

MONOLOGUE A1 (1M - Guard)

GUARD

I want to tell you some things. About his majesty.

Pause.

He invented gunpowder. He stole fire from the gods and then he set fire to the gunpowder, which blew everything up. But he caught everything in his hands and stitched it back together. I helped him, but it wasn't easy. He wasn't easy. He built the first giant forges and furnaces. He discovered how to manufacture steel. He worked eighteen hours a day and made us work even harder. He was the Chief Engineer. He made the first hot air balloon, and then the Zeppelin. He built the first airplane with his own hands. At first it didn't work—all the test pilots, Icarus and the others, fell into the sea—but then he decided to pilot the plane himself. I was his mechanic. Long before that, when he was just a little prince, he invented the wheelbarrow. I played with him. Then it was sailboats, steamships, the railway, the automobile. And of course the sickle and the plough, the combine and the tractor.

Pause.

He extinguished volcanoes and made others erupt. He built Rome, New York, Moscow, Geneva. He founded Paris. He started revolutions, counter-revolutions, reformation and counter-reformation, colonialism and post-colonialism.

Pause.

He wrote the Iliad and the Odyssey. He wrote tragedies and comedies under the name of William Shakespeare. He invented the telephone and the telegraph and the fax machine and the search engine. He did everything with his own hands.

Pause.

Majesty, Commander in Chief, Master Engineer, Chief Executive Officer.

MONOLOGUE A2 (1M - King)

KING

I had a little ginger cat. I found him in a field, stolen from his mother, a real wild cat. He was two weeks old, maybe a little more, but he already knew how to scratch and bite. I fed him and petted him and took him home. He became the sweetest cat. Once, he hid in the sleeve of a visitor's coat. He was the most polite creature, a real prince. When we came home in the middle of the night, he would come greet us, his eyes all sleepy. Then he'd go back to sleep in our bed. One time the door was closed to our bedroom—he tried to open it, he pushed it with his behind, and he got angry and he made a beautiful noise. He shunned us for a week. He was terrified of the vacuum cleaner. He was really a cowardly cat, defenseless, a poet cat. Once we brought him a toy mouse and he hid under the cabinet. We wanted him to experience the outside world. We put him on the pavement right outside the window. He was so scared. There were pigeons all around and he was frightened of pigeons. He meowed with despair, pressed against the wall. All animals and all other cats were strange creatures that he mistrusted or enemies that he feared. He was only happy with us. We were his family. He thought we were cats and cats were something else. But still, one day, he went out on his own. The big dog next door killed him. He was lying there like a cat doll, a puppet ripped open with an eye gouged out and a paw torn off, like a stuffed animal damaged by a sadistic child.

Pause.

I had a dream about him. He was in the fireplace, lying on the embers. Marie was surprised he didn't burn. I said, "Cat's don't burn. They're fireproof." He came out of the fireplace, meowing in a cloud of smoke. But it wasn't him—it was another cat, ugly and fat and female. Like his mother, the wildcat. He looked like Marguerite.

MONOLOGUE A3 (1W - Marie)

MARIE

My sweet king, there is no past and there is no future. There's only a present and it goes right up to the end. Everything is in the present. Be present.

Pause.

Stop torturing yourself. "Existence," that's just a word. "Death," just a word. These are just formulas and ideas that we create for ourselves. Once you understand that, nothing can hurt you. Life is only an unanswered question: what is it... what is? That you can't answer the question *is* the answer – let yourself drop into the infinite wonder and chaos and then you too will be infinite. Be amazed! Be dazzled! Everything is strange! Don't let words define *you*, break through the prison bars and escape! Breathe!

Pause.

Let yourself be inundated by joy, be amazed and dazzled by the energy. Its glare penetrates your flesh and bones and flows through you like a river of bright light.

Pause.

If you want to.

Pause.

Remember, please, that morning in June by the sea, the two of us... you looked out and you were filled up with an indescribable joy, something you couldn't describe, you felt it, you said it was unchangeable and inexhaustible. If you felt it then, you can feel it now because the light comes from inside you. Look for it inside yourself.

MONOLOGUE A4 (1M - King)

KING

When I'm gone! When I'm gone they will laugh and sing and stuff their faces and dance on my fucking grave! They won't give a shit! It will be like I never even fucking existed! OH! Please... please... please let them remember me. Let them cry their fucking eyes out! Let my life story be recited every morning in every school by every child. They will have only one thing to study – me – and all the other textbooks will be burned! Destroy every statue and put up one of me, a good one, with me on a horse, in every public park. Put my picture in the back of every taxi. Name everything after me: buildings, children, colleges, dogs, horses, harrier jets, prisons, malls, handbags, prizes... let everyone else be forgotten, all the other kings and philosophers and poets and tenors, and let there be consciousness of only one single name: BERENGER. Let them learn to read by spelling out my name: BUH-ER-RR-EH-NN-JJ-EH-RR...! Make them say mass for me and make them carve all the stained glass windows in the shape and color of my eyes. Let the rivers trace the shape of my face across the plains. Let my name echo throughout eternity! Let them pray to me! Let them beg!

Pause.

All I've ever wanted is to be remembered by everyone until the end of time and then also after the end of time – in twenty thousand years, in two hundred and fifty five thousand billion years... but they'll forget long before that, they're all selfish. Just thinking about their own little lives, not about me. If the whole earth is going to heat up and its glaciers will melt and its oceans will rise and its atmosphere will burn off and the whole universe is going to explode, then just let it explode. Who cares! It's all the same if its tomorrow or if its in a thousand million centuries.

SCENE B1 (1M, 1W – King & Juliette)

KING (*to Juliette*)
Tell me about your life. How is it?

JULIETTE
Pretty bad.

KING
Life can't be bad. That's a contradiction in terms.

JULIETTE
Life is not beautiful.

KING
But it is *life*!

JULIETTE
In winter, when I get up, it is still night. I'm freezing cold.

KING
Me too. But it is not the same cold. You don't like to be cold?

JULIETTE
In summer, when I get up, it's only just beginning to get light. A pale kind of light.

KING (*in a rapture*)
A pale kind of light! There are so many kinds of light: blue and pink and white and green and *pale*!

JULIETTE
I clean all the dirty laundry in the palace washtubs. My hands hurt. My skin is cracked.

KING (*still in a rapture*)
It hurts! You can feel your skin. Didn't we get you a washing machine? I thought we got you a washing machine. Marguerite! Didn't we get a washing machine?

MARGUERITE
We had to pawn it to pay down the national debt.

JULIETTE
I empty the chamber pots. I make the beds.

KING
She makes the beds! Where we rest, where we sleep, where we go to sleep and the get up in the morning every day. We always wake up again in the morning.

JULIETTE
I polish the wood floors. I sweep, I sweep, I sweep. It's endless.

KING
Endless!

JULIETTE

KING

JULIETTE

KING

JULIETTE

KING

JULIETTE

KING

JULIETTE

KING

JULIETTE

KING

JULIETTE

KING

JULIETTE

KING

JULIETTE

A cheap dress. A cheap, ugly dress.

KING

You don't know what you're saying! It's beautiful!

SCENE B2 (2W – Marie & Marguerite)

Marie sniffles.

MARGUERITE
Don't start weeping again.

MARIE (*crying*)
I'm *trying* to stop.

MARGUERITE
Just don't fall apart. It won't help anything. This is how it works, and you've been expecting it. Haven't you been expecting it?

MARIE (*sniffing*)
You've been expecting it.

MARGUERITE
Luckily. And now everything is ready to go. (*to Juliette*) Give her another tissue.

MARIE
I was hoping...

MARGUERITE
Hoping! All you do is hope and hope and laugh and hope and then you just cry and cry and cry.

MARIE
What did the doctor say?

MARGUERITE
Just what you already know.

MARIE
Maybe he's made a mistake.

MARGUERITE
Don't start hoping again! The signs are unmistakable.

MARIE
Maybe he read them wrong.

MARGUERITE
They *can't* be read wrong. They are *facts*.

MARIE (*almost falling in*)
Oh! This crack!

MARGUERITE
You see! And that's not the only thing. It's your fault if he's not prepared. It's your fault if he's taken by surprise. You let him just do whatever he wanted and enabled him. You

are an enabler. With your balls and carnivals and dinners and parties and dinner parties and fireworks and flash mobs and honeymoons. How many honeymoons have you had?

MARIE

We were celebrating our anniversaries.

MARGUERITE

You celebrated your anniversaries four times a year. (*in an impression of Marie*) "One must *live!*" you used to say.

MARIE

He loves to party.

MARGUERITE

People know but they act as if they don't know. They know and they forget. But him, he is the *king*. (*Ushers are silent*) The king can't forget. He has to keep his eyes open, looking ahead. He has to know each step, the exact length of the route, and *see* the end of the journey.

MARIE

My poor dumpling, my poor little king.

MARGUERITE

Put on a happy face. Like this. (*She demonstrates.*) We don't want *him* to start crying. What a terrible influence you've been. Oh well! He prefers you, but I haven't been jealous. Not at all. I have merely recognized his lack of wisdom. Now you can do nothing for him. You're covered in tears. Where is your snark now? What happened to your sarcastic smile? It's time to wake up. Take your place and get yourself together. (*baby voice*) Look, you're still wearing your lovely necklace. So pretty! (*normal voice*) Go, take your place.

MARIE (*sitting*)

I won't be able to tell him.

MARGUERITE

I'll tell him. I'm used to doing the chores.

MARIE

No, don't tell him! Please. I'm begging you.

MARGUERITE

Leave it to me, *I'm* begging *you*. We will need you, however, during several stages of the ceremony. You like ceremonies!

MARIE

Not this one.

MARGUERITE

It won't be as much fun, of course, as one of your charity auctions. Let's all dance and drink and dine and be merry, don't worry, it all goes to the premature infants and cripples and disaster victims and refugees and political exiles and lady novelists. Or your charity balls for the organizers of charity balls. This will be family only. With no dancing.

MARIE

No, don't tell him anything. It'll be better if he doesn't know what's going on.

MARGUERITE

So it's just (*sung*) la, la, la (*spoken*) poof? No.

MARIE

You have no heart.

MARGUERITE (*after checking*)

Not true. It's beating.

MARIE

You're terrible—he's not prepared.

MARGUERITE

It's your fault if he's not prepared. He's like one of those travellers who stay too long at every stop and forget every time that the stop is not the end of the journey. When I reminded you that we must always remain conscious of our ultimate destiny you called me a, quote, "pretentious bitch."

SCENE B3 (2M – King & Doctor)

DOCTOR
Sire, you cannot be cured.

KING
I'm not sick.

DOCTOR
How do you feel?

KING
Just a few aches and pains. It's nothing. And I'm starting to feel a lot better.

Pause. He considers.

Actually I feel great.

DOCTOR
You are going to die. You will not have your breakfast tomorrow. Or even your dinner tonight. The chef has turned off the gas. Also, he quit. He's put the tablecloths and napkins away in the cupboard, forever.

KING
Who could have given these orders, without my consent? I feel fine! You're teasing me. It's all lies.

Pause.

I'll die when I want, I am the king, I am the decider.

DOCTOR
You've lost the power to decide, your majesty.

KING
I'm not sick!

Pause.

Didn't Marie just say that I'm not sick? *(looking into a portrait of his younger self as if it were a mirror)* I look... I look amazing!

DOCTOR
And your pains?

KING *(sitting)*
All gone.

DOCTOR
Ok – let's see you move around a little bit.

KING (*trying to stand*)
Ow! Owwwwwww! It's just because I wasn't mentally prepared. I didn't have time to get in the right frame of mind. If I think I am cured then I am cured. It's that simple. But I've been busy! Running the kingdom!

DOCTOR
The kingdom is falling apart, your majesty.

KING
I get it. It's a plot. You want me to resign.

DOCTOR
It would be for the best.

KING
I should resign?

DOCTOR
Yes – resign morally and administratively. And physically.

KING
You're crazy. Or... or a traitor!

SCENE C1 – (1M, 2W – King, Marie, Marguerite)

MARIE (*to the King*)

Tell me to do something. Give me an order. I'll obey you.

MARGUERITE

She thinks what she calls "love" can do the impossible.

MARIE

Order me around, Sire. See how beautiful I am. I smell good. Order me to come over to you, to kiss you.

KING (*to Marie*)

Come to me. Kiss me.

She doesn't move.

KING (cont.)

Can you hear me?

MARIE

I can hear you. I'm going to do it.

KING

Come to me.

MARIE

I want to. I'm going to do it. I want to do it but my arms don't work.

KING

Okay... dance.

She doesn't move.

KING (cont.)

Dance!

MARIE

I can't.

KING

You've probably just have a stiff neck. Come closer.

MARIE

Okay.

KING

A little closer.

MARIE

Okay.

KING

Do it!

MARIE

I don't... I don't remember how to walk.

MARGUERITE

Take a couple of steps towards him.

She does.

KING

Aha! She's coming!

MARGUERITE

Because she listened to *me*. (*to Marie*) Stop. Stand perfectly still. Jump up and down. Act like a baby. Act like a monster. Act like the king.

Marie follows Marguerite's instructions. On the direction to "act like the king," she falls down and pretends to die.

KING

I order trees to sprout through the floor! (*pause.*) I order the roof to disappear! (*pause.*) What? Nothing? (*Pause.*) I order it to rain. (*Pause.*) Let there be a thunderbolt, one I can hold in my hand. (*Pause.*) I order that the leaves grow again. I order that Juliette enter the room, right there.

SCENE C2 – (2M, 1W – King, Guard, Marie)

MARIE

Take control, sire. Prove you can do it. You can do it if you want to.

KING

I'm doing it. I'll prove it to all of you!

MARIE

But first get up.

KING

I'm getting up!

(The King makes a tremendous effort and grimaces.)

MARIE

You see, it's easy.

KING

It's so easy! You're a bunch of conspiring assholes. Terrorists. *(to MARIE)* No, no, I can do it by myself.

The King falls. Juliette tries to help him.

KING (cont.)

I can get up by myself!

He gets up, with great, painful effort.

GUARD

Long live the king!

The King falls.

GUARD (cont.)

The king is dying!

MARIE

Long live the king!

The King gets back up, with the help of his scepter.

GUARD

Long live the king!

The King falls again.

GUARD (cont.)

The king is dead.

MARIE

Long live the king! Long live the king!

The King stands again, painfully. The King falls again.

GUARD
The king is dying.

MARIE
No! Long live the king! Long live the king!

GUARD
Long live the king!

The King stands again.

MARIE
You see, he's better!