You really love it?

GEORGE *(George is moving across the stage, jumping up from one level to the next, really enjoying being a flower. His whole body is undulating. He is on his knees, bending over. Jumping up, his arms moving rhythmically.)* Oh . . . oh . . . yes . . . I do. Such imagery. It turns me on!

SYLVIENNE *(She is fascinated.)* Like — like a scraggly weed turning into a beautiful flower!

GEORRGE *(Looks at his hands as he is still undulating. Examines them excitedly.)* I'm blue — a pale, delicate blue — like a high cloud just before dawn.

SYLVIENNE Oh, how exciting. You look just like a —

GEORGE *(Frenzy of violet happiness, bounding all over the stage.)* I'm purple, I'm blue, I'm yellow and I'm — white. *(Finally comes to a stop in front of Sylvienne. Looks at her. Imploring.)* Will you call me Violet?

SYLVIENNE As long as you want me to. How are you, *Violet*?

GEORGE *(In ecstasy as he discovers his flower being. He feels the bare flesh of his ankles.)* My chlorophyll is cool . . . . so cool. . . . and . . . *(His hands move up his legs and he very slowly pulls off his T-shirt and holds it over his head.)* . . . and seeping up from the richness of the good earth!

SYLVIENNE You are beautiful, Violet!

GEORGE *(Feeling his body.)* Tell me of my beauty!

SYLVIENNE You are radiant!

GEORGE I am not an object?

SYLVIENNE Of course not. Your center is in your heart. You are the most beautiful of violets! *(George's hand undulates in front of her face. They are both radiant as they look at one another. George jumps up to higher platform doing wild flower gyrations. As if*

hypnotized Sylvienne follows him. George begins to sing to her.)
GEORGE Violet! Violet! Violet!
SYLVIENNE *(Singing back to him.)* I am blooming on the side of a mountain very high!
GEORGE *(Touches her hands, still singing.)* You have broken through the rock-encrusted earth and you've — *(He takes hold of her wrists and pulls her to standing position.)* pushed through the scraggly weeds. *(He moves around her in a dance movement. She is hypnotized as he sings* Violet *over and over. Six times. He finishes singing. They rub petals and then he pulls her down to stage floor. They are kneeling on the stage, very close.)* Oh, Violet!
SYLVIENNE Yes, Violet?
GEORGE You are ah — *(He is feeling the softness of her arms.)*
SYLVIENNE Yes, Violet?
GEORGE Beautifully long-stemmed.
SYLVIENNE Oh, thank you.
GEORGE *(His arms are around her now. He begins to press his body against hers in utter animal sexuality. He kisses her hands.)* Your petals are — ah —
SYLVIENNE Yes, Violet?
GEORGE Softly smooth and — ah — sensual. *(The lower part of his body is moving back and forth, rubbing against her.)*
SYLVIENNE Ah — your — ah — corollah ah — is —
GEORGE Yes, Violet? *(He is kissing her neck and feeling her breasts.)*
SYLVIENNE It's ah — it's an — ah — exciting blue-purple!
GEORGE *(Grabs her breast.)* You've got a wild-looking stamen!
SYLVIENNE Ah — thank you. Ah — how's your calyx?
GEORGE Early morning cool. You're so delicate feeling! *(His hand is feeling her rear end and moving around to the front and her vaginal area.)*
SYLVIENNE You're ah — almost *translucent!*
GEORGE You, my dear, are lovelier than all the varieties of begonias. *(His hand is now feeling her vagina.)* You are lovelier than — *(Sylvienne jumps up and with all her might she hits him on the shoulder, really smacks him.)*
SYLVIENNE I'm not like the *others*, George! I'm not like the others!
GEORGE *(Angry.)* You stupid little apprentice! *(He runs off-stage and finds a man. Eyeball to eyeball.)* She doesn't know the first fucking thing about acting! *(Actor Two (Dan Leach) comes running up aisle. His arms are outspread as if he were flying. He is doing a Chekhov exercise. He runs onto center stage and begins to*

do his flying exercise. Dan Leach looks like a huge bird flying very, very high. He is facing downstage, completely involved in his flying exercise.)

GEORGE *(In the aisle, talking to the audience, deadly serious.)* He's flying now — really flying! *(Dan continues flying as George moves down aisle, talking to different people.)* You know, there was a time when I thought I could be another Marlon Brando — long, long ago, but look at this kid — *(George looks at Dan. Dan has changed from his flying exercise to a molding exercise. A molding exercise is defined as thinking of the air as a canvas and your body as the paintbrush and you are molding the air into a beautiful creation. Dan is doing it with his hands, his body, his legs, moving gracefully across the stage. He is completely in his own world.)* Fantastic, huh? Do y'know this kid has only been studying the Chekhovian method for six years and I've been studying it for twenty? *(Watches Dan molding.)* I could watch him forever. *(Pause)* Ah — Dan? *(Dan doesn't answer)* Ah — Dan, do you feel up to your famous turkey? *(No answer.)* Ah — Dan?

DAN *(Finally out of his concentration.)* What is it, Birimisa? *(Dan (Actor Two) should refer to Actor One (George Birimisa) by his last name.)*

GEORGE Do you feel up to your famous turkey? *(Dan faces audience. He starts with his chin and slowly works up to his eyes, then down to his arms, his back and his feet. Mr. Leach went to the zoo and studied a turkey. After he fully becomes the turkey he picks out individuals in the audience. Then he jumps off the platform and hops about as the turkey and approaches people. He gets very close with the open-eyed stare of the turkey.)* Gobble — gobble — gobble! *(Right at particular person. Then he finds someone else.)* Gobble - - - - - gobble - - - gobble! *(Someone else.)* Gobble - - - gobble - - - gobble! *(Then he jumps onstage as the turkey and stares at audience.)*

GEORGE *(To audience.)* I think that deserves a round of applause! *(The audience applauds every night. During the height of the applause Dan gives with another "Gobble - - - gobble - - - gobble." Then back to his molding exercises, completely involved in his own world.)* Dan, let's show these people what a really great actor can do. *(No answer.)* Ah — Dan?

DAN What?

GEORGE Ah - - - *(He looks at audience, then back to Dan.)* Let's see — put your center in your ah - - - - - chest.

DAN My chest?

GEORGE Yeah! *(Dan is motionless for moment. Then he straightens up. He becomes very masculine. He picks out pretty girl in audience and walks offstage and over to her. He lifts her chin until their eyes meet.)* What's your name, baby? *(If she doesn't answer he asks her again. Once in awhile a girl may be hostile. If this happens George calls him back to stage or he goes on to next girl.)*

DAN What are you doing after the show?

GIRL I'm with my boyfriend.

DAN Ditch him! We'll turn on at the Electric Circus.

GEORGE *(Laughing)* Hey, Dan, you better take it easy. Come up here.

DAN I'm having a ball, fella. *(Moves to next girl)* What's your phone number? *(Finally he comes back onstage.)*

GEORGE Okay, Dan, back onstage. *(Dan comes onstage)* Ah — put your center in your mouth.

DAN My mouth? *(He is thinking about it. In this production Dan Leach wears sunglasses up to this point. However, they are optional.)*

GEORGE Yeah.

DAN *(At first he is tentative. He puts the handle of the sun glasses in his mouth. He begins to lick the handle with his mouth. He begins to grin. He is enjoying his center in his mouth. His movement changes. He becomes a rather screaming faggot but it is not in the sense of someone who is camping but a really true faggot. His eyes light up as he picks out a good-looking guy in the audience. As he does this he is not putting anyone down. He swishes over to the fellow and begins to run his hand through the fellow's hair.)* Oooooooooooooo! oooooooooooooooh! oooooooooooooooh!

GEORGE *(Moving off stage into aisle.)* What is it, Dan?

DAN *(Hand to chest. Still messing with the guy.)* I don't know. I've never had my center in my mouth before.

GEORGE But it's absolutely brilliant work!

DAN It's ah - - - got me worried. It's ah - - - I'm afraid that I - - -

GEORGE Afraid of what?

DAN I don't know! I've never experienced anything like this before. It's like - - - dear me - - I - - -

GEORGE *(Comes offstage and hits Dan on shoulder)* You're not freaking out, are you, fella?

DAN *(Big grin. Moves away from George. Looks for other men.)* It's fabulous! *(Up and down aisle swishing like crazy.)* Now I can understand the whole high camp mystique — I can understand Andy Warhol and Susan Sontag and Sybil Burton — the whole

crew. Why it even makes Cherry Grove understandable! *(He moves quickly to young lady that he asked for date when his center was in his chest.)* You got a cigarette on you, dear? *(If she doesn't he goes to another girl until he gets cigarette. Then he moves to the fellow through whose hair he has run his hands.)* Light me! *(What usually happens is that the fellow tries to light Dan's cigarette and the match goes out.)* Don't be nervous. I won't hurt you.

GEORGE Dan, will you please come back here? *(Dan sits on edge of stage. Dan is puffing away madly, his legs crossed and having a ball.)* Dan, ah - - - put your center back; in your chest. *(Dan gives him quizzical look.)* Your chest - - - remember? Ah - - - - - let me see - - - - - think of Jean Paul Belmondo and Albert Finney!

DAN *(Looks at George. Very excited.)* Belmondo and Finney - - - together? *(Turns his eyes up to the ceiling in ecstacy.)*

GEORGE Will you come off it, fella?

DAN I can't. I just can't!

GEORGE *(Really trying. Bent over him.)* But you're the greatest actor in our troupe with - - - *(George makes his hands into fists and puts them under Dan's nose.)* with the biggest fucking balls!

DAN *(with distaste)* Please, Birimisa. I guess I don't want to, so there! I love my center right where it is! I love it! I love it! I love it! *(He runs down center aisle looking for another guy.)*

GEORGE *(Chases after him.)* Jesus — will you think masculine?

DAN I guess I don't want to — thank you! *(Dan is standing next to another young man. Sylvienne who has been upstage runs down the aisle.)*

SYLVIENNE Oh, Dan, dear, you look pale. Why don't you go upstairs and relax?

DAN *(Putting down sunglasses and putting out cigarette in ashtray next to record player in the back of the Firehouse Theatre. He turns on Sylvienne.)* You just shut up! You don't fool me for a second, Miss Mini Monster. You'd love to have this gorgeous stage all to yourself! *(Dan stands center stage. Sylvienne is in aisle.)*

SYLVIENNE What on earth did I do?

DAN Germinate, bitch, Ugh! Ugh! *(Hand to throat.)* Women! I just can't stand them! *(He makes loud noises of vomiting. Very loud.)*

SYLVIENNE *(Looking for a sympathetic face in audience.)* Of course you realize this is no accident! *(No one can hear her as Dan is making so much noise.)*

DAN Get her out of here! Get her out of here!

SYLVIENNE *(Shouting.)* Of course you realize this is no accident. *(Moving to another person.)* Let me tell you about Dan Leach and how it all started! Originally he's from Texas. His father was killed in a stampede in the Pecos Panhandle when Dan was just seven years old. However, it just seems that Dan was riding his pinto pony that just happened to start the stampede that killed his father and — *(Dan runs offstage, grabs Sylvienne. He lifts her and carries her down the aisle. He pushes open the door at the back of the theater.)* He thinks I'm his mother and he feels guilty about —

DAN *(As he closes the door. Sylvienne is in lobby.)* Oh, no you don't. Maybe you can say those things in New York but not in Minneapolis! *(Dan comes back onstage. He has lost his faggot image and is back to his masculine self.)*

GEORGE *(Sitting stage left and laughing.)* Your next line is Violet! You skipped a whole scene!

DAN Shut up, Birimisa. I know what my next line is. *(He turns to audience.)* You'll have to forgive me for breaking out of character, ladies and gentleman, but that young lady is an apprentice with our group who just happens to be more interested in finding herself a man than she is in learning the Chekhovian method of acting. However, what's really bugging her is her last review. She was called *adequate* by a reviewer from the *Village Voice* — *(Suddenly Dan is a faggot.)* - - - - - - who shall remain nameless.

(George is still sitting on stage. With one hand he is making the motion of a violet. He is turned away from Dan.)

DAN Violet?

SYLVIENNE *(Running down aisle from back of theater, her hands to her face, her petals quivering. She is smiling.)* Ahhhhh - - - - - yes, Dan?

DAN Really! I wasn't speaking to you, Vera Hruba Ralston! *(Dan turns to George.)* Violet?

GEORGE Ah — you still Dan Leach?

DAN Mmmm. I - - ah - - - really don't know.

GEORGE *(Leans back. Is lying almost flat on the stage.)* Show me what your name is!

DAN Oooooh! What a wonderful idea, Birimisa! *(Dan crouches on stage, his hands to his sides. Quickly he grows and flowers. Mr. Leach is six-feet-three and very high with his hands over his head. Birimisa is leaning on his elbow, intently studying Dan. Flirting.)* What's my name, Birimisa?

GEORGE You a flower, right?

DAN You're so perceptive, Birimisa.

GEORGE *(Feels Dan's bare feet.)* You red?
DAN It may confuse you since my center is still in my mouth.
GEORGE Ah - - - you a lilac?
DAN You're getting warm!
GEORGE You begin with an L?
DAN *(Shaking his rear end.)* Part of me does!
GEORGE You've got more than one name, right?
DAN Oooooh! You're so right, Birimisa!
SYLVIENNE *(Very loud.)* I know what your are — you're a *pansy*!
DAN Wilt, weed!
GEORGE *(Squeezes Dan's waist)* I know what you are - - - - - you're a lily! *(Dan squeals in delight.)* Ah - - - you're a madonna lily!
DAN Honey, that was my image ten years ago!
SYLVIENNE What a laugh. Easter lily!
DAN Sizzle, bitch!
SYLVIENNE Aren't we the sweetest? You want me to call you Easter?
DAN Up your vinyl vagina, Miss Tessie Teeneybopper! *(He turns to George.)* You can call me Easter, Birimisa!
GEORGE *(Moves toward Dan. He is a flower and undulating. His arm moves sensually toward Dan.)* How are you, Easter, baby?
DAN Call me Easter honey pot!
GEORGE How are you Easter ah - - - - - honey pot?
DAN My petals are quivering! *(George and Dan are almost touching. Sylvienne, as a violet, manages to get between them. Dan looks her over.)* Oooooh! Such a putrid purple. Honey, you're not going to make out looking like that! Look at me! *(Dan is in all his glory as Easter lily.)* I'm clear, clean, cool and such an eggshell white!
SYLVIENNE *(Losing her temper.)* You are a screaming faggot hiding behind the arts!
DAN *(Touches her hair.)* Oooh! Do I detect a touch of sickly, jealous green in your stamen? You, my dear, are an artificial flower. Non-organic. You don't belong on the stage with us! *(Looks at audience, still as flower with his hands over his head.)* There was a time when just having a hot vulva was enough! Those days are gone forever!
SYLVIENNE *(Loses control completely.)* You've always had the hots for George!
GEORGE and DAN *(Screaming back.)* For *Violet*!

SYLVIENNE Ah — Fuck it! *(In the Firehouse production she runs upstage and exits behind flat stage right.)*

DAN Dear me! Such shocking Anglo-Saxon smuttiness! *(Dan looks at George sexily.)* Violet?

GEORGE *(Is undulating his arms sensually. Looks over his shoulder to where Sylvienne has exited. Moves toward Dan. His body is suddenly very sexual, secretive.)* Yeah, Easter, baby?

DAN You're such a deep, lustrous purple!

GEORGE Thank you, baby! *(George is showing off as a flower, his body moving sensually.)*

DAN Baby? Mmmmmmmm. Yes. Do you mind if I call you Daddy, Violet? Yes, Daddy Violet! *(Dan is kneeling on stage, facing away from George. George is standing, legs spread wide and is moving his middle back and forth, slowly. His eyes are almost closed.)*

GEORGE No, baby, I don't mind! *(He is moving his middle back and forth, faster and faster.)*

DAN Oh, Daddy Violet, your fibrous stamen turns me on. It flames me. It makes my chlorophyll boil. You're purple petals are like an ocean on a moonlit night.

GEORGE *(Pause)* Don't stop, baby!

DAN You mean that, Daddy Violet?

GEORGE Yeah, get with it!

DAN Oh, may I, Daddy Violet, may I?

GEORGE *(Sexual frenzy.)* May you - - - what?

DAN May I cultivate your root?

GEORGE *(Grabs his crotch with both hands.)* The root of heaven! *(Sylvienne enters stage right quickly.)*

SYLVIENNE *(Screaming.)* The root of heaven? How sick can you get, George?

GEORGE *(Startled out of his fantasy. Pushes her offstage.)* Get back in your hole!

SYLVIENNE You're as sick as he is!

GEORGE *(Pushes her offstage again.)* As you get a little older you'll realize how sick you really are!

SYLVIENNE *(Crosses backstage and comes out from behind flat stage left. George is looking in opposite direction.)* I'm tired of being a seed!

GEORGE Stay nice and warm in the good earth! *(Dan is lying on platform propped up on one elbow. Now he looks at Sylvienne. He smiles at her.)*

DAN Are you really tired of being a seed, *Violet*?

SYLVIENNE *(Looks at George then back to Dan.)* I - ah - - - I - - ah - - - beg your pardon?

DAN Your name is Violet, isn't it?

SYLVIENNE Ah - - - I - - - ah - - yes! yes! yes! *(She smiles and flutters as Violet.)* My name is Violet!

DAN Good! Then answer my question. Are you - - - -

SYLVIENNE But I thought that you - - - you know - - - all those nasty - - - ?

DAN Yes, Violet?

SYLVIENNE *(Moves closer to him.)* Is your center still in your mouth?

DAN Yes, my center is still in my mouth, Violet.

SYLVIENNE I - - I just don't understand. I wasn't blaming you. I was blaming your center - - - you know - - - calling me all those horrible names. Ah - - - Ver Hruba - - - ah - - - who is Vera Hruba - - - ah - - something or other?

DAN Vera Hruba Ralston. An actress in the forties who just happened to be married to the owner of Republic Studios, Herbert J. Yates.

SYLVIENNE You're terribly confusing!

DAN Nothing personal, Violet. As you grow you will learn to bypass the rocks and the scraggly weeds.

SYLVIENNE Are you saying that your center is in your mouth ah — permanently?

DAN Until I change it organically. I don't believe in chemical fertilizers.

SYLVIENNE Ah - - - will you answer me one question?

DAN Yes, Violet?

SYLVIENNE *(Flutters her petals)* Am I really an artificial violet?

DAN Hyperbole, my dear Violet! *(Dan touches her leg.)* I must say that you do have a degree of organic life in your roots. I mean - - - wouldn't you say it would be rather difficult to grow on the side of a mountain overlooking the Mekong - - - - - - - - - - - *(He is looking over the edge of the stage.)* Mekong Delta! I can - - - oh - - I can - - - Dear God - - - - - - the Mekong Delta!

SYLVIENNE What - - - - what is it?

DAN *(Utter terror, crawling across stage, moaning and crying.)* I don't know. I - - - - - -

SYLVIENNE You don't know?

DAN *(Clutching his body.)* I feel so empty! Empty! Dear God. I can't - - - -

SYLVIENNE You've been working too hard. Doing your famous turkey must be a terrible emotional strain.

DAN *(Screaming.)* My center is gone!

SYLVIENNE But it can't be. It can't be.

GEORGE *(Runs downstage and grabs Dan. Arms around him. Holds him tightly.)* But that's impossible. It's impossible!

DAN *(Trying to get away.)* But the impossible has happened. I don't have a center! Dear God, where is the center of my being?

GEORGE *(Still holding him. Dan is like a crazy man.)* Look, it's got to be somewhere. It's only logical according to the teachings of Michael Chekhov!

DAN *(Sobbing hysterically.)* I know. . . . I know . . . after all these years of study I'm a failure. What would Michael Chekhov say?

SYLVIENNE *(Shaking Dan.)* Listen to me. Easter!

DAN What?

SYLVIENNE *(At the top of her lungs.)* Easter! Easter Lily!

DAN What on earth are you talking about? *(He is still trying to get away from George who is holding him.)*

SYLVIENNE You've got to remember. You're clear, cool and such an eggshell white. You're Easter Lily!

DAN I am?

SYLVIENNE Yes! Yes! Yes!

GEORGE Now don't panic. Let me think. *(He twists Dan's head around until they are eyeball to eyeball.)* Dan? Dan?

DAN Who?

GEORGE Dan Leach! Dan Leach!

DAN If only I could find my center. Dear God, where is it - - - - where? *(George gives up in horror. It is getting to him. He crawls upstage, away from Dan).*

SYLVIENNE You've got to find it! Without you as a living example of the artist I - - - -

DAN *(He is pounding on the stage. He is completely gone.)* I - - - I - - - can't find it!

SYLVIENNE Oh, my God - - - how could you - - - - - - *(Dan is bent over, his face on the stage. She is kneeling. She doubles her fists and starts beating him on the back.)* How could you — how could you do this to me? How could you do this to me? *(She jumps up.)* My center is in my heart! My center is in my heart! My name is Violet! I am blooming on the side of a mountain very high. I have broken through the rock encrusted earth and I've pushed through the scraggly weeds and now I can feel the afternoon

sun opening me up and below - - below - - - - *(She looks down into the Mekong Delta. She lets out a horrible scream.)*

GEORGE *(He sees it, too. He is in agony.)* What is it?

SYLVIENNE The fog has lifted — the fog is no longer a solid blanket hiding the - - I can see into the Mekong Delta!

DAN *(In pain and terror, his hands hiding his face from the horror.)* Great, baby, great! Go with it. This can be an existential breakthrough!

SYLVIENNE *(She is downstage at the edge of the platform staring into the Mekong Delta. She is completely hysterical. George is also hysterical. He is pulling his hair and moaning, staring down also. At the height of the scene all of them are moaning and screaming and ripping at their bodies.)* The rice paddies - - - so close - - - so close - - - - a baby in a basket - - - - - in the center of the flooded rice paddy - - - closer - - - closer - - - *(She lets out another terrifying scream. She is backing up stage and yet she can't stop looking.)* The baby is charred, burned, roasted. I - - - - - *(Hysteria.)* can smell the flesh. I can smell the flesh. The eyeballs are dripping - - - - - - boiling - - - - searing me *(Scream.)* Charred - - - - burned - - - roasted. I can - - - - the mother - - - bloated - - -floating - - - - purple-green - - - - - - - - *(She begins to beat her body, completely out of her mind.)*

GEORGE *(Crying and screaming and pounding the stage with his fists. He tries to get up. He is hysterical. Finally he manages to stagger over to Sylvienne. He grabs her. He drags her to the edge of the stage. She fights him all the way, clawing at him.)* C - - - - Come out of it! Come out of it! That is not the Mekong Delta. That is not the Mekong Delta! *(She is still fighting desperately and screaming. She has her hands over her face. He pulls them down and forces her to look down.)* That is not the Mekong Delta! *(Pause. He is fighting with himself. He finally gets it out.)* Salinas Valley! *(He is screaming it, trying to convince her and himself.)* Salinas Valley! Salinas Valley! Salinas Valley! Salinas Valley! Salinas Valley! Salinas Valley! *(No response.)* Salinas Valley!! *(He is staring into her eyes now.)* Salinas Valley! Salinas Valley!

SYLVIENNE *(Whisper)* Salinas Valley?

GEORGE Salinas Valley. Salinas Valley. Salinas Valley.

GEORGE and SYLVIENNE Salinas Valley. Salinas Valley. Salinas Valley. *(They are smiling faintly. George runs to Dan who is bent over in the position of a Vietcong who is being tortured. George pulls Dan up to kneeling position.)*

GEORGE Salinas Valley. Salinas Valley. Salinas Valley. *(They are both staring down.)*

DAN Salinas Valley.

GEORGE and DAN Salinas Valley. Salinas Valley, Salinas Valley.

SYLVIENNE *(Runs over to them. Kneels. They are very close, all three of them.)* I've got it. Like magic. I'm becoming a good actress — an organic actress!

DAN *(Face high)* My center has returned!

SYLVIENNE *(True concern)* Is it still you-know-where?

DAN It's in my heart - - - - I think!

SYLVIENNE Everything's turning out fine!

GEORGE *(His arms around them. They are very close, in fact, they are cheek to cheek. Tender, together.)* We're really growing, you know?

DAN *(Now he is radiant)* I think I will join the two of you on the side of that mountain very high. *(All three get up quickly. George helps Sylvienne get up. Sylvienne becomes a violet. George becomes a violet. They watch anxiously as Dan (center stage.) becomes a violet.)*

SYLVIENNE Such a deep, deep purple! Such an organic violet!

DAN Both of you may call me Violet!

SYLVIENNE Hello, Violet!

GEORGE Hi, Violet!

DAN Hello, Violets!

SYLVIENNE Ah - - - will you join us in the song? You know, that horrible nightmare — looking down into the - - - - - - ?

DAN Now, now, Violet. You are growing. Organic fertilizer. And, remember, pain is always involved with growth. And, let's face it, there's nothing worse than petal pain. *(They run upstage. They hold hands. They look at audience and begin to sing.)* Violet! Violet! Violet! *(They run downstage. To the very edge. Dan is center stage. Sylvienne is far stage right. George is far stage left. They look at individuals as they sing, hoping for a smile, some encouragement so they can keep their newfound Salinas Valley.)* We are blooming on the side of a mountain very high. We have broken through the rock-encrusted earth and we've pushed through the scraggly weeds - - - - - *(Quickly they form a circle and start dancing around in a circle. They go faster and faster and faster and laugh happily, lovingly, a kind of hysteria of happiness.)* Violet! Violet! Violet! We can feel the morning sun opening us up and below the fog is a solid blanket - - - - - - - *(They stop the ring around the rosey and face downstage looking over the edge where*

the Mekong Delta was before.) hiding the - - - - - - - - - *(George and Sylvienne pull back. They look anxiously at Dan.)*

DAN *(Long pause.)* Salinas Valley! *(Now the happiness is complete. All are jumping up and down, joyful as they are wide-open flowers looking at audience with complete love.)*

ALL THREE Violet! Violet! Violet! *(Singing of course.)*

DAN *(Arms spread wide. Utter joy. Singing the finale.)* The sun is on us!

SYLVIENNE *(Slight pause. Then points stage right.)* The Salinas Valley — Steinbeck country!

GEORGE *(Stage left. Runs happily there.)* The fog has lifted - - - the mission bells are echoing across the valley!

DAN *(Pointing stage center over the heads of audience.)* The morning dew is on the neat rows of lettuce stretching to the horizon - - - geometrically patterned.

SYLVIENNE The ah - - - the acorns, silver-green and flecked with white, on the tall, slim, eucalyptus trees!

GEORGE *(Gets between them. Pulls them close. Arms around each other.)* Look - - - a truckful of wetbacks - - - they're wearing brightly colored panchos and singing of their homeland!

DAN And - - - - to the west - - - - beyond the valley - - - the azure Pacific! *(All three freeze. They are staring into the distance, into the beauty of the Salinas Valley. Five second pause.)*

SYLVIENNE *(In a whisper.)* Arcadia!

GEORGE *(Another pause.)* Paradise!

DAN *(Another pause.)* Eden. *(All of them stare into the distance, still frozen. Finally Sylvienne breaks out of it.)*

SYLVIENNE *(To Dan.)* Please, you know, before anything else happens - - - that - - - - -

DAN Relax! *(He makes a motion to George. Quickly George runs stage left and looks at audience.)*

GEORGE George Birimisa!

SYLVIENNE Sylvienne Strauss!

GEORGE and SYLVIENNE Dan Leach! *(They hold hands and bow, taking their curtain calls.)*

THIS CEREMONY CALLED KAFKA WAS FIRST UNDERTAKEN ON THE SEVENTH AND EIGHTH DAYS OF DECEMBER IN THE YEAR 1967, IN THE FREDERIC WOOD THEATRE OF THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA, FOR THE ALUMNI ONE-ACT PLAY FESTIVAL

It is possible that this ceremony forms only a part of the immense process which many call Kafka

KAFKA

A RITUAL BY BRIAN SHEIN

Directed by John Rapsey

Olympio (The Controller), master of the revels	VAL ROMILLY
Arcadion (The Mime), a mercurial spirit	LEANNE WHITE
Fortran (Actor One), an honest heart	SCOTT SWAN
Amarissa (Actor Two), a dream princess	SUSAN CADMAN
Angelo (Actor Three), an ardent prince	SIMON FASS
Musician	MICHAEL BERRY

Designed by Irene Rapsey

A NEW CEREMONY CALLED KAFKA IS BEING UNDERTAKEN FROM THE FOURTEENTH TO THE TWENTY-FOURTH DAYS OF FEBRUARY IN THE YEAR 1968, BY THE PLAYHOUSE THEATRE COMPANY, STAGE TWO SERIES, IN VANCOUVER, BRITISH COLUMBIA, CANADA

The basic costume for the cast is a sort of uniform close to dancers' tights. The Controller's uniform may be more elaborate, The Mime's more reminiscent of a harlequin's outfit. If the Musician appears on stage, his form should not be recognizably human.

The stage design must give a sense of infinite open space broken by abstract shapes. One of these shapes can serve as the altar. Lighting and the bodies of the actors constantly transform the bare set.

For convenience in reading, *Kafka* is divided into seven major sections. The action is, however, continuous from beginning to end.

ONE — THE ELEMENTS OF THE CEREMONY

The Controller stands before the altar, his arms upraised. On the altar are displayed the knife, the ritual vestments and four masks.

Courtly Elizabethan music is playing. The three Actors enter and, with exaggerated theatrical movements, enact a brief scene of greeting one another: Actor One is sturdy and serious, Actor Two languid but charming, Actor Three bored and amused in a dashing style. They pay no attention to The Controller. At the end of their scene, they freeze in elegant poses. The music stops. The Controller turns from the altar and conjures the entrance of The Mime.

C. Now do I, Olympio,
Summon those powers that foreknow
All this our pageantry and show,
Summon those powers that aid my will
That these our actors may fulfill
A high and solemn ritual.

(The Mime appears wearing a black domino mask and carrying the program cards. She aids The Controller to don his mask. The Controller indicates the three Actors, and The Mime places masks on Actors One and Two. These two Actors immediately line up at rigid attention. Actor Three, however, refuses his mask and continues to pose with an air of defiance. With a flourish, The Mime inserts a program card in The Controller.)

The Mime inserts a program card in The Controller. This ceremony . . .

(Three laughs mockingly.)

C. This ceremony called Kafka is undertaken today, the — day of —, in the year —, between the hours of — and —.* It is possible that this ceremony forms only a part of the immense process which many call Kafka.

(Three laughs mockingly. The Mime picks up the knife.)

Some maintain that this process or this Kafka had already begun long before our entrance into this place and will continue long after our leaving. Some declare that the success of this ceremony or Kafka will make the continuation of Kafka unnecessary. Some add that the ceremony can never succeed.

(Three laughs. The Mime begins to creep stealthily towards The Controller with the knife.)

It may be futile. It may be heroic. We must succeed, even knowing success is impossible. It is Kafka. . . . Already we are haunted by the feeling that we are losing ourselves or wandering into a strange country, a country so strange that not even the air has anything in common with our native air, where one might die of strangeness and yet whose mysterious power is such that one can only go on and lose oneself further.

(The Mime is directly behind The Controller. She raises the knife as if about to plunge it into him.)

The elements of the ceremony have been prepared: the masks, the program cards, the vestments, the knife . . .

(The Controller turns and indicates the knife. The Mime holds it poised, pirouettes, turns away. Three laughs.)

. . . The Mime, the three Actors, The Controller, the audience. All who are here today . . .

3. *(He draws an invisible sword.)*

All who are here today, who note this show,
This cruel and idle pageantry, must know
The bitter mockery of Angelo
Who is and is not part of what Olympio
Calls Kafka: some strange land, some foreign tongue
The which, against my will . . . !

C. This is impossible without his mask! The program for today requires masks. The Mime inserts another program card in The Controller and presents him with the knife. Actor Number One, prepare to transfer and take necessary action.

1. Ready for transfer.

C. The Controller points the knife at Actor Number One . . .

* The time limits should be indicated precisely to the second.

(As The Controller points the knife, there is a flash of light and appropriate sound effects. Actor One reverts instantly to his Elizabethan manner.)

. . . who removes his mask and approaches Actor Number Three.

1. Sweet Angelo, a word.
3. Who's that?
1. Fortran,
The humble Fortran you once named your friend,
Whose counsels you approved as honest words,
That now implores you, Prince, to don your mask.
'Tis needful now. Look on my own. Prince, do.
3. And Amarissa mask'd?
1. Fair Amariss,
Arcadion, Olympio. He calls
It Kafka and a noble cause, my lord.
3. I'll do't then, for thee and for the lady.
C. The Controller points the knife at The Mime who aids Actors One and Three to don their masks.
(Light. Sound. Actors One and Three mechanically take up their positions beside Two.)
1. Necessary action taken. Until otherwise noted, the pointing of the knife indicates an Actor's role.
3. The Mime inserts another program card in The Controller.
C. All who are here today must remember that we are gathered in a ritual to approach what is called Kafka through Kafka, by Kafka, with Kafka.
3. Whatever Kafka means. She speaks, dreamily.
2. Kafka? Someone said Kafka . . . Kafka . . . ? A sudden cry.
3. What is Kafka?
C. *(Moving towards Three, threatening him with the knife.)*
We are joined in a struggle against incomprehensible odds. We must all enter the ceremony.
2. The Controller threatens Actor Three.
C. Everyone must join. There is no choice. The action for today is programmed on the cards. The program requires one Actor in terrible pain. Crawling. Face in the ground. The program requires . . .
1. He points with the knife.
C. . . . Actor Number One.
(He points. Light. Sound. One is felled as if struck by a heavy blow.)
3. He collapses, racked with pain.

(Actor One sprawls face down on the ground. He makes feeble crawling motions with his arms and legs. He is on a journey through a strange land and there is much about him — sights and sounds — that he cannot understand.)

1. Why me? Him . . .

C. Actor Number Three, like Actor Number One, was always part of the ritual. Actor Number One will state his role.

1. *(He is begging, he is confused.)*
   I am . . .

2. A new program card is inserted in The Controller.
   (As the card is inserted, The Controller and Actors Two and Three suddenly shift their positions.)

1. I am . . . begging to enter the ritual.

C. A new program card has been inserted. Actor Number One is incorrect.
   (The Controller and Actors Two and Three shift again. With The Mime, they form a machine or a swarm that assaults Actor One from all directions.)

2. In strange voices . . .
3. . . . Actors Two and Three . . .
2. . . . torment Actor Number One because of . . .

C. Actor Number One is incorrect.

3. . . . Kafka! You forgot . . .
2. . . . Kafka! You strayed from . . .

C. Actor Number One will state his role.

3. . . . Kafka! Betrayed . . .
2. . . . Kafka! Falsified . . .

C. Actor Number One is incorrect.

3. . . . Kafka! Can't enter . . .
2. . . . Kafka! Incorrect . . .
3. . . . Kafka! The ritual . . .

C. Actor Number One will state his role.

2. . . . Kafka! The secret . . .
3. . . . Kafka! You spoil . . .
2. . . . Kafka! And your . . .
3. . . . Kafka is not . . .
2. . . . Kafka is Kafka!
3. . . . Kafka!

C. Actor Number One is incorrect. Actor Number One will state his role.

1. Kafka! No, no! The messenger!
(The machine breaks suddenly.)
Messenger from Kafka . . .
3. She speaks dreamily.
2. Mes-sen-ger . . .
C. The messenger from Kafka is also . . .
3. The messenger to Kafka.
2. Pass-ing through Kaf-ka . . .
1. The messenger.
C. It is an endless journey. The messenger is tired.
1. Kafka. Kafka.
3. He moans. It is a hard journey.
2. What mes-sen-ger?
C. No doubt the messenger is very much like that one. There are many turnings in the journey. So long since he knew which road to take.
3. A new program card is inserted in The Controller.
(They have been drifting around and away from Actor One. Now they form a small group, ignoring him. The Controller instructs the two Actors.)
C. We have been hearing about this Kafka for many years now. Sometimes there is considerable information.
3. And sometimes, like now, we hear nothing.
2. Nothing for the longest time. Sometimes I wish I had never heard about Kafka in the first place.
C. That cannot be helped. We have heard about Kafka before. More information may be forthcoming. There is the messenger.
(They look over at Actor One as if he were a clinical subject.)
3. What's left of him, that is. I wonder how much more of this he can take.
2. He shouts.
3. I wonder how much more of this he can take!
C. The masks are very heavy, I know.
2. Heavy like a mountain pressing on your face.
3. The Controller bends over Actor One and examines the mask.
3. The Mime leads Actors Two and Three towards One where they also bend over, curious.
C. The mask of Kafka. Information concerning Kafka is very much like this, no doubt.
3. Very much like it. And look at it. Look at it.
(The Controller moves away. Two and Three linger and kneel on each side of Actor One.)

2. Kafka mask. Kafka face.
3. With curious detachment, Actors Two and Three probe and poke at the body of Actor One, murmuring softly.
2. Kafka face.
3. Kafka tears.
2. Kafka tears and sweat make mirrors.
3. The Kafka arm. The other.
2. Kafka hand. Kafka fingers.
3. Ten Kafka fingers, still moving.
2. Kafka legs.
3. Still moving. Kafka lungs.
2. Still breathing. Kafka chest.
3. Heaving. And all the Kafka muscles.
2. This Kafka muscle.
3. Beating. Kafka heart.
2. Tears. Kafka tears.
3. Kafka tears. Kafka sweat. Make mirrors.
2. Where we kiss.
3. Reflected.
(They rise to form an arch above Actor One. Their hands make mirrors, touching palm to palm as they kiss.)
2. And The Mime withdraws a program card from Actor One and inserts it in The Controller.
3. Unseen by Actors Two and Three who are reflected.
(Actor One gets to his feet. The arch breaks slowly.)
2. A program card as if it were a message.
3. The Controller points with the knife.
C. Actor Number Two.
(Light. Sound. She spins rapidly and sinks to her knees.)
1. She stumbles, whirling, dazed.

THREE — KAFKA MESSAGE

(Actor Two rises. She has had a revelation. She speaks with wonder, with profound joy.)
2. Where am I?
C. Actor Number Two will state her role.
2. I am the messenger with the message. I *am* the message, the Kafka message.
C. Actor Number Two is correct.
3. Impossible! She is obviously begging to enter the ritual and that is a separate role.

(Actors Three and One engage in a private argument. Two attempts to speak to them but in vain. She is confused by it all.)

1. Not necessarily. At any rate, after what happened to me, nothing seems to matter. Whether or not Actor Two is correct is completely beside the point.
2. No! It matters! Can't you see . . . ?
3. The Mime withdraws program cards from Actor One, Actor Three and The Controller and inserts them in inverse order.
1. Actor One to Actor Three. Beside the point. If I could be betrayed so easily, if that pain could be inflicted on me while you stood by and watched with your "curious detachment," then why not beside the point?
3. Actor Three to Actor One. And what if that was all part of the program and soon I will be betrayed, the pain will be inflicted on me? Will that be beside the point? Even if it's just part of the program?
C. Controller to Actors One and Three. These emotional outbursts are beside the point. During this section, Actor Number Two in her role . . .
3. What role?
1. It doesn't matter at all.
C. . . . in her role . . .
2. *(She is becoming increasingly confused, increasingly angry.)* Not just a role! A message. I am a Kafka message!
C. . . . stumbles slowly around the stage, ignored by all.
3. At times she approaches the others.
1. Who ignores her.
2. *(She circles from one to another, sometimes pleading, sometimes shouting. She is trying to break through mechanical barriers, fields of mindless energy.)*
   Am I beside the point?
1. They do not seem to hear her.
3. Shut up! Shut up with those stage directions! It just doesn't work. There hasn't been any Kafka information at all recently.
2. There was a mist on the mountain . . .
1. Actor One recites from memory storage concerning Kafka information. There is considerable Kafka information. It is our duty to decide what is true and what is false. Some Kafka information is frankly fantastic.
2. No, no! Just listen . . . !
1. Frankly fantastic. Quote. One evening a messenger appeared at the door, stamping the snow from his boots. He declared that

Kafka had ceased to exist. We mocked him and ignored his pleas for a hearing.

2. He's telling it wrong!

1. Ignored his pleas for a hearing. Unquote. This information, including the reported information of the Kafka messenger, was added to the existing files of messages, beliefs and suggestions concerning Kafka. In due time it will be considered and sorted according to its probability content.

2. And there was a sort of enchantment in the air . . . Listen to me!

3. Actor Three recites from memory storage concerning information sorting processes. Information sorting processes classify according to type and time of information. Further processes involve intermixing of information according to random and fixed programs and consideration for probability content. It must be understood that probability content of the Kafka factor cannot be measured. Any measurement is purely temporary. All information is thus equally valuable.

2. Lies! Because there is something true about Kafka!

C. All we can be sure of is the ceremony called Kafka.

1. Actor One says something about the ceremony called Kafka. It is a hateful round of contradictions and repetitions which are supposed to eventually exhaust all Kafka possibilities. Supposed to! While The Controller wields the knife and that Mime creature flits around with all our words on her cards and the Actors are subjected to stupid cruelty and the audience sits and watches. And there's nothing we can do, we don't even know what it means. It doesn't even try to justify itself except with a lot of Kafka, Kafka, Kafka!

   I want to take your Kafka and rip it to shreds!

3. Actor One has just recited the tirade against the ceremony.

C. In reply to the tirade against the ceremony: the ceremony may be . . .

2. All of you, listen!

C. We acknowledge the presence of Actor Number Two but do not pay any attention until the proper time.

2. No! Now!

1. Actor Two strikes The Controller.

3. He ignores her.

2. Nothing but contradictions! Lies! And meanwhile the mountain pool . . .

1. Actor Two becomes increasingly vehement.

2. Just listen! It's real! And stop those stage directions!

3. Actor Two strikes Actor One. He ignores her.
C. In reply to the tirade against the ceremony: the ceremony may be no more correct than what Actor Number Two has been trying to say.
2. Will say!
C. All Kafka information is equally valuable. Actor Number Two will attempt to recall what she thought was a Kafka message.
2. It is a message!
(The others shift position. Actor Two walks as if in a dream.)
3. The Mime stalks her as she speaks and wanders.
1. The Mime weaves the ritual vestments about her.
2. Because what if. . . . It was as if there was a strange land, a foreign tongue. Kafka. And something was in the air. Maybe an enchantment. Kafka enchantment. But I forget.
3. She remembers.
2. I thought, what if the ceremony were not everything? And I was a princess with a beautiful name. Like in a dream. It was about Kafka.
1. Actors One and Three take her arms.
3. They walk with her.
(They lead her towards The Controller.)
2. And there were other people. A poet, weaving words. A prince. His honest companion. And the mountain pool where the prince kissed my reflection in the water. Or was it in the air with all that enchantment of Kafka? What was my name?
3. She cannot remember.
2. Just Kafka. Kafka. All I remember. And it seemed so real.
1. She is talking about the end when we reveal our real roles.
3. Our other roles.
1. That's another part of the ceremony.
3. It isn't time yet.
1. It isn't real yet.
2. But if it were true . . . !
3. It is true and so is this now. All about Kafka.
C. All she recalls distinctly is Kafka. All that is important is Kafka.
2. Because I am the messenger or the message and the road of Kafka is long. So many turnings.
1. The Actors and The Mime begin to form the mazes of Kafka through which the message must pass.
C. Kafka. The sounds are shifting masks.
(They form the maze of the jackdaws.)
2. There were mists on the mountainside.

3. Kafka. Ka! The cry of the jackdaws . . .
2. It was summer. Morning.
1. . . . in the snow. Ka! Ka!
3. Jackdaws that pick the bones of messengers.
2. In the snow? I heard them on the mountain.
1. Ka! Ka! Gnaw at the bones of the word.
3. At the Kafka mask.
1. Picking at the Kafka face.
2. Kafka tears like the pool.
C. Kafka. The sounds are shifting masks.
(They form the maze of the shrouds.)
1. Kafka. The rustle of draperies.
3. Kaf. Kaf. Softly.
2. Like a princess' gown in the mists.
1. Softly. Kaf. Kaf.
3. And the Kaf Kaf cry of sick words. Hoarse messengers rustle in their grave clothes.
1. Kafka. Kafka.
2. The road. So many turnings.
3. Kafka messengers shrouded in the snow.
1. Down the road in mists of Kafka, Kafka.
C. Kafka. The sounds are shifting masks.
(They form the maze of the wind.)
2. I'm frightened!
3. Or is it the whistling of the wind saying Kafka, Kafka . . .
1. . . . and turning in its sleep, the Kafka wind that talks to itself all night about Kafka . . .
2. I'm lost!
3. . . . about Kafka and about the Kafka messengers with their Kafka Kafka shrouds . . .
1. . . . after the jackdaws picked their Kafka flesh. Ka. Ka.
3. She blunders into The Controller.
1. He wields the knife.
(The maze breaks.)
C. Ka! The cry of the knife! Kafka! Kafka!
2. No! You! Kafka!
3. She cowers, terrified.
C. Kafka! Just the word is left. And we must cut it to tatters.
(Suddenly, she leaps at the knife. The Controller's power is threatened. Actors One and Three shift into a group, watching tensely.)
2. No! Not me!

1. She attempts to wrest the knife from his grasp.
3. They struggle.
1. Actors One and Three exchange program cards.
3. Actor Three to Actor One. The Controller retains possession of the knife.
1. Actor One to Actor Three. The Controller rises.
C. *(He is angry. He is frightened. He menaces Actor Two.)* Kafka! We will take it apart and scatter its fragments to the wind. The ceremony will not be interrupted. The Mime withdraws a program card from Actor Number Two and inserts it in The Controller. The program requires . . .
2. He points with the knife.
C. . . . Actor Number Three.
(Light. Sound. Actor Three jackknifes into a foetal position. In slow motion, he struggles to be born.)
1. He screams.
3. Kafka!

FOUR — TAKE KAFKA APART

(Actor Three rises as if in a trance.)
C. Actor Number Three will state his role.
3. Kafka. I represent Kafka. Kafka, Kafka. . . .
(He continues to mutter "Kafka.")
1. Actor Three is incorrect.
2. Actor Three is correct.
C. It does not matter whether Actor Number Three is correct or incorrect.
2. He continues muttering.
1. He is threatened. The Mime carries out the exchange of program cards.
2. Actor Two to Controller.
(The Controller moves into position for the pursuit.)
C. We take Kafka apart. . . . Controller to Actor Number One.
(Actor One moves into position.)
Apart, sound by sound.
1. Actor One to Actor Two.
(Actor Two moves into position. They are joined by The Mime in a slow and very stylized pursuit of Actor Three. The Mime carries the vestments.)
C. We mangle Kafka.
2. Tear Kafka apart . . .

1. . . . Kafka by Kafka.
C. Scatter the Kafka message . . .
2. The Mime pursues Actor Three . . .
C. . . . to the Kafka wind . . .
1. . . . with slow and terrible motions . . .
C. . . . blown with the snow of Kafka . . .
2. . . . bearing the Kafka vestments . . .
C. . . . while we pick the Kafka bones . . .
1. . . . while Actor Three retreats . . .
C. . . . from among the flesh of Kafka, Kafka masks . . .
2. . . . as if in a slow and heavy trance . . .
C. . . . the messages of Kafka picked to shreds.
1. . . . like our slow and terrible voices . . .
C. We take Kafka to pieces slowly . . .
2. . . . like the slow and terrible pursuit . . .
C. . . . twisting the Kafka limbs, the Kafka bones . . .
1. . . . of The Mime and the Kafka vestments . . .
C. . . . Twisting around our tongues . . .
2. . . . until he submits and bows . . .
C. . . . until Kafka is twisted into Kafka . . .
1. . . . and the Kafka vestments are placed on his shoulders . . .
C. . . . and we must begin again to mangle Kafka . . .
(They have closed in around Actor Three. The vestments are placed on his shoulders and then ripped off with large stylized gestures.)
2. . . . and we tear the Kafka vestments . . .
1. . . . from the Kafka shoulders . . .
2. . . . bent beneath Kafka.
1. Ripped from Kafka.
3. *(He stops muttering. He cries:)*
I represent Kafka . . .
2. Slowly like Kafka.
3. . . . but I'm not really . . .
1. A long . . .
2. . . . and terrible . . .
1. . . . Kafka agony.
3. . . . Kafka!
2. A sudden scream. Kafka pain!
(The pursuit formation breaks.)
1. The Kafka struggle, Actor Number Two.
C. Actor Number Two.
(He points with the knife. Actor Three rises to his feet and

Actor Two goes into his trance state.)

2. But I'm not really . . .
3. The Mime carries out the exchange of program cards.
2. . . . not really Kafka. Kafka. Kafka. . . .
(She continues to mutter. The pursuit of Actor Two begins to form. This pursuit is more human, less stylized than the first.)
1. Actor One to Controller and she retreats . . .
C. Controller to Actor Number Three while Kafka comes to pieces . . .
3. Actor Three to Actor One and she continues muttering . . .
1. . . . while we pursue her with the Kafka vestments . . .
C. . . . letter by letter. Kafka. K.
3. . . . in a slow and terrible pursuit with slow and terrible motions . . .
1. . . . until she retreats and bows, until the Kafka vestments are placed on her shoulders . . .
C. Letter by letter. Kafka. A.
3. . . . and we must begin again to mangle Kafka and we tear the Kafka vestments . . .
1. . . . from the Kafka shoulders, from the twisted mangled Kafka arms . . .
C. Letter. F.
3. . . . from the Kafka arms, from the Kafka hands, from the Kafka back, from the Kafka chest . . .
1. . . . from the Kafka belly, from the Kafka legs, from the Kafka feet, from the Kafka skin . . .
C. K.
3. . . . from the Kafka eyes . . .
1. . . . from the Kafka ears . . .
3. . . . from the Kafka mouth . . .
1. . . . from the Kafka tongue . . .
3. . . . from the Kafka throat . . .
1. . . . from the Kafka lungs . . .
3. . . . from the Kafka blood . . .
1. . . . from the Kafka heart!
C. A. K. A. F. K. A. Kafka!
(The formation breaks.)
3. The Kafka heart.
1. Still beating. Kafka. Kafka. Kafka . . .
(He continues to mutter. Actor Two rises.)
C. Actor Number One.
2. The Controller points with the knife.

3. He continues muttering.
2. The Mime carries out the exchange of program cards.
(The pursuit of Actor One begins to form. It will become savagely bloodthirsty and animal-like.)
3. Actor Three to Controller while Kaf . . .
C. . . . ka! Controller to Actor Number Two while Ka . . .
2. . . . f . . . Actor Two to Actor Three while ka . . .
3. Ka . . . !
C. Aa . . !
2. Ff . . . !
3. Ka . . . !
C. Aa . . . !
2. While Kafka comes to pieces.
(With The Mime, they enact the pursuit and the placing of the vestments and then rip them off, hissing and muttering the sounds and letters of "Kafka" in varying combinations. Actor One regularly mutters "Kafka" until the end when he screams:)
1. But I'm not really Kafka!
(The formation breaks. Actor One rises and The Controller enters a trance.)
C. Kafka! Not really Kafka. Kafka. Kafka.
(He continues to mutter and wanders off by himself. The three Actors form a close group and watch.)
2. The Controller continues to mutter.
1. The Actors withdraw their own program cards and exchange them among themselves.
(The Mime sees her chance. She leaps at The Controller. They fight, The Controller still muttering, The Mime feinting with the vestments.)
2. The Mime attempts to wrest the knife from The Controller's grasp.
3. The Actors insert the program cards.
1. The Mime and The Controller grapple.
2. They struggle for control of the knife.
3. The Controller retains the knife.
2. The Mime lies prostrate.
1. The Controller withdraws program cards from himself and from The Mime and rips them to shreds.
(The Controller stops muttering. He turns to the Actors.)
C. Actors' roles are no longer indicated by the pointing of the knife. The dismemberment of Kafka is completed and the inscription, letter by letter, of Kafka on the body of the Mime begins.

(A procession forms up, led by The Controller bearing the knife. Actors One and Three follow, carrying the body of The Mime. Actor Two, carrying the vestments, brings up the rear. They march to the altar, each repeating "Kafka" with variations in pitch and tempo. The Mime is placed on the altar and covered with the vestments. The Actors are silent. Only The Controller prepares to make the inscription, carressing the body of The Mime, testing the knife. The Actors begin to hand program cards around in a circle and start a montage of distorted voices.)

C. Kafka. Kafka. Kafka.
(He continues to mutter.)
2. This ceremony called Kafka is undertaken today . . .
3. We must succeed, even knowing success is impossible. It is Kafka . . .
1. Already we are haunted by the feeling that we are losing ourselves . . .
2. The elements of the ceremony . . .
3. This cruel and idle pageantry . . .
1. Inserts another program card . . .
C. *(He inscribes a letter. The Mime writhes horribly.)*
K!
M. Kafka!
C. Kafka. Kafka. Kafka.
(He continues to mutter and prepares to inscribe another letter.)
2. What is Kafka . . . ?
3. All enter the ceremony . . .
1. Will state your role . . .
2. Messenger very much like that one . . .
3. Beside the point. . . . Inflicted on me . . .
1. Information concerning Kafka. . . . Tirade against the ceremony . . .
C. A!
M. Kafka!
(The Controller hands the knife to Actor One who begins to mutter "Kafka" and continues until he has inscribed a letter.)
C. Princess of Kafka . . .
2. The road of Kafka . . .
3. Kafka masks shifting . . .
C. The Kafka wind . . .
2. Twisting Kafka . . .

1. F!
M. Kafka!
(Actor One hands the knife to Actor Two who begins to mutter "Kafka.")
1. Slow and terrible Kafka . . .
3. The hands of Kafka . . .
C. Kafka actors . . .
1. Kafka control . . .
3. Kafka vestments . . .
C. Kafka knife . . .
2. K!
M. Kafka!
(Actor Two hands the knife to Actor Three who begins to mutter "Kafka")
1. Through Kafka.
C. By Kafka.
2. With Kafka.
1. Without Kafka.
C. Yes Kafka.
2. No Kafka.
1. Right Kafka.
C. Wrong Kafka.
2. Cruel Kafka.
1. Kind Kafka.
C. False Kafka.
2. True Kafka.
1. Neither Kafka.
3. A!
M. Kafka!
(The Mime jumps to her feet and seizes the knife. She threatens the others with it, laughing madly.)
Kafka knife, Kafka knife . . .
(She continues to taunt while the others retreat before her. They tear their program cards and scatter the pieces, desperately intoning their words.)
1. Indubitable Kafka.
2. Eloquent Kafka.
3. Spellbound Kafka.
C. Rudimentary Kafka.
1. Vicarious Kafka.
2. Lethal Kafka.
3. Passionate Kafka.

C. Echoing Kafka.
1. Towering Kafka.
2. Demonic Kafka.
3. Unviable Kafka.
C. Unspecified Kafka.
1. Unlimited Kafka.
2. Uninitiated Kafka.
3. Untroubled Kafka.
1. Undulant Kafka.
2. Understood Kafka.
3. Unctious Kafka.
(With a shrill laugh, The Mime points the knife at The Controller.)
M. The Controller!
C. Cacophonous Kafka!
(He collapses.)

SIX — DANCE KAFKA DANCE

(The three Actors huddle over the body of The Controller. The Mime straddles the body and applies artificial respiration.)
C. *(With each breath.)* Kafka. Kafka. Kafka. Kafka. Kafka.
(He continues. The Mime joins in the same rhythm.)
M. Kafka. Kafka. Kafka. Kafka. Kafka.
(She continues. The Controller slowly rises to his feet.)
1. Kafka. Kafka. Kafka. Kafka. Kafka.
(He continues, rising to his feet.)
2. Kafka. Kafka. Kafka. Kafka. Kafka.
(She continues, rising to her feet.)
3. Kafka. Kafka. Kafka. Kafka. Kafka.
(He continues, rising to his feet. After Actor Three's fifth "Kafka," The Controller begins a slightly louder chant: "Come Kafka Come!" The others join in the above order after each fourth repetition. They form stylized and constantly moving groups that will lead to the dance. The Controller changes the chant to "Now Kafka Now!" and the others join after each third repetition. Then, the climactic chant of "Dance Kafka Dance!" begins, joined after each second repetition. Sound effects and the amplified chanting surround the audience. Lights flash. The formations of the actors break apart. They clap hands, stamp feet. The Controller dances. Actor One is a machine gone wild. Actors Two and Three clinch in a parody

of copulation. The Mime drifts sleepwalkerwise to the altar, playing with the knife. She suddenly grows rigid, raises the knife and, at the height of the dance, drives it into the altar. The Controller lets out a high-pitched scream of "Kafkaaaa!" The chanting stops.)

SEVEN — WE SPEAK AS WHAT WE ARE

(There is a moment of dead silence. The actors slowly pick themselves up. Actor Two comes forward. Her mask has been ripped off.)

2. What was that distant noise so like the wind
In restless conversation with itself
All night? Where am I now? What is this strange
Enchanted land where even the air is fresh
With a sweet magic? And my mask ripp'd off?
Who are those others mask'd, those misty men?

C. *(He removes his mask.)*
The ceremony failed, the chanting faded
As if the wind were talking in its sleep,
The wind that died and, dying, left behind
A silence circled with this fragile speech.
Now these our actors put aside the sham,
The shambles of our strange invented world.
We speak as what we are.

1. *(He removes his mask. The same courtly music as in the opening begins to play softly.)*
Humble Fortran,
An honest heart beneath an actor's guise.
Our pageantry, our masque is swept aside
And we are mortal, nothing more or less.

2. Amarissa, who all this weary while
Dreamed of the mountain pool where once a prince
Kissed my reflection in that liquid glass.
The water shimmered and we disappeared
But now we meet reflected in the air.

3. *(He removes his mask.)*
And I that ardent prince, young Angelo.
Through water, air or fire I go to greet
My Amarissa. Now our two hands meet.
Our kingdom is recovered, here we dwell,
Once more our native realm.

M. *(She removes her mask. The three Actors are grouped together and she indicates them with her hand.)*

Arcadion,
A poet and inventor of this fine
Sweet eloquence, this final flourish.
I speak my words at last, my native tongue.

C. *(He gestures towards the Actors, The Mime and, finally, the audience. The music rises.)*

And I, Olympio, the arbiter
Of elegance, master of these revels,
Draw them about us to a close. We call
This ceremony Kafka and if you
Should now applaud our solemn rites your hands
May echo Kafka Kafka. So we end.

Production Notes on Kafka

A FEW NOTES on one production of *Kafka* — its first performance, at the University of British Columbia — may make the reader's conception of the play more concrete. I had intended the script to provide words and basic organization for a total theatrical effect, one in which lighting, sound effects, body movements and vocal qualities would be as important as the words themselves. For the first performance, I was fortunate in working with a director who was able to realize this effect.

The set consisted of a hollow rectangular box — black outside, white inside — at stage right that served as the altar and of three large square frames of diminishing sizes — also black and white — that were angled at right, left and centre behind the altar in a series that led back to a vanishing point on the cyclorama at the rear of the stage. The Mime made her entrance through the frame at the right; The Musician was half-concealed behind the left frame. There were also three small square boxes scattered in front of the latter frame. The actors perched on these for the maze of the jackdaws.

Costuming was very useful in establishing the levels of the play. The Controller and the three Actors wore a uniform of dark pants and a green jersey on the back of which was a black pocket for the program cards. Brightly coloured cloaks were worn over this uniform for the Elizabethan sections at the beginning and the end. The masks were simple dark headbands from which a short nosepiece descended. The Mime wore red and white tights. The Musician was visible only as a dark shape, almost forming a part of the frame behind which he sat.

Apart from the Elizabethan music and a sound montage overlaying the final chant, both of which were taped, all the sound effects were produced onstage by The Musician using a variety of instruments and noisemakers. Effects included a long sliding note to indicate the transfer of Actor One, a metallic crash that followed the pointing of the knife, short beeps punctuating the information sorting processes section and the soft shaking of maraccas while Actor Two attempted to recall her dream. Drums of course built up the DANCE KAFKA DANCE scene. (It might be interesting to try one or more piercing high-pitched sounds for that scene instead.)

Lighting changes were frequent. The cyclorama and the main acting area were lit alternately with red, green and blue. Three spots — green, clear and magenta — flashed from Actor Two to Actor Three to The Controller while they tormented Actor One. The same spots, along with some others, provided a number of areas for small groupings. During the inscription, the altar was bathed in a steel blue light. The chant culminated in a strobe effect that filled the entire stage; I would like to see strobes also used on the audience.

The actors achieved a fair range of vocal variation, using their voices to distinguish between the various types of lines. Body movements were based on Rudolph Laban's method of eight basic "efforts" involving the whole body. The play was thus choreographed from be-

ginning to end, both for individual styles of movement and for group work. The chant, for instance, grew from a huddled group expanding and contracting with the rhythm of The Controller's breathing to a swaying line with out-stretched arms to a slow mechanical march of two lines in profile and then to a gradually tightening circle that spun faster and faster until it broke apart and the actors were hurled off to different areas of the stage. Actors Two and Three performed a brief mating dance and copulated. The Controller danced elaborately by himself. Actor One turned in circles, flapping his arms and his head mechanically. The Mime, meanwhile, was moving with long fluid strides towards the altar.

There are many possibilities for other productions of *Kafka*: it is possible that this ceremony forms only a part of the immense process which many call Kafka. I might point out that, no matter what the production, The Mime is a much more important figure than would appear from the script. The Mime is a magical creature, neither male nor female, neither robot nor human. Her presence must always be felt. It is only during the final chant that she becomes, briefly, a part of whatever it is the others are. It is Kafka.

BRIAN SHEIN

The President's Medals

UNIVERSITY OF WESTERN ONTARIO

Dr. D. C. Williams, the President of the University of Western Ontario, announces the opening of the competition for the President's Medals for 1968. These medals are awarded annually for the best single poem, best short story, best scholarly article, and best general article submitted for the competition. A cash award will accompany each medal.

To be eligible, work must be written by a Canadian citizen or a person resident in Canada, and must have appeared in a Canadian publication in the calendar year preceding the year of the award. The closing date for entries is March 15, 1968.

Competitors should submit three copies of each entry, at least one of which must be a tearsheet from the issue of the publication in which the entry appeared. Each copy should be clearly marked with the name and address of the person submitting the entry, and with the name of the category in which it is submitted. No entries will be returned. Entries should be sent to the Chairman of the Awards Committee, Professor R. G. N. Bates, Department of English, University College, The University of Western Ontario, London, Ontario.

Judges reserve the right not to make an award if the calibre of the entries does not warrant it.

BOOKS RECEIVED

ATWOOD, MARGARET, *The Circle Game.* House of Anansi, 671 Spadina Avenue, Toronto 4. Poems. 80 pp. $1.95.

BAYO, GERARD, *Nemesis.* 13, Allée du Poitou, 92-Bagneux, France. Poems. 104 pp.

BOWERING, GEORGE, *Baseball.* The Coach House Press, 317 Bathurst Street, Toronto 2B. A poem in the magic number 9.

COLEMAN, VICTOR, *One Eye Love.* Coach House Press, 317 Bathurst Street, Toronto 2B. Poems. $2.50.

GODFREY, DAVE, *Death Goes Better With Coca-Cola.* House of Anansi, 671 Spadina Avenue, Toronto 4. Short stories, 120 pp. $1.95, hardback $4.50.

JONAS, GEORGE, *The Absolute Smile.* House of Anansi, 671 Spadina Avenue, Toronto 4. Poems, 62 pp. $1.95.

KIYOOKA, ROY, *Nevertheless These Eyes.* Coach House Press, 317 Bathurst Street, Toronto 2B. Poems, $2.50.

LEE, DENNIS, *Kingdom of Absence.* House of Anansi, 671 Spadina Avenue, Toronto 4, Poems. 64 pp. $1.95.

NEWMAN, CHRISTINA MCCALL, *The Best of Ralph Allen.* McClelland & Stewart. 184 pp. $6.50.

ONDAATJE, MICHAEL, *Dainty Monsters.* The Coach House Press, 317 Bathurst Street, Toronto 2B. 77 pp. $3.50. Poems.

PAGE, P. K., *Cry Ararat!* McClelland & Stewart. Poems. 112 pp. $4.95.

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