



Vili Ravnjak

RIMSKI DRAMSKI DIPTIH ***ROMAN DRAMATIC DYPTICH***

GIORDANO BRUNO
POTOVANJE V RIM (CARAVAGGIO)

GIORDANO BRUNO
JOURNEY TO ROME (CARAVAGGIO)



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Samozaložba, Maribor 2012

Elektronska izdaja

Prevod v angleški jezik Tomaž Onič

Oblikovanje in prelom Jože Vodušek

Fotografija na naslovnici je iz uprizoritve
Potovanja v Rim v Drami SNG Maribor leta 2009,
fotograf Damjan Švarc.

Fotografija na zadnji strani je iz uprizoritve
Giordano Bruno v Drami SNG Maribor leta 1998,
fotograf Tone Stojko.

CIP - Kataložni zapis o publikaciji
Univerzitetna knjižnica Maribor

821.163.6-12

RAVNJAK, Vili

Rimski dramski diptih = Roman dramatic dyptich
[Elektronski vir] / Vili Ravnjak. - Elektronska izd. -
[Maribor] : samozal. V. Ravnjak, 2012

Vsebina na nasl. str.:

Giordano Bruno = Giordano Bruno

Potovanje v Rim (Caravaggio) = Journey to Rome (Caravaggio)

ISBN 978-961-276-467-8

COBISS.SI-ID 70434561

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Translated by Tomaž Onič



Maribor, 2012



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GIORDANO BRUNO

Dramski dialogi

1998

OSEBE

AVTOR, dramatik*
GIORDANO BRUNO, filozof
ROBERTO BELLARMINO, inkvizitor
TIBOR, ječar

**Avtorja in inkvizitorja igra isti igralec.*

KRAJ IN ČAS DOGAJANJA

Prvi del v avtorjevi delovni sobi danes,
drugi del pozimi leta 1600 v Angelskem gradu v Rimu.



*Krstna izvedba obeh delov teksta je bila
9. septembra 1998 v Drami SNG Maribor.*

Režija Maria Millas.

Prvi del

**SVETI OGENJ ali
PROLOG K DRAMI GIORDANO BRUNO**

[Drama se dogaja neke deževne noči v podstrešni sobici, kjer sedi za pisalnim strojem Avtor in tipka. Kadar tipkanje utihne, se slišijo dežne kaplje, ki padajo na streho. V prostoru, ki je prezaložen s knjigami in rokopisi, je mrak, ki ga razsvetljuje luč z delovne mize. Ob njej je majhen kip Giordana Bruna. Pred njim je prižgana sveča.]

AVTOR *(med tipkanjem pisma):*

Dejali ste, da ne bom zmogel, da mi bo spet zmanjkalo inspiracije, še preden bom prav začel. Morda ste imeli prav. Toda zagotavljam vam, ne bom se vdal. Obljubljam vam, gospod ravnatelj, dramo bom končal, pa četudi jo bom pisal vse življenje. Še nobeno delo me ni tako vznemirjalo. Prav obseda me. Nenehno čakam na čudežni trenutek, ko me bo iskra božanskega navdiha ponesla iz brezna ustvarjalne krize! *(Se ustavi in zamisli. Izvleče papir iz stroja in ga raztrga.)* Ne, takšnega pisma mu pa res ne morem poslati; nor sem, popolnoma sem nor! S tem mu dejansko sporočam, da drame nikoli ne bo ... Jaz pa sem honorar že zapravil. Ne bi smel podpisati tiste nesrečne pogodbe. Kaj sem pa hotel? Bil sem brez denarja, kot vedno ... Ne, ne! *(Ponovno vloži list in začne tipkati.)* Gospod ravnatelj, to je drama, ki jo vsi pričakujemo – vi kot najuspešnejši gledališki direktor, jaz kot najuspešnejši dramatik svoje generacije ... *(Neha tipkati, zazre se predse.)* Drama, ki jo čedalje manj razumem, tekst, ki mi je vedno bolj tuj ... Moj bog, zakaj? Zakaj?

[Iz temnega ozadja sobe kot duh vstopi Giordano Bruno. Je podoben kipu na avtorjevi mizi. Avtor onemi. Bruno se mu približa.]

BRUNO:

Zakaj? Zato, ker jaz te drame ne potrebujem. Očitno pa je tudi ti ne.

AVTOR:

Še kako potrebujem. Najbolj od vseh!

BRUNO:

Zakaj bi sploh moral pisati? Zakaj ustvarjati velika in pomembna dela? Biti slaven?

AVTOR:

Kdo si?

BRUNO:

Naslovni junak tvoje drame. (*Vzame v roke kip Giordana Bruna.*)
Giordano Bruno. Si nisva podobna?

AVTOR:

Giordano Bruno da si?

BRUNO:

Dober večer, prijatelj! Trkal res nisem, a vrata so bila odklenjena.

AVTOR:

No, tako! Lepa reč! Končno se mi je zmešalo. Začenjam halucinirati.
– Torej, gospod Privid, lahko bi bili vljudnejši! Sploh pa si te nisem predstavljal takega!

BRUNO:

Domišljija in stvarnost sta dva svetova. Pogosto zelo različna. Včasih povsem nasprotna.

AVTOR:

Ti bi torej naj bil materializacija mojih misli?

BRUNO:

Lahko se me dotakneš!

AVTOR:

Ne, ne. Raje imam stvari, ki se mi samo zdijo.

BRUNO:

Prav. Tako bo tudi moj obisk skrivnostnejši kot bi sicer bil. Torej, dramo bi rad napisal o meni in o mojem življenju?

AVTOR:

Ja.

BRUNO:

In koliko časa se že mučiš z njo?

AVTOR:

Odkar pišem za gledališče. Sedem let. Vsake toliko časa se je znova lotim, vendar je nikoli ne morem dokončati.

BRUNO:

Z drugimi teksti nisi imel takih težav?

AVTOR:

Ne. Tako *Nerona* kot *Einsteina* sem napisal v enem zamahu.

BRUNO:

Če prav razumem, si v tem času končal dve veliki zgodovinski drami?

AVTOR:

Nerona so razglasili za najboljši dramski prvenec, *Einstein* pa mi je lani prinesel nagrado za najboljšo dramo leta.

BRUNO:

Misliš, da bo drama o Giordanu Brunu tudi uspešnica?

AVTOR:

O tem ne dvomim.

BRUNO:

Jaz pa ti povem, da ne bo. Nikoli namreč ne bo napisana, nikoli dokončana. In ti to veš.

AVTOR:

Blede se mi! To niso moje misli!

BRUNO:

Kaj naj bi bila glavna tema drame o Giordanu Brunu?

AVTOR:

Svoboda in resnica.

BRUNO:

Si ti svoboden? Si ti resnica?

AVTOR:

Umetnik sem. Ustvarjam. Prepuščam se navdihu, in kadar plavam na njegovih krilih, vem, da je to, kar ustvarjam, resnično.

BRUNO:

Ob meni pa se tvoj navdih ne more prav razplamteti. Je tako?

AVTOR:

Je in ni. Kadar se z Brunom intenzivno ukvarjam, postanem drug človek. Sploh ne razmišljam več o drami, ampak o svojem življenju, o smislu bivanja. Dvomiti začnem o svojem umetniškem poslanstvu. Sprašujem se, če je to, kar počnem, dobro; če je umetnost, ki jo ustvarjam, prava.

BRUNO:

Seveda, ker nočeš slišati tega, kar bi moral.

AVTOR:

To pa je?

BRUNO:

Nehaj se ukvarjati s to dramo.

AVTOR:

Zakaj?

BRUNO:

Taka, kot jo želiš ustvariti, ni nikomur potrebna.

AVTOR (*se smeje*):

Odpovem naj se delu, v katerega sem vložil vse svoje ustvarjalne upe?

BRUNO:

Odpovedati se moraš določenim oblikam čutenja in mišljenja. V bistvu samo nekaterim estetskim normam in filozofskim kategorijam.

AVTOR:

Ne, ne. Ničemur se ne bom odpovedal. Biografija Giordana Bruna je že sama po sebi popolna dramska stvaritev. Klasična dramaturgija v najizvirnejšem pomenu. V njej so v najčistejši obliki prisotni prvorazredni dramski konflikti, ki kar kličejo, da jih prenesemo na oder.

BRUNO:

Jaz sem se odpovedal življenju, ti pa se niti svojim dramaturškim domislicam ne moreš? Pa bi bil rad moj biograf?

AVTOR:

Daj, no, daj! Odpovedal si se življenju, ker si užival v vlogi žrtve. Do podrobnosti sem te preučil. Zaslepljen si bil s svojim heroizmom. Poln si bil sebe in svoje pomembnosti. In nenazadnje, vedel si, da te čaka nesmrtna slava, da bodo o tebi še stoletja razmišljali, pisali knjige, uprizarjali drame, snemali filme ...

BRUNO (*se začne smejati*).

AVTOR:

Jaz te sicer ne bom prikazal tako bedno, a vseeno, to je tvoje bistvo.

BRUNO (*se še bolj smeji*).

AVTOR:

Sem te zadel, kaj?

BRUNO:

Ne mene, sebe si zadel! Meni je vseeno, kaj drugi govorijo in mislijo, tebi pa ni! Mnenja drugih o meni – to so njihova življenja, njihove resnice. Jaz z njimi nimam nič.

AVTOR:

Torej mi dovoli, da si ustvarim svojo sliko o tebi!

BRUNO:

Ti si drugačen. Ob tebi mi ne more biti vseeno. Izbran si, da bistvo Giordana Bruna zares spoznaš. Samo svojo sedanjo zamisel drame moraš prerasti. – Prijatelj moj, samo korak, majhen korak stran od tega tvojega bedastega gledališča obstaja resnična umetnina: življenje – Giordano Bruno.

AVTOR:

In v čem je njegova posebnost?

BRUNO:

Stojim pred teboj in te gledam. Občutiš, kako te gledam, kako diham?

AVTOR:

To za teater ni zanimivo.

BRUNO:

Se bojiš preprostosti, enostavnosti resnice?

AVTOR:

To ni snov za dramo. Nič dramatičnega, nič konfliktnega. Izžvižgali me bodo.

BRUNO:

Bojiš se, da občinstvo tvojega dela ne bi sprejelo, da ti ne bi ploskali.

AVTOR:

Umetnost ustvarjamo za druge. Aplavz je logična posledica.

BRUNO:

Toda ne, kadar se prilizujemo in skušamo na vsak način ugajati. Ne moreš vendar žrtvovati svoje poštenosti, svoje iskrenosti na račun slave in javnega priznanja. – Ne, dragi moj, na tak način drame o Giordanu Brunu ne moreš ustvariti. Umetnine, ki niso iskren izraz resničnega stanja umetnikove duše, so prazne. Lahko so lepe in privlačne navzven, oblikovno dovršene, a v njih ni ognja živosti! Pozabljene bodo, čim se bo okus občinstva in kritike spremenil.

AVTOR:

Torej med umetnostjo in življenjem ne bi smelo biti nikakršne razlike?

BRUNO:

Ne, med umetnostjo in umetnikom ne more biti razlike.

AVTOR:

Tvoja biografija bi torej morala biti moja avtobiografija?

BRUNO:

Na nek način da.

AVTOR:

Smešno!

BRUNO:

Rekel si, da te ukvarjanje z menoj osebno spreminja. Nisi nikoli pomislil, da drame o Giordanu Brunu morda sploh ne pišeš za gledališče, ampak zase?

AVTOR:

Razmišljal sem o tem. Toda vprašanja, ki jih odpiram, so preveč pomembna, da o njih ne bi govoril javno. Ta drama je moj prispevek k obrambi svobode mišljenja in svobode veroizpovedi. Z zgodovino Cerkve hočem kritično obračunati in pokazati resnično ozadje njenega ponovnega vzpona na oblast.

BRUNO:

Vključiti se hočeš v spopad med Cerkvijo in družbo. Uživaš v vlogi razsodnika? Ali pa bi se rad postavil na eno od vojskujočih se strani?

AVTOR:

Cerkev je treba obravnavati strogo. Tu ni popuščanja. Kadarkoli v zgodovini so ji popustili, je sledila katastrofa.

BRUNO:

Kaj pa ti je storila?

AVTOR:

Meni nič. Pač pa drugim! Drama o Giordanu Brunu je posvečena žrtvam inkvizicije.

BRUNO:

Maščevati se hočeš za bolečine in trpljenja žrtev inkvizicije?

AVTOR:

Gre za kritični prikaz nasilja, ki je povezano z zgodovino Cerkve. Nasilje in religija ne moreta hoditi skupaj. V krščanstvu pa se prav to nenehno dogaja.

BRUNO:

Toda tvoja drama ne bo nič drugega kot podaljševanje tega stanja. Z njo boš samo še bolj vzpodbudil stare polemike in obračunavanja med zagovorniki in nasprotniki Cerkve.

AVTOR:

Gledališče je ogledalo družbe.

BRUNO:

To je mogoče res. Vendar pa si moramo najprej postaviti vprašanje, kdo so ljudje, ki držijo to ogledalo v rokah. Od njih je odvisno, kaj bomo videli. – Povej mi, zakaj si se odpovedal prvemu naslovu drame? Ti naslov Feniks ali Čudežna preobrazba ni več všeč? Si se zbal lastnega ustvarjalnega in osebnostnega preobrata? (*Se zagleda v njegove oči.*)

AVTOR (*po dolgem premolku*):

Izgini!

BRUNO:

Povej mi vrstni red prizorov!

AVTOR:

Prosim te, odidi!

BRUNO:

Lažje ti bo, če vsebino drame pregovoriva skupaj. Morda boš tako našel celo ključ, kako jo končati. – Torej, prvo dejanje, samostan

San Domenico Maggiore v Neaplju, leta 1566. Giordano Bruno ima osemnajst let in študira teologijo.

AVTOR:

Večer je. Mladi Bruno skupaj z drugimi študenti zavzeto posluša predavanje starega, s svobodomiselnimi idejami prežetega patra. Nenadoma zleti prek neba čudežno lep ptič, ki ga še nihče nikoli ni videl ...

BRUNO:

... ki ga nihče ne pozna. – Feniks! Sveta ptica, simbol nesmrtnosti, simbol večnega samorojevanja. Feniks se odpravlja v smrt. Njegova krila izginjajo v krvavordeči krogli zahajajočega sonca. Ko namreč ptica ostari in začuti bližino smrti, se zakoplje v gnezdo in v njem od lastne toplote zgori, nato pa se iz svojega pepela znova rodi.

AVTOR:

Najprej svoboda, odprtost, široki humanistični nazori, renesansa v pravem pomenu besede, potem vdor temnih sil papeškega dvora in opustošenje.

BRUNO:

Čista epska dramaturgija?

AVTOR:

Na nek način da. Čeprav ne bi rad, da bi bilo samo to. Stvar se pravzaprav začne kot kriminalka. Ponoči neznanci skrivnostno ubijejo starega patra. Naslednje jutro njegovo truplo najdejo na samostanskem hodniku. Čez nekaj ur se v samostanu pojavi inkvizicijska policija in začne preiskavo. Zaslišijo priorja, več profesorjev in študentov, med njimi tudi Giordana Bruna. Umor patra ostane nepojasnen. Glavni inkvizitor zagrozi, da bo vse predal inkvizicijskemu sodišču. Naslednjo noč ubijejo tudi inkvizitorja. V samostanu nastane vsesplošen preplah.

BRUNO:

Tisto noč sem bil s svojo ljubico, čudovito lepo redovnico, na vrtu ženskega samostana v soseščini. Omamljen od sveže zaljubljenosti in strasti mladega ženskega telesa, sem se proti jutru vračal domov. Pri plezanju čez samostanski zid so me zasačili. Nasilno so me odvedli v priorjevo sprejemnico, kjer so zasliševali mojega študentskega kolego, ki so ga prav tako ujeli, ko se je od ljubice vračal domov. Naključje je hotelo, da sva postala glavna osumljenca za inkvizitorjev umor.

AVTOR:

Naslednji dan pride v samostan novi inkvizitor, ki v zelo kratkem času odkrije, kdo je pravi morilec.

BRUNO:

Bil sem oproščen. Toda moje ime je vseeno ostalo v inkvizicijskem zapisniku. Ker sem zagovarjal svobodomiselnje ideje starega patra, pa sem dobil prvič tudi pečat heretika.

AVTOR:

Ni dobro? Drama, vredna Schillerja ali Shakespeara!

BRUNO:

Da, če bi bilo vse to res!? Naslednjo noč naj bi mi ubili ljubico?

AVTOR:

Saj vem, da je mlada redovnica Beatrice moj izmislek, toda za nadaljnji potek drame je njen nastop potreben.

BRUNO:

Nune iz ženskega samostana so zavohale, da je njihova sestra noseča. V strahu pred inkvizicijo so ta greh seveda želele skriti. Nesrečnemu dekletu so iztrgale plod. Sredi noči sem jo našel mrtvo na hribu nad morjem. Na nebu je sijal mesec, jaz pa sem jokal. Takrat sem začutil, da sem izgubil vse, kar mi je bilo dragocenega v

življenju. Z mojo Beatrice je umrla tudi vera v krščansko videnje Boga.

AVTOR:

To je ključni trenutek, v katerem zraste Brunov dosmrtni odpor do Cerkve kot institucije. Tu se odloči za življenje v svobodi in za svobodo. – Slekel si meniško kuto in zbežal iz Neaplja.

BRUNO:

V resnici seveda ni bilo tako. Pred inkvizicijskim terorjem sem prvič zbežal šele iz preiskovalnega zapora v samostanu Minerva v Rimu.

AVTOR:

No, ja, kakšno stvar že lahko malo prilagodim. Saj ne pišem dokumentarne drame.

BRUNO:

Kljub nekaterim ponaredkom, ali bolje rečeno, ideološkim prilagoditvam, se mi zdi drama do sem dobra. Ni pa dobro nadaljevanje. Zašel si v povsem drug pripovedni slog. Ostala dejanja so nekaj povsem drugega kot prvo. V bistvu nimajo prave povezave s prvim. Pravzaprav so le fragmenti, ilustracije. Na primer potovanje v Švico in Francijo, kjer se moram neposredno soočiti z resničnostjo verskih vojn, pa bivanje v Londonu in srečanje z angleško kraljico, ki je bilo sicer eno najlepših londonskih doživetij; Elizabeta I. je imela izreden smisel za humor in se je znala na papežev račun tako pretkano šaliti, da sem se moral do solz nasmejati.

AVTOR:

Strinjam se, prehod med prvim in drugim dejanjem je moj glavni dramaturški problem, a ga v tem trenutku še ne znam rešiti.

BRUNO:

Morda pa začetek drame ni pravi?

AVTOR:

Ne, začetek je pravi. Potrebujem Brunov zelo osebni razlog za njegov odpor do institucij Cerkve. Če ga prikažem v luči mladostne ljubezenske tragedije, bo to prepričljivo.

BRUNO:

Pristranski si. Preveč črno-belo me slikaš. Razen tega pozabljaš, da me večina pozna kot filozofa in mistika.

AVTOR:

Poskrbel sem tudi za to. Imam nekaj čudovitih prizorov, ki jih nameravam vključiti v tretje in četrto dejanje. Na primer tvoje vznesene razprave z londonskimi prijatelji o resnici, ali pa razkrivanje skrivnosti kabalistične mistike v pravljici Pragi leta 1589.

BRUNO:

In konec drame?

AVTOR:

Konec je vezan na nekaj nenavadnih, usodnih naključij tvojega življenja. Povej mi, zakaj si leta 1591, ko si se mudil v Frankfurtu, sprejel povabilo beneškega plemiča Giovannija Moceniga, da prideš v Benetke, ko pa si vedel, da te tam lahko ujame inkvizicija?

BRUNO:

Ne vem, kar šel sem. Tako sem pač čutil.

AVTOR:

Res nenavadna odločitev. Ves čas tvojega svobodnega potepanja po Evropi je bila za teboj razpisana inkvizicijska tiralica. Vedel si, da te papeški Rim šteje za enega največjih nasprotnikov Cerkve, pa si vseeno šel. Pogum ali norost? Kakorkoli že, sijajen vrh drame. Čas, preden te ujamejo, bi rad prikazal v svetlih tonih. Četrto dejanje se bo začelo s sproščeno zabavo in plesom v maskah. Giovannija Moceniga, tvojega izdajalca, bi moral prikazati nekoliko bebavo.

Prizor, ko Mocenigo 23. maja 1591 prinese na beneško inkvizicijsko sodišče prijavo zoper tebe, bi moral biti tragikomičen.

BRUNO (*se smeje*):

To mi je všeč! Čim več humorja!

AVTOR:

No, ja, ne vem, če se tako očitno montiranemu procesu lahko smejemo? Kakorkoli že, tu nameravam citirati uradni inkvizicijski zapisnik in pismo nekega gospoda Schoppa, ki ga je pisal svojemu prijatelju dan po tvoji usmrčitvi na Cvetnem trgu.

BRUNO:

Ampak tu še nisem mrtev, skoraj deset let življenja še imam pred seboj.

AVTOR:

To je tema zadnjega dejanja. Skoraj sem ga končal.

BRUNO:

Zanimivo, zanimivo. Očitno je najbolj avtobiografsko.

AVTOR:

Prosim, no! – Prizorišče dogajanje so zapori Angelskega gradu v Rimu, kjer je bil Bruno zaprt od 27. februarja 1593, do smrti, 17. februarja 1600. V teh letih je zoper njega ves čas tekel javni proces, ki pa se je dokončno zaostril po letu 1597, ko je prišel za rimskega inkvizitorja Roberto Bellarmino. – Izvoli, lahko ga prebereš!

BRUNO (*prelistava Avtorjev tekst*):

Videti je kar zanimivo. Toda, kaj boš z dramo, pri kateri ti je že na začetku vse jasno? Situacije, ki jih prikazuješ, so bile že tisočkrat obdelane. Nič novega ne boš povedal.

AVTOR:

Klasika ostaja klasika. Dobre stvari so večne.

BRUNO:

Ujel si se v iluzijo velike dramatike, v iluzijo pomembnih, večnih resnic. Oprosti, vse to so zelo omejene, pristranske vizije resničnosti.

AVTOR:

Kako to misliš?

BRUNO:

Žrtev svojih prepričanj si; predvsem pa žrtev družbenih predsodkov in zablod uma. – Tako vas je strah prestopiti meje znanega, resničnega in možnega; tako zelo, da svobode mišljenja in ustvarjanja nikoli ne boste spoznali! – Dragi moj, resnična tema tvoje drame sploh nisem jaz, ampak ti in tvoje ustvarjanje.

AVTOR:

Kako?

BRUNO:

Ti ne pišeš drame o Giordanu Brunu, ampak o inkviziciji. Iz odnosa, ki ga imaš do inkvizicije in do zgodovine Cerkve, pišeš vse to. Toda, čemu ti bo ponavljanje zgodovine in popravljanje napak preteklosti? Sebe spremeni in preteklost ne bo več preteklost! Človeški možgani si izmislijo meje resničnega in možnega, nato pa začno vanje verjeti. Naša resničnost je to, v kar verjamemo.

AVTOR:

Sem torej ves čas živel v zmoti? Je bil ves moj trud zaman?

BRUNO:

Ne, ni bil. Ob Giordanu Brunu si odraščal. Tukaj sem zato, da bi ti to spoznal in dokončno odrasel.

AVTOR:

Moje drame niso moje življenje!

BRUNO:

Pa so! V resnici pišeš vedno o sebi. Stvari, o katerih pišeš, se ti dogajajo. Živiš jih. Tvoja umetniška domišljija, tvoje misli in čustva so resničnost, v kateri živiš. Razmisli torej, kakšno realnost želiš ustvarjati? Kje in kako živeti?

AVTOR:

Umetnosti pripisuješ moč, ki je v resnici nima.

BRUNO:

Vsaka umetnina je živo bitje, najprej v notranjem svetu umetnika, potem pa v svetovih vseh, ki pridejo v stik z njo.

AVTOR:

Ne bodi smešen! Umetnina vendar ne oblikuje posameznikovega življenja!

BRUNO:

Oblikuje ravno ne; sooblikuje pa! Umetnina postane del človekovih misli in čustev, torej del njegovih resničnosti. – Svet, ki ga prikazuješ, je svet brez izhoda, obsojen na večni dvoboj dobrega in zla. Mučenci bodo jutri mučitelji, mučitelji pa mučenci. Hudič in Bog si tu nikoli ne bosta segla v roke. Svetloba in tema tu ne bosta nikoli eno. Si še naprej želiš živeti v takšnem svetu?

AVTOR:

Ne.

BRUNO:

Torej ga nehaj ustvarjati! Nehaj obnavljati izkustvo trpljenja in nasilja, ki je povezano z zgodovino Cerkve, z zgodovino prelivanja Kristusove krvi. Ker ta drama nima konca. Nikoli je ne boš končal. Nemogoče. Nihče je še ni. Zato jo nehaj pisati. Zdajle, v tem trenutku!

AVTOR:

Kaj naj storim?

BRUNO:

Začni se zavedati, kaj počneš. Prepoznavaj preprosto dejstvo, da si se izgubil v obzidjih lastnega uma. Meje, v katere si se vklenil s svojimi umetniškimi ambicijami, te bodo zadušile. – Dragi moj! Sposoben si prerasti samega sebe! Tvoj duh je neskončen! Tvoj duh je brezmejen! Večni smo, nesmrtni! Le da moramo to spoznati. V sebi. Iz sebe.

AVTOR:

Kdo si?

BRUNO:

Sen; sen, ki ga sanjajo živi in živijo mrtvi.

AVTOR:

Pa jaz? Kaj sem pri vsem tem jaz?

BRUNO:

Majhen otok resnice, tako kot jaz.

AVTOR:

To praviš ti?!

BRUNO:

Poglej plamen te sveče! Kaj vidiš?

AVTOR:

Ogenj.

BRUNO:

In zdaj poglej vame! – Pravi naslov tvoje drame je Feniks.

AVTOR:

Vem.

BRUNO:

Zdaj razumeš, zakaj sem tu?

AVTOR:

Kdo si? Kdo?

BRUNO:

Privid in resnica, kot življenje samo.

AVTOR:

Dovolj! Nehaj me mučiti. Odpovedujem se tej drami! Odpovedujem se. Prepričal si me. Ne potrebujem je. Nihče je ne potrebuje. Giordano Bruno, vrni se v zgodovino! Pozabljen si! Pozabljen! Ni te, ni te več!

BRUNO:

Dotakni se me.

AVTOR:

Ne! Ni te – ni te – ni te ...

BRUNO:

Jaz sem. (*Se dotakne Avtorjevih rok in obraza.*)

AVTOR (*se ga otepa*):

Nisi, nisi, nisi.

BRUNO:

Jaz obstajam. Živim. To je vsa moja resnica. Vse, kar ve zgodovina o meni, je v primerjavi s tem preprostim dejstvom nič, manj kot nič. (*Začne zažigati liste Avtorjeve drame.*)

AVTOR:
Kaj pa počenjaš?

BRUNO:
Prižigam ogenj.

AVTOR:
Moj rokopis sežigaš?

BRUNO:
Tvojo dramo pišem. (*Nadaljuje s sežiganjem.*)

AVTOR:
Moje delo uničuješ!

BRUNO:
Kaj je resnica onstran tvojih papirjev; kaj je življenje onstran tvojega gledališča?

AVTOR:
Moj bog, prividi! Prividi! Stran od mene! Stran! – Plameni? Ogenj?!

BRUNO:
Sveti ogenj nikoli ni bil privid.

AVTOR:
Brat moj! Obstaja samo resnica, ki jo živimo.

BRUNO:
In to resnico lahko spoznamo in prerastemo.

[Se pridruži Brunu pri sežiganju listov. Oba se začneta smejati in uživati. Potem pa Bruno nenadoma izgine. Izbruhne požar. Avtor se zave svojega početja.]

AVTOR:

Moj bog! Kaj vendar počenjam?

[Požar se vedno bolj širi, dokler ne zajame celega prostora.]

AVTOR (*izginja v plamenih*):

Gorim! Gorim! Gorim!

[Oder prekrije zavesa. Na proscenij stopi Giordano Bruno z rokopisom zadnjega dejanja Avtorjeve drame.]

BRUNO:

Jaz sem. Jaz obstajam. To je edina resnica, ki ne potrebuje dokaza. Stojim tukaj na odru, vame svetijo reflektorji in vi me lahko gledate. Vidite me bolje kot jaz vas. Torej, to je vse. – Nobenega aplavza? Nobene kritike? Ne dobre ne slabe? Seveda. Moja predstava je končana. Mojega gledališča ni več. Heroji so pomrli, legende so odsanjane, zgodovina je pozabljena, jaz pa sem spet nič – praznina, mir, tišina. Spet lahko živimo svojo vsakdanjost. Saj res! Skoraj bi pozabil. Tu imam rokopis zadnjega dejanja izgubljene avtorjeve drame. Najbrž bi ga moral prebrati.

Drugi del

POSVEČENO ŽRTVAM INKVIZICIJE

Prvi prizor

[Angelski grad v Rimu pozimi leta 1600. Giordano Bruno sedi na tleh jetniške celice in meditira. Pred vrati stoji stražar Tibor. Po zamračenih stopnicah prihaja Roberto Bellarmino. Tibor ga ustavi.]

TIBOR:

Stoj! Kdo je?

BELLARMINO:

Jaz.

TIBOR:

Kdo jaz?

BELLARMINO:

Jaz.

TIBOR:

Stoj! Ne premikaj se!

BELLARMINO:

Mene si drzneš ustavljati?

TIBOR:

Kdo pa si, da te ne bi smel?

BELLARMINO:

Izgubil boš službo.

TIBOR:

Rekli so mi, da je treba ukaz Velikega inkvizitorja strogo spoštovati. Nihče se ne sme približati celici Giordana Bruna.

BELLARMINO:

Jaz sem izdal ta ukaz, zato ga lahko tudi prekršim.

TIBOR:

Roberto Bellarmino! Oprostite! Oprostite, nisem vas spoznal.

BELLARMINO:

Odpri!

TIBOR (*mu odpre*):

Oprostite, Veliki inkvizitor, prosim, oprostite!

BELLARMINO (*vstopi*):

Kako je z njim?

TIBOR:

Spi.

BELLARMINO:

Kako, spi? Vedno, kadar pridem, spi.

TIBOR:

V resnici nikoli ne spi. Samo sedi in se dela kot da spi.

BELLARMINO:

Torej meditira?

TIBOR:

Zadnjič ste dejali, da meditirati sme.

BELLARMINO:

Zato, ker ti nisi sposoben ločiti, kdaj meditira in kdaj spi.

TIBOR:

Zame je to isto.

BELLARMINO:

Pa ni! Taki, kot si ti, vedno spijo. Giordano Bruno pa nikoli. Hudič ga je obsedel. Zdaj o tem ni nobenega dvoma več. Z njim je konec. Brezupno se je sploh karkoli pogovarjati. A vseeno. – Zbudi ga!

TIBOR (*predrami meditirajočega Bruna*):

Ej, stari, zbudi se! Obisk imaš.

BRUNO:

Dobrodošli, Bellarmino! Boste prisedli? Lahko vam odstopim malo slame.

BELLARMINO:

Kratek bom. Prihajam po posebnem papeževem nalogu. Prenašam njegovo osebno prošnjo.

BRUNO:

Mora biti pa že kaj hudo pomembnega, da se Klement VIII. osebno obrača name?

BELLARMINO:

Sveti oče ti daje še zadnjo priložnost, da se odpoveš svojim knjigam, prekličeš svoje ideje in se pokesaš.

BRUNO:

Kaj stvar še ni končana?

BELLARMINO:

To je zadnja možnost, da se rešiš smrti!

BRUNO:

Česa naj se pokesam? Ne čutim se krivega.

BELLARMINO:

Zgorel boš na grmadi.

BRUNO:

Če mi je Bog namenil tako usodo, naj se zgodi.

BELLARMINO (*Tiborju*):

Lahko greš, Tibor. Počakaj pred vrati.

TIBOR:

Razumem. (*Odide.*)

BELLARMINO:

Poslušaj, Bruno! Zdaj gre zares. Novo stoletje se začenja. Začenja se velika katoliška obnova sveta. Konec je popuščanjem. Vsi, ki širijo krivo vero in begajo vernike, bodo izobčeni in pokončani. Kaj misliš, da inkvizicijsko sodišče nima drugega dela, kot ukvarjati se s tvojimi herezijami?

BRUNO:

Sploh se vam ni treba ukvarjati z njimi. Za vas nimajo nikakršne pozitivne vrednosti. Samo jezite se nanje in sovražite vse, kar je povezano z njimi. Zakaj? Resničnega bistva mojega dela ne boste nikoli dojali. Če pa bi ga, z njim ne bi imeli kaj početi, preveč tuje vam je. Zato je najbolje, da vse skupaj ignorirate in se mirno posvetite gradnji vašega novega nebeškega kraljestva.

BELLARMINO:

Se ti je res tako težko pokesati?

BRUNO:

Nedolžen sem. Vi pa hočete, da sem kriv.

BELLARMINO:

Nisi nedolžen. Grešnik si. Velik smrtni grešnik. Bremejto te grehi, storjeni iz napačno vodenega razuma. Tukaj sem, da bi ti pomagal spregledati.

BRUNO (*se nasmeje*):

Je razum sploh lahko pravilen ali napačen?

BELLARMINO:

Brez dvoma. Pravilnega navdihuje milost Jezusa Kristusa, napačnega pa peklenški načrti Satana in njegovih pomagačev.

BRUNO (*se še bolj smeje*):

Kako ste lahko tako naivni?

BELLARMINO:

Na duši imaš največjega med vsemi krščanskimi grehi: zanikanje pravega Boga. Zate Jezus Kristus ni odrešenik sveta?!

BRUNO:

Povem ti, Bellarmino, Kristus bi bil prvi, ki bi se uprl ideologiji odrešenja, s katero je Cerkev umazala njegov lik; prvi, ki bi se uprl razširjanju Evangelija z ognjem in mečem.

BELLARMINO:

O metodah razširjanja vere ne želim razpravljati. Nisem si jih jaz izmislil.

BRUNO:

Cilj posvečuje sredstva.

BELLARMINO:

Naši cilji so božji. Vsako sredstvo, ki se uporabi za zmago prave vere, je blagoslovljeno.

BRUNO:

Tudi zločini?

BELLARMINO:

Skrivnost Jezusovega odrešenja ti bo ostala za vedno tuja, antikrist!

BRUNO:

Kaj pa, če je tuja vam, ne meni?

BELLARMINO:

S teboj se ni mogoče pogovarjati.

BRUNO:

Prikrojili ste si Jezusov nauk o odrešenju, da bi z njim lahko vladali in držali ljudi v trajni odvisnosti od institucij Cerkve. Razširjate ideje, ki so v nasprotju z Jezusovim izvirnim učenjem. Spremenili ste osnovno sporočilo o skrivnosti Kristusovega odrešenja, ki je v tem, da vsakdo, tako kot on, postane resnica in živi brezpogojno, nesebično ljubezen, ki je enaka do vseh živih bitij. To je odrešenje. To je razsvetljenje. Osvobojenje, na katero nam ni treba čakati do smrti, ampak ga lahko doživimo že danes, v tem trenutku, zdajle, tukaj.

BELLARMINO:

Jezus, o katerem govoriš, ni pravi Jezus. To je Jezus tvoje domišljije.

BRUNO:

Je Jezus piscev Evangelija pa Jezus prvih cerkvenih očetov kaj drugega kot plod njihove domišljije? Jim je morda osebno govoril, kaj naj pišejo in delajo?

BELLARMINO:

Ti ne razumeš ali pa nočeš razumeti višjega smisla Jezusovega poslanstva v človeški zgodovini, še manj vloge, ki jo ima pri tem sveta Cerkev.

BRUNO:

Najbrž res ne. Zagotovo pa vem, da vaš Jezus ni Jezus, ki je učil nauk o odrešenju, ki se lahko uresniči samo skozi medsebojno odpuščanje in ljubezen. Ta Jezus je moj prijatelj. In zelo ga imam rad.

BELLARMINO:

Če znamo brezpogojno ljubiti in nesebično odpuščati drugim, moramo znati to dvoje od drugih tudi sprejemati. Kdor daje milost, naj milost tudi sprejema. V svojih knjigah in govorih si žalil verska čustva kristjanov in blatil institucijo Cerkve. Sveti oče ti to početje v imenu vsega cerkvenega občestva odpušča. Zakaj nočeš sprejeti milosti njegovega odpuščanja?

BRUNO:

Papež mi ničesar ne odpušča. Hoče, da javno priznam nekaj, česar nisem zagrešil. Se zavedaš, v kaj me v resnici sili?

BELLARMINO:

Tvoje dejanje bi prispevalo k umirjanju strasti. Pa še živ bi ostal.

BRUNO:

Vseeno mi je – sem ali nisem. Zame včeraj in jutri že dolgo ne obstajata.

BELLARMINO:

Od človeka, ki je napisal *Herojske zanose*, bi težko pričakoval, da se bo takole vdal.

BRUNO:

Se spomniš, kaj sem vam rekel ob koncu sojenja?

BELLARMINO:

»Sodniki, z večjim strahom mi izrekate obsodbo, kot jo jaz sprejemam«.

BRUNO:

Nedolžen sem. Čist.

BELLARMINO:

Prekliči svoje izjave. Nikakršne možnosti nimaš, da bi s trmo dosegel kaj drugega kot smrt na grmadi. Človek božji, če se takoj ne spokoriš, te bodo živega sežgali!?

BRUNO:

Ničesar, kar sem izrekel ali napisal, ne mislim preklicati. S tem bi zanikal filozofijo, ki mi je pomagala, da sem postal to, kar sem. Zavrgel bi vso duhovno znanost o samospoznavanju in samosvobajanju – izročilo, ki je bilo in bo ostalo v lasti duhovno razsvetljenih in svobodno mislečih ljudi. To so moji bratje in sestre. Vedno in povsod preganjani. Zaradi solidarnosti z njimi ne bom ničesar preklical.

BELLARMINO:

Zgorel boš na grmadi zaradi prepričanj, ki so danes taka, jutri drugačna.

BRUNO:

Čeprav je vse relativno, še ne pomeni, da v človeku ni tudi česa trajnejšega, absolutnega. Na primer občutek za poštenost.

BELLARMINO (*se nasmeje*):

Poštenost!? Poštenost – absolutna kategorija?! Ne razumem, kako se lahko tako sprenevedaš? Sam si pisal, kako se običaji morale spreminjajo, kako so odvisni od družbenega okolja in zgodovinskega trenutka!?

BRUNO:

Ne govorim o vrednotah morale. Govorim o čistem srcu, o najbolj prvinskem občutku, ki se zbudi v človeku, ko ve, da dela prav. Prav po svoji vesti.

BELLARMINO:

Oznanjaš evangelij svobode, svobodnega mišljenja, svobodne religije. Misliš, da so ljudje zreli za to? Reci jim, da je vse dovoljeno, pa se bo družba čez noč razkrojila v popolni kaos in anarhijo.

BRUNO:

Če pri ljudeh, ki jih učiš svobode, ne vzgajaš hkrati občutka za strpnost do drugačnih od sebe, res ne moreš pričakovati drugega kot vojno. Skozi vsakega človeka govori Bog resnico na samosvoj, samo temu človeku lasten način. Zato je treba življenje in resnico slehernega spoštovati, ker samo tako spoštujemo Boga. Strpnost do drugačnosti je torej osnovni pogoj ustvarjalnega življenja družbe.

BELLARMINO:

S teboj ni mogoče razpravljati. Karkoli poveš, smrdi po peklu. Bog je ustvaril človeka po svoji podobi, torej se ljudje med seboj v ničemer ne razlikujemo. Posebnosti, ki nas ločujejo, niso božje, ampak hudičeve.

BRUNO:

Prišla sva do bistva najinih razhajanj. Ti vidiš enakost v podobnosti, jaz jo vidim v različnosti. Težava je le v tem, da za enim stoji ogromna moč milijonske Cerkve, za drugim pa en sam, nebogljen človek.

BELLARMINO:

Noben verski poglavar nobene cerkve na svetu ne bi mirno opazoval, kako pred njegovimi očmi rušijo avtoriteto vere in bogoslužja. Samo pomisli, kaj bi se zgodilo, če bi dovolili, da vsakdo časti Boga kot se mu zljubi.

BRUNO:

Kar bi bila v resnici najbolj naravna oblika religije.

BELLARMINO:

Ateist! Ti si hudič! Res, hudič si! Tako lahko razmišlja samo človek, kakršen si ti. Noben vernik se ne bo strinjal s teboj.

BRUNO:

Ker ste ga naučili, da vodi v zveličanje samo spoštovanje cerkvenih zakramentov in verskih dogem. Iz vernikov delate ideološke zafrustrirance in fanatike, ne pa religioznih ljudi, ki bi imeli spontan odnos do Boga in sveta.

BELLARMINO:

Tvoje ideje so dobesedno nore. Tvoje knjige so spomenik bolnega uma.

BRUNO:

Ne, Roberto! Moje knjige so obramba svobode. Obramba svobode mišljenja in izražanja, ki bo vedno potrebna, ker se bodo vedno in povsod pojavljali ljudje, ki jih bo svobode strah. Inkvizicija je večna. Samo zunanje obličje spreminja. Po duhu ostaja enaka.

BELLARMINO:

Satan!

BRUNO:

Čeprav ste mi na najbolj drastičen način vzeli fizično svobodo, mi moje notranje svobode nikoli ne boste. Za vedno vam bo ostala nedosegljiva, ker je vaš duh nesvoboden in um omejen! Bog je vsakega človeka ustvaril kot svobodo. In če se mu hočemo za to oddolžiti, je naša duhovna odprtost, miselna širina, srčna brezmejnost največ, kar lahko položimo na njegov oltar.

BELLARMINO:

Božjih resnic, ki jih razglašáš, ni izrekel Bog, ampak ti sam.

BRUNO:

Mar zakonov, ki jih vi razglašate za božje in večne, ni ustvaril človek? – Človek je zmotljiv, ujet v tisoče zank nevednosti in omejenosti. Samo tisti, ki se vseh teh nebogljenosti zaveda, lahko na primeren način služi Bogu.

BELLARMINO:

Mi lahko poveš, koliko ljudi zmore sprejeti dejansko odgovornost za svoje misli in dejanja? Koliko ljudi v resnici lahko živi svobodo?

BRUNO:

Danes takih ljudi najbrž ni veliko. Vprašanje je, če so kot množica kdaj sploh obstajali ali bodo obstajali. Notranja svoboda namreč zahteva popolnoma etičnega človeka.

BELLARMINO:

Tvoje ideje so utopične in nevarne.

BRUNO:

Nevarne? Seveda nevarne! Nevarne za vsakogar, ki ima v rokah moč in oblast. Razsvetljenemu, notranje svobodnemu človeku namreč ni mogoče vladati, kajti nobene oblasti, nobene moči ga ni strah; nobene institucije, nobene avtoritete ne priznava. Samo pomisli, dragi moj Bellarmino, kaj bi se zgodilo, če bi se v srcu vsakega vernika prebudil živi Bog? Kaj bi se zgodilo z vašo Cerkvijo, če bi Jezus iz Nazareta začel govoriti skozi vsakega kristjana?!

BELLARMINO:

Očitno je, da se najini filozofiji ne bosta mogli nikoli srečati. Še bolj očitno pa je, da boš pri svojih zmotah vztrajal.

BRUNO:

Vzemiva, da je moja odločitev, da se ne pokesam in ne sprejemem papeževe pomilostitve, zmota. V redu. To je moja zmota. Z njo sem se prikrajšal za nekaj let življenja. Toda zaradi te moje zmote

se bo pokazala neka druga zmota, mnogo večja, mnogo usodnejša. Zmota, ki bo razkrila napačno zasnovanost celotnega verskega sistema. Zločin, ki ga Katoliška cerkev z mojo usmrčitvijo sprejema nase, bo obremenil celotno zgodovino krščanstva.

BELLARMINO:

To bo spomin v glavah zgodovinarjev, mrtev spomin, od katerega nihče ne bo imel posebne koristi. Ti pa boš zavrzel življenje?!

BRUNO:

Roberto, moj ubogi Roberto, mar me v vseh teh letih, odkar me mučiš in zaslišuješ, še vedno nisi uspel spoznati?

BELLARMINO:

Oprosti. Tukaj sem po papeževem nalogu. Naročili so mi, da te moram prepričati v kesanje. Cerkev namreč mnogo bolj zanima tvoja spreobrnitev kot pa usmrtitev. S tvojim imenom je povezanih preveč vplivnih posameznikov in družbenih gibanj. Tvoja smrt je za nas veliko tveganje.

BRUNO:

Umiram zase. Ne za sovražnike, ne za prijatelje.

BELLARMINO:

Toda ti nisi navaden človek.

BRUNO:

Pred smrtjo postane vsakdo čisto navaden človek.

BELLARMINO:

Petindvajset let že opravljam poklic inkvizitorja in moram ti reči, da v vsem tem času še nisem srečal človeka, kot si ti. Iskreno priznam, vsi, ki so me svarili pred teboj, so imeli prav. Nevaren človek si. Če sem dolgo s teboj, se vame naseli popoln dvom.

Začnem se spraševati, če je to, kar počnem, sploh prav. Če sta moja vera in zaupanje v Jezusa Kristusa sploh pravi? Ali s svojo lojalnostjo do papeža in Cerkve ne delam krščanski veri v resnici več škode kot koristi? Če bi s takim razmišljanjem nadaljeval, mi na koncu najbrž ne bi ostalo drugega, kot da se ubijem. Res si nevaren človek, Bruno! Samo božji previdnosti se lahko zahvalim, da se je tvoj proces iztekel.

BRUNO:

Se torej danes vidiva zadnjič?

BELLARMINO:

Skoraj gotovo. Papežu bom rekel, da si si vzel čas za premislek. Če kesanja ne bo, te bomo naslednji teden predali rimski posvetni oblasti.

BRUNO:

In jim priporočili, naj z obsojencem postopajo blago, po možnosti brez prelivanja krvi. *(Se nasmehne.)* Torej, naj zgori v ognju.

BELLARMINO:

Sam si kriv, Bruno! Popolnoma sam. Sicer pa, kdor želi biti svoboden, naj nosi tudi breme odgovornosti.

BRUNO:

V slovo bi te rad objel.

BELLARMINO:

Giordano Bruno!? Tako nič ni hotel razumeti, ali pa ni mogel. *(Hitro odide.)*

Drugi prizor

[Čez nekaj dni. Bruno sedi na tleh in meditira. Pride do ekstatičnega trenutka.]

BRUNO:

Bog – Bog – Bog! Vse veselje bi lahko prehodil, pa te ne bi našel. A korak, en sam korak stran, pogled vase, in povsod ti. Kamor nese pogled, vse si ti – jaz sem ti in moj pogled je ti. O, Bog! Tako neskončno oddaljen in skrit si, pa vendar tako blizu – ti si jaz, jaz sem ti. Bog moj, ti, ki bivaš, ko rečem, da te ni, in te ni, ko rečem, da si... Zdaj vem, da me ljubiš. Še nikoli nisem tako zagotovo vedel, tako jasno čutil, da sva eno. Večno Eno. Vedno znova bova skupaj umirala in se skupaj rojevala. O, Bog! Moj Bog! – Mir; mir v tebi, mir v meni; Bog!

Tretji prizor

[Zvečer. Nastopi Tibor, ki prinaša Brunu večerjo.]

TIBOR:

Dober večer, gospod. Prinesel sem ti večerjo.

BRUNO:

Boš večerjal z mano?

TIBOR:

Ne smem.

BRUNO:

To je moja zadnja večerja. Kaj si mi prinesel?

TIBOR:

Nič drugega kot običajno. Samo, da si nocoj upravičen še do majhnega dodatka.

BRUNO:

A res? Kakšen pa je?

TIBOR:

Dva kosa kruha dobiš.

BRUNO:

Enega ti odstopim. Navajen sem samo na enega. Preveč mi bo.

TIBOR:

Od jetnikov ne smemo ničesar jemati.

BRUNO:

Jaz sem poseben jetnik.

TIBOR:

Zame ste vsi enaki. No, ja, ti si res precej drugačen.

BRUNO:

Zakaj?

TIBOR:

No, ja, jutri te ne bo več med živimi.

BRUNO:

Še marsikoga ne bo, pa ni za to nič drugačen.

TIBOR:

Drugačen si, ker se smrti nič ne bojiš.

BRUNO:

Ti se je bojiš?

TIBOR:

Meni ni treba jutri umreti. Mene ne bodo sežgali na grmadi.

BRUNO:

Lahko da boš moral ti umreti še bolj grozne smrti. Nihče ne ve, skozi kakšna vrata bo moral oditi v večnost. A vseeno se ti smrti ni treba bati. Bojiš se lahko samo ljudi. Zaradi drugih človek največ trpi. Zaradi drugih najtežje umira.

TIBOR:

Strinjam se. A kaj, ko brez drugih ni mogoče živeti.

BRUNO:

Seveda. Drugi so okolje našega življenja. Odnosi z njimi so glavni vir sreče in nesreče. Vidiš, zato ne smeš dovoliti, da bi bil tvoj notranji mir odvisen od drugih. – Boš torej kos kruha?

TIBOR (*sprejme kruh*):

Hvala.

BRUNO:

Prisedi. Bova skupaj jedla.

TIBOR:

Tega pa raje ne bi. Saj veš, da se pazniki in jetniki ne smemo družiti. Tak je hišni red v zaporih.

BRUNO:

Tudi prav. (*Začne jesti.*) Ej, moj dragi Tibor, ti bo kaj dolgčas, ko bo ta celica prazna?

TIBOR:

Gotovo ne bo dolgo. Morda že jutri dobim novega jetnika.

BRUNO:

Si pa ječar, ki si ga človek za zadnjo uro lahko samo želi.

TIBOR:

A misliš? Moji nadrejeni imajo o meni čisto drugačno mnenje.

BRUNO:

Kaj še sploh delaš v teh zaporih? Moral bi ven. Si najti kakšno drugo delo.

TIBOR:

Danes je težko dobiti redno službo. Jaz pa imam družino.

BRUNO:

Boš pozdravil, prosim, svoji hčerkici? Koliko sta že stari?

TIBOR:

Osem in devet. Pozdraviti pa jih ne bom mogel. Doma o svoji službi nikoli ne govorim.

BRUNO:

Torej tvoji deklici sploh ne vesta, kdo je Giordano Bruno?

TIBOR:

Vesta. Toda ne vesta, da sem jaz njegov stražar.

BRUNO:

Zakaj pa jima tega ne poveš?

TIBOR:

Ker se te bojita. Otroci na ulici s tvojim imenom strašijo drug drugega. Predstavljaš jim razbojnika in hudiča. Ne vem, kaj bi rekli, če bi zvedeli, da sem jaz stražar človeka, ki jima vzbuja takšen strah.

BRUNO:

Smejali bi se. Verjetno bi spoznali, da ta strah sploh ni tako velik, kot o njem govorijo.

TIBOR:

No, ja; morda jima nekega dne res povem. Povem resnično zgodbo o Giordanu Brunu. A prej naj še malo odrasteta. Ni treba, da bi že tako majhni morali vedeti za vse grdobije odraslih.

BRUNO (*neha jesti*):

Tako. Povečerjal sem.

TIBOR:

Hiter si.

BRUNO:

Pravzaprav ni bilo kaj jesti. Sama voda. Kruh bom pojedel kasneje.

TIBOR (*vzame Brunovo posodo*):

V redu. Nocoj te bom prišel zgodaj buditi. Po vse, ki so določeni za grmado, pridejo že sredi noči.

BRUNO:

Ti me kar zbudi, ko bo treba. Saj veš, da nikoli prav ne spim.

TIBOR:

To jima bom povedal. Svojima deklicama bom povedal, da sem nekoč stražil človeka, ki ni nikoli spal. Ure in ure je presedel s prekrizanimi stopali na stegnih in z zaprtimi očmi. Potem je malo hodil, poležaval in spet je sedel ter mižal. Kako se nikoli ne utruji, sem se spraševal. In kaj mu hodi po mislih, da lahko to počne? Pa toliko časa? Zdaj lahko štejem že leta. On pa je še vedno enako spočit, enako mlad.

BRUNO:

Človek, ki ne spi, bedi, ti bosta rekli.

TIBOR:

Toda ti tudi bediš ne. Povej mi, kaj si ves ta čas delal, ko nisi ne spal ne bedel?

BRUNO:

Živel sem, Tibor, živel.

TIBOR:

No, ja, tak je pač bil ta Giordano Bruno. Pa saj mi nihče ne bo verjel, ko jim bom začel pripovedovati o tebi. Če pa že, bodo rekli, ta ni bil normalen, in najbrž je kar prav, da so ga skurili.

BRUNO (*se začne smejati*).

TIBOR:

Žal. Ljudje pač tako razmišljajo. Kaj jaz morem? Zdaj pa grem. Ne bom te več motil.

BRUNO:

Ne motiš me.

TIBOR:

Ne, ne; jaz že vem, kdaj se moram umakniti.

BRUNO:

Prav. Zbuditi me pa le pridi pravočasno.

TIBOR (*po dolgem premolku*):

Pa kaj te res ni nič strah?

BRUNO:

Ne.

TIBOR:

No, ja; ti že veš ... (*Odide.*)

BRUNO (*obstane sredi ječe s kosom kruha v rokah; začne ga jesti, smehlja se; čez čas nadaljuje*):

Kaj je smrt življenju? Kaj je zemlja nebu? Kaj je onstran sveta oblik in razlik? Kaj onstran večnega umiranja in rojevanja? Kaj se skriva pod površjem valovanja sprememb? Kaj je ptica, ki preleti nebo? In kaj nebo, ki ostane za njo in je bilo tu že mnogo pred njo? Velika Pot – Večno Eno, neminljivo Eno, glas tišine, podoba praznine ...

Četrty prizor

[Sredi noči. Tibor je zaspal pred vrati. Bruno hodi v krogu. Nastopi Roberto Bellarmino. V poltemi zadene ob spečega Tiborja.]

BELLARMINO:

Spiš?

TIBOR (*zmeden*):

Kdo je?! Kdo je?!

BELLARMINO:

Spiš? Na delovnem mestu spiš?

TIBOR:

A, vi ste?

BELLARMINO:

Vstani in odidi. Počakaj me pred vrati.

TIBOR:

Razumem, gospod inkvizitor. (*Odide.*)

BELLARMINO (*vstopi v Brunovo celico in nekaj časa molče opazuje Bruna, ki hodi v krogu*).

BRUNO:

No, in? Boš kaj rekel?

BELLARMINO:

Jaz nisem tvoj morilec.

BRUNO:

Vem.

BELLARMINO:

Prisilili so me.

BRUNO:

Hočeš reči, zlomili so ti svobodno voljo.

BELLARMINO:

Nisem vzdržal. Pritiski so bili premočni.

BRUNO:

Oprostim ti. Od samega začetka je bilo vse tako zastavljeno, da sem moral biti obsojen. Tudi papeževa ponudba za pomilostitev ni bila nič drugega kot Judežev poljub.

BELLARMINO:

Klement VIII. je zahteval tvojo smrt.

BRUNO:

Meni je popolnoma vseeno, kdo je in kdo ni moj morilec. Ni se mi treba ukvarjati z njegovim iskanjem in obtoževanjem. Jaz moram samo umreti. Mene se razprave o tem, ali je moja smrt pravična ali krivična, ne tičejo.

BELLARMINO:

Mene pa. Zaradi tebe ne morem več spati.

BRUNO:

Občutek krivde, ki traja dlje kot tri minute, je nesmiseln in z vidika duševnega zdravja škodljiv. Tri minute so namreč povsem dovolj, da se človek zave napake, ki jo je storil.

BELLARMINO:

Pa potem? Kaj pride po tem?

BRUNO:

Nič. Napako je treba popraviti, če se seveda še da.

BELLARMINO:

In če se ne da?

BRUNO:

Potem si jo je treba zapomniti, da naslednjič ne bi storili iste. Ponavljanje istih napak je brezkoristno mučenje samega sebe.

BELLARMINO:

Giordano! – Ne bodi presenečen, ko ti bom povedal, zakaj sem tu.

BRUNO:

Težko bi me še s čim presenetil.

BELLARMINO:

Prišel sem, da te odpeljem od tod.

BRUNO:

Ti me boš odpeljal na Cvetni trg? Od kdaj pa inkvizitorji osebno vodijo svoje žrtve na morišče?

BELLARMINO:

Organiziral sem tvoj pobeg.

BRUNO (*se začne smejati*).

BELLARMINO:

Ne smej se! Zunaj čakajo konji. Jutri zvečer boš že na ladji.

BRUNO (*še vedno v smehu*):

Roberto, moj ubogi Roberto, kaj pa vendar počneš?!

BELLARMINO:

Zgodila se je krivica, ki je ne morem dopustiti. Prisiljen sem bil, da te obsodim. Zato te imam pravico rešiti.

BRUNO:

Moje življenje je končano. V meni ni ničesar več, kar bi me vezalo na zemljo.

BELLARMINO:

Torej ne greš?

BRUNO:

Nobenega razloga za pobeg ne vidim.

BELLARMINO:

Pomagati sem ti hotel.

BRUNO:

Sebi, ne meni.

BELLARMINO:

V meni vse gori!

BRUNO:

Vem. Slabo vest imaš. Pregarja te občutek krivde. Toda, Roberto! Jaz nisem pravi vzrok tvoje bolečine. Vzrok trpljenja si ti sam. Izigrali so te. Ves čas si bil samo sredstvo v rokah Katoliške cerkve, pa tega nisi vedel ali nisi hotel vedeti. Žrtev si, tako kot jaz. Žal veliko bolj tragična.

BELLARMINO:

Pred petnajstimi leti se mi je zgodilo nekaj podobnega. V srcu sem čutil isto bolečino, preganjal me je isti nemir. Šlo je za primer neke mlade ženske, obtožene čarovništva. Četudi so vsi dokazi govorili, da je sodelovala pri tajnih obredih, se mi je zdela ves čas nedolžna. Ničesar se ni bala, vsa mučenja je prestala takorekoč brez posledic. Odgovarjala je iskreno in je do konca ostala mirna, z neko nerazložljivo radostjo v sebi. Na zahtevo škofa, ki me je obtoževal, da paktiram s satanisti in mi grozil z izobčenjem, sem jo moral obsoditi. V noči pred usmrčitvijo sem prišel k njej v ječo in jo odpeljal na prostost.

Sam sem organiziral pobeg. Plačal sem konje in čoln. Po reki je odšla do prvega morskega pristanišča, kjer se je vkrcala na ladjo in za njo se je izgubila vsaka sled. Po tem dogodku sem začutil v duši velikansko olajšanje. Čutil sem, da sem storil veliko in plemenito dejanje. Ohranil sem čistost sodniškega poklica. Omogočil sem, da je zmagala pravica.

BRUNO:

Pri drugih obsojencih nisi nikoli čutil potrebe, da bi jim pomagal ali jih skušal rešiti?

BELLARMINO:

Včasih sem sicer zaznal kaj podobnega, toda nikoli s tako silovitostjo.

BRUNO:

Potemtakem si razlikoval med resnično in navidezno krivdo oziroma nedolžnostjo. In kaj ti je bilo pri tem merilo?

BELLARMINO:

Notranji občutek. Čustvo.

BRUNO:

Pri drugih obsojencih torej nisi doživel nikakršnega pozitivnega čustva?

BELLARMINO:

Sem. Toda ta čustva so bila drugačna – neizrazita, pomešana z dvomi. Samo v tej ženski je bilo nekaj, kar me je v celoti prepričalo v njeno čistost.

BRUNO:

Dragi moj Bellarmino! Zgodilo se ti je nekaj najbolj človeškega. Dotaknila se te je ljubezen, to bo, to. Iz te ženske te je verjetno prvič in zadnjič v življenju ogovorila ljubezen.

BELLARMINO:

Na nek način sem bil res zaljubljen vanjo.

BRUNO:

Kakšna škoda, da se nisi zaljubil še v koga.

BELLARMINO:

Ta ženska je bila v resnici nedolžna. Ne glede na moja čustva.

BRUNO:

Kako pa to veš?

BELLARMINO:

Leta sodniških izkušenj ti izostrijo občutek, s katerim lahko jasno prepoznaviš, kaj se dogaja v obtoženčevi duši. Ta ženska ni nikomur ničesar hotela. S čarovništvom se je ukvarjala, ker je v tem uživala, in to je bilo vse. Rada je imela življenje. Nikogar ni ničesar obtoževala. Nikjer ni iskala sovražnikov in krivcev za nesrečo, da se je znašla v rokah inkvizicije. Rekla je, obsodite me, če hočete. Moja duša je čista. Meni se ne more nič zgoditi. Bog je z menoj.

BRUNO:

Od drugih nisi nikoli slišal ničesar podobnega?

BELLARMINO:

Slišal sem že, slišal. Toda nobena izjava ni bila tako prepričljiva, tako resnična.

BRUNO:

Seveda ne! Ko pa si do vseh drugih čutil samo prezir in sovraštvo! Zato so se ti vse sodbe zdele pravične. Zmešalo se ti je, Bellarmino!

BELLARMINO:

Ne. Ves čas sem se zelo jasno zavedal, kaj delam. Spoštoval sem pravna določila inkvizicijskih zakonov. Ugotavljal sem skladnost prekrška in zakonskega predpisa. Če sta se ujemala, sodbe ni bilo težko izreči. Ravnal sem po črki zakona.

BRUNO:

Kaj pa je pri vsem tem počela tvoja pamet?

BELLARMINO:

Opravljal sem svoj poklic.

BRUNO:

In se nisi nikoli zamislil nad njim?

BELLARMINO:

Ko sem se odločil zanj, sem vedel, kakšno delo me čaka. Četudi sem kdaj doživel trenutke malodušja, nisem nikoli v celoti podvomil, če je to, kar počnem, v resnici dobro. Nisem se spraševal, ali so zakoni, ki jih izvršujem, pravični, ali je v njih zares izražena božja volja. Izreki sodb so bili zame rutina. Vse dokler nisem naletel nate. Pri tebi se mi je vse zalomilo.

BRUNO:

No, me veseli, da se danes končno zavedaš, kako si vsa leta sodil po zločinskem pravu. Vse sodbe, ki si jih izrekel, so zločin, ki te bo bremenil, dokler boš živ. Bog je vsakomur dal lastno pamet in vest. Zato tisti, ki ju noče uporabljati, še posebej, če to počne zavestno, dela zoper njega. Četudi je sodnik samo izvrševalec zakonov, se ne more izogniti odgovornosti, da sodi tudi po svoji vesti.

BELLARMINO:

Kaj naj storim?

BRUNO:

Najmanj in največ, kar lahko storiš, je, da nehaš soditi. Da si se odločil rešiti mene, je čisti nesmisel. Jaz ne potrebujem pomoči. Če bi se hotel, bi se že zdavnaj rešil. Sam. Podcenjuješ me, Bellarmino! Misliš, da človek, kakršen sem jaz, ne pozna magij in obredov, s katerimi bi si vrata Angelskega gradu že tisočkrat odprl? (*Vstopi Tibor.*)

TIBOR:

Gospod inkvizitor, mestna straža je prišla.

BELLARMINO:

Naj še malo počaka.

TIBOR:

Jim bom povedal. (*Odide.*)

BELLARMINO:

Ti si moj poraz. Popolni poraz! Odvzel si mi še zadnje upanje, ki sem ga imel. Kako bom živel, ko pa v meni ni več ne volje do življenja, ne volje do dela?! Ne vere v Boga!

BRUNO:

Roberto, jaz sem ti odpustil. Zaradi mene ti res ni treba imeti slabe vesti.

BELLARMINO:

Tako si se zarasel vame. Od znotraj si me prežrl. Ne morem več misliti tako kot sem lahko še včeraj. Bruno, kaj si napravil iz mene?! (*Pade predenj na kolena in zajoče.*) Odreši me, prosim!

BRUNO (*ga z roko poboža po glavi*):

Pomiri se, pomiri. Tudi brez tebe bi bila moja usoda taka, kot je. Sem pač živel v takšnem času, med takimi ljudmi.

BELLARMINO (*še vedno na tleh*):

Giordano, prosim te, stori mi uslugo! (*Vzame iz svojega žepa majhno stekleničko.*) Umreti v živem ognju ni lahko. Večkrat sem videl, kako se ljudje mučijo, preden izgubijo zavest. To je steklenička, ki ti lahko olajša smrt. Dovolj je požirek in v nekaj minutah te ne bo več.

BRUNO:

Zakaj to počenjaš, Roberto?

BELLARMINO:

Ne vem, ne vem ...

BRUNO:

Ponujaš mi beg, ponujaš mi strup – dejanja, s katerimi me samo ponižuješ!

BELLARMINO:

Ne, ne! Tega nisem hotel!

BRUNO:

Če bi bil kdo drug, bi me tvoji predlogi skoraj gotovo osrečili. Tako pa z njimi lahko onesrečiš le samega sebe.

BELLARMINO:

Tega ne počnem jaz. Nekdo drug dela to v meni. Kot bi se neka tuja duša polastila mojega telesa in zdaj skozi mene počne stvari, ki jih jaz sicer nikoli ne bi. V popolni vročičnosti sem organiziral tvoj pobeg. Niti minute nisem mogel biti pri miru, dokler ni bilo vse pripravljeno. Šele potem mi je nekoliko odleglo.

BRUNO:

In zakaj si prinesel strup?

BELLARMINO:

Ker je nekdo v meni dejal, morda ne boš hotel pobegniti, ali pa nas ujamejo na poti – to bi bila rešitev za vse: zate, zame in za spremljevalce.

BRUNO (*se začne smejati*):

Vidiš, če bi bil v meni tak strah kot je v tebi, bi se lahko o vsem sporazumela. Do procesa najbrž sploh ne bi prišlo. Tako pa si bova ostala do konca tuja. S to razliko, da jaz tebe lahko razumem, ker je bilo nekoč tudi mene strah, ti pa mene ne, ker nisi nikoli živel brez strahu. Bog te blagoslovi, Bellarmino, resnični, notranji Bog! (*Ponovno vstopi Tíbor.*)

TIBOR:

Poveljnik straže sprašuje po vas, gospod inkvizitor!

BELLARMINO:

Povej mu, da prihajam.

TIBOR:

Boste vi odvedli Bruna?

BELLARMINO:

Ne. Ti ga boš.

TIBOR:

Potem moraš z menoj, Giordano.

BELLARMINO:

Srečno pot!

BRUNO (*pride do Bellarmina in ga objame*):

Srečno, brat! (*Nato odide s Tiborjem.*)

[*Bellarmino počaka, da odideta, potem sede v meditacijski položaj, v katerem je običajno sedel Bruno in zapre oči; čez čas sname križ, ki ga je imel obešenega okrog vratu, vzame stekleničko strupa in jo spije; potem se v smrtnem krču zgrudi in umre.*]



***POTOVANJE V RIM
(CARAVAGGIO)***

*Dramski tekst
1988*

*Uprizoritvena verzija
2009*

NASTOPAJOČI

MICHELANGELO MERISI DA CARAVAGGIO, slikar
LUCIA ARATORI, njegova mati (tudi OKOSTNJAK)
GIOVANNI BAGLIONE, umetnostni kritik in kustos
FRANCESCA BAGLIONE, njegova žena
FRANCESCO MARIA DEL MONTE, kardinal
MATHEO CONTARELLI, kardinal
GOSPODIČNA PHYLLIS, kurtizana
GRAZIA LENA, njena nečakinja
GENERAL HOLEFERN, vrhovni vojaški poveljnik
RANUCCIO TOMASSONI, njegov voznik, vojaški pilot
GIULIO, kabarejski igralec (tudi PALČEK VODNIK)
TOTO, kabarejski igralec (tudi BRODNIK HARON)

Prvi moški
(DVORJAN, LETALSKI ČASTNIK, ŠKOF, MOŽ NA LADJI)
Drugi moški
(DVORJAN, LETALSKI ČASTNIK,
PREDSEDNIK VLADE, MOŽ NA LADJI)
Tretji moški
(KOMORNIK, LETALSKI ČASTNIK, TAJNIK VOJAŠKEGA
SVETA, POLICIJSKI NAČELNIK, MOŽ NA LADJI)
Četrty moški
(LETALSKI ČASTNIK, ŠEF DRŽAVNE VARNOSTI,
ZASLIŠEVALEC, MOŽ NA LADJI)
Prvi fant
(ANGEL, RIMSKI VOJAK, DIONIZ, OPICA FLOKI)
Drugi fant
(ANGEL, POVELJNIK RIMSKIH VOJAKOV, DIONIZ)
Tretji fant
(ANGEL, RIMSKI VOJAK, DIONIZ, POLICIST)
Četrty fant
(ANGEL, RIMSKI VOJAK, DIONIZ, RADOVEDNEŽ)

Prva plesalka
(ORIENTALSKO DEKLE, MENADA, PALČEK)
Druga plesalka
(ORIENTALSKO DEKLE, MENADA, PALČEK)
Tretja plesalka
(ORIENTALSKO DEKLE, MENADA, PALČEK)
Četrta plesalka
(ORIENTALSKO DEKLE, MENADA, PALČEK,
TELEVIZIJSKA NAPOVEDOVALKA)

(Kot slikarski modeli in gostje/gledalci sodelujejo vsi
nastopajoči.)

V tekst drame so kot sestavni del vključene Caravaggiove slike:

DAVID Z GOLJATOVO GLAVO, SALOMA,
SMRT SV. MATEJA, MARIJA MAGDALENA,
SV. JANEZ KRSTNIK, JUDITA OBGLAVLJA
HOLOFERNA, POČITEK NA POTI V EGIPT,
DEČEK Z OVONOM, ABRAHAMOVO ŽRTVOVANJE,
MARIJINA SMRT, DEČEK Z LAUTO, MEDUZA,
POLAGANJE V GROB, DEČEK S KOŠARO SADJA

in glasba W.A. Mozarta REQUIEM (Dies Irae, Agnus Dei, Requiem).



*Krstna izvedba teksta je bila
9. oktobra 2009 v Drami SNG Maribor.*

Režija Sebastijan Horvat.

PROLOG

Nastopajoči:

BAGLIONE, DVA DVORJANA, KOMORNIK,
DEL MONTE, CONTARELLI

*[Noč. Rim. Palazzo Madama. Galerijski hodnik. Visoka srebrna stena, na njej uokvirjena Caravaggiova slika **David z Goljatovo glavo**. Mimo prideta dva dvorjana. Ogledujeta si sliko, skušata jo sneti; ker jima ne uspe, gresta dalje. Za njima pride Giovanni Baglione, ki se prav tako ustavi pred sliko.]*

BAGLIONE:

Končno! Končno je tudi tebi odklenkalo. Zdaj smo na vrsti mi. Da popravimo krivice in napišemo oporoko. Ves sem poten. Vročina še ponoči ne poneha. Julij je v Rimu res strašen. Upam, da me del Monte sprejme. Ob tej uri navadno občuje z duhovi. (*Odide.*)

[Dvorjana se vrneta, eden nosi priročno lestev, z njima je Komornik.]

PRVI DVORJAN:

Torej je res?

KOMORNIK:

Res.

DRUGI DVORJAN:

Sijajno!

PRVI DVORJAN:

Spet bomo obogateli. Kakšna sreča za nas! Veliki slikarji ne umirajo vsak dan.

DRUGI DVORJAN:

Del Monte spi?

KOMORNIK:

Ne. Ima obisk. Kardinal Contarelli je pri njem.

DRUGI DVORJAN:

Kdo?

PRVI DVORJAN:

Kako? Blede se vam, komornik! Kardinal Contarelli je že vsaj pet let mrtev, če jaz kaj vem.

KOMORNIK:

Rečem vam. Nenadoma se je znašel pri njem. Zaklenila sta se in sedaj potihem šepetata.

PRVI DVORJAN:

Hohohoho ... Ta je pa lepa! Nisem vedel, da del Monte tako sveto verjame v prikazni. Pohitimo! Pristavi lestev! Njegov privid ne bo trajal večno.

KOMORNIK:

Nisem čisto prepričan, da je to dobro, kar delamo.

PRVI DVORJAN:

Kako? Še pred nekaj minutami ste govorili povsem drugače.

KOMORNIK:

On vse ve, četudi spi. Njegovemu očesu se ne more nič skriti; njemu ni mogoče pobegniti ...

PRVI DVORJAN:

Ah, bedarija! Nasedate vražam, komornik, cela baba ste že. Slika je prišla s sinočnjo pošto iz Neaplja; razstavili ste jo pred dobre pol ure, del Monte pa je šel spat vsaj pred tremi urami, je tako?

DRUGI DVORJAN:

Potemtakem še sploh ne ve, da je Caravaggio mrtev.

KOMORNIK:

Naj bi tako bilo, čeprav ...

PRVI DVORJAN:

Snemimo jo brž! Jutri bo vredna sto milijonov lir. Ne bodite, no, zaskrbljeni, komornik, pripadel vam bo lep delež. Ali pa vas morda peče vest?

KOMORNIK:

Slika je bila namenjena kardinalu del Monteju osebno.

PRVI DVORJAN:

Saj jo bo lahko imel! Takoj jutri jo naj odkupi od nas. Kaj tako mencaš? Snemi jo že vendar!

DRUGI DVORJAN (*na lestvi*):

Ne gre! Nekaj se je zataknilo.

PRVI DVORJAN:

Pusti! Bom jaz!

KOMORNIK:

Toda on bo izvedel. Še vsakega tatu je izsledil.

PRVI DVORJAN:

In zakaj še nikogar ni predal policiji? Pa tudi vas še ni odpustil.

KOMORNIK:

On je – nad vsemi nami je; ve za naše grehe, ve, da mi to vemo, a nas nikoli noče kaznovati.

DRUGI DVORJAN:

Grozni ste!

PRVI DVORJAN:

Kdo za vraga je zabijal te žeblje? Potrebne bodo klešče.

DRUGI DVORJAN:

Psst! Nekaj slišim. Prihajajo!

KOMORNIK:

Jav, po meni je!

DRUGI DVORJAN:

Pohiti!

PRVI DVORJAN:

Ne gre!

KOMORNIK:

Bežimo!

DRUGI DVORJAN:

Baglione in oba kardinala!

PRVI DVORJAN:

Ampak Contarelli je mrtev!

DRUGI DVORJAN:

Tu prihaja živ!

PRVI DVORJAN:

Ooo! Kakšna družabnika sem si našel!

[Zbežijo z lestvijo.]



[*Nastopijo del Monte, Contarelli in Baglione.*]

DEL MONTE:

Caravaggio je bil edini. Kot je bil edini da Vinci ali Michelangelo. Vi pa veste, da takih umetnikov ni več med nami, da so časi genijev mimo.

CONTARELLI:

Zanašajo vas čustva.

DEL MONTE:

Zelo drag človek mi je bil, priznam. Bil mi je brat po duhu, a tega ni vedel. Samo malo je manjkalo, pa bi spoznal Boga in smisel kozmične igre. Škoda. Umrl je neveden in izgubljen.

BAGLIONE:

Da. Njegov značaj je bil neznosen. Nikoli nisi vedel, komu služi: Bogu ali Hudiču?

CONTARELLI:

Služil je umetnosti, Baglione. In pri tem mu ni bilo lahko. Samo pogledjte tole njegovo sliko! (*Se ustavijo pred sliko na steni.*) David z Goljatovo glavo. Videti je kot avtoportret.

BAGLIONE:

Seveda, kaj drugega kot avtoportret. Bi lahko incialke M A C O, ki so vpisane na Davidov meč, razumeli kako drugače kot Michel Angelo Caravaggio Opus? Verjetno lahko nekdo, ki živi tako razdvojeno kot naš Caravaggio, ob koncu svojega življenja sebe vidi le še v podobi odsekane Goljatove glave.

DEL MONTE:

Pozabljate, da so protislovja in paradoksi bistvo stvarnosti. Značajska in duhovna enostranskost sta znamenji ustvarjalne in osebnostne majhnosti. Šele skozi kontradiktornost zasije genij popolnosti. Šele v združitvi nezdružljivega se izraža duh večnosti.

CONTARELLI:

Baglionejev odnos do Caravaggia je v tem trenutku res nekoliko pretiran, toda z leti se bo unesel. Mislim, da bi ga lahko brez oklevanj angažirala za pisanje uvodne študije za milansko razstavo Caravaggiovih del leta 1951.

BAGLIONE:

Oprostite, nisem vas dobro razumel. Kaj ne pišemo ravnokar leta 1610?

CONTARELLI:

Se opravičujem. Kar naprej pozabljam, da poznate samo sedanjik. Glede časa onostranstvo človeka povsem zbega. A hotel sem reči tole: kmalu se bo zgodilo, kar si, Baglione, vi želite; Caravaggiova umetnost bo padla v pozabo, a ne za vedno. Več kot tri stoletja bo živel v senci, toda vstal bo. Leta 1951 bo v Milanu velika razstava njegovih del, ki jo organizirava skupaj s kolegom del Montejem, in takrat tudi on zasije v soncu svoje večne slave. Vas ne bi mikalo, Baglione, da bi se ob tej priložnosti pojavili kot prvi kritik in svojemu nesmrtnemu sodobniku, sedanjemu sovražniku, zapeli hvalospev?

BAGLIONE:

V reinkarnacijo ne verjamem. Pa tudi vaša pravila življenja v onostranstvu me ne prepričajo. Žal.

DEL MONTE:

Poslušajte kardinala, Baglione, sicer boste ostali zapisani samo na senčni strani zgodovine.

BAGLIONE:

Zakaj me tako zaničujete? Brez mene tudi Caravaggia ne bi bilo.

DEL MONTE:

Imate prav. Le kaj bi geniji brez svojih nasprotnikov? Od kod bi jemali moč in navdih? Smešno. Contarelli, mislim, da bo uk trd, a najbrž se izplača. Začnita s teorijo relativnosti.

CONTARELLI:

Saj res. Kaj sta prostor in čas? Kaj zgodovina? Kaj človek? Kako zanimiva in skrivnostna vprašanja. (*Se zazre v zamaknjenega Del Monteja.*) Francesco, kaj se dogaja? Kam si odšel?

DEL MONTE (*zamaknjen*):

Tu je! Vrača se.

CONTARELLI:

Vidim ga. Prihaja. – No, Baglione, pojdiva. Mislim, da bi bil kardinal rad sam.

DEL MONTE:

Nočejo ga spustiti preko reke, na zemljo bi ga radi vrnili.

CONTARELLI:

Zbogom, del Monte. Občevanje z onostranstvom človeka spremeni.

BAGLIONE:

Upam, da imaš od takšnih zamaknjenosti tudi kakšno zemeljsko korist.

CONTARELLI:

Postali boste slavni in bogati. Vam to ni dovolj? (*Odideta.*)

DEL MONTE (*sam*):

O, Caravaggio! Sin moj! Plavaj! Ne zaustavljaj se! Moraš preplavati reko! Onstran so travniki čiste radosti. Tam sije sonce. Tam je luč, ki pozlata vsako trpljenje. Plavaj! Moj duh je s tabo, ne boj se! Smer je prava. Ne verjemi glasovom, ki te vabijo v brezna! Zakaj si se ustavil? Tu na zemlji ni nič več tvojega ...



[V ozadje se prikrađejo tatovi Caravaggiove slike: Komornik, Prvi in Drugi dvorjan, ki pristavi lestev. Opazijo klečečega del Monteja.]

PRVI DVORJAN:

Tam je senca!

KOMORNIK:

Del Monte je. Zmešalo se mi bo!

PRVI DVORJAN:

Premika se in govori.

DRUGI DVORJAN:

Najbrž je prikazen. Pa kaj vaju to briga? Pomagajta raje. Zdaj bo šlo. Še malo. Takole.

KOMORNIK:

On je! On!

PRVI DVORJAN:

Nehaj paničariti! Samo njegov duh je. Pridrži lestev!

DEL MONTE:

Ne kradite! Okradli vas bodo.

KOMORNIK:

Na, zdaj pa imamo! Oglaš se.

PRVI DVORJAN:

Pohiti! Tu zares straši.

DRUGI DVORJAN:

Primi. (*Snameta sliko.*)

DEL MONTE:

Ne trudite se, fantje! Se ne splača. Slika bo ukradena še štirikrat, preden bo leta 1951 prišla na milansko razstavo.

PRVI DVORJAN:

Zdaj pa brž od tod! Tu stoji svet na glavi. (*Odhajajo.*)

DEL MONTE (*zakliče*):

Komornik! Komornik, kam bežiš? Pridi sem!

KOMORNIK:

Kliče me!

PRVI DVORJAN:

Midva kar greva. Počakava te na vrtu. (*Odideta.*)

KOMORNIK (*se približa*):

Da, izvolite, gospod kardinal.

DEL MONTE:

Jutri pripravite vse za zadušnico. Bral jo bom osebno. K obredu povabite samo tiste, ki so ga imeli radi. Najbrž jih ne bo mnogo.

KOMORNIK:

Kaj naj storimo z njegovim truplom?

DEL MONTE:

Pustite ga v Portu Ercole. Če je le mogoče, naj ga pokopljejo cerkveno. Lahko greš.

KOMORNIK:

Moj poklon! (*Odide.*)

DEL MONTE:

Vrnil si se. Pa tako blizu resnice si bil! Kako nisi mogel spregledati? Zdaj boš moral znova na isto, že tolikokrat prehojeno pot. – Torej, Caravaggio, dobrodošel na Zemlji, edinem kraju, kjer je mogoče spoznavati kraljestvo božje!

*[Stena, na kateri visi slika, začne pokati: ruši se kamenje in omet, vmes kri; nastopi potres, zemlja bobni, dvigujeta se dim in prah; prihrumi vihar. In glasba – W. A. Mozart: **REQUIEM, Dies Irae.**]*

TEČAJ IZ LETENJA

Prvi prizor

Nastopajoči:
CARAVAGGIO, GIULIO, ŠTIRJE ANGELI

[Na planem. Zadaž visoko nebo. Giulio vodi tečaj letenja. Angeli se učijo vzletati in pristajati. Caravaggio stoji ob strani, jih opazuje in si dela slikarske skice.]

CARAVAGGIO (*odvrže skice*):

To vse skupaj ni nič! Popolnoma sem prazen. Brez idej, brez vsake prave inspiracije. Počutim se, kot da nikoli več ne bom ustvaril nobene slike.

GIULIO:

Moraš se zaljubiti, Caravaggio! Navdih pride z zaljubljenostjo. Jaz sem vedno zaljubljen. To me drži pokonci. Pa tudi njih! Od česa pa misliš, da angeli živijo, če ne od ljubezni?

CARAVAGGIO:

Ne maram zaljubljenosti. Ko sem zaljubljen, se popolnoma spremenim. Grozen postanem. Bitje, ki ga ljubim, me povsem obsede.

GIULIO (*se zasmije*):

Takšne so pač te človeške, zemeljske ljubezni. Zato se je treba dvigniti nadnje. Poglej te dečke, nič človeškega jih ne more več prikleniti na zemljo, jih umazati, zato se lahko svobodno ljubijo s komerkoli.

CARAVAGGIO:

V meni, žal, ni take moči.

GIULIO:

Da, da; težko je biti Bog, vem. A spleča se potruditi. Vsaj poskusiti. – Amorčki! V vrsto zbor! (*Angeli pristajajo in stopajo v vrsto.*) Ponovili bomo prvo vajo letenja v prostem slogu, s tem, da boste tokrat uporabljali lok in puščice. Leteli bomo v jati in posamič. Razumeli?

ANGELI (*v zboru*):

Razumeli.

GIULIO:

Torej, preverite krila, če brezhibno delujejo. Dobro. Zdaj pa globoko vdihnite, napolnite pljuča s svežim zrakom in se začnite počasi odrivati od tal. Razširite roke ter začnite enakomerno in vztrajno frfotati. Vaše peruti postajajo zračne, telo breztežno. Imenitno! Vidite, kako znate! In sedaj se lahko poženete proti nebu.

ANGELI (*frfotajo po zraku*).

GIULIO:

In ko boste visoko zgoraj, ko se boste povsem zlili z nebesno sinjino, boste napeli loke in začeli streljati zlate Amorjeve puščice proti zemlji. (*Gleda za njimi.*) Čudoviti so. Obožujem jih. To je moj najboljši razred.

CARAVAGGIO:

In kako se naučiš postati angel?

GIULIO:

Pridi v naš tečaj. Vsak četrtek popoldne smo tukaj. Joy, kam so ušli? Ne smem jih pustiti same. Počakajte! (*Se dvigne v zrak.*) Vidiš, Caravaggio, kaj dela človeška volja? Samo verjeti je treba in biti drzen! Usoda ljubi pogumne. Ne odlašaj! Zrasla ti bodo krila, verjemi! (*Odleti.*)

CARAVAGGIO:

Giulio! Vse to je vendar utvara! Cenena teaterska iluzija!

GIULIO (*se vrne*):

Hočeš reči, da so moji fantje samo privid? No, pa mu pokažite, kaj znate!

ANGELI (*začno streljati nanj puščice*).

CARAVAGGIO (*beži pred angeli*):

Giulio, kaj počenjaš? Nehajte!

GIULIO:

Sejemo seme tvojih kril. Boš videl, kako hitro ti zrastejo. Vendar pazi, letati po zemlji je težko, krila so za nebo! (*Skupaj z angeli odleti.*)

SALOMA

Drugi prizor

Nastopajoči:

CARAVAGGIO, TOTO, GIULIO, LENA, PHYLLIS,
TOMASSONI, ŠTIRJE RIMSKI VOJAKI,
ŠTIRI ORIENTALSKA DEKLETA/MENADE
(KOT GLEDALCI – GOSTJE SO PRISOTNI VSI
NASTOPAJOČI)

[Kabaretno gledališče Orlando Furioso. Ljudje sedijo pri mizah, se pogovarjajo, pijejo in kadijo. Na odru se odvija umetniški program. Občinstvo navdušeno ploska. Na oder priteče evforični konferansje Toto.]

TOTO:

Bravo, bravo, bravissimo! Resnično in doživeto, dragi moji, resnično in doživeto je bilo to plapolanje Erosovih kril. Puščice, ki so jih naši frfotavi lepotci poslali na zemljo, bodo še dolgo tlele v naših srcih. Hvala vam, hvala pa tudi učitelju, našemu častitemu hermafroditu Giuliju! Mi, cenjeni obiskovalci nocojšnjega posebnega programa bara Orlando Furioso, pa ostanimo še nekaj časa med nebom in zemljo. Točka, ki sledi, je vaša. Vsem dobro znani dramolet Saloma smo na posebno željo našega cenjenega gosta, velikega baročnega slikarja Michelangela Merisija da Caravaggia, ki sedi tukaj med nami (*aplavz*), postmodernistično okrasili. Moje drage dame in spoštovani gospodje, selimo se dve tisočletji nazaj, v Kristusove čase, v deželo Kano Galilejsko, kjer vlada kralj Herod Antipa. Pravkar je pomlad, listje zeleni, sonce toplo greje, v daljavi valovi morje, v trdnjavi Maher pa se začenja praznovanje Herodovega rojstnega dne. Igralci že prihajajo. Kmalu bo nastopila tudi Grazia Lena, naša najstniška madonna (*aplavz*) in nam razkrila sij Salominih strasti. Toda joj! Kot povsod, kjer je lepote preveč, tli nesreča. V temačnih

ječah trdnjave Maher ždi vklenjeno telo preroka Janeza Krstnika.
Samo masko si še nadenem in igra se lahko začne!

[Vuprizoritvi Salome nastopajo igralci z maskami. Orkester zaigra nekaj omamno čutnega. Orientalska dekleta zaplešejo.]



[Phyllis in Caravaggio ob strani pri svoji mizi, sredi pogovora.]

PHYLLIS:

Nocojšnja predstava bo najbrž nekaj posebnega?

CARAVAGGIO:

Želim te presenetiti.

PHYLLIS:

Boš pokazal tudi svojo novo sliko?

CARAVAGGIO:

Da. Sestavni del predstave je.

PHYLLIS:

Kako lepo, da si spet poln idej. Bala sem se že zate. Čisto si bil izgubljen.

CARAVAGGIO:

Zdaj pa me je en sam navdih. Delam pet slik hkrati. Zaključujem ciklus Sv. Mateja za kapelo Contarelli. Manjka mi samo še glavni lik. Iščem model za rablja.

PHYLLIS:

Potrebuješ torej nekoga, da se vanj zaljubiš?

CARAVAGGIO:

Saj veš, da brez muz ne znam ustvarjati.

PHYLLIS:

Na zdravje! (*Nazdravita.*) Na ljubezen!

CARAVAGGIO:

In na umetnost!

PHYLLIS:

Na srečo v ljubezni in umetnosti!



TOTO/HEROD (*Toto/Herod prekine ples orientalskih deklet.*):

Dovolj, dovolj! Naj zapleše Saloma! Ne skrivaj jo tako ljubosumno, Herodiada, lepoto njenega telesa so bogovi namenili vsem.

GIULIO/HERODIADA:

Da, Herodež moj. Čakala sem tvoj ukaz, vendar ga izpolniti ne morem. Salomo je obšla žalost, ki ji nihče ne ve vzroka. Bleda je kot stena in strmi v prazno. Bojim se, da ni za ples.

TOTO/HEROD:

Kako? Mar v celem kraljestvu ni zdravila za njeno melanholijo?

GIULIO/HERODIADA:

Je. En sam način je, ki jo lahko spravi v veselje.

TOTO/HEROD:

Povej naravnost.

GIULIO/HERODIADA:

Saloma ima skrito željo.

TOTO/HEROD:

Da? Naj jo pove!

GIULIO/HERODIADA:

Prej hoče zagotovilo, da bo uresničena.

TOTO/HEROD:

Reci ji, da kralj zagotavlja uresničitev njene želje. Samo naj že zapleše! Nestrpen postajam.

GIULIO/HERODIADA:

Izpolnila bom tvoj ukaz, kralj. (*Privede Salomo.*) Tukaj je. Kralj je pripravljen izpolniti tvojo željo, Saloma, zato zapleši!

LENA/SALOMA:

Pa si dobro premislil, kralj?

TOTO/HEROD:

Ne more biti želje, ki je kralj ne bi mogel izpolniti. Vse do polovice svojega kraljestva ti dam, samo zapleši!

LENA/SALOMA:

Pazi, kralj, užitke je treba plačati, naj ti ne bo cena previsoka! Labodje, zaigrajte!

[Zapleše ob zvokih senzualne melodije.]



CARAVAGGIO:

Nocoj greš torej h generalu Holefernu?

PHYLLIS:

Da. Sporočil je, da me želi takoj videti. Ne vem, zakaj njegov šofer zamuja?

CARAVAGGIO:

Najbrž ga je kaj zadržalo v kasarni ali pa je obtičal v prometu.

PHYLLIS:

Preganja se z dekleti. To bo, to!

CARAVAGGIO:

Ne moreš mu zameriti. Rekla si, da je mlad in za ljubezen več kot nadarjen.

PHYLLIS:

Naj se zabava. Nimam nič proti, a ne na moj račun.

CARAVAGGIO:

Te Holefern ljubi?

PHYLLIS:

Da. Preveč. Obseden je z mano.

CARAVAGGIO:

Zvest ljubimec, predan; bogat, reden plačnik, kaj si lahko želiš lepšega?

PHYLLIS:

Pa ni tako. Ta igra postaja nevarna. Začel me je klicati sveta Judita. Trdi, da ga bom nekega dne ubila, mu odsekala glavo. Da pa on proti temu ne more nič, ker ima pač takšno usodo, zato vztraja z menoj v zvezi in se priporoča Bogu.

CARAVAGGIO:

Bere Biblijo?

PHYLLIS:

Ne vem. Najbrž. Zmerom bolj je nor.

CARAVAGGIO (*občuduje Salomin ples*):

Sijajna Saloma je tvoja nečakinja.

PHYLLIS:

Hvaležna sem ti, da si ji dal glavno vlogo.

CARAVAGGIO:

Zelo je nadarjena. Ima izjemen erotični šarm. Prefinjeno senzualnost. Najbrž se uči od tebe.

PHYLLIS (*se zasmije*):

Pa tudi od tebe!

CARAVAGGIO (*navdušeno ploska*):

Bravo! Bravo!



[Gledalci pri mizah in igralci na odru ploskajo. Saloma se priklanja.]

TOTO/HEROD:

Odlično! Odlično! Svojim očem ne morem verjeti! Daj, pridi bliže, da te otipljem in se prepričam v tvojo resničnost.

GIULIO/HERODIADA:

Najprej izpolnitev želje, potem dotikanje in mečkanje! Saloma, kar na dan z besedo!

LENA/SALOMA:

O, kralj! Ukaži, naj odsekajo glavo Janeza Krstnika in jo prineso predme na srebrnem krožniku.

TOTO/HEROD:

Aaaa!? Ta želja je nora! Takih želja ni!

GIULIO/HERODIADA:

Obljubil si, kralj!

TOTO/HEROD:

Ženska je obsedena! Hudič govori iz nje! Kdo je Janez Krstnik? Jaz ga ne poznam.

GIULIO/HERODIADA:

Me sploh ne čudi, da ga ne poznaš. Upravljanje dežele ti je zadnja stvar. Niti svojih političnih nasprotnikov ne poznaš. Sramota! Janez Krstnik pa hodi po deželi, krščuje ljudi v Jordanu in oznanja novi komunizem.

TOTO/HEROD:

Kaj? Novi komunizem? Tako naj ga priženejo in mu odsekajo glavo. O, hčerka, moram te pohvaliti, vzorno mi pomagaš vladati.

LENA/SALOMA:

Ampak, kralj! Jaz nimam s tem nič. To so mamine intrige. Moje srce je ranjeno! Janez Krstnik se noče ljubiti z mano!

TOTO/HEROD:

Grozno! Razumeti strasti dveh tako divjih žensk? Ne! Nemogoče! A obljubil sem. Torej naj se zgodi. Prinesite ji glavo Janeza Krstnika!

[Rimski vojaki se razkropijo po prostoru, orkester igra dramatični finale, v bar vstopi Ranuccio Tomassoni.]



PHYLLIS:

Končno! Končno! Holefernov šofer prihaja.

CARAVAGGIO:

To je on? Saj tega lepotca pa poznam!

PHYLLIS:

Da?

CARAVAGGIO:

Pred dvema letoma sva se srečala na Azurni obali. S starši je bil tam na počitnicah. Seveda, on je. Igrala sva tenis. Kako mu je že ime?

PHYLLIS:

Ranuccio, Ranuccio Tomassoni.

CARAVAGGIO:

Tako je: Ranuccio.

TOMASSONI (*pristopi*):

Lepo pozdravljeni, gospodična Phyllis!

PHYLLIS:

Predrzni ste. Kod pa hodite? Že celo uro vas čakam.

TOMASSONI:

Zakaj pa?

PHYLLIS:

Ne norčujte se! Saj veste, da general Holefern ne mara zamujanja.

TOMASSONI:

Nocoj z zmenkom ne bo nič.

PHYLLIS:

Kako?

TOMASSONI:

Generala so obšle nenavadne slutnje. Nepremično sedi na letališču in gleda v nebo.

PHYLLIS:

Tomassoni, vi se šalite!

TOMASSONI:

Ne, res je.

PHYLLIS:

Takoj me odpeljite k njemu. Storil bo kakšno neumnost.

TOMASSONI:

Ne morem. Nocoj nihče več ne more v oporišče. Razglasili so izredno stanje. Razen tega sem tu čisto zasebno. Rad bi se malo poveselel in sprostil.

PHYLLIS:

Ta je pa lepa!

CARAVAGGIO:

Pomiri se, ljubica, tako pač je. Življenje je nepredvidljivo. Tomassoni, izvolite, prisedite!

TOMASSONI:

Če gospodična Phyllis dovoli?

PHYLLIS:

Kaj sprašuješ, sedi! No, tako, pa si oglejmo predstavo do konca. Nisem vaju seznanila, čeprav se menda od nekod že poznata.

TOMASSONI:

Res? Ne vem.

CARAVAGGIO:

Se spomniš, bilo je pred dvema letoma, na Azurni obali; igral si tenis s prijateljem, potem smo igrali skupaj ... Potem smo šli plavat v večerno morje; se spomniš?

TOMASSONI:

Da, da; vi ste Michel; seveda, spomnim se. Kje vas spet srečam?

CARAVAGGIO:

Svet je majhen.

PHYLLIS:

Še dobro, da je.



POVELJNIK RIMSKIH VOJAKOV:

Kralj! O, kralj! Strašna vest: Janeza Krstnika ni več v ječi!

GIULIO/HERODIADA:

Kako? To je politična zarota!

TOTO/HEROD:

Pobegnil? To ni mogoče?

POVELJNIK RIMSKIH VOJAKOV:

Pa je! Po čudežu je izginil. Nihče ne ve, kam.

TOTO/HEROD:

Sleparija!

LENA/SALOMA:

Prevaral si me, kralj! Sam si skoval to intrigo.

TOTO/HEROD:

Ni res! Kaj ne vidiš, da tudi jaz zijam ko zaklan?

GIULIO/HERODIADA:

Če je to res, potem ukaži, naj ga takoj najdejo med prebivalstvom Kane Galilejske!

TOTO/HEROD:

Kje ga boš našla med tolikimi ljudmi?

GIULIO/HERODIADA:

Njega je lahko prepoznati. Tudi politično neizobražen človek bi ga odkril, samo ti ne! Razpošlji vojake in jim ukaži, da ga najdejo!

TOTO/HEROD:

Vojaki! Storite, kar ste pravkar slišali! Najdite ga!



TOMASSONI:

Zanimiv zaplet.

CARAVAGGIO:

Da. Variacija svetopisemske zgodbe o Salomi.

PHYLLIS:

V njej sodeluje tudi Caravaggio.

TOMASSONI:

Res? Kako pa?

CARAVAGGIO:

Boš videl.



LENA/SALOMA:

Čutim ga. Tu je! Privedite ga predme in naj bo moj. Prepričajte ga, da bo moj! Ali pa naj umre! Zagrozite mu s smrtjo. Ah, ne; naj živi! Hočem ga imeti za ljubimca. Prepričajte ga, da se odpove svoji veri in me vzame kot žensko. Hočem biti želja njegovih sanj in mu služiti kot predmet naslade. Kajti on je Bog!

[Vojaki hodijo med ljudstvom, to je med gledalci v baru; iščejo nekoga, ki bi lahko bil podoben Janezu Krstniku.]

GIULIO/HERODIADA:

Kakršen kralj, takšno ljudstvo! Ne vidiš, da brijejo norca iz tebe?

TOTO/HEROD:

Ne igray se, ljudstvo, verjemi, kar ti govorim!

GIULIO/HERODIADA:

Kdo pa še danes verjame v besede!?

TOTO/HEROD:

Pa ti stopi mednje in jih prepričaj! Jaz se te igre ne grem več.

LENA/SALOMA:

Hočem Janeza!



TOMASSONI:

Če prav razumem, bo Janez kdo od gledalcev?

CARAVAGGIO:

Tako je. Izbranec bo za nagrado smel spati z nečakinjo gospodične Phyllis, z lepoticco, ki igra Salomo.

TOMASSONI:

Lepo nečakinjo imate.

PHYLLIS:

Ti je všeč? Ampak do nje se ne pride kar tako.

TOMASSONI:

Kaj pa če jo dobim za nagrado?

PHYLLIS:

Si pa domišljav!



LENA/SALOMA:

Dajte mi mojega Janeza!

TOTO/HEROD:

Poglej, kako hčer si vzgojila! Cel regiment črncev je ne bi zadovoljil.

GIULIO/HERODIADA:

O, ti, impotentni vlačugar, daj žezlo sem! Slabši si ko baba! Janez Krstnik, vidim te! Takoj pridi sem na oder! O, pridi, ti anarhistična baraba, da ti pljunem v obraz! Povem ti, ob letu bodo Rdeče brigade zbrisane z obličja zemlje.

LENA/SALOMA:

Janez, moj Janez!

TOMASSONI (*pride na oder*).

TOTO/HEROD:

Kaj? Tak lep mladenič, pa tak antikrist? Pravi terorist! Saj! Lepota vodi v grešnost, samo bedaki mislijo, da v njej gledajo svetost.

GIULIO/HERODIADA:

Prinesite sekiro in tnalno!

LENA/SALOMA:

Ne! Živega hočem!

GIULIO/HERODIADA:

S političnim podzemljem je treba ostro.

TOTO/HEROD:

Saj si krvoločnejša kot živi revolucionar!

GIULIO/HERODIADA:

Roke vstran! Jaz sem ga ujela in jaz ga bom usmrtila!

LENA/SALOMA:

Mama, jaz ga ljubim, pusti ga živeti!

GIULIO/HERODIADA:

Prej si govorila drugače!

LENA/SALOMA (*objame Tomassonija*):

Ne dam ga!

GIULIO/HERODIADA:

Vstran se spravi! Vojaki, odstranite jo!

TOTO/HEROD:

Ženske, oh, te ženske! Zmanjkalo mi je teksta. Najraje bi kar omedlel.

GIULIO/HERODIADA:

Hočem smrt! Že cel večer čakam nanjo!

LENA/SALOMA:

Prosim te, mama! On ne sme umreti!

GIULIO/HERODIADA:

Ne! Dovolj mi je tega. Sama ga ubijem!

TOTO/HEROD:

Jaz ne morem več. Deus ex machina, zgodi se!

*[Prizorišče prekrije reprodukcija Caravaggiove slike **Saloma**. Glasbeni finale. Občinstvo ploska. Izpod zavese se prikobaca konferansje Toto.]*

TOTO:

Končno! Končno! Si predstavljate, čemu vse bi še morali prisostvovati, če nam ne bi priskočil na pomoč naš veliki Michelangelo Merisi da Caravaggio. Izvolite na oder, gospod Caravaggio! (*Caravaggio pride na oder, občinstvo mu ploska.*) Dobrodošli v nočnem programu bara Orlando Furioso, v gledališču, ki nastaja iz umetnosti vaših slik. Čestitam vam za to izredno umetnino. Menda ste jo naslikali leta 1606, a izgleda kot bi jo dokončali včeraj? Kaj pravite na to?

CARAVAGGIO:

Nič.

TOTO:

Počutite pa se najbrž dobro?

CARAVAGGIO:

Izvrstno.

TOTO:

Saj res! Kako se tudi ne bi? Biti toliko let živ, biti takorekoč neumrljiv, saj to je sijajno! Slišim, da ste šele predvčerajšnjim dopotovali v Rim in da najbrž tu ne boste dolgo?

CARAVAGGIO:

Ne vem.

TOTO:

Potemtakem ostaja datum vašega odhoda skrivnost, kakor je skrivnost tudi vse, kar je gospod Caravaggio počenjal zadnjih 400 let. Še enkrat, iskrena hvala! (*Caravaggio odide z odra.*) Mi, drage gledalke in spoštovani gledalci, pa si oglejmo še finale, kakor ga vidita ljubezen in modrost! (*Dvignejo zaveso.*) Nič več psihičnih travm in spolnih frustracij! Nič več čustvenih blokad. Nastopila je svoboda. Apolon in Dioniz sta sklenila mir.

[Na odru je Ranuccio Tomassoni kot Dioniz, ki mu Grazia Lena natika bršljanov venec, okrog njiju zbor menad.]

TOTO: Čaščenje nocojšnjega zmagovalca naj se začne! Menade, oder je vaš!

[Glasba, ples menad.]

ZMAGOVALEC TERJA NAGRADO

Tretji prizor

Nastopajoči:

TOMASSONI, TOTO, PHYLLIS, CARAVAGGIO, LENA

[Ulica pred barom Orlando Furioso. Pozno ponoči. Pri izhodnih vratih se prerekata Toto in Tomassoni.]

TOMASSONI:

To ni pošteno! Obljubili ste mi nagrado, in zdaj mi je ne date! Rekli ste, da bom smel spati z Grazio Leno, zdaj pa je še videti ne smem.

TOTO:

Rekli so vam, rekli, mladenič, vendar gospodična Lena nocoj tega ne želi početi.

TOMASSONI:

Izmišljujete si.

TOTO:

Gospodična ima vendar pravico odločati o svojih ljubimcih sama.

TOMASSONI:

Zakaj potem ponujate take nagrade?

TOTO:

Tudi umetniki moramo od česa živeti.

TOMASSONI:

Sam bom govoril z njo.

TOTO:

Ne norite! To je teater! Videti ste pametni, zato se vam toliko bolj čudim, da niste sposobnejši v razločevanju stvarnosti in domišljije. Vse to je bila igra; igra, v kateri ste sodelovali tudi vi, mladenič! Zakaj pa ste pristali vanjo?

TOMASSONI:

Padel sem vanjo. Nihče mi ni povedal, zakaj gre. Če bi vedel za štos, se gotovo ne bi zaljubil.

TOTO:

A zaljubili ste se? No, potem vam pa res ni pomoči.

[Prideta Phyllis in Caravaggio.]

TOTO:

Phyllis, prosim, zaljubil se je v Grazio Leno in po vsej sili hoče spati z njo.

PHYLLIS:

O, sveta preproščina! Ranuccio, srček! Tisto tam je bil oder, to tu pa je življenje. Samo v primeru, če bi se gospodična Lena sama zaljubila vate, bi se to lahko zgodilo. Sicer pa nikakor nimaš dovolj denarja, da bi jo plačal.

TOMASSONI:

Ampak obljubili ste mi jo!

PHYLLIS:

Toto, res si boste morali izmisliti drugačno nagrado, ni prvič, da spravljate v zadrego.

LENA (*pride z rožami v rokah*).

TOMASSONI:

Lena, ljubica, recite, da me ljubite! Priznajte resnico svojega srca, Grazia Lena!

LENA:

Kako ste zahtevni, mladenič!

PHYLLIS:

Ne težači več, Tomassoni; v kasarno se spravi. Holefern bo hud.

LENA:

Vi me ljubite. To mi je všeč. Vendar to še ni dovolj, da bi spali z mano. Dopustiti morate, da se tudi jaz zaljubim v vas.

TOMASSONI:

Toda vi me ljubite, že zdaj me ljubite, iz oči vam berem!

PHYLLIS:

Dovolj, dovolj; čas je, da gremo. Kmalu se bo začelo daniti. Lahko noč, Toto, popazi na Giulia, spet je preveč pil. (*Odhaja.*)

LENA:

Lahko noč, zmagovalec! (*Ga poljubi na lica.*)

CARAVAGGIO:

Ti torej ne greš z nami, škoda. (*Mu da roko.*) No, me je veselilo, da sva se spet srečala. Oglasi se kaj, naslov imaš. Lahko noč.

[*Vsi trije odidejo.*]

TOMASSONI:

Kurc, pa tak teater! Drkam lahko tudi sam.

LETALA V VEČERNI ZARJI

Četrty prizor

Nastopajoči:

ŠTIRJE LETALSKI ČASTNIKI, HOLEFERN,
TOMASSONI, PHYLLIS, OPICA FLOKI

[Letališče vojaškega oporišča San Sebastiano. General Holefern sedi na pisti in opazuje letala pri vzletanju. Večeri se. Okrog njega skupina letalskih častnikov.]

PRVI ČASTNIK:

Gospod general, nujno je, upoštevajte naša mnenja!

DRUGI ČASTNIK:

Kot zakleto. Ne sliši.

TRETJI ČASTNIK:

Pustite ga. Blazen je.

ČETRTI ČASTNIK:

Boste vi prevzeli odgovornost za bombardiranje begunskih naselij?

TRETJI ČASTNIK:

Jaz ne! On je ukazal napad.

PRVI ČASTNIK:

Se sploh spomnite, kdaj je bil nazadnje pri sebi?

DRUGI ČASTNIK:

Vi, kolega, boste morali prevzeti poveljstvo.

TRETJI ČASTNIK:

Ste smešni? Nikakor.

DRUGI ČASTNIK:

Za življenja naših fantov gre. Sestrelili jih bodo kot muhe.

TRETJI ČASTNIK:

Holefern zmerom pravi, da nasprotnikova protiletalska obramba ni vredna niti piškavega oreha.

PRVI ČASTNIK:

Ne bodite cinični! Pojma nima, kaj govori.

ČETRTI ČASTNIK:

Saj, zato je poveljnik!

DRUGI ČASTNIK:

No, ne bomo se tu prepirali!

ČETRTI ČASTNIK:

Boste leteli?

PRVI ČASTNIK:

Nocoj ne.

ČETRTI ČASTNIK:

Pa ste na seznamu.

PRVI ČASTNIK:

Za nič na svetu ne. Nocoj bo smrt kosila kot še nikoli. Poglejte, kako je nebo rdeče!

DRUGI ČASTNIK (*je skušal ponovno predramiti generala*):

Brezupno. Niti premakne se ne. Pojdimo, gospodje!

PRVI ČASTNIK:

Poslali bomo protest vrhovnemu poveljstvu zaradi nemogočih delovnih razmer.

ČETRTI ČASTNIK:

Komu boste poslali? Vrhovnemu poveljstvu? Mar ne veste, da je bil general Holefern včeraj imenovan za vrhovnega poveljnika vseh oboroženih sil v državi?

TRETJI ČASTNIK:

To bo pa še zelo zabavno! Se bom raje kar umaknil.

PRVI ČASTNIK:

Jaz tudi. Zdravo!

DRUGI ČASTNIK (*skomigne z rameni*).

ČETRTI ČASTNIK:

Midva pa tudi.

[Častniki se razidejo, Holefern ostane sam, čez nekaj trenutkov se mu približa Ranuccio Tomassoni.]

TOMASSONI:

Gospod Holefern, gospod Holefern, prišla je.

HOLEFERN:

Kdo?

TOMASSONI:

Gospodična Phyllis. Pripeljal sem jo.

HOLEFERN:

Kje je?

TOMASSONI:

Čaka v avtu. Hoče, da še enkrat poveste, če si jo zares želite.

HOLEFERN:

Mali, ti se norčuješ! Saj veš, da si jo strastno želim. Naj takoj pride. Že ves večer mislim nanjo. Čisto sem že melanholičen.

TOMASSONI:

Razumem, gospod general.

HOLEFERN:

Čakaj! Si me tudi ona želi?

TOMASSONI:

Kako ne bi? Samo po vas vzdihuje in trpi, ker ne ve, zakaj sme tako poredko priti k vam?

HOLEFERN:

Ubožica! Najbrž ne ve, da imam odprtih pet front. Zmešalo se mi bo od poveljevanja. – Kaj čakaš? Pripelji jo!

TOMASSONI:

Razumem, gospod general.

HOLEFERN:

Počakaj! Pa ti razumeš, kaj jaz pravzaprav govorim?

TOMASSONI:

Zelo dobro, gospod general.

HOLEFERN:

Ti paglavček mali, ti! Zelo malo je takih ljudi, kot si ti. Tako dobrih in zaupljivih ... – No, poberi se že! Še nista tu?

TOMASSONI:

Razumem, gospod general! (*Odide.*)

HOLEFERN:

Ja, ja, ni dobro biti preveč odkrit. Pretirana iskrenost človeka stane. Ampak, si videl, te presrane častnike? In kaj so vse govorili čezme? Jim bom že pokazal. Le kako si me drznejo motiti pri večerni meditaciji? Saj vem: črtijo me, se mi rogajo in posmehujejo; ne znajo ceniti mojih strateških, voditeljskih sposobnosti. Naj le počakajo!

[*Tomassoni in Phyllis prideta.*]

HOLEFERN:

Judita! Milostna!

PHYLLIS:

Dragi! (*Se strastno poljubita.*)

HOLEFERN:

Zakaj te tako dolgo ni bilo, nesrečnica?

PHYLLIS:

Nisi me želel videti.

HOLEFERN:

Kako si lepa! O, kako si lepa!

PHYLLIS:

Ti pa si zrasel in se pomladil. Slišim, da si postal najmogočnejši človek Bližnjega vzhoda.

HOLEFERN:

Ah, malenkost, malenkost. Drugi so tako hoteli, kaj sem pa mogel. No! Da bi si lahko ustvarila vsaj približen vtis moje sedanje moči in ugleda, si oglej lahek spektakel supersoničnih bombnikov. (*Pokaže*

na nebo z letali.) Kaj niso krasni? Bombe v njihovih trupih so blagoslovljene. Za nič na svetu ne bi hotel oskruniti Svete dežele. Le naglej se jih! Kaj niso božanski ti nabrekli kurci s krili? Žene in dekleta se jih posebej vesele. Brizg njihove sperme pomeni zanesljivo pot v raj. In kje je najina postelja? Tomassoni, kaj čakaš?

TOMASSONI:

Hej, fantje!

[Častniki postavijo orientalsko spalnico.]

HOLEFERN:

Vidiš, kako me ubogajo; vse storijo, kar ukažem. Res je lepo biti vrhovni poveljnik. Me boš počastila s striptizom, draga? Dolgo že nisem užival ob gledanju tvojega plesa.

PHYLLIS:

Kakor ukažeš!

HOLEFERN:

Želim te gledati, oblito z žarki zahajajočega sonca. Poglej, kako čudovito nebo imava!

PHYLLIS (*začne s streaptisom*):

Mimogrede, da ne pozabim. Ta mesec mi nisi nakazal denarja.

HOLEFERN:

Kako? Tomassoni mi je vrnil poštne odrezke.

PHYLLIS:

Lahko, da ti je dal kakšne druge.

HOLEFERN:

Takoj jutri preverim. S suhim zlatom te poplačam, če bo treba, a zdaj se posveti obredu slačenja. O, da bi smel umreti na tvojih prsih!

PHYLLIS:

O, boš, dragi, boš; nič še ni prepozno; predstava se šele prav začinja.

[V ozadju eksplozija; Holefern se skriva pod posteljo; iz dima pride opica Floki.]

PHYLLIS:

Ja, Floki, ljubica, kaj delaš tu? *(Jo vzame v naročje.)*

HOLEFERN:

O, ta nesrečna opica! Začela se je vpletati v moje delo.

MARIJA MAGDALENA

Peti prizor

Nastopajoči:

CARAVAGGIO, TOMASSONI, LENA

[V slikarskem ateljeju. Caravaggio pri delu. Tomassoni ga opazuje.]

TOMASSONI:

Lepe slike delaš. Ljudje na njih so tako živi, kot bi zares obstajali.

CARAVAGGIO:

Se ti zdi?

TOMASSONI:

Recimo Grazia Lena.

CARAVAGGIO:

Vidim, da ti je zelo všeč. Se motim?

TOMASSONI:

Phyllis je rekla, da ob tej uri ponavadi pride k tebi, da jo portretiraš. Rad bi se srečal z njo.

CARAVAGGIO:

Misliš, da si tudi ona želi tvoje bližine?

TOMASSONI:

Samo pretvarja se, da ne, v resnici zelo dobro ve, da sta najini duši sorodni, da si od vekomaj pripadata.

CARAVAGGIO:

Ti torej hočeš njeno iskreno čustvo, čisto in nedolžno ljubezen. Pa veš, da to pri prostitutkah ne gre?

TOMASSONI:

Še v nobeno nisem bil tako zaljubljen. Čeprav me je prvi naval strasti že minil. Zdaj nisem več nestrpen. Srce mi ne razbija več, ko jo vidim. Samo prijetno toplo mi postane.

CARAVAGGIO:

V njej je gotovo nekaj, kar je vredno ljubiti. Njen duh je preveč prefinjen, da bi lahko bila samo navadna kurtizana. V njeni lepoti je nekaj božanskega. Vsak seks z njo je posebno doživetje. Ne bodi jezen, jaz sem ji vzel nedolžnost. Trinajstletno sem jo našel na cesti, bila je otrok brez staršev, vzel sem jo za model in ponoči je spala v moji postelji. Potem sem jo dal v uk gospodični Phyllis. Tako je postala njena nečakinja. Pri njej imam seveda še zmerom določene seksualne predprave. Storil bom, da boš lahko spal z njo.

TOMASSONI:

Hočeš me prizadeti.

CARAVAGGIO:

Ne. Čemu?

TOMASSONI:

Ljubosumen si.

CARAVAGGIO:

Ta je pa lepa!

TOMASSONI:

Nisi iskren.

CARAVAGGIO:

Mogoče. Ob tebi postanem zmeden. Podobna sta si. Doživljam te enako kot njo. Ti si njena moška varianta.

TOMASSONI:

Se boš zaljubil vame?

CARAVAGGIO:

Sem se že.

TOMASSONI:

Hohoho ... To bo pa težko! Jaz ti namreč ljubezni ne bom mogel vračati kot ti jo Lena.

CARAVAGGIO:

Naslikal sem te kot rablja svetega Mateja. Poglej, to si ti! *(Mu pokaže zasnovo slike Smrt sv. Mateja, kjer je skoraj končan lik rablja.)*

TOMASSONI:

To, da sem jaz?

CARAVAGGIO:

Da.

TOMASSONI:

Pravijo, da si velik čudak. Mislim, da bo kar držalo.

[Oglasi se hišni zvonec. Prihaja Lena.]

CARAVAGGIO:

Prišla je. Skrij se! Rad bi, da jo presenetiva!

TOMASSONI:

Velja. *(Se skrije.)*

LENA (*pride*):

Čao, oči! Kako si?

CARAVAGGIO (*jo poljubi*):

Dobro, ljubica, dobro, pa ti?

LENA:

Zamujam. Odkar so uvedli enosmerni promet, ne prideš nikamor. Bova nadaljevala? Danes bi morala končati.

CARAVAGGIO:

Kaj si pa tako hladna? Kaj se dogaja? Nočeš povedati?

LENA:

Ah, tisti prismuknjeni Tomassoni! Ne da mi miru. Phyllis je rekla, da bo danes tu.

CARAVAGGIO:

Nič ne vem.

LENA:

Ljubim ga! (*Zajoče.*)

CARAVAGGIO:

Tako si lepa, kadar jočeš. Tvoja nedolžnost in mehkoba se raztapljata v krhke solze (*jo poljublja po licih*), ki se blešče kot jutranja rosa. O, Grazia Lena, ljubezen moja ... In zdaj zapri oči in si predstavljaš kako z letalom Ranuccia Tomassonija jadrate po nebu. Visoko, visoko nad oblaki, blizu sonca. Skušaj videti sliko čim bolj živo. Čutiš, kako Ranucciova energija prihaja k tebi? Kako se zliva s tvojo?

TOMASSONI (*je prišel iz svojega skrivališča in se nežno dotaknil Leninih rok*).

CARAVAGGIO:

In zdaj odpri oči.

LENA (*se vrže Tomassoniju v objem*):

O, Caravaggio, reci, da ni privid! Prosim!

OBISKAL VAS BO ANGEL

Šesti prizor

Nastopajoči:

CARAVAGGIO, BAGLIONE, FRANCESCA, DEL MONTE,
CONTARELLI, KOMORNIK, PHYLLIS, HOLEFERN,
TOMASSONI

[Cerkev San Luigi dei Francesi v Rimu. Otvoritev Caravaggiovih slikarskih del v kapeli Contarelli. Prideta Giovanni Baglione in njegova žena Francesca. Baglione gre k oltarju in pošili za pregrinjala, ki zakrivajo slike. Približa se Caravaggio.]

FRANCESCA (*zakliče Baglioneju*):
Pssst! Giovanni! Giovanni!

BAGLIONE:
Kaj je? (*Zagleda Caravaggia.*) O, vi ste!

CARAVAGGIO:
Kar pogledajte! Saj lahko pogledate!

BAGLIONE:
Ne, ne! Raje sem presenečen. Bom že počakal.

CARAVAGGIO:
Mislim sem, da bo otvoritev takoj po maši.

BAGLIONE:
Kot vidite, povabljenih še ni. Slišim, da je med njimi tudi general Holefern. Res ne vem, kaj ima on opraviti z umetnostjo?

CARAVAGGIO:

Ravno toliko kot vi.

BAGLIONE:

Ooo! Še vedno ste živi strup.

CARAVAGGIO:

Kakor za koga.

BAGLIONE:

Pa vi sploh veste, da je vaša umetniška kariera v največji meri odvisna od mene? Jaz se na vašem mestu ne bi tako obnašal.

CARAVAGGIO:

Menite, da bi lahko kdaj postali to, kar sem jaz?

FRANCESCA:

Hihihihihhi ...

CARAVAGGIO:

Veste, kaj pomeni tak smeh? Seksualno zafrustriranost.

BAGLIONE:

Gnusite se mi!

CARAVAGGIO:

Čudilo bi me, če se vam ne bi.

BAGLIONE:

Ne morem vas več gledati!

CARAVAGGIO:

Obrnite se vstran.

BAGLIONE:

Res ne vem, kateri hudič je premamil kardinala, da vam je zaupal poslikavo te kapele. Umetnost, ki jo delate, sodi v bordel, ne pa v cerkev.

CARAVAGGIO:

Ste prepričani?

BAGLIONE:

Le kaj ima Bog opraviti z vsebino vaših slik? Sploh veste, kaj je Bog?

CARAVAGGIO:

Ne! Verjamem pa, da se mi bo nekega dne sam razodel, kar tako na vsem lepem.

BAGLIONE:

Z vami nima smisla razpravljati. Nič vam ni sveto. Iz vsega se norčujete. Francesca, posvetiva se raje molitvi. *(Poklekne, da bi molil.)*

FRANCESCA *(tudi poklekne, vendar se neprenehoma spogleduje s Caravaggijom).*

CARAVAGGIO *(po daljšem premolku):*

Dovolj te komedije! *(Stopi k oltarju in potrga s slik pregrinjala).*

FRANCESCA:

Kaj vam pa je? Saj ste nori!

BAGLIONE:

Ne! Uničili ste otvoritev kapele. Kako si drznete?

CARAVAGGIO:

Povem vam, Francesca, obiskal vas bo angel, ki je navdahnil rablja Sv. Mateja! Zbogom! *(Odide.)*

BAGLIONE (*steče za njim*):

Ne odhajajte! Rotim vas! Zadolžen sem za protokol.

FRANCESCA:

Mati božja, kakšna lepota!

BAGLIONE:

Nehaj že buljiti v to skladovnico grešnosti! (*Skuša ponovno zagrniti slike.*)

FRANCESCA:

Kaj je rekel? Nekega dne me bo obiskal angel. Kaj ti nisem ves čas govorila, Giovanni, da sem seksualno zatrta ženska? In ti si kriv.

[Oglasijo se orgle. Pridejo Del Monte, Contarelli, Komornik, Dvorjana, General Holefern, Gospodična Phyllis, Tomassoni. Baglione v paniki pusti napol odgrnjene slike.]

DEL MONTE:

Ja, Baglione, kaj pa to pomeni? Rekel sem vam, naj slike odkrijejo v naši prisotnosti.

CONTARELLI (*vzhičen nad lepoto slik*):

Sijajno! Božansko! Še sploh kdo zna ustvarjati kot Caravaggio?

BAGLIONE:

Ne! On je žal edini.

CONTARELLI:

Edini! Prav ste povedali. Pa ne bodite zaradi tega zagrenjeni.

HOLEFERN:

Kje pa je? Povabi me na otvoritev, njega pa ni.

KOMORNIK:

Poglejte! Tam na sliki je. (*Pokaže na Caravaggiov portret v sliki Smrt Sv. Mateja.*)

HOLEFERN:

To da je on?

BAGLIONE:

Da. Njegov avtoportret. Hudo narcisoiden človek je.

HOLEFERN:

Čakajte, no, čakajte! Saj tam je tudi moj šofer! Tomassoni, to si ti?!
Kaj delaš na sliki?

PHYLLIS:

Oster vid imaš dragi, toda to še ne pomeni, da vidiš resnico.

HOLEFERN:

Hočeš reči, da to ni on? Priznaj, Tomassoni; si to ti?

DEL MONTE:

Preveč zahtevno vprašanje. Spoznati sebe ni lahko.

FRANCESCA:

Ti me boš obiskal; ti si Caravaggiov angel! (*Pade predenj na kolena.*)
O, pridi kralj! Vrata so odklenjena in postelja postлана!

JANEZ KRSTNIK

Sedmi prizor

Nastopajoči:
CARAVAGGIO, TOMASSONI

*[V Caravaggiovem ateljeju. Ranuccio Tomassoni pozira Caravaggiu za sliko **Sv. Janez Krstnik**, ki se danes nahaja v Mestnem muzeju v Kansas Cityu.]*

TOMASSONI:

Praviš, da sem na tej sliki jaz?

CARAVAGGIO:

Bi lahko bil kdo drug?

TOMASSONI *(se nasmehne)*:

Ne, ne; se ne strinjam; to je samo podoba tvojega hrepenenja, hrepenenja po nečem, kar ne obstaja, pa si želiš, da bi obstajalo. Jaz nisem tak, kot me vidiš. Mogoče bi lahko bil tak, če bi sanjal tvoje sanje, živel skozi tvojo domišljijo.

CARAVAGGIO:

Ravno to hočem. Sanje in domišljijo preoblikovati v stvarnost. Nemogoče spreminjati v mogoče.

TOMASSONI:

Ampak ti ne razlikuješ med stvarnostjo in domišljijo! Jaz nisem Janez Krstnik s tvoje slike!

CARAVAGGIO:

Vseeno. Iz tvoje lepote in moje ljubezni je nastalo nekaj čudovitega. To je najlepša slika, ki sem jo kdaj ustvarjal!

TOMASSONI:

Neprestano bežiš od realnosti. Zakaj me ne sprejmeš takšnega, kakršen sem v resnici? Jaz, Ranuccio Tomassoni.

CARAVAGGIO:

Ker ti nisi običajen predmet mojega poželenja! Tvoja prisotnost me dela božanskega. Ob tebi postajam velik kot sam Stvarnik.

TOMASSONI:

O, Caravaggio! Kako daleč narazen sva si. Čeprav se zdi, da sva eno. – Zato bom zdaj storil nekaj, česar za nikogar drugega ne bi. Odločil sem se vino spremeniti v kri. Predajem se ti! Naj moje spolno telo dokočno zgori v ognju tvoje strasti!

CARAVAGGIO:

Ne, Ranuccio, ne! Nočem svetlobe, ki umre s koncem orgazma! Čemu mi bo umrljiva lepota, umrljiva ljubezen? Večnost hočem. Boga, ki je v tebi, hočem!

TOMASSONI (*vzame list papirja*):

Naj ti preberem: »Lepota je v očeh občudovalca, in ljubezen v tistem, ki ljubi.«

CARAVAGGIO:

Čigav je ta tekst?

TOMASSONI:

Od kardinala Del Monteja. Instrukcije o obvladovanju spermalnega ognja. V spermi je ogenj. Pazite, da ga ne boste prezgodaj pogasili, ali še bolje, sploh ga nikoli do konca ne pogasite; pustite raje, da stalno malo gori, da vam sveti kot duh večne luči.

[Odvrže rdeče ogrinjalo Janeza Krstnika in ga strastno poljubi.]

PRAZNIK SONCA

Osmi prizor

Nastopajoči:

CARAVAGGIO, PHYLLIS, LENA, TOMASSONI,
HOLEFERN, BAGLIONE, FRANCESCA, DEL MONTE,
CONTARELLI, ŠEF DRŽAVNE VARNOSTI,
ŠTIRI MENADE, ŠTIRJE DIONIZI, GIULIO,
OKOSTNJAK, OPICA FLOKI
(KOT GOSTJE SODELUJEJO VSI NASTOPAJOČI)

[Prostor, ki je hkrati galerija Caravaggiovih slik in zabavišče bara Orlando Furioso. Velika zabava v čast poganskega boga Sonca. Prisotni so vsi nastopajoči, kostumirani dogodku primerno.]

[Caravaggio in Phyllis opazujeta od daleč Ranuccia in Leno.]

CARAVAGGIO:

Kaj nista lep par?

PHYLLIS:

Izzivaš nesrečo. Tomassoni jo lahko zaradi tebe grdo skupi. Holefern je nepredvidljiv.

CARAVAGGIO:

Nocoj ga še opazil ne bo.

PHYLLIS:

Zlorabljaš ju.

CARAVAGGIO:

Ne. Ljubim ju.

PHYLLIS:

Pred mano čustev ne moreš skriti. Goriš od ljubosumja. Toda čemu?
Z obema spiš, oba sta prijazna s tabo.

CARAVAGGIO:

Prijazna!?

PHYLLIS:

Bi rad kaj več? Onadva sta sebi povsem dovolj. Zadovoljen bodi,
da je odnos med vami tako mehak in razumevajoč, čeprav se bojim,
da samo na zunaj.

CARAVAGGIO:

Pretiravaš. Srečen sem, da ju vidim srečna. Kako ne bi bil, saj sta
vendar kot moja otroka!



*[Kardinal del Monte, oblečen kot antični bog Sonca, pride v spremstvu menad
in Dionizov, ki prinašajo darove narave in jih delijo med obiskovalce.]*

DEL MONTE:

Otroci sonca! Uresničite raj, ki vam od vekomaj pripada. Storite
to zdaj, takoj! Sprejmite radost življenja, zadihajte z njo, postanite
z njo eno! Bodite pogumni! Jočite, ko vas peste bolečine in veselite
se, ko vam je lepo. Golih rok in odprtih src se predajte življenju, naj
vas prevzame kot vihar. Izgorite v njem in vstanite iz njegovega
pepela kot ptič feniks! Postanite vredni svojega Boga! Bodite kot
Sonce. Grejte sebe, da se bodo lahko ob vas greli drugi. Uživate in
ljubite se! Ter vedite: vse smo mi sami. Tu in zdaj. Trenutek je naša
večnost. Otroci sonca, pozdravljam vas v kraljestvu svobode!

*[Del Monte začne divje plesati z menadami in Dionizi. Sledi vsesplošno
navdušenje in rajanje.]*



CARAVAGGIO:

Imam majhno prošnjo. Saj mi je ne boš odklonil?

TOMASSONI:

Prijatelju nikoli.

CARAVAGGIO:

Ti je Baglionejeva soproga všeč?

TOMASSONI:

To je tista, ki me je zadnjič hotela naskočiti kar v cerkvi?

CARAVAGGIO:

Da, da; ves večer te že pogleduje. Vidiš, kako se ti smehlja in te občuduje? Obljubil sem ji, da ji pošljem angela, ki je navdihnil podobo rablja Sv. Mateja. Torej tebe.

TOMASSONI:

Lepa je že, mlada tudi, ampak ...

CARAVAGGIO:

Kaj oklevaš? Ne bi rad prelomil zvestobe Leni? Daj, daj; kje si še slišal, da je bila prostitutka komu zvesta? Boš videl, koga vse bo nocoj razveselila. Zakaj torej tudi ti ne bi izkoristil priložnosti, ki se ti ponuja? In še kako drugo zgrabi. Nocoj je žensk na pretek. In prišle so z enim samim namenom, da bi se ljubile in spet ljubile.

TOMASSONI:

Seznani me z njo.



HOLEFERN:

Giovanni! Prosim, primite Flokija in dajte mir! (*Mu porine v naročje svojo opico.*) Zadolženi ste zanj, in če se mu karkoli zgodi, vas dam

obglaviti. Zdaj pa naprej. (*Zagleda Caravaggia.*) Ravno prav, gospod Caravaggio, z vami sem hotel govoriti. Baglione mi je pravkar pokazal vašo sliko *Judita obglavlja Holoferna*. Bi mi lahko pojasnili, kaj ste hoteli z njo povedati?

CARAVAGGIO:

Nič takega, kar bi vas lahko vznemirjalo.

HOLEFERN:

Se vi sploh zavedate, da se jaz pišem Holefern in da je moji izvoljenki ime Judita?

CARAVAGGIO:

Ko sem sliko ustvarjal, tega nisem vedel.

BAGLIONE:

Gospod general, bojim se, da so se vam pojmi stvarnosti in domišljije nekoliko zamešali.

HOLEFERN:

Baglione, jaz se na vašem mestu ne bi šalil. Vi sploh ne veste, kako težko je paziti Flokija.

CARAVAGGIO:

Gre za svobodno predelavo svetopisemske zgodbe.

HOLEFERN:

A tako? Imate srečo, da sem velik ljubitelj umetnosti, sicer bi vas dal zapreti. Pojdimo dalje! Kaj je to? (*Razkrije Caravaggiovo sliko **Počitek na poti v Egipt.***)

CARAVAGGIO:

Počitek na poti v Egipt.

HOLEFERN:

Tokrat ste zadeli. Egipt res ne sodeluje v vojni; sedi doma, šili zobotrebce in počiva.



CARAVAGGIO:

Lena!

LENA:

Pusti me!

CARAVAGGIO:

Kardinal Contarelli bi se rad seznanil s teboj.

LENA:

Nočem! Ne boš moj zvodnik.

CARAVAGGIO:

Lena, otrok, kaj ti je? Obljubil sem, da mu za nocoj priskrbim kaj kratkočasnega.

LENA:

Najdi kakšno drugo! Tu je cel kup deklet.

CARAVAGGIO:

Ti si profesionalka. Na hitro opravi z njim. Naša družina se mu ima toliko zahvaliti. Pet slik mi je odkupil.

LENA:

Jaz nisem nobena članica tvoje družine!

CARAVAGGIO:

Lena! Ljubica!

LENA:
Sovražim te!

CARAVAGGIO:
No, no, doma se pomenimo. Zdaj pa zahtevam, da obdelaš kardinala Contarellija, kot je treba.

LENA:
O, Bog, kako te sovražim!

CARAVAGGIO (*zagleda Contarellija*):
Le bliže, le bliže, gospod kardinal! Že cel večer bi vas rad spoznal z neko mlado krasotico.

CONTARELLI (*pristopi ves razvnet*):
Milostna! Poljubljam roko, v srcu prepevajoč hvalnico ljubezni.

CARAVAGGIO:
Dražestna je nečakinja gospodične Phyllis.

CONTARELLI:
Moram reči, da tako v lepoti kot zapeljivosti prekaša svojo teto.

CARAVAGGIO:
Strinjam se. Oprostita mi za trenutek. Kličejo me. (*Odide.*)

CONTARELLI:
Milostna! Saj ste krhki kot pomladna rosa. Smem zvedeti vaše cenjeno ime?

LENA:
Grazia Lena, vam na uslugo. Ampak za plačilo mi boste dali diamantno ogrlico, ki vam binglja okrog vratu.

CONTARELLI:

Da? Tako ste dragi?

LENA:

Užitek je treba plačati.



ŠEF DRŽAVNE VARNOSTI:

Vi ste intimna prijateljica generala Holeferna?

PHYLLIS:

Kaj vas to briga! Vprašajte njega.

ŠEF DRŽAVNE VARNOSTI:

Ne bodite, no, tako živčni! Pred menoj nimate kaj skrivati. Vse vem o vas.

PHYLLIS:

In? Kaj bi radi?

ŠEF DRŽAVNE VARNOSTI:

Saj veste, da sva si v marsičem kolega. Prostitucija in vohunstvo sta se zmerom dobro ujemali. Pravzaprav sta sestri. Vašo pomoč potrebujem.

PHYLLIS:

V kakšni zvezi?

ŠEF DRŽAVNE VARNOSTI:

Potrebujemo nekoga iz neposredne bližine generala Holeferna.

PHYLLIS:

V konkretnih akcijah ne sodelujem.

ŠEF DRŽAVNE VARNOSTI:

Tokrat boste storili izjemo. Prepričan sem.



CARAVAGGIO (*razkrije svojo sliko **Deček z ovnom.***)

HOLEFERN:

Je koštrun pravi?

CARAVAGGIO:

Boste preverili?

HOLEFERN (*otiplje sliko*):

To je slika. Pa je videti, kot bi bil živ.

CARAVAGGIO:

V umetnosti prebiva tisto, kar se nam zdi, da je ali bi lahko bilo. Na primer: zdaj je (*odgrne zaveso, za katero spolno občujeta Tomassoni in Francesca Baglione*), zdaj ni (*zagrne zaveso*). Vidite, tega, kar se vam je še pravkar zdelo najbolj resnično, tega preprosto ni.

HOLEFERN:

Lahko to čarovnijo ponovite?

CARAVAGGIO:

Seveda. Torej – zdaj je (*odgrne zaveso; ljubimca opazita, da ju gledajo*).

BAGLIONE:

Ne! Moja žena! (*Mu postane slabo.*)

CARAVAGGIO:

Pa spet ni! (*Hitro zagrne zaveso.*)

HOLEFERN:

Zabavno. Nisem vedel, da je umetnost tako zabavna reč. Čisto me je prevzela. A vi pa pravite, da je tam notri vaša žena? To pa je še bolj zabavno.

CARAVAGGIO:

Poskusimo še enkrat?

HOLEFERN:

Ne, ne, pustite ljubimcema, da uživata. Raje si oglejmo še kakšno čarovnijo. Kaj pa, če bi človek hotel vstopiti v kako umetnino in tam kaj konkretnega postoriti? Bi bilo to mogoče?

CARAVAGGIO:

Taki efekti se zaračunavajo dvojno.

HOLEFERN:

Priskrbeli mi boste enega. Kaj je, Baglione? Kaj ste tako prebledeli? Pazite Flokija, on je garant vaše glave, ne pa žena, ki se vam gre tam notri umetnost z nekim tipom. Svojčas bi rekel, da je podoben mojemu šoferju, zdaj pa vem, da je vse, kar vidim, iluzija, kajne Caravaggio, in dosti lažje mi je živeti.

CARAVAGGIO (*odgrne prostor, v katerem plešejo menade*):

Tako. Tukaj pa lahko vstopite in storite kaj konkretnega.

HOLEFERN:

Hhhmm! Pravi čarovnik ste! Tega vam ne pozabim. Baglione, s Flokijem me počakajta tukaj. Vi, Caravaggio, ste prosti. Lahko slikate dalje. Imate mojo moralno podporo. (*Vstopi med navdušene menade, Caravaggio zagrne za njimi zaveso.*)



TOMASSONI (*steče iz svojega skrivališča*):

Holefern me bo poslal na fronto; o, Bog, izgubljen sem! Svinja si, Caravaggio!

FRANCESCA:

Ranuccio, ljubček, ne puščaj me nezadovoljene! Prosim!

TOMASSONI:

Kam naj greva? Po vseh kotih se kurbajo.

FRANCESCA:

Pojdiva nazaj.

TOMASSONI:

Ne nazaj, vrnili se bodo!

FRANCESCA:

Pa bodiva kar tule.

TOMASSONI:

Si nora? Vsem na očeh?

FRANCESCA:

Še nikoli nisem tako uživala, kot danes s tabo.

TOMASSONI:

Res si nadarjena, a povsem neizobražena, ti mala pohotnica, ti!

FRANCESCA:

Semle, semle.

TOMASSONI:

Ja, ja... (*Se zavlečeta pod neko zaveso.*)

BAGLIONE (*se skriva prikrade do ženinega kurbišča*):

Ti kurba! Candra nenasitna! Pa tu pred vsemi? Pred Caravaggiom, da se mi bo lahko še bolj posmehoval in me zaničeval? Pridi ven, ti lajdra! (*Skrivališče je prazno.*) O, ušla je! Saj sem vedel. Nesreča ne pride nikoli sama. Tukaj je neka sled. (*Nerodno stopi in pade. Floki pobegne.*) Ooo! Zdaj sem pa pečen. Floki! Še ob glavo bom zaradi babe! Ooo! Floki! Floki! Srček, kam si šel, ne se skrivat, striček te ima rad, pridi, prikaži se. Pa vse zaradi te preklete candre! Ločil se bom! Ločil! Floki, Floki ... (*Išče opico, ki je splezala nekam visoko.*)

[*Nastala je tišina. Tudi na vrtu se je rajanje poleglo.*]



DEL MONTE (*se preoblači v običajno kardinalske obleke*):

Kaj je, sin moj? Zakaj si tako mračen?

CARAVAGGIO:

Iščem se, oče.

DEL MONTE:

Potem se ustavi, poglej vase.

CARAVAGGIO:

Ne morem. Od znotraj prihaja nekaj, kar me žre in sili v dejanja, ki jih ne razumem.

DEL MONTE:

Treba je biti vztrajen. Ni vsakomur dano, da bi pogledal v svoj resnični obraz.

CARAVAGGIO:

Ljubim nekega fanta.

DEL MONTE:

On pa tebe ne ljubi?

CARAVAGGIO:

Ne. Ljubi dekle, ki jo ljubim tudi jaz.

DEL MONTE:

Potem si takorekoč dosegel popoln ljubezenski trikotnik.

CARAVAGGIO:

Ne. Ostal sem povsem zunaj.

DEL MONTE:

Kako? Ti ljubiš njega, on ljubi njo, ona pa spet ljubi tebe?

CARAVAGGIO:

Ne. V resnici se ljubita samo onadva.

DEL MONTE:

In tebi je zato težko in si žalosten?

CARAVAGGIO:

Samo človek sem.

DEL MONTE:

A treba je postati Bog! Povem ti, Michel, ti bi se lahko prebil do višjih spoznanj življenja. Tako bi te tudi ljubosumje za vselej minilo. Užival bi v njuni sreči.

CARAVAGGIO:

Prepozno! Nocoj sem razbil njun mir.

DEL MONTE:

Kar storimo drugim, storimo sebi.

CARAVAGGIO:

Bojim se trpljenja, oče!

DEL MONTE:

Žal se mu ne boš mogel izogniti. Dobro pri tem je to, da je trpljenje najkrajša pot do razsvetljenja, če je človek dovolj inteligenten, seveda.



[Skozi okno prileti Giulio, opravljen kot črni angel.]

DEL MONTE:

O, Giulio! Od kod ti?

GIULIO:

Z nebes.

DEL MONTE:

In kako je tam gori?

GIULIO:

Kot na zemlji.

DEL MONTE:

Spremenil si krila. Ne služiš več Erosu?

GIULIO:

Ne. Z Amorčki smo se skregali, pa sem zamenjal boga. Zdaj sem Kronos, vladar časa in gospodar usode.

DEL MONTE:

In tako edini. Z nikomer se ti ni treba več prepirati, vsi te morajo ubogati. In po kaj si prišel med nas?

GIULIO:

Tega vam pa ne smem povedati. Pokvaril bi smisel igre.

TENIS

Deveti prizor

Nastopajoči:
CARAVAGGIO, TOMASSONI

[Teniško igrišče. Tomassoni in Caravaggio igrata tenis.]

CARAVAGGIO:
Sedem proti pet, tretjič.

TOMASSONI:
Goljufaš! Že dvakrat si šel čez črto.

CARAVAGGIO:
Sploh ne znaš igrati tenisa.

TOMASSONI:
Tega mi ne boš govoril. Bil sem prvak prve mladinske lige.

CARAVAGGIO:
Jaz pa sem ga igral, ko se ti še rodil nisi.

TOMASSONI:
Daj, nehaj že, sicer ne bom več igral.

CARAVAGGIO:
Ne moreš. Kaj pa stava?

TOMASSONI:
Stavil si ti, ne jaz. Ne vem, kaj ti je toliko do te tekme. Bi me rad premagal?

CARAVAGGIO:

Ali pa ti mene?

TOMASSONI:

Res mi je vseeno.

CARAVAGGIO:

Pa ni tako.

TOMASSONI:

Zakaj ne?

CARAVAGGIO:

Igraj!

TOMASSONI:

Ne bom.

CARAVAGGIO:

Igraj, če ti rečem!

TOMASSONI:

Zapri gobec! Ti pes! Oh, kako te sovražim!

CARAVAGGIO:

Res ne vem, čemu?

TOMASSONI:

Gnusiš se mi! Tako podlega in umazanega človeka še nisem srečal. Uničil si mi življenje. Za nalašč si me povabil na zabavo k del Monteju in mi podtaknil Baglionejevo pičko, da bi se mu maščeval, mene pa očrnil pred Holefernom. Zaradi tebe sem izgubil mesto generalovega voznika in moram spet v službo vojaškega pilota. Na fronto moram. Z Mrtvega morja se ni še nihče vrnil. Vse sestrelijo v zraku. Zakaj mi to delaš?

CARAVAGGIO:

Ker te ljubim.

TOMASSONI:

Ne bodi ciničen!

CARAVAGGIO:

O, Bog! Kako si želim, da bi te razstrelili v zraku, da bi letalo s tvojim razmesarjenim truplom padlo v morje, da bi tvoja lepota zgrmela v prepad, da za teboj ne bi ostala niti sled, da bi bilo tako, kot da te sploh nikoli ni bilo!

TOMASSONI:

Ti si nor! Ti si gladko malo nor! Se zavedaš, kaj govoriš?

CARAVAGGIO:

O, prav dobro.

TOMASSONI:

Povej, kaj sem ti storil?

CARAVAGGIO:

Kako naj se te rešim? Zasleduješ me, obsedel si me, povsod si z menoj. Moje srce utriplje v tebi, v tebi diham, skozi tvoje možgane mislim. Postal sem ti!

TOMASSONI:

Manj mi je zate kot za lanski sneg. Vedno si mi bil tujec. Samo delal sem se, da si mi blizu. To, da sem bil tvoj ljubimec, je bila samo igra. Odhajam. Povej, kje lahko najdem Leno?

CARAVAGGIO:

V bolnišnici.

TOMASSONI:

Kako? Kje?

CARAVAGGIO:

Dobila je živčni zlom, ko so ji povedali, da je noseča, in to še s kardinalom Contarellijem. Ko je abortirala, se ji je dokončno utrgalo. Zdaj je menda blazna. Na zaprtem oddelku psihiatrične klinike jo najdeš. Pravi jo pa, da nikogar več ne prepozna.

TOMASSONI:

Pozivam te na dvoboj!

CARAVAGGIO:

Prosim?

TOMASSONI:

Rekel sem, pozivam te na dvoboj. Pa menda ne boš rekel, da ne znaš sabljati?

CARAVAGGIO:

Da, da; moj čas ni bil njegov, njegova pot ne moja; prav. Kdaj?

TOMASSONI:

Jutri ob prvem svitu med drevesi Giardina Fiesco.

OBROČ SE ZAPIRA

Deseti prizor

Nastopajoči:

CONTARELLI, ŠKOF, BAGLIONE, PHYLLIS,
PREDSEDNIK VLADE, ŠEF DRŽAVNE VARNOSTI,
TAJNIK VOJAŠKEGA SVETA,
DEL MONTE, OKOSTNJAK

[V vladnih prostorih. Popoldan. Škof in Contarelli sredi zaupnega pogovora.]

ŠKOF:

Pa kako ste mogli, prosim vas, narediti mladoletnici otroka?! Presenečate me, gospod kardinal, saj jih boste imeli kmalu sedemdeset.

CONTARELLI:

Ne kričite, za božjo voljo, vsi vas bodo slišali!

ŠKOF:

O, kako ste naivni! Ves Rim govori o vas. Hočem reči, opravlja vas.

CONTARELLI:

Povejte, kako naj se te sramote rešim? Kako naj tej smrkli zavežem jezik? Menda so jo danes odpustili iz bolnišnice. Za jutri pa je že sklicana novinarska konferenca.

ŠKOF:

Bodite no! Po medijih vas bodo začeli vlačiti, kaj ste nori, zdaj na starost? Svetujem vam preprost, a preizkušen rimski recept: Leno naj utopijo v Tiberi. Nihče, bodite prepričani, ne bo vedel, ali gre za umor ali samomor.

CONTARELLI:

Kruti ste! Bom še premislil. (*Se umakneta v ozadje.*)

[*Po hodniku prideta Phyllis in Baglione.*]

BAGLIONE:

Tomassoni je preprosto prišel, vzel dva meča ter ju odnesel. Rekel je, da ju Caravaggio potrebuje za slikanje.

PHYLLIS:

Pa to je blaznost! Sploh veste, da sta si za jutri napovedala dvoboj?

BAGLIONE:

Ne. A tako? Zanimivo.

PHYLLIS:

Poklicali boste policijo in prijavili krajo orožja.

BAGLIONE:

Le kaj vam je toliko do njiju?

PHYLLIS:

Pobila se bosta. Strast ju je čisto obsedla.

BAGLIONE:

In kaj potem, če odideta s sveta dva taka človeka, kot sta Tomassoni in Caravaggio? Končno se je sreča nasmehnila tudi meni. Naenkrat mi gresta s poti oba: tisti, ki umre, in tisti, ki bo obsojen zaradi uboja prvega. Sijajno!

PHYLLIS:

Pošast ste!

BAGLIONE:

Ne, ne, samo objektivni skušam biti.

[Mimo prideta Predsednik vlade in Šef državne varnosti.]

PHYLLIS:

Gospod predsednik, če tega idiota ne boste takoj ukrotili in mu ukazali, da me uboga, bom odpovedala sodelovanje.

PRESEDNIK VLADE:

Kako ste lepi, kadar se jezite! V en sam ogenj strasti se spremenite. Baglione, vi pa pojdite! Kdaj sem vas že določil za stražo?

BAGLIONE:

Na sestanek sem bil vendar povabljen.

PRESEDNIK VLADE:

Seveda. Da bi opravljali dela, ki vam pritičejo.

BAGLIONE (*odide*).

PHYLLIS:

Ne morem več! Ne morem več! (*Zajoče.*) Zlomili ste me.

PRESEDNIK VLADE:

Vaša čustva so bogata. Občudujem jih.

PHYLLIS:

Kaj mora propasti res vse, kar mi je dragocenega na svetu?

ŠEF DRŽAVNE VARNOSTI:

Gospodična Phyllis, napačno sklepanje. Mi vam dajemo priložnost, da z enim samim dejanjem očistite vso svojo grešno preteklost. In tako rekoč čez noč postanete rešiteljica naroda. Njegov svetel zgled. Simbol zmage in svobode.

PHYLLIS:

Hočete me umazati z umorom. Ampak meni je Holefern ljub človek.

Kaj jaz morem, če je vojaški diktator in politični bedak? To je vaš problem. Jaz nisem politik.

PRESEDNIK VLADE:

Ste pa prijateljica policije in diplomacije.

ŠEF DRŽAVNE VARNOSTI:

Si predstavljate koliko ljudi je zaradi vaših informacij moralo s političnega prizorišča, če že ne z oblička zemlje?

PHYLLIS:

Vi to meni? Ste sploh kdaj odprli svoj dosje?

PRESEDNIK VLADE:

Čustva, že spet ta čustva! Odstranitev generala Holeferna je nujnost, sicer se nikoli ne bomo izvlekli iz vojne in politične krize. Vso oblast ima v rokah, civilisti v vladi smo samo še okras. Državo bo spremenil v vojaško taborišče. Mar to hočete? Vidite, stvar je preprosta: ali mi njega, ali on nas.

PHYLLIS:

Pa mi zaupate? Ste prepričani, da vas ne izdam in da se v tej igri midva ne znebiva vas?

ŠEF DRŽAVNE VARNOSTI:

Za kaj takega je najbrž že prepozno. Pred dobro uro so namreč iz notranjega ministrstva poslali generalu Holefernu depešo z vašim dosjem.

PHYLLIS:

Svinje!

PRESEDNIK VLADE:

Edini način, s katerim si torej še lahko rešite življenje in se celo povečate v osvoboditeljico naroda, je, da ubijete generala Holeferna.

ŠEF DRŽAVNE VARNOSTI:

Ne bojte se! Nič se vam ne bo zgodilo. Mislili smo na vašo varnost.

[Iz ozadja se neopazno prikradeta Contarelli in Škof.]

CONTARELLI:

Bodite močni, gospodična Phyllis, mi smo z vami. Slavili in častili vas bomo kot reinkarnacijo svetopisemske Judite. Samo to mi še na tihem zaupajte, kako lahko pridem do Grazie Lene? S škofom bi jo rada obiskala.

ŠKOF:

Nesla ji bova rože. V tej hudi stiski je prav gotovo potrebna duhovne tolažbe.

PHYLLIS (*v solzah*):

O, Bog, Zakaj vse to? Ne razumem.

TAJNIK VOJAŠKEGA SVETA (*priteče*):

Gospodje! A tu stel!

PRESEDNIK VLADE:

Kaj se je zgodilo? Kaj je?

ŠEF DRŽAVNE VARNOSTI:

Govori, teslo zarukano!

TAJNIK VOJAŠKEGA SVETA:

Kako sem zasopel, moj bog, stopnice so me čisto zdelale. Torej, izvedeli smo, da bo Holefern noč prespal v oporišču San Sebastiano. To pa je za naš načrt takorekoč idealna priložnost.

PRESEDNIK VLADE:

Ste storili že kaj konkretnega? Phyllis je tu in čaka.

TAJNIK VOJAŠKEGA SVETA:

Helikopter je pripravljen. Takoj lahko poleti proti oporišču.

[Pride kardinal Del Monte, za njim hodi Okostnjak, ki nosi meč.]

PRESEDNIK VLADE:

Končno! Dočakali smo vas.

PHYLLIS (*pade na kolena pred del Monteja*):

Oče, vi, ki vse to gledate, in veste, čemu to, zakaj ničesar ne storite? Vi, ki razumete vzrok in posledico, blagoslovite me, ki sem nevedna in šibka in nebogljena vstopam v noč, ki je ne razumem, in se je bojim.

DEL MONTE:

Sprejmi ta meč, hčerka, in mir naj te spremlja na poti.

PHYLLIS:

Kaj pa moja krivda? Ubila bom človeka!

DEL MONTE:

To je tvoja usoda. Proti njej ne moreš nič.

[Oglasijo se sirene.]

PRESEDNIK VLADE:

Kaj je to?

ŠEF DRŽAVNE VARNOSTI:

Vaje družbene samozaščite.

PRESEDNIK VLADE:

Nič me niso obvestili.

ŠEF DRŽAVNE VARNOSTI:

Mene tudi ne. Zvedel sem po ovinkih. Brž od tod! Spuščali bodo solzivec.

TAJNIK VOJAŠKEGA SVETA:

O, moja sapa!

CONTARELLI:

Upam, da vsaj streljali ne bodo. Pokanje me čisto zmede.

ŠKOF:

Kaj pa večernice?

PRESEDNIK VLADE:

Jih boste imeli pač v bunkerju. Gremo. Hvala vam, del Monte. Vzemite plinsko masko, sicer se boste zadušili. Gregor, vi vzemite meč! Phyllis, dajte mi roko. Nevarno bo.

ŠEF DRŽAVNE VARNOSTI (*vzame meč*):

Kako je težak!

DEL MONTE:

Čisto srebro.

ŠEF DRŽAVNE VARNOSTI:

Saj s tem ženska ne more rokovati.

PRESEDNIK VLADE:

Smešni ste. V predstavi bo vendar uporabljala rekvizit.

TAJNIK VOJAŠKEGA SVETA:

Ojej, že voham, bežimo! (*Steče.*)

PHYLLIS:

Spomnite se me, oče, ko me ne bo več, se me spomnite ...

[Vsi, razen del Monteja in Okostnjaka se razbeže.]

DEL MONTE (*sede*):

Oh, ti nesrečni otroci, kako ničesar ne razumejo!

BAGLIONE (*vstopi z rožami v naročju*):

Tu je nekdo naročil rože.

DEL MONTE:

Nikogar od njih ni več. Pri stranskih vratih so odšli.

BAGLIONE:

Phyllis tudi?

DEL MONTE:

Tudi.

BAGLIONE:

Jaz pa sem jo hotel vprašati, kje bo dvoboj. Rad bi bil gledalec. – Kaj je to? Nekaj je v zraku? Vi nič ne duhate? Strup! (*Kašljajoč in kričeč na pomoč zbeži.*)

DEL MONTE:

Odpri okna. Vse so usmradili. Pfej!

OKOSTNJAK (*odpira okna, zunaj zvezdnata noč*).

DEL MONTE:

Mar nimajo vsa naša dejanja tudi nek višji smisel, nek skrit pomen? Mar se za vsakim človekovim korakom, za vsako spremembo v naravi, celo za vsakim izbruhom vulkana, poplavo reke, premikom zvezde, ne skriva globlji namen, vzrok, ki ga mi s svojim omejenim vedenjem ne moremo dojeti? – Da, da, življenje je res skrivnost ...

OKOSTNJAK:

Vi ste zmerom tako filozofsko navdahnjeni, oče. – Morala bova pregledati pošto. Veliko se jo je nabralo.

DEL MONTE:

Je kaj nujnega?

OKOSTNJAK:

Tu sta dva telegrama z Jupitra in priporočena pošiljka z odkupnino s Saturna. Sicer pa je cel kup pisem z Meseca, dve kartici z Marsa, eno vam pošilja teta, ki je tam v toplicah; pa pošta iz Pekinga, Londona, Kaira; iz Ljubljane je prišlo vabilo za nek občni zbor in tako naprej in tako naprej. Izvolite pogledati. (*Mu izroči pisma.*)

DEL MONTE:

Roke se ti tresejo, prijatelj.

OKOSTNJAK:

Star sem že, oče; osamljen; nihče več se ne meni zame.

DEL MONTE:

Bodi prepričan, tvoj čas je spet blizu. Sicer pa si se mi vedno zdel v dobri formi. – Nekaj malega bova natipkala.

OKOSTNJAK (*sede k pisalnemu stroju*).

DEL MONTE (*narekuje*):

Rim, leta Gospodovega 1606., na 29. dan velikega travna, ko je šel Jupiter preko Bika, in sta bila Oven in Kozorog v obnebjū Velikega medveda. Nekim ljudem, ki sem jih poznal, se je zgodila nesreča. Za večnost majhen, nepomemben dogodek, a za ljudi, ki so morali izgoreti v njej, dogodek, velik kot veselje.

AGNUS DEI

Enajsti prizor

Nastopajoči:

GIULIO, TOTO, TOMASSONI, LENA, CARAVAGGIO,
DEL MONTE, MODELJ SLIKE MARIJINA SMRT

*[Bar Orlando Furioso. Vse je prazno. Z gramofona prihajajo zvoki bluesa. Na odru Giulio, oblečen kot ženska, pleše sam. V ozadju velika panoramska reprodukcija Caravaggiove slike **Abrahamovo žrtvovanje**.]*

GIULIO:

O, blues, čarobni blues, ki prebujaš v meni strasti ženske! Da, gospod, pristopite, zaupajte svojim sanjam, kajti z menoj jih uresničite. Še nikoli niste tako uživali; karkoli poželite, to dobite, ker jaz sem vse. O, blues, čarobni blues ...

TOTO (*se pri vratih prereka s Tomassonijem*):

Ne bodite nasilni! Tu ni nikogar. Prazno je. Vidite?

GIULIO:

O, lepi mladenič, le sem, le sem, boš zaplesal z mano!

TOMASSONI (*zgrabi Giulia*):

Kje je Lena?

GIULIO:

Jaz sem tvoja Lena.

TOTO:

Razumite! Že cel mesec je ni bilo. Nima več pogodb.

GIULIO:

Naš bordel propada, kajne kralj? Odkar ni več Salome, je vse prazno. Ranuccio, bodi ti naš prvi novi gost, daj zgled ostalim. Nocoj se lahko ljubiš z menoj zastonj.

TOMASSONI:

Roke stran! Gnusiš se mi, ostuda pokvečena!

GIULIO:

Zakleni vrata, kralj!

TOTO:

Kaj ti pa je?

GIULIO:

Tomassoni ostaja z menoj. Zakleni jih, če ti pravim! Pa menda ne boš rekel, da si ljubosumen?

TOTO (*odide in zaklene vrata*).

TOMASSONI:

Lena, moja Lena, nikjer te ni. Vse sem že pretaknil, tebe pa ni in ni. In jutri grem na fronto.

GIULIO:

Nikamor ne boš šel. Lepo tu boš ostal in počakal, da neurje mine. Objemi me.

TOMASSONI:

Ne dotikaj se me!

GIULIO:

Ljubi, bodi pameten in me poslušaj. Vse, kar je, se giblje in premika, vendar včasih tudi zastane, obmiruje. In zdaj je čas, ko se moraš prepustiti mirovanju.

TOMASSONI:

Nehaj me slepiti s praznimi besedami, pusti me, da grem.

GIULIO:

Miruj! Vsi so proti vsem. Tekla bo kri. Lahko se rešiš, če boš moder.

TOMASSONI:

Kaj skrivaš pred menoj? Govori!

GIULIO:

Jaz vem za prihodnost. Miruj! In ne želi vedeti ničesar.

TOMASSONI:

Kdo si?

GIULIO:

Človek, ki ve in vidi več, kot bi kot človek smel.

TOMASSONI:

Povej, prosim, kje je Lena?

GIULIO:

Če boš dober in prijazen z mano in če boš z menoj dočakal jutro četrtega dne, potem ti povem. Znaš igrati karte?

TOMASSONI:

Ne.

GIULIO:

Naučil se jih boš. Časa imava na pretek. Stvari se bodo uredile, medtem ko bova midva počivala in se zabavala. Vina je dovolj.

TOMASSONI:

Coprница! Kje so ključi? Ven hočem!

GIULIO:

Ni jih! Izgubili so se. (*Se smeje.*) Zdaj si moj! Samo moj!

TOMASSONI:

Odpri vrata! Razbil jih bom. Hočeš me ustaviti, mi preprečiti, da bi pomagal ljudem, ki so v stiski. Leno hočete umoriti. Odpri! Ali pa si pot naredim sam! (*Vzame nož in zabode v panoramsko reprodukcijo Caravaggiove slike **Abrahamovo žrtvovanje.***)

GIULIO:

Neeee!

[*Iz slike se ulije kri. Zasliši se Mozartov **Requiem, Agnus Dei.***]

TOTO (*priteče*):

Za božjo voljo, nikar! Ne delajte tega!

TOMASSONI (*uničuje sliko, ki vedno bolj krvavi, nenadoma zakriči*):
Oči! Moje oči! Ne! Oči! (*Se bojuje s slepoto.*)

[*Za sliko vstaja prizorišče naslednjega prizora: megleno jutro, zora, reka Tibera, iz katere vlečejo Lenino truplo.*]

TOMASSONI:

Giulio! Kaj si storil z mojim vidom? Giulio! To nisem jaz! Ne, to nisem jaz! Vrni mi oči, prosim! Moje oči! (*Zagleda mrtvo Leno.*) Lena! Lena!

GIULIO:

To je stvarnost tvoje prihodnosti.

DEL MONTE (*se nenadoma pojavi*):

Kaj delaš s tem otrokom? Zlorabljaš tretje oko! Nimaš pravice.

GIULIO:

Hotel sem ga rešiti. Premlad je, predober, da bi smel umreti. Moral bi mirovati, mirovati.

DEL MONTE:

Ti bi rad preobračal tok usode, delal nekaj, česar še bogovi ne morejo?

GIULIO (*joče*):

Toda zakaj? Zakaj sem potem smel prestopiti meje časov? O, Kronos, ne bom več tvoj angel; slekel bom tvoja krila Usoda; samo še angel človeške Smrti bom. Pa tako visoko sem že bil, mislil, da vem vse!

DEL MONTE:

No, zdaj si spet človek. To, kar si bil zmerom. Tudi, ko si letel.

V TIBERI JE TRUPLO

Dvanajsti prizor

Nastopajoči:

**TOMASSONI, LENA, CARAVAGGIO, POLICIST,
RADOVEDNEŽ, MODELI SLIKE MARIJINA SMRT**

[Breg Tibere v zgodnjem jutranjem svitu, na drugi strani Caravaggiov slikarski atelje. Ob reki so policisti in reševalci ter nekaj radovednežev. V ateljeju Caravaggio dokončuje sliko Marijina smrt. V ozadju je scenografija slike, vendar v njej ni ljudi.]

TOMASSONI (*objokuje Leno*):

Lena! Lena! Ljubica! Sestra! Kaj so ti storili? Povej, kdo je bil? O, Lena, prebudi se, jaz sem, tvoj Ranuccio!

RADOVEDNEŽ:

Mladenič jo očitno pozna.

POLICIST:

Šli boste z nami.

TOMASSONI:

Rekla si, vsak človek je zvezda, si rekla; tako majhen, ko ga gledaš na nebu in tako velik, ko mu prideš blizu, in rekla si še, ko umreš, zares postaneš zvezda in se preseliš na nebo in od tam gledaš na zemljo, ki je tako majhna, kot si se nekoč ti zdel samemu sebi. Toda kje med neskončnimi milijoni zvezd naj te najdem, ker kaj bom jaz brez tebe?

POLICIST:

Odstranite se, mladenič, motite nas pri delu. Dvignite jo na nosila!

TOMASSONI:

Ne dotikajte se je. Sam jo bom odnesel.

[Pograbi Lenino truplo ter ga odnese v Caravaggiov atelje in ga položi v scenografijo slike Marijine smrti; pristopijo tudi ljudje, ki jo objokujejo.]

CARAVAGGIO *(onemi pred sliko, ki se nekaj metrov v stran spreminja v resničnost)*.

TOMASSONI:

Prišel sem. Ne kot umetnost, kot resničnost sem tu. Pojdiva! Dani se.

OBGLAVLJENJE

Trinajsti prizor

Nastopajoči:

HOLEFERN, FLOKI, PHYLLIS

[V štabu letalskega poveljstva oporišča San Sebastiano. Na televizijskih ekranih potekajo vojaške akcije. Opica Floki sedi za komandnim pultom in pritiska na gumbe ter spreminja televizijske kanale. General Holefern na tleh razgrne spalno vrečo, se usede in si začne odvezovati čevlje.]

HOLEFERN:

Floki, ne igray se! Še v zrak bomo šli zaradi tebe. Biti moraš previden. *(Se uleže, da bi spal.)* Če bomo kje zmagali, me zbudi; o porazih me ni treba obveščati, naveličal sem se jih. *(Si premisli in vstane.)* Ah, ne bom spal, lahko kdo pride in me nepripravljenega zaskoči. Pred oficirsko golaznijo ni človek nikjer varen. Povsod prežijo name in čakajo, da jim pridem pod nož. Je sploh kje kdo, ki mi ne bi želel smrti? Floki, ti si še edini zvesti vojak. Drugi se samo delajo, kako me ubogajo. Oh, kako sem utrujen! Spal bi. Ampak prišli bodo in me zaklali. Kar v snu mi bodo odrezali glavo in se z njo jutri bahali na trgu pred vojsko in ljudstvom. Osvoboditelji, osvoboditelji bodo kričali. Kakšni osvoboditelji neki? Morilci! Ojej, spal bi. Spal. *(S televizijskih ekranov izgine slika.)* Ja, Floki, kaj pa delaš? Zaradi tebe bomo še vojno izgubili! Pusti to, dovolj je. Pojdi se igrat na dvorišče, jutri te naučim pravega poveljevanja. *(Floki odide.)* Vse programe je zmešal. Kaj bom pa zdaj? Nobenega kontakta s frontami ni več. Kako naj poveljujem? No, vendarle spet slika!

[Na ekranih se pojavi fotografija gospodične Phyllis.]

PHYLLIS:

Zdravo.

HOLEFERN:

Kaj? Ti? Proč od mene!

PHYLLIS:

Ne trudi se. Ne moreš me spraviti z ekrana. Računalniki so blokirani.

HOLEFERN:

Zakaj? Zakaj, ljubica, si mi to storila? Pa tako lepo sva se ljubila!

PHYLLIS:

Kaj verjameš temu, kar so ti natvezili o meni? Kdo ti pa sploh še govori resnico? Hranijo te z lažmi, da bi te zbegali in še bolj osamili.

HOLEFERN (*zajoče nad komandnim pultom*):

Ljubica, jaz ne morem več! Vsi so proti meni, na nikogar več se ne morem nasloniti. Tako me je strah. Bojim se umreti.

PHYLLIS:

Pomiri se, dragi, jaz sem s teboj. Varovala te bom in mirno vodila skozi nevarnosti. Zdajle se boš lepo slekel in legel spat.

HOLEFERN:

Ne! Ne, v posteljo, ne, prosim, nikar! Kadar legam vanjo, mislim, da legam v grob.

PHYLLIS:

Utrujen si, živčno prenapet, tak ne boš nikoli dobil vojne. Ubogaj me!

HOLEFERN:

O, Judita, milostna, stopi z ekrana in pridi k meni!

PHYLLIS:

Bom, dragi, ko boš v postelji, bom zlezla k tebi in ljubila se bova kot še nikoli.

HOLEFERN:

Da, potrebujem te, prosim te, pridi, vse bom naredil, kar ukažeš. Ljubim te.

PHYLLIS:

Najprej lepo snemi kapo; tako, vidiš, da gre; zdaj si odpni bluzo, sleci jo; in gumbi na srajci; čutiš, kako se dotikam tvojega trebuščka; moja roka potuje po tvojih dlakavih prsih, in zdaj hlače.

HOLEFERN:

Ne! Hlač pa ne!

PHYLLIS:

Zakaj ne?

HOLEFERN:

Lahko kdo pride.

PHYLLIS:

Nikogar ne bo. Sama sva. Čisto sama na vsem ljubem svetu. Dajva! Najprej pas, tako, zdaj zgornji gumb, in zadruga, čevlje že imaš odvezane, samo dol jih vrzi in hlače bodo kar same zdrsele dol. Tako. Zdaj lahko ležeš.

HOLEFERN:

In kje si ti? Kdaj prideš ti?

(Phyllis izgine z ekranov, spet gledamo prizore z bojišč.)

HOLEFERN:

Tako. Ni je več. Spet samo privid. Pa tako resničen. Ojej, kar slekel sem se. Res bi moral spati. Moji možgani so utrujeni. Megla se mi dela pred očmi. (*Leže.*) Ja, res, tako mi je, kot bi legal na mesarsko mizo. Nocoj me bodo umorili. Ostal sem sam na tem velikem gradu, vsi so me zapustili, sam bom umrl. O, ljudje! Vaša srca bodo ostala hladna; moje bolečine še opazili ne boste; moj strah bo šel mimo vas. Zakaj? Saj nisem tako slab človek, samo zdim se vam tak; in rad bi živel, tako kot vi, živel, živel. O, noč, dobra noč, pridi in zbriši vse, kar sem kdaj storil ali bi lahko bil; naj s teboj pozabim vse, kar sem bil sebi, bil drugim. In dovoli mi spati, spati ... (*Zavije se v spalno vrečo in zaspi.*)

PHYLLIS (*pride iz ozadja z mesarskim nožem*).

HOLEFERN (*plane pokonci*):

Judita, prosim, nikar!

PHYLLIS (*ga zabode prvič, drugič, dokler ga ne ubije*).

DVOBOJ

Štirinajsti prizor

Nastopajoči:

CARAVAGGIO, TOMASSONI, PHYLLIS

[Park. Sončni vzhod. Ptice in oddaljen hrup avtomobilske ceste. Tomassoni in Caravaggio s sabljami.]

TOMASSONI:

Sanjal sem, kako gledam v veliko sinjemodro oko, umito v potoku čistih solz; oko v svetlobi, ki je še nikoli nisem videl. Potem me je neka skrivnostna sila potegnila vanj. Dolgo sem hodil po notranjosti očesa, skozi pokrajine različnih svetlob in barv, dokler nisem zagledal nekoga, ki me je gledal. Ta nekdo sem bil jaz sam.

CARAVAGGIO:

Začniva.

TOMASSONI:

In Bog naj blagoslovi najina meča ter za vselej spravi najini poti.

CARAVAGGIO:

Amen.

[Se objameta in začneta bojevati. Sprva se borita mirno, Tomassoni je opazno boljši, vendar pa ni nasilen in daje prednost Caravaggiu, ki ga rani v desno nogo; nekaj trenutkov zatem pa Caravaggio zabode Tomassonija naravnost v srce.]

CARAVAGGIO:

Ne! Ranuccio, ne! Prosim, ne umri!

TOMASSONI:

Ej, moj Michel, čemu ta patetika? Rad sem živel, rad umrem. Življenje mi je bilo podarjeno, zato ta dar zdaj s hvaležnostjo vračam. Selim se med zvezde. Tam nekje na severu bom prebival. Z Leno bova skupaj. Ko naju boš iskal na nebu, ti bova mežikala. Ne boš naju zgrešil. (*Umre.*)

[Pričenja se mračiti. Sonce temni, iz njega se začne valiti gosta črna masa in se razliva po odru. S strani pride Phyllis z odsekano Holeferново glavo, od katere curlja kri.]

CARAVAGGIO (*krikne od strahu*):

Phyllis!

PHYLLIS:

Tvoja Judita sem in to je Holefernova glava. Kri je še topla, pred nekaj minutami je v njej utripalo življenje, zdaj pa je nič; gola smrt.

CARAVAGGIO:

Stran! Proč od mene! Oči mi trgaš!

PHYLLIS:

Ti si me ustvaril, Caravaggio, tvoja junakinja sem in pravkar prelamljam zakon umetnosti in stopam v življenje. O, Stvarnik moj, izbriši zločin, izmij mojo krivdo! Glej, tu pred teboj klečim nemočna in te prosim! O, Stvarnik moj, zakaj si me ustvaril za ubijanje?

CARAVAGGIO:

Stran! Stran od mene!

[V ozadju se zasliši bobnenje vulkana, skoraj povsem se je že stemnilo.]

PHYLLIS:

Slišiš, kako bobni človeška kri? Slišiš topot zločina? Slišiš, kako na stežaj so se odprla vrata pekla? Tudi ti zgrmiš z menoj v prepad!

[Pred Caravaggiom se utrga zemlja, izbruhne vulkan; Phyllis ga poriva v plamene, skupaj padeta v ognjeno žrelo.]

V KRALJESTVU PALČKOV

Petnajsti prizor

Nastopajoči:

CARAVAGGIO, HARON, PALČEK VODNIK,
ŠTIRJE PALČKI, DEL MONTE

[Podzemeljska reka. Brodnik Haron vozi čoln, na katerem je speči Caravaggio. Podzemeljskemu svetu sledi pokrajina, obsijana z mesečino. Na bregu reke stojijo palčki in mahajo brodniku s svetilkami.]

PALČEK VODNIK:

Le sem, le sem, boter Haron! Potnika že nestrpno pričakujejo.

BRODNIK HARON (*ustavi čoln*):

Revež je zaspal. – Caravaggio, zbudi se; prispela sva.

CARAVAGGIO (*se zbudi*):

Kje sem?

BRODNIK HARON:

V kraljestvu palčkov.

PALČEK VODNIK:

Izstopi in nam sledi. Tebi, boter Haron, pa hvala za pomoč.

BRODNIK HARON:

Srečno pot! (*Odrine čoln.*)

[Palčki odvedejo Caravaggia na pot.]

CARAVAGGIO:

Kam gremo?

PALČEK VODNIK:

Boš izvedel, ko bo čas.

[Palčki med tihim petjem vodijo Caravaggia skozi planinsko pokrajino. Pridejo v sneženje. V daljavi se pokaže grad. Ko se mu približajo, se grajska vrata samodejno odpro. Znajdejo se pred srebrnimi stopnicami.]

PALČEK VODNIK:

Sezuj čevlje.

CARAVAGGIO:

Zakaj?

PALČEK VODNIK:

V zadnje kraljestvo ne moreš obut.

CARAVAGGIO *(si sezuje čevlje)*.

PALČEK VODNIK:

Tako. Zdaj si pripravljen. *(Pozvoni.)* Novinec čaka. Sprejmite ga.

[Palčki se neopazno umaknejo.]

DEL MONTE *(prihaja naproti)*:

To ni novinec, ali pač! Pozdravljen, Caravaggio! Pozdravljen v domovini Severnega sonca! Prišel sem ti naproti, da bi ti bilo lažje stopiti na pot, ki vodi k srebrnim vratom. Pridi! Spremljal te bom.

*[Hodita skupaj. V daljavi se pojavi okolje Caravaggiove slike **Deček z lauto**. Zasliši se dečkova glasba in petje: madrigal Jacqua Arcadia: »Voi sapete ch'ia v'amo« – »Veste, da vas ljubim«. Del Monte se neopazno umakne. Caravaggio kot začaran hodi proti sliki in glasbi. Gre skozi njjo, nenadoma pa se obrne nazaj in za seboj zagleda odsekano glavo s kačami ter zasliši pošastne zvoke, ki prihajajo iz njegove slike **Meduza**. Zakriči od groze in se zgrudi.]*

ZNANI NEZNANEC

Šestnajsti prizor

Nastopajoči:

LUCIA, CARAVAGGIO, GIULIO, DEL MONTE

[Caravaggiovo stanovanje v Neaplju. Postelja, kjer spita on in Giulio. Sončno jutro. Vstopi Caravaggiova mati Lucia Aratori. Odloži kavo ter ju začne buditi.]

LUCIA:

Vstati bo treba, otroka, vstati. Ej, zbudi se, Michel; enajst je že; Giulio, srček, ob dvanajstih, si rekel, imaš sestanek.

CARAVAGGIO:

Strašne sanje sem imel.

LUCIA:

Kričal si v spanju.

CARAVAGGIO:

Kako sem se namučil, moj bog ...

LUCIA:

Sredi noči sem te morala tolažiti. Tako zelo si jokal.

CARAVAGGIO:

A res? Joj, mama, kaj bi brez tebe? Nihče me ne razume bolje kot ti. Nihče mirneje ne prenaša moje norosti. Od kod jemlješ potrpežljivost? Zakaj me ne skregaš? Zakaj mi ne rečeš, kaj naj počnem?

LUCIA:

Če bi hotela, da živiš, kot si želim jaz, bi bilo bolje, da te ne bi rodila. Zakaj ne sprejmeš svobode, ki si jo dobil z rojstvom?

CARAVAGGIO:

Svobode? Le kje vidiš kakšno svobodo?

LUCIA:

Povsod je: okrog tebe, v tebi; le, da tega še nisi dojel.

CARAVAGGIO:

Pil bi kavo.

LUCIA (*mu poda skodelico*):

Izvoli.

CARAVAGGIO:

Hvala.

LUCIA:

Giulio, boš tudi ti? Kako diši! Vstani, zamudil boš sestanek.

CARAVAGGIO:

Zaspanè! Dvigni svojo rit! Hajd!

LUCIA:

Kavo ti bom postavila semle.

GIULIO:

Celo noč si se premetaval in dihal vame svoje smrdljive alkoholne hlapce. Nič se nisem naspal. (*Vstane.*)

[*V veži zazvoni zvonec.*]

LUCIA:

Nekdo je prišel.

GIULIO:

Najbrž policija.

CARAVAGGIO:

Ne hecaj se, mali! Mama, stopi in poglej, kdo je!

LUCIA (*odide*).

GIULIO:

Nekoč te bodo tako ali tako ujeli. Bodi brez skrbi. Danes zločina ne moreš kar tako prikriti.

CARAVAGGIO:

Nehaj!

LUCIA (*se vrne*):

Pred vrati stoji neznanec. Pravi, da prihaja iz Rima in da išče tebe, Michel.

CARAVAGGIO:

Iz Rima? Nemogoče! Kaj hoče?

LUCIA:

Ne vem. Samo zate je vprašal.

GIULIO:

Kaj si tako presran? Pusti ga, naj vstopi. Nič se ti ne more zgoditi. Tu si pod neapeljsko oblastjo.

CARAVAGGIO:

Bodi tiho, smrkavec!

LUCIA:

Ga naj spustim noter?

CARAVAGGIO:

Spusti ga. Ne! Naj gre k vragu! Spusti ga noter! Kaj zijaš?

LUCIA (*odide*).

GIULIO:

Me pa res zanima, kdo bi se lahko v Rimu spomnil nate? Grem v kopalnico. Pogovor bo najbrž diskreten.

CARAVAGGIO:

Izgini!

GIULIO (*odide*).

LUCIA (*privede v sobo kardinala del Monteja*).

CARAVAGGIO:

Del Monte?!

DEL MONTE:

Pozdravljen, Caravaggio!

CARAVAGGIO:

Vi v Neaplju? Ob tem času?

DEL MONTE:

Dolžnosti pač. (*Mu seže v roko.*)

CARAVAGGIO:

Saj ne morem verjeti, da ste to res vi!

DEL MONTE:

Ne čutiš stiska mojih rok?

CARAVAGGIO:

Boste odložili? Izvolite sesti. To je moja mama.

LUCIA:

Lucia Aratori.

DEL MONTE (*ji seže v roko*):

Francesco. Poznam vas, bral sem Caravaggiovo biografijo.

LUCIA:

Vam smem kaj postreči?

DEL MONTE:

Ne, hvala. Kratek bom.

LUCIA:

Nekaj malega vam bom vseeno ponudila. (*Odide.*)

CARAVAGGIO:

Po kaj prihajate?

DEL MONTE:

Po tebe.

CARAVAGGIO:

Nocoj sem vas sanjal.

DEL MONTE:

Vem. Tě sanje sem ti poslal jaz, da bi te spomnil na Rim.

CARAVAGGIO:

Kaj bi danes z Rimom?

DEL MONTE:

Marsikaj. Tam te na primer čaka Ranuccio Tomassoni.

CARAVAGGIO:

Šalite se. Štiri leta je že mrtev.

DEL MONTE:

Ni res! On živi. Njegova smrt je trajala le kratek hip. Kdaj se boš naučil, da ni nič dokončnega. Tomassonijev duh spet prebiva v človeškem telesu. Igra vajinega prejšnjega življenja se nadaljuje. Priznaj svoj zločin, se pokesaj in pridi v Rim.

CARAVAGGIO:

Nobene krivde ne čutim.

DEL MONTE:

To je laž! Štiri leta v pregnanstvu! Pred kom si bežal? Rimske oblasti so ti zločin oprostile. Pa ti? Si si ga ti oprostil? Pokesaj se, sezi Ranucciu v roko in v miru odigrajta tekmo do konca. Nobena igra se namreč prej ne konča, dokler se v njej sile ne izravnajo. Pred vestjo ne moreš ubežati. S teboj bo šla v grob in v večnost prihodnjih časov.

LUCIA *(ki je med kardinalovim govorom prinesla skodelico kave, se zgrudi v krčevit jok)*.

DEL MONTE:

Odstranite to žensko!

CARAVAGGIO:

Moja mati je.

DEL MONTE:

Povej ji, da ne more jokati namesto tebe!

CARAVAGGIO:

Ne maram vaše resnice, mrzla je kot led. Kje imate usmiljenje?

DEL MONTE:

V predsobi, kjer sem pustil čevlje.

CARAVAGGIO:

Satan!

DEL MONTE:

Lahko mi rečeš tudi Bog. Bistvo ostaja isto.

GIULIO (*pride, zagleda na tleh Luccio*):

Lucia, kaj pa je? Jočeš? – O, kardinal del Monte? Vi?

DEL MONTE:

Zdravo, mali! Kdaj prideta v Rim?

GIULIO:

V Rim?

DEL MONTE:

Da. Vsi vaju pričakujemo. Usedita se na prvi vlak in se pripeljita. Odhajam. Še enkrat te svarim, Caravaggio, vsemu, prav vsemu se lahko izogneš, pred celim svetom zbežiš, a s seboj ostaneš večno. (*Odide.*)

GIULIO:

V Rim? V Rim, je rekel?

NA LADJI

Sedemnajsti prizor

Nastopajoči:

CARAVAGGIO, GIULIO, ŠTIRJE MOŽJE NA LADJI

[Noč. Na krovu ladje. Sliši se valovanje morja. Caravaggio in Giulio spita med vrečami ob jamboru.]

CARAVAGGIO (*skoči iz spanja*):

Aaaaa! Kdo je? Kako sem se prestrašil! Ej, Giulio, kje sva?

GIULIO (*se obrne*):

Daj mir in spi. Na ladji.

CARAVAGGIO:

Kaj nisva rekla, da greva v Rim?

GIULIO:

Rekla sva. Saj se po morju tudi pride tja. Lahko noč.

[Ponovno zaspita. A v ozadju se res premikajo sence. Caravaggio spet skoči pokonci.]

CARAVAGGIO:

Nekdo hodi! Ej, tu nekdo hodi!

GIULIO:

Preganjavico imaš. Daj mir in spi. Dobil boš morsko bolezen.

CARAVAGGIO (*se uleže in spet vstane*):

Rečem ti, tu nekdo hodi. Iščejo naju. Slišiš?

GIULIO:
Mornarji so. Spi.

[Iz teme ju naskočijo možje.]

PRVI:
Tu sta! Po njima! Posveti sem!

DRUGI:
Drži ga! Zamaši mu usta!

TRETJI:
Ujeta na begu. Aretirana sta.

ČETRTI:
Zvežite ju!

DRUGI:
Lahek plen!

TRETJI:
Odvedite ju!

POMOTA

Osemnajsti prizor

Nastopajoči:

CARAVAGGIO, GIULIO, ZASLIŠEVALEC, POLICIJSKI
NAČELNIK, TELEVIZIJSKA NAPOVEDOVALKA

*[Podeželska policijska postaja. Zasliševalec zaslišuje Giulia. Na televiziji
predvajajo risanke.]*

GIULIO:

Ne! To je pomota! Midva sploh nisva človeka, ki ju iščete.

ZASLIŠEVALEC:

Bomo menda že mi vedeli, koga iščemo. Glej me v oči, ko govoriš
z menoj!

GIULIO:

Razumem, gospod. Ampak midva z Michelom sva nedolžna.
Nobene zveze nimava z vašo afero.

ZASLIŠEVALEC:

Ne laži! Greva od začetka! Rojstni podatki!

GIULIO:

22. januar 1591, Palermo.

ZASLIŠEVALEC:

Se ti norčuješ iz mene, ali kaj?

GIULIO:

To so moji rojstni podatki. Drugih nimam.

ZASLIŠEVALEC:

Lažeš ko cigan! Privedite drugega. S tem se ne bom več zafrkaval.

[Pazniki privedejo pretepenega Caravaggia.]

ZASLIŠEVALEC:

Kaj si počenjal na dan atentata?

CARAVAGGIO:

Kdaj?

ZASLIŠEVALEC:

Kdaj?! 29. maja 1988?

CARAVAGGIO:

Nič. Tega dne in tega leta sploh nisem živel.

ZASLIŠEVALEC:

Dobro. Preskočiva to podrobnost. Od kod poznaš generala Holeferna?

CARAVAGGIO:

Sploh ga ne poznam. Oziroma. Leta 1598 sem naslikal delo z naslovom Judita obglavlja Holoferna.

ZASLIŠEVALEC:

Pa od kod vidva prihajata? Iz katerega sveta? Kakšen jezik govorita? A sta čisto nora? Sploh vesta, da sta vpletena v atentat na vojaškega poveljnika Nata?

CARAVAGGIO:

Prvič slišim.

GIULIO:

Michel, priznaj, ne bodi trmast!

ZASLIŠEVALEC:

Še enkrat: kaj si počenjal 29. maja?

CARAVAGGIO:

Na ta dan sem leta 1606 v dvoboju ubil prijatelja.

ZASLIŠEVALEC:

Privatnosti me ne zanimajo. Gospod Caravaggio, bodite pametni, sodelujte z nami. Torej, kaj veš o generalu Holefernu?

CARAVAGGIO:

Rekel sem vam. Leta 1598 sem ga uporabil kot slikarski motiv. Prevezel sem ga po Svetem pismu.

ZASLIŠEVALEC (*ga udari*):

Nadaljuj!

CARAVAGGIO:

Zakaj me mučite? Jaz nisem disident. Mene politika ne zanima. Zmerom sem rad sodeloval z oblastjo. Samo ubog slikar sem, rojen 17. oktobra 1571 v Milanu, umrl 18. julija 1610 v Portu Ercole. Danes je 15. julij, do smrti imam še natanko tri dni.

GIULIO:

Resnico govori, jamčim zanj!

ZASLIŠEVALEC:

Sem tebe kaj vprašal? Glej risanke, sicer boš šel nazaj v keho. – Nadaljuj!

CARAVAGGIO:

V strahu pred kaznijo sem s kraja zločina pobegnil. Najprej sem se skrival v okolici Rima, potem sem zbežal v Neapelj, od tam na Malto, z Malte na Sicilijo; bil vmes v Messini in Palermu, dokler oktobra 1609 nisem spet prišel v Neapelj, kjer sem ostal do

predvčerajšnjim, ko sem prejel povabilo kardinala del Monteja, da se vrnem v Rim, ker so mi kazni oprostili.

ZASLIŠEVALEC:

Domišljijo pa imaš, mojster, domišljijo. Moral bi napovedovati vreme. In zakaj nista šla iz Neaplja v Rim z avtom ali vlakom? Zakaj ravno z ladjo? Narediti sta vendar morala cel ovinek.

CARAVAGGIO:

Ker sem se bal, da bi mi rimski sovražniki na cesti ne pripravili kake pasti; hotel sem se ogniti običajni poti in priti v Rim s povsem druge strani tako, da bi vse presenetil.

POLICIJSKI NAČELNIK (*vstopi*):

Lahko ju spustiš. Pomotoma ste ju aretirali. Našli so prave.

CARAVAGGIO:

Kaj? Zmotili ste se?

GIULIO:

Vidite? Ves čas sem vam zatrjeval: nisva prava!

ZASLIŠEVALEC:

Hvala bogu. Še ob pamet bi me spravila.

[Na televiziji se pojavi portret gospodične Phyllis.]

GIULIO:

To je Phyllis. Naša Phyllis.

POLICIJSKI NAČELNIK:

To je ona. Atentatorka. (*Pojača televizijski zvok.*)

TELEVIZIJSKA NAPOVEDOVALKA:

... In s tem so vsi pomembni voditelji Rdečih brigad za zapahi.

Danes zjutraj so v nekem rimskem stanovanju našli truplo gospodične Phyllis, imenovane, Sv. Judita, morilke generala Holeferna. Predvidevajo, da si je slavna teroristka sodila sama. To je bila naša zadnja vest. Nadaljujemo s programom za naše malčke. (*Risanka.*)

CARAVAGGIO.

In kaj bo z nama?

POLICIJSKI NAČELNIK:

Lahko gresta.

CARAVAGGIO:

Kje so najine stvari?

POLICIJSKI NAČELNIK:

Kakšne stvari?

CARAVAGGIO:

Najina prtljaga; moji kovčki, moje slike, barve, čopiči, platna?

ZASLIŠEVALEC:

Mi nimamo ničesar.

CARAVAGGIO:

Kako? Vse je bilo na ladji.

ZASLIŠEVALEC:

Od tam nismo ničesar vzeli.

CARAVAGGIO:

To je rop! Vse, kar sem imel, je bilo z mano na ladji! Kam ste spravili moje stvari?

POLICIJSKI NAČELNIK:

Najbrž so tam, kjer ste jih pustili. Vendar pa se bojim, da je ladja odplula proti Cipru.

GIULIO:

O, ne!

CARAVAGGIO.

Nemogoče!

POLICIJSKI NAČELNIK:

Pa je! Zdaj pa izginita! Sicer vaju dam res zapreti. Gremo! Vrzite ju ven!

OB MORJU

Devetnajsti prizor

Nastopajoči:
CARAVAGGIO, GIULIO, TOTO

[Peščena morska obala. Giulio in Caravaggio brezciljno hodita.]

CARAVAGGIO:

Kam naj grem? Ničesar več nimam. Nič več nisem.

GIULIO:

Morava priti do Rima, dragi, daj, potrpi še malo, vzdrži. Vidiš zdaj, kako je bil tvoj strah prazen. Pomotoma so naju zaprli, hahaha ...

CARAVAGGIO:

A najinega Rima ni več.

GIULIO:

Pa je, dragi. Mora biti. Rim je večen. Drugi ljudje živijo v njem, toda ulice in zgradbe najinih spominov še obstajajo. Prosim te, Michel, morava priti tja. Danes je četrtek. V baru Orlando Furioso je premiera.

CARAVAGGIO:

Bolan sem. Umrl bom. Pojdi sam.

GIULIO:

Ne, skupaj bova šla.

CARAVAGGIO:

Ne morem več. (*Omaga in pade v pesek.*)

GIULIO:

Michel, Michel!

CARAVAGGIO:

Še tri dni imam do smrti. Ostal bom v Portu Ercole, zadela me bo sončarica, v blodnjah visoke vročine bom umrl, razžrt od malarije.

GIULIO:

Jaz moram priti v Rim! (*Zajoče.*)

CARAVAGGIO:

Pojdi! Jaz bom ostal tu, in čakal nate, smrt.

TOTO (*se potihem prikrade s strani*):

Giulio! Ej, Giulio!

GIULIO (*se obrne*).

TOTO:

Pssst!

GIULIO:

Toto! Toto! Moj zlati Toto!

TOTO:

Prišel sem, da te odpeljem v Rim.

GIULIO:

V Rim? – Ja! V Rim! Danes je četrtek. V našem baru je premiera.

TOTO:

Na žalost Orlanda Furiosa ni več.

GIULIO:

Kaj pa potem počenjaš?

TOTO:

Delam verske oddaje za televizijo. Baglione me je angažiral.

GIULIO:

A res? Me vzameš v službo?

TOTO:

Seveda. Zato sem prišel. Igral boš angela smrti v pasijonu Kristusovega trpljenja.

GIULIO:

Super! Te vloge še nisem igral.

TOTO (*se ozre na umirajočega Caravaggia*):

A to je Caravaggio?

GIULIO:

Morava ga vzeti zraven.

TOTO:

To bo pa bolj težko. Saj je že skoraj mrtev.

CARAVAGGIO:

Pustite me, prosim; rad bi umrl ob morju.

GIULIO:

Kaj pa govoriš, Michel? Ti si vendar večni; nikoli ne boš umrl. Se spomniš, kaj je govoril kardinal del Monte? Smrti ni, je samo življenje. (*Caravaggia spravita na noge.*) Vidiš, da zmoreš. Zdaj lahko gremo. Lepo počasi, korak za korakom. (*Hodijo ob obali.*)

TOTO:

Kakšna vročina! Nikjer oblačka. Samo nebo in morje in pesek in sonce.

GIULIO:

Vse ena sama ravnina. A je do Rima še daleč?

TOTO:

Daleč. Ampak sonce je visoko. Do večera bomo že prišli.

GIULIO:

Ja, ja; treba je verjeti, in upati. Potem se stvari kar zgodijo. Si predstavljaš, Michel, v Rimu nas vsi pričakujejo in ugibljejo, po kateri poti pridemo. Mi pa nenadoma stopimo prednje iz zraka. Hahaha ... Saj ne bodo verjeli, da smo se res vrnil.

[Začne grmeti.]

TOTO:

Kaj pa je to? Grmenje sodi v naslednji prizor.

GIULIO:

Včasih se tudi bogovi zmotijo.

[Začne se temniti in bliskati, grmenje narašča; zapiha tudi veter; nevihta bo vsak hip tu.]

TOTO:

So se pa resno lotili. Mokri bomo ko miši.

GIULIO:

Kje pa! Uprava gledališča je uporabo dežja prepovedala.

TOTO:

Sreča za nas. A nebo je vseeno čudno. Poglej oblake, še pred minuto jih ni bilo.

CARAVAGGIO *(se začne smejati)*.

TOTO:

Končno si se zbudil! Boš zdaj lahko hodil?

[Z vso silovitostjo se ulije ploha.]

TOTO: Kaj? To je pravi dež!?

[Oba z Giulijem stečeta z odra pod streho, Caravaggio pa se razširjenih rok preda neurju, prekipavajoč od sreče.]

CARAVAGGIO:

»Oče, v tvoje roke izročam svoje telo in svojo dušo.«

VSTAJENJE

Dvajseti prizor

Nastopajoči:

CARAVAGGIO, GIULIO, TOTO, BAGLIONE, LENA,
TOMASSONI, MODELI SLIKE POLAGANJE V GROB

*[V televizijskem studiu. Sliši se Mozartov **Requiem**. Priprave na snemanje Totove velikonočne verske oddaje. Na velikih monitorjih tečejo posnetki Golgote in Kristusovega križanja. Toto daje zadnja navodila pred začetkom snemanja. Kamere so vključene tudi v dvorani, kjer snemanjo gledalce.]*

TOTO:

Pozor, začeli bomo! Ton, kamera, teče!

*[Kamere začno spremljati prizor, ki je koreografiran posnetek Caravaggiove slike **Polaganje v grob**. Kristusa igra Caravaggio. Najprej ga snamejo s križa, nato ga prinesejo h grobu. Ko Giulio odvali pokrov groba, Caravaggio nenadoma prekine igro.]*

CARAVAGGIO:

Ne, ne več; premislil sem si. V tej zgodbi ne želim več sodelovati. Dovolj je bilo.

[V studiu nastane vsesplošno vznemirjenje; iluzije slike ni več; snemanje je prekinjeno, čeprav na televizijskih monitorjih »Polaganje v grob« teče dalje.]

TOTO (*zmeden*):

Drage gledalke, cenjeni gledalci, to je nesporazum! – Stop, stop! Konec! Nehajte! Tega ni bilo v scenariju!

[Televizijski ekrani se ugasnejo. Prižgejo se dežurne luči.]

BAGLIONE (*pridrvi ves besen*):

Sramota! Odpuščeni ste!

*[Zmedo v studiu prekrije reprodukcija Caravaggiovega tihožitja **Deček s košaro sadja**. Med tihožitjem se pojavi Tomassoni in Caravaggiu – skozi sliko – izroči resnično jabolko.]*

TOMASSONI:

»Lepota je v očeh občudovalca in ljubezen v tistem, ki ljubi.«

EPILOG

Nastopajoči:

BAGLIONE, CARAVAGGIO, TOMASSONI

[Isto okolje kot v prologu: galerijski hodnik, noč; skozi prazno srebrno steno se vidi vrt z mesečino.]

BAGLIONE:

Začenjam z biografijo človeka, zaradi katerega bo tudi moje ime ostalo v zgodovini. Kdo bi se sicer kdaj spomnil malega, nepomembnega, predvsem pa nevoščljivega in zagrenjenega umetnostnega kritika in kustosa, če iz gorja, ki ga je v svojem življenju storil sebi in drugim, ne bi rasla tudi taka umetnost, kot je slikarstvo Michelangela Merisija da Caravaggia. Čas, ti edini resnični in pravi gospodar vsega, bog nad bogovi, ti, ki izravnaš vse! Kdo bi si mislil, da se bodo Contarellijeve napovedi uresničile? Pa so se. Danes so v Milanu odprli svetovno razstavo Caravaggiovih slikarskih del. Z veličastnim uspehom. Za katalog sem napisal uvodni esej. Seveda nisem izdal svojega pravega mnenja. Osmešil bi se.

[Skozi steno se vidi, kako Caravaggio odrine pokrov svojega groba in vstane.]

BAGLIONE:

Toda, kako naj ljubim, kako naj cenim človeka, ki mi še po smrti ne da miru?

CARAVAGGIO (*pride do stene k Baglioneju, mu nekaj govori, a njegovega glasu ni slišati*).

BAGLIONE:

Poglejte, že spet je tu! In tako vsako noč. Kaj vse mi počenja! Hvala bogu, sem se teh prikazni že navadil. Svoj čas pa sem umiral od strahu. Posebej, ko sije mesec, je prijazen. Takrat zadaj na vrtu z Ranucciom Tomassonijem igrata tenis. (*Izroči Caravaggiu teniške loparje skozi steno.*) Nerodno je samo to, da moram imeti njune loparje na skrbi jaz. Po končani tekmi jih moram pospraviti in jih čuvati do naslednjega dne, ko jih moram spet izročiti. To je pravzaprav moja kazen. Če se tako vzame, sploh ni pretirana, samo konca ji ni videti nikjer.

[*Caravaggio in Tomassoni začneta igrati tenis na vrtu. Luna sije. Baglione se neopazno umakne.*]



GIORDANO BRUNO

Dramatic Dialogues

1998

Translated by Tomaž Onič

CHARACTERS

AUTHOR, playwright*
GIORDANO BRUNO, philosopher
ROBERTO BELLARMINO, inquisitor
TIBOR, guard

**The author and the inquisitor are played by the same actor.*

PLACE AND TIME

The first part takes place in the author's study in the present,
the second part in the winter of 1600 in The Castle
of Sant'Angelo in Rome.



*The premiere of both parts of the play was on
9 September 1998 at the Slovene National Theatre in Maribor.*

Directed by Maria Millas.

Part One

HOLY FIRE or PROLOGUE TO THE PLAY GIORDANO BRUNO

[The play takes place on a rainy night in an attic room, where the Author sits at the typewriter and types. When the typing stops, one can hear rain drops falling on the roof. The room filled with books and manuscripts is dark; it is lit only by the lamp on the desk. Next to it stands a small bust of Giordano Bruno. A candle is lit in front of it.]

AUTHOR (*while typing*):

You said that I would not make it, that I would again run out of inspiration even before starting. Perhaps you were right. But I assure you, I will not give in. I promise you, Mr headmaster, I will finish this play, even if I spend my whole life writing it. No work has ever bewildered me so much. It obsesses me. I am in constant anticipation of a miraculous moment when a spark of heavenly inspiration takes me from the abyss of this writer's block! (*He stops and thinks, pulls the paper from the typewriter and tears it up.*) No, seriously, I cannot send him such a letter; I am mad, I am completely mad! This really sends him a message that there will never be a play... And I have already spent my advance. I should not have signed that unfortunate contract. But what could I do? I was penniless, as always... No, no! (*Again he inserts paper and starts to type.*) Mr headmaster, this is a play that we all anticipate – you as the most successful theatre director, I as the most successful playwright of my generation... (*He stops typing and stares into space.*) The play I understand less and less, the text that grows less and less familiar to me... My God, why? Why?

[From the dark background steps Giordano Bruno, as a ghost. He resembles the bust on the Author's desk. The Author is speechless. Bruno approaches him.]

BRUNO:

Why? Because I do not need this play. And, obviously, neither do you.

AUTHOR:

But I do need it. More than anyone!

BRUNO:

Why should you write at all? Why create great and important works? Be famous?

AUTHOR:

Who are you?

BRUNO:

The title character of your play. (*Picks up the bust of Giordano Bruno.*) Giordano Bruno. Don't we resemble each other?

AUTHOR:

Giordano Bruno, you?

BRUNO:

Good evening, friend! I did not knock, but the door was unlocked.

AUTHOR:

Great! Beautiful! Finally, I am insane. I am starting to hallucinate. – So, Mr Illusion, you could have been more polite. And what's more, I did not picture you like this.

BRUNO:

Imagination and reality are two separate worlds. Often very different from each other. Sometimes quite opposite.

AUTHOR:

So you are supposed to be the materialization of my thoughts?

BRUNO:

You can touch me.

AUTHOR:

No, no. I prefer things that only appear real.

BRUNO:

Fine. My visit will thus be even more mysterious. So, you would like to write a play about me and my life?

AUTHOR:

Yes.

BRUNO:

And how long has the pain of writing lasted so far?

AUTHOR:

Since I started writing for the theatre. Seven years. Every now and then I come back to it, but I can never finish.

BRUNO:

You did not have similar problems with other texts?

AUTHOR:

No. I wrote *Nero* as well as *Einstein* at a go.

BRUNO:

If I understand correctly, you have finished two great historical plays in these years?

AUTHOR:

Nero was proclaimed the best debut play, while *Einstein* won me the prize for the best play of the year.

BRUNO:

You think the play about Giordano Bruno will also be a success?

AUTHOR:

I have no doubt about this.

BRUNO:

Well, it won't be, I can tell you that. It will never be written, never completed. And you know it.

AUTHOR:

I'm hallucinating! These aren't my thoughts!

BRUNO:

What was supposed to be the central theme of this play about Giordano Bruno?

AUTHOR:

Freedom and truth.

BRUNO:

Are you free? Are you the truth?

AUTHOR:

I am an artist. I create. I give myself to inspiration, and when I fly on its wings, I know that what I am creating is real.

BRUNO:

But with me, your inspiration cannot catch fire. Am I right?

AUTHOR:

Yes and no. When I deal intensively with Bruno, I become a different man. I stop thinking about the play, I think of my life, of the purpose of being. I start doubting my artistic calling. I ask myself whether what I do is good, if the art I am creating is the right one.

BRUNO:

Of course, because you do not want to hear what you should.

AUTHOR:

And this is?

BRUNO:

Stop dealing with this play.

AUTHOR:

Why?

BRUNO:

Nobody needs it the way you want to create it.

AUTHOR (*laughs*):

I should renounce a work into which I have put all my creative hopes?

BRUNO:

You must renounce certain ways of feeling and thinking. In fact, only certain aesthetic norms and philosophical categories.

AUTHOR:

No, no. I will renounce nothing. Giordano Bruno's biography is in itself a perfect dramatic creation. Classic dramaturgy in its most original meaning. It contains the purest of the first-class dramatic conflicts, which call out to be staged.

BRUNO:

I renounced my life, and you cannot renounce your dramaturgic ideas? And you wish to be my biographer?

AUTHOR:

Oh, come on! You renounced your life because you enjoyed the role of victim. I've studied you in detail. You were blinded by your own heroism. You were full of yourself and your significance. And last but not least, you knew that lifelong glory awaited you, that for

centuries people would think about you, write books, stage plays, make films...

BRUNO (*laughs*).

AUTHOR:

I will not depict you so pitifully, but nonetheless, this is what you are.

BRUNO (*laughs even more*).

AUTHOR:

I've got you, right?

BRUNO:

Not me, you got yourself! I don't care what people talk and think about, but you do. The opinions of others about me – these are their lives, their truths. I have nothing to do with them.

AUTHOR:

Then allow me my own opinion about you.

BRUNO:

You are different. I cannot feel indifferent to you. You have been chosen to learn the essence of Giordano Bruno. You just have to outgrow your present idea of the play. – My friend, only a step, one small step away from this silly theatre of yours lies a real piece of art: life – Giordano Bruno.

AUTHOR:

And what's so special about it?

BRUNO:

I'm standing in front of you and I'm watching you. Can you feel my gaze, my breathing?

AUTHOR:

This is not interesting for the theatre.

BRUNO:

Are you afraid of simplicity, the straightforwardness of the truth?

AUTHOR:

This is not the right stuff for a play. No drama, no conflict. They will boo me.

BRUNO:

You are afraid that the audience will not accept your work, and that they will not applaud.

AUTHOR:

Art is created for others. Applause is a natural consequence.

BRUNO:

But not when we provide flattery and try to please, no matter what. You cannot sacrifice your own honesty, your own integrity for fame and public recognition. – No, my friend, this is not how you create a play about Giordano Bruno. If works of art are not the true reflection of the real condition of the artist's soul, they are empty. They can be beautiful and attractive on the outside, perfect in their form, but there is no fire of life in them. They will be forgotten as soon as the tastes of the audience and the critics change.

AUTHOR:

So there should be no difference between art and life?

BRUNO:

No, there cannot be a difference between the art and the artist.

AUTHOR:

So, your biography should be my autobiography?

BRUNO:

In a way, yes.

AUTHOR:

Funny.

BRUNO:

You said that your personality was changing as you were dealing with me. Have you ever thought that you are not writing the play about Giordano Bruno for the theatre but for yourself?

AUTHOR:

I *have* thought about it. But the questions that arise are too important to be discussed in public. This play is my contribution to the defence of freedom of thought and freedom of religious belief. I want to deal critically with the history of the church and unveil the real background of its re-ascent to power.

BRUNO:

You want to participate in the combat between the Church and society. Do you enjoy the role of arbiter? Or do you wish to take sides with one of the fighting parties?

AUTHOR:

The church must be treated firmly. There should be no room for compromise. Whenever in history this mistake was made, a catastrophe followed.

BRUNO:

What did it do to you?

AUTHOR:

To me nothing. But to others! The play about Giordano Bruno is dedicated to victims of the inquisition.

BRUNO:

You want to avenge the pain and suffering of victims of the inquisition?

AUTHOR:

This is a critical insight into the violence connected with the history of the church. Violence and religion cannot coexist. But in Christianity this happens constantly.

BRUNO:

However, your play will only prolong this situation. You will only trigger the old polemics and fights between the supporters and the adversaries of the church.

AUTHOR:

The theatre mirrors the society.

BRUNO:

Perhaps. However, we must ask ourselves who are the people holding this mirror in their hands. They choose what we will see. – Tell me, why have you given up the original title of the play? Do you no longer like the title Phoenix or the Mysterious Transformation? Do you suddenly fear a turn in your own creativity or personality? (*Looks him in the eye.*)

AUTHOR (*after a long silence*):

Be gone!

BRUNO:

Show me the order of the scenes.

AUTHOR:

Please, leave.

BRUNO:

You will feel better if we discuss the plot together. Perhaps this will

give you the key to its conclusion. – So, Act One, the San Domenico Maggiore monastery in Naples, 1566. Giordano Bruno is eighteen and studies theology.

AUTHOR:

Evening. Young Bruno together with other students, is captivated by the lecture of the old latitudinarian friar. Suddenly, across the sky flies a marvellously beautiful bird that nobody had seen before...

BRUNO:

... that nobody knows. – Phoenix! A sacred bird, a symbol of immortality, a symbol of eternal rebirth. The Phoenix flies to its death. Its wings sink into the blood-red ball of the setting sun. When the bird grows old and feels death approaching, it buries itself in its nest and burns in its own heat, then it is born again from its own ashes.

AUTHOR:

At first there is freedom, openness, a wide humanistic view, renaissance in its true meaning, then the intrusion of dark forces of the papal court and devastation.

BRUNO:

Pure epic dramaturgy?

AUTHOR:

In a way, yes. Even though, I would not want it to be just that. This, in fact, starts like a thriller. During the night, the old friar is killed. The find his body in the morning in the monastery hall. A few hours later, the inquisitorial police appear at the monastery and start an investigation. They question the prior, several professors and students, Giordano Bruno among them. The friar's murder remains a mystery. The main inquisitor threatens to turn the case over to the inquisitorial court. The following night the inquisitor is killed. The monastery is in a panic.

BRUNO:

That night I was with my beloved, a gorgeous nun, in the garden of a neighbouring convent. Bewildered from fresh affection and the passion of a young woman's body, I was returning home in the morning. They caught me as I was climbing over the monastery wall. They led me to the prior's reception room, where my student colleague was being interrogated. He, too, was caught returning from his beloved. It was a mere coincidence that we became the main suspects in the inquisitor's murder.

AUTHOR:

The next day, a new inquisitor comes to the monastery. He soon discovers the real killer.

BRUNO:

I was exonerated. But my name stayed in the minutes. Because I defended the liberal ideas of the old friar, I was for the first time branded a heretic.

AUTHOR:

Good, is it not? A drama worth of Schiller or Shakespeare.

BRUNO:

Yes, if it were all through!? The following night they were supposed to kill my beloved?

AUTHOR:

I know that the young nun is my fabrication, but I need her appearance for the continuation of the play.

BRUNO:

The nuns from the convent suspected that their sister was pregnant. Fearing the inquisition, they wanted to conceal this sin. They ripped the babe from the unfortunate girl. In the middle of the night I found her dead on the hill above the sea. The moon was bright in

the sky, and I cried. I felt I had lost everything that was dear to me in my life. My Christian understanding of God died with my Beatrice.

AUTHOR:

This is the key moment for Bruno's lifelong aversion to the institution of the Church. He chooses a life in freedom and for freedom. – You removed your habit and ran away from Naples.

BRUNO:

Of course, that's not what really happened. I first fled from the terror of the inquisition when in the remand prison of the Minerva monastery in Rome.

AUTHOR:

Well, I can adapt a thing or two. This is not a documentary.

BRUNO:

Despite a few inadequacies, or better, ideological adaptations, I find the play good to this point. But not the continuation. You switched to a completely different narrative style. The following Acts are way different from Act One. In fact, they are not connected to Act One. They are just fragments, illustrations. For instance, the journey to Switzerland and France, where I have to face the reality of religious wars directly. Or my stay in London, and the encounter with the Queen of England, which was one of the greatest London experiences; Elizabeth I had a great sense of humour and could crack such witty jokes at the expense of the Pope that I laughed till I cried.

AUTHOR:

I agree, the transition between Acts One and Two is my main dramatic problem, but right now I do not know how to resolve it.

BRUNO:

Perhaps the beginning of the play is not right?

AUTHOR:

No, the beginning is fine. I need Bruno's very personal reason for resenting the institutions of the church. It will be persuasive if I show it as a tragedy of young love.

BRUNO:

You are prejudiced. You paint me too black-and-white. Besides, you are forgetting that I am mostly known as a philosopher and a mystic.

AUTHOR:

I have taken care of that. I have a few wonderful scenes, which I intend to include in the third and fourth acts. For instance, your heated discussion with your London friends about the truth, or exposing the mysteries of cabalist mystical theology in the 1589 fairy-tale Prague.

BRUNO:

And the end of the play?

AUTHOR:

The end will introduce some unusual and fatal coincidences of your life. Tell me something: when in Frankfurt in 1591, why did you accept an invitation from the Venetian nobleman Giovanni Mocenigo to come to Venice? You knew you could be caught by the inquisition?

BRUNO:

I do not know, I just went. I felt the urge at the time.

AUTHOR:

A truly remarkable decision. Throughout your wandering around Europe, there was an inquisitorial warrant against you. You knew that Papal Rome held you as a major enemy of the Church, and yet you went. Courage or insanity? At any rate, a brilliant resolution. I would like to depict the time before your arrest in bright tones.

Act Four will start with a relaxed celebration and a masked ball. Giovanni Mocenigo, the traitor, should look slightly eccentric. The Scene when on 23 May 1591 Mocenigo reports you to the Venetian inquisition tribunal should be tragicomic.

BRUNO (*laughs*):

I like this. The more humour the better.

AUTHOR:

Well, I don't know if we can laugh at such an obviously staged trial? Anyhow, I intend to quote the official inquisition minutes and the letter of a certain Mr Schopp which he wrote to his friend on the day after your execution at the Campo de' Fiori.

BRUNO:

But at this point I am not dead yet, I have almost ten more years to live.

AUTHOR:

This is the last Act. It is almost finished.

BRUNO:

Interesting, interesting. It is obviously the most autobiographical.

AUTHOR:

Please! – The setting is the cells of the Sant' Angelo castle in Rome, where Bruno was imprisoned from 27 February 1593 until his death on 17 February 1600. All these years, there was an ongoing public process against him. It got seriously tense in 1597 when Roberto Bellarmino became the inquisitor of Rome. – Here, you are welcome to read it!

BRUNO (*flips through the Author's text*):

Looks quite interesting. But what's the point of a play where everything is clear from the very beginning? These situations have been dealt with a thousand times. This is nothing new.

AUTHOR:

Classics remain classics. Good stuff is eternal.

BRUNO:

You are caught in the great dramatic illusion, in the illusion of the important, eternal truths. I am sorry, but these are all very limited and biased visions of reality.

AUTHOR:

What do you mean?

BRUNO:

You are a victim of your beliefs; but most of all a victim of social prejudice and mental delusion. – You are so scared of overstepping the limits of the known, the real and the possible, so scared that you will never know real freedom of thought and creation. – My friend, the real theme of your play is not me; it is you and your writing.

AUTHOR:

What do you mean?

BRUNO:

You are not writing a play about Giordano Bruno, but about the inquisition. It all stems from your relation to the inquisition and the history of the Church. But why repeat history and correct the mistakes of the past? Change yourself, and the past will no longer be the past. The human brain makes up the borders of the real and the possible, then starts to believe in them. Our truth is what we believe.

AUTHOR:

Have I then lived in error all this time? Have all my efforts been in vain?

BRUNO:

No, they have not. You have grown up with Giordano Bruno. That's why I am here – for you to see this and ultimately grow up.

AUTHOR:

My plays are not my life!

BRUNO:

Oh, but they are! You really always write about yourself. What you write is what happens to you. You live them. Your artistic imagination, your thoughts and feelings are the reality you live in. Think now what kind of reality you wish to create? Where and how to live?

AUTHOR:

You attribute to art more power than it really has.

BRUNO:

Works of art are living beings, first in the internal world of the artist, then in the worlds of all who come in contact with them.

AUTHOR:

Don't be ridiculous! An artwork does not shape an individual's life.

BRUNO:

Not exactly shapes but helps in shaping. An artwork becomes part of human thoughts and feelings, part of one's reality. – The world you show is a world with no way out, destined to an eternal dual of good and evil. The martyrs will be torturers tomorrow, and the torturers martyrs. The devil and God will never shake hands here. Light and darkness will never be one here. Do you still wish to live in such a world?

AUTHOR:

No.

BRUNO:

Then stop creating it. Stop creating the experience of suffering and violence connected to the history of the Church, the history of spilling Christ's blood. Because this play has no end. You will never finish it. Impossible. No one ever has. So, stop writing. Now, this instant!

AUTHOR:

What should I do?

BRUNO:

Start realizing what you are doing. Recognize the simple fact that you are lost within the walls of your own mind. The borders in which you locked yourself with your artistic ambitions will suffocate you. – My friend. You can outgrow yourself. Your spirit is infinite! Boundless. We are eternal, immortal. We only need to recognize it. In ourselves. From ourselves.

AUTHOR:

Who are you?

BRUNO:

A dream; a dream that is dreamed by the living and lived by the dead.

AUTHOR:

And I? What am I in all this?

BRUNO:

A small child of the truth, like me.

AUTHOR:

And *you* say that?

BRUNO:

Look at the flame of this candle! What do you see?

AUTHOR:

Fire.

BRUNO:

And now look at me. – The right title of your play is Phoenix.

AUTHOR:

I know.

BRUNO:

Do you see now why I am here?

AUTHOR:

Who are you? Who?

BRUNO:

Vision and truth, just like life itself.

AUTHOR:

Enough! Stop torturing me. I renounce this play. I renounce it. You have convinced me. I don't need it. Nobody needs it. Giordano Bruno, go back to history! You are forgotten! Forgotten! You don't exist, you no longer exist!

BRUNO:

Touch me.

AUTHOR:

No! You don't exist – you don't – you don't...

BRUNO:

I do. (*Touches the author's hands and face.*)

AUTHOR (*tries to break free from his touch*):

No, no, no.

BRUNO:

I exist. I live. This is my whole truth. Everything history knows about me is nothing compared to this simple fact. Less than nothing.
(*Starts to set the pages of the Author's play on fire.*)

AUTHOR:

What are you doing?

BRUNO:

I am lighting a fire.

AUTHOR:

Burning my manuscript?

BRUNO:

Writing your play. (*Keeps setting the pages on fire.*)

AUTHOR:

Destroying my work!

BRUNO:

What is the truth beyond your papers; what is life beyond your theatre?

AUTHOR:

My God, hallucinations! Hallucinations! Get away from me! Get away! – Flames? Fire?

BRUNO:

Holy fire has never been a hallucination.

AUTHOR:

Brother, there is only one truth, that we live.

BRUNO:

We can recognize this truth and outgrow it.

[Joins Bruno in setting the pages on fire. They both start laughing and enjoying it. Then Bruno suddenly disappears. A fire breaks out. The author realizes what he is doing.]

AUTHOR:

My God! What am I doing?

[The fire spreads until it engulfs the whole space.]

AUTHOR (*disappears in flames*):

I'm burning! I'm burning! I'm burning!

[Curtain. Giordano Bruno with the manuscript of the last Act steps onto the proscenium.]

BRUNO:

I am. I exist. This is the only truth that needs no proof. I am standing here on this stage, in the spotlight, and you can watch me. You see me better than I see you. So, this is it. – No applause? No criticism? Good or bad? Of course. My performance is finished. My theatre is no more. The heroes are dead, the legends are dreamt away, history is forgotten, and I am again nothingness – emptiness, peace, quiet. We can again live our everyday lives. Ah, yes! I almost forgot. Here is the manuscript of the last Act of the Author's lost play. I guess I should read it.

Part Two

DEDICATED TO THE VICTIMS OF THE INQUISITION

Scene One

[The Castle of Sant'Angelo in Rome, winter 1600. Giordano Bruno is seated on the floor of the prison cell, meditating. In front of the door stands Tibor, the guard. Down the dark stairs comes Pietro Bellarmino. Tibor stops him.]

TIBOR:
Stop! Who goes there?

BELLARMINO:
Me.

TIBOR:
Me who?

BELLARMINO:
Me.

TIBOR:
Stop! Don't move!

BELLARMINO:
How dare you stop me?

TIBOR:
Who are you that I should not?

BELLARMINO:
You will lose your job.

TIBOR:

I was told to follow the grand inquisitor's orders strictly. Nobody comes near Giordano Bruno's cell.

BELLARMINO:

I issued this order; therefore, I can break it, too.

TIBOR:

Roberto Bellarmino! My apologies. I am sorry, I did not recognize you.

BELLARMINO:

Open up!

TIBOR (*lets him in*):

I am sorry, grand inquisitor, please, I am sorry.

BELLARMINO (*enters*):

How is he?

TIBOR:

Asleep.

BELLARMINO:

What do you mean, asleep? Whenever I come, he is asleep.

TIBOR:

He is not really asleep. He just sits there and pretends to be asleep.

BELLARMINO:

So, he meditates?

TIBOR:

Last time you said that he could meditate.

BELLARMINO:

That is because you are unable to distinguish meditation from sleeping.

TIBOR:

To me this is the same.

BELLARMINO:

Well, it is not. People like you always sleep. Giordano Bruno never. He is possessed by the devil. There is no longer any doubt about it now. He is finished. It is hopeless to even speak to him. But still. – Wake him.

TIBOR (*wakes Bruno who is in meditative state*):

Hey, mate, wake up! You have a visitor.

BRUNO:

Welcome, Bellarmino. Would you sit down? I can offer you some straw.

BELLARMINO:

I will be brief. I come with a special order from the Pope. I bring a personal request from him.

BRUNO:

Oh, it must be something highly important for Clement VIII to address me personally.

BELLARMINO:

The Holy Father offers you one last chance to renounce your books and ideas and repent.

BRUNO:

Is the matter not concluded yet?

BELLARMINO:

This is your last chance to save yourself from death!

BRUNO:

Repent for what? I do not feel guilty.

BELLARMINO:

You will burn at the stake.

BRUNO:

If this is the fate God chose for me, let it happen.

BELLARMINO (*to Tibor*):

Tibor, you may go. Wait outside.

TIBOR:

Yes, sir. (*Leaves.*)

BELLARMINO:

Listen, Bruno. This is serious. A new century is beginning. A great catholic renewal of the world is beginning. No more compromise. All who spread heresy and confuse the believers will be outlawed and exterminated. Do you think the inquisitorial court has nothing better to do than to deal with your heresies?

BRUNO:

You do not need to deal with them at all. They have no positive value for you. You do nothing but direct your anger at them and you hate everything connected to them. Why? You will never understand the real essence of my work. And if you did, you would not know what to do with it. It is too distant from you. Therefore, it is best to ignore the whole thing and to focus on building your new heavenly kingdom.

BELLARMINO:

Is it really so difficult to repent?

BRUNO:

I am innocent. And you want me guilty.

BELLARMINO:

You are not innocent. You are a sinner. A mortal sinner. You are

burdened by sins committed through misguided reasoning. I am here to open your eyes.

BRUNO (*laughs*):

Can reasoning be right or wrong?

BELLARMINO:

Without a doubt. The right kind is inspired by the mercy of Jesus Christ and the wrong kind by the devilish plan of Satan and his helpers.

BRUNO (*laughs even more*):

How can you be so naive?

BELLARMINO:

The biggest of all Christian sins lies on your soul: denial of the true God. Do you not believe in Jesus Christ as our saviour?!

BRUNO:

I tell you, Bellarmino, Christ would be the first to object to the ideology of salvation with which the church has blotted his image; he would be the first to resist spreading the gospel by fire and sword.

BELLARMINO:

I will not debate the methods of spreading religion. They were not my idea.

BRUNO:

The end justifies the means.

BELLARMINO:

Our ends are divine. Any means is blessed that is used for the victory of the correct religion.

BRUNO:

Even crime?

BELLARMINO:

The secret of Jesus' salvation will forever remain foreign to you, you antichrist!

BRUNO:

What if it is foreign to you, not me?

BELLARMINO:

It is impossible to converse with you.

BRUNO:

You have tailored Jesus' teaching of salvation to subordinate the people and keep them in constant dependence on the institutions of the Church. You are spreading ideas that are opposed to Jesus' original teaching. You have changed the basic message about the secret of Christ's salvation, the idea of which is that everyone – just like him – becomes the truth and lives the unconditional non-selfish love, equal towards all living beings. This is salvation. This is enlightenment. Liberation that needs not await one's death but can be experienced today, this moment, here and now.

BELLARMINO:

The Jesus that you talk about is not the real Jesus. It is the Jesus of your imagination.

BRUNO:

Is the Jesus of the gospel writers and the Jesus of the first fathers of the Church anything but their imagination? Did he perhaps tell them in person what to write and do?

BELLARMINO:

You do not understand or do not want to understand the higher significance of Jesus' mission in human history, and even less the role of the Holy Church in this matter.

BRUNO:

Perhaps not. But I know for sure that your Jesus is not the Jesus who taught about salvation that can only come to life through mutual forgiveness and love. This Jesus is my friend. And I love him very much.

BELLARMINO:

If we know how to love unconditionally and forgive unselfishly, we must also know how to accept these from others. Whoever grants mercy, should also receive mercy. In your books and speeches you insulted the religious feelings of Christians and slandered the institution of the Church. The holy Father forgives you on behalf of the whole community of the Church. Why do you not want to accept the mercy of his forgiveness?

BRUNO:

The Pope forgives nothing. He wants me to publicly confess to something I did not do. Are you aware of what he is forcing me into?

BELLARMINO:

Your act would contribute to soothing the feelings of the public. And you would stay alive.

BRUNO:

Dead or alive – I don't care. For me, yesterday and tomorrow ceased to exist a long time ago.

BELLARMINO:

I would not expect someone who wrote *On Heroic Frenzies* to give in that easily.

BRUNO:

Do you remember what I said at the end of the trial?

BELLARMINO:

“Judges, you pronounce this sentence against me with greater fear than I receive it”.

BRUNO:

I am innocent. Clean.

BELLARMINO:

Revoke your statements. You have no chance of achieving anything but death at the stake with your stubbornness. Man, you will be burned alive unless you repent immediately!

BRUNO:

I have no intention of revoking anything I said. This would mean renouncing the philosophy that helped me become what I am. I would reject all spiritual science of self-recognition and self-liberation – the tradition that has been and will stay in the domain of spiritually enlightened and free thinking people. These are my brothers and sisters. Always and everywhere persecuted. I will revoke nothing so as to keep solidarity with them.

BELLARMINO:

You will burn at the stake for beliefs that change between today and tomorrow.

BRUNO:

Even though all is relative, this does not mean there cannot be something stable, absolute in man. The sense of honesty, for example.

BELLARMINO (*laughs*):

Honesty? Honesty – an absolute category? I cannot understand your pretence. You wrote yourself that the customs of morality change, that they depend on the social environment and the historical moment.

BRUNO:

I do not speak of moral values. I speak of pure heart, of the most

basic feelings that are roused in a man when he knows he is right. According with his conscience.

BELLARMINO:

You proclaim the gospel of freedom, free thought and free religion. Do you think people are ready for this? Tell them that everything is permitted, and society will dissolve itself into complete chaos and anarchy overnight.

BRUNO:

If you teach people freedom and at the same time fail to bring them up in tolerance towards difference, you cannot expect other than war. Through each person, God speaks the truth in an original way, unique to this person. Therefore, the life and truth of each individual must be honoured, since this is the only way to respect God. So, tolerance of difference is a basic condition for the creative life of society.

BELLARMINO:

It is impossible to argue with you. Everything you say smacks of hell. God created man in his own image, so people do not differ among themselves. The characteristics that distinguish us are not divine but diabolic.

BRUNO:

We have reached the essence of our different views. You see equality in similarity, I see it in diversity. The only problem is that one of these views is backed by the enormous power of the Church and the other by a single, frail man.

BELLARMINO:

No religious leader of any church in the world would watch quietly as the authority of religion and worship is disrupted before his eyes. Just think what would happen if we let everyone worship God as they pleased.

BRUNO:

This would really be the most natural form of religion.

BELLARMINO:

Atheist! You devil! Really, you are the devil! Only a man like you can think like this. No believer will agree with you.

BRUNO:

Because you taught people that nothing but respect for church sacraments and religious dogma leads to salvation. You are turning the faithful into frustrated ideological fanatics and not into religious people who have a spontaneous attitude to God and the world.

BELLARMINO:

Your ideas are literally crazy. Your books are a monument to a sick mind.

BRUNO:

No, Roberto! My books are a defense of freedom. A defense of freedom of opinion and expression, which will always be needed, because there will be people, always and everywhere, who will be afraid of freedom. The inquisition is eternal. It only changes its face. Its spirit remains the same.

BELLARMINO:

Satan!

BRUNO:

Although you have taken my physical freedom in the most drastic way, you will never take my inner freedom. It will forever remain unreachable for you, because your spirit is not free and your mind is limited! God created every human being as freedom. And if we want to repay him, the most we can place on his altar is our spiritual openness, broadness of mind and immensity of heart.

BELLARMINO:

God never uttered these divine truths that you proclaim; you did.

BRUNO:

And the laws that you proclaim divine and eternal, were they not created by man? – Man is fallible, wrapped in a thousands chains of ignorance and limitation. Only those who are aware of all the helplessness can serve God appropriately.

BELLARMINO:

Can you tell me how many people are actually able to accept the responsibility for their thoughts and actions? How many people can actually live freely?

BRUNO:

Today probably not many. The question is whether they have ever existed as a crowd or ever will. Inner freedom requires a fully ethical man.

BELLARMINO:

Your ideas are utopian and dangerous.

BRUNO:

Dangerous? Of course, dangerous! Dangerous for anyone in power. An enlightened man with inner freedom cannot be ruled; because he fears no government and no power, he recognizes no institution and no authority. Just think, my dear Bellarmino, what would happen if the living God awoke in the heart of every believer? What would happen to your Church if Jesus of Nazareth began to speak through every Christian?!

BELLARMINO:

It is obvious that our philosophies can never meet. And it is even more obvious that you will persist in your mistakes.

BRUNO:

Let us consider that my decision not to repent and not to accept the Pope's pardon is a mistake. Fine. This is my mistake. It will deprive me of a few years of life. But my mistake will bring out

another mistake, much larger, much more fatal. A mistake that will reveal the mistaken basis of your entire religious system. The crime that the Catholic Church takes upon itself by executing me will burden the entire history of Christianity.

BELLARMINO:

This will be a memory in the minds of historians, a dead memory, from which no one will get any particular benefit. But you will reject your life?

BRUNO:

Roberto, my poor Roberto, in all these years since you have tortured and questioned me – have you still not managed to get to know me?

BELLARMINO:

I am sorry, but I am here by order of the Pope. I have been commissioned to convince you to repent. The church is much more interested in your conversion than in your execution. Your name is linked to individuals and social movements that are too influential. For us your death is a great risk.

BRUNO:

I am dying for myself. Not for my enemies, nor for my friends.

BELLARMINO:

But you are no ordinary man.

BRUNO:

Before death, everyone becomes an ordinary man.

BELLARMINO:

I have been an inquisitor for twenty-five years, and I have to say that in all this time I have never met a man like you. I can honestly admit that all who warned me about you were right. You are a

dangerous man. When I am in your company, I am immersed in absolute doubt. I begin to wonder whether what I do is right at all. Whether my faith and my trust in Jesus Christ are true at all? If in my loyalty to the Pope and the Church I do not do the Christian religion more harm than good? If I continued with such thinking, I would probably have no other choice in the end but to kill myself. You are a dangerous man, Bruno! I can only thank God's providence that your process has ended.

BRUNO:

Is this then our last meeting?

BELLARMINO:

Almost certainly. I will tell the Pope that you took some time to think. If there is no repentance, you will be handed over to the Roman secular authorities next week.

BRUNO:

And recommend that they treat the convict gently, possibly without bloodshed. (*Smiles*). So, let him be burned in fire.

BELLARMINO:

It is your fault, Bruno! Entirely yours. However, he who wants to be free should bear the burden of responsibility.

BRUNO:

I would like to hug you in parting.

BELLARMINO:

Giordano Bruno? Never wanted to understand a thing, or could not. (*Leaves quickly.*)

Scene Two

[A few days later. Bruno sits on the floor, meditating. Reaches an ecstatic moment.]

BRUNO:

God – God – God! I could walk across the universe but could not find you. But one step, a single step away, introspection, and you everywhere. Wherever the eyes stop, all is you – I am you, and I see through your eyes. Oh, God! So infinitely distant and hidden, and yet so close – you are me, I am you. My God, you who exist when I say you do not, and you do not when I say that you do ... Now I know that you love me. I have never been so sure, never felt so clearly that we are one. Eternally one. We will always die together and be born together. Oh, God! My God! – Peace, peace within you and peace within me, God!

Scene Three

[Evening. Tibor brings supper to Bruno.]

TIBOR:

Good evening, sir. I bring your supper.

BRUNO:

Will you eat with me?

TIBOR:

I am not allowed.

BRUNO:

This is my last meal. What have you brought?

TIBOR:

Nothing different than usual. Only tonight you are entitled to a small supplement.

BRUNO:

Really? What is it?

TIBOR:

Two slices of bread.

BRUNO:

I will give you one. I am only used to one. Two will be too much.

TIBOR:

We are not allowed to take anything from the prisoners.

BRUNO:

I am a special prisoner.

TIBOR:

For me, everyone is the same. Well, ok, you really are quite different.

BRUNO:

Why?

TIBOR:

Well, ok, tomorrow you will not be among the living.

BRUNO:

This is true for many people, and they are no different for that.

TIBOR:

You are different because you are not afraid of death.

BRUNO:

Are you afraid of it?

TIBOR:

I don't have to die tomorrow. I will not be burned at the stake.

BRUNO:

You may have to face an even more horrible death. Nobody knows the door through which he will have to walk into eternity. Yet you need not fear death. You can only fear people. Other people make you suffer the most. Other people make dying the most difficult.

TIBOR:

I agree. But it's just you that can't live without others.

BRUNO:

True. Others are the environment of our lives. Relations with them are the main source of our happiness and our misery. You see, this is why you must not allow your inner peace to depend on others. – Will you then have this slice of bread after all?

TIBOR (*accepts the bread*):

Thank you.

BRUNO:

Sit down. We will eat together.

TIBOR:

That I would rather not. You know that jailers and prisoners are not allowed to socialize. It is prison rules.

BRUNO:

Fine. (*Starts eating.*) Ah, my dear Tibor, will you miss the company when this cell is empty?

TIBOR:

It surely won't be long. Perhaps I will get a new prisoner tomorrow.

BRUNO:

You are the jailer that a prisoner can only wish for in his final hour.

TIBOR:

You think so? My superiors have a totally different opinion about me.

BRUNO:

What are you still doing in these jails, anyway? You should leave. Find another job.

TIBOR:

It is difficult to get a permanent job today. And I have a family.

BRUNO:

Will you give my love, please, to your two daughters? How old are they?

TIBOR:

Eight and nine. But I can't say hi to them from you, since I never speak about my job at home.

BRUNO:

So your girls don't even know who Giordano Bruno is?

TIBOR:

They do. But they don't know I am his jailer.

BRUNO:

Why don't you tell them?

TIBOR:

Because they are afraid of you. Children on the street scare each other with your name. They see you as a bandit and the devil. I don't know what they would say if they knew that I was the jailer of a man whom they fear so much.

BRUNO:

They would laugh. They would probably realize that this fear is not as great as it may seem.

TIBOR:

Well, ok; perhaps I will tell them someday. Tell them the true story of Giordano Bruno. But first they should grow up a bit. Such little kids don't need to know all the mean tricks of the adults.

BRUNO (*stops eating*):

There. I have finished.

TIBOR:

You are quick.

BRUNO:

In fact, there was not much to eat. Just water. I will eat the bread later.

TIBOR (*takes Bruno's dish*):

Fine. Tonight I will come early to wake you. All who are bound for the stake are woken in the middle of the night.

BRUNO:

Just wake me when you must. You know I never really sleep.

TIBOR:

I will tell them. I will tell my girls that I once guarded a man who never slept. Hours and hours he would sit with feet crossed on his thighs and eyes closed. Then he would walk a little, lie down, and sit back with his eyes closed. How come he never gets tired, I wondered? And what is on his mind so that he can do this? And for such long periods of time? I have been counting years now. He is still rested and fresh as he was, young as he was.

BRUNO:

They will say that a man who is not asleep is awake.

TIBOR:

But you are also not awake. Tell me, what were you doing all this time while you were neither asleep nor awake?

BRUNO:

I lived, Tibor, lived.

TIBOR:

Well, ok, this was Giordano Bruno. Nobody will believe me anyway when I start to tell the story about you. And if they do believe it, they will say this man wasn't quite himself and it's probably right that they burned him.

BRUNO (*starts laughing*).

TIBOR:

I'm sorry; this is how people think. What can I do? Now I will go. I will not disturb you any longer.

BRUNO:

You are not disturbing me.

TIBOR:

No, no; I know when I need to leave.

BRUNO:

Fine. But do come to wake me on time.

TIBOR (*after a long silence*):

Are you really not afraid?

BRUNO:

No.

TIBOR:

Well, ok; you'd know... (*Leaves.*)

BRUNO (*stops in the middle of the cell with a slice of bread in his hands; starts eating, he smiles; continues in a short while*):

What is death to life? What is Earth to sky? What lies beyond the world of shapes and differences? What is beyond eternal dying and being reborn? What lies beneath the surface of wavering changes? What is a bird that flies across the sky? And what is the sky that remains after it and was here long before it? The Great Path – The eternal One, the immortal One, the voice of silence, the image of emptiness...

Scene Four

[In the middle of the night. Tibor is asleep before the door. Bruno walks in circles. Enter Roberto Bellarmino. In the semi-darkness, he bumps into the sleeping Tibor.]

BELLARMINO:
Are you sleeping?

TIBOR (*confused*):
Who is this? Who is this?

BELLARMINO:
Are you sleeping? Sleeping in your workplace?

TIBOR:
Ah, it is you?

BELLARMINO:
Get up and go. Wait for me outside.

TIBOR:
Yes sir, Mr inquisitor. (*Leaves.*)

BELLARMINO (*enters Bruno's cell and for some time silently watches Bruno walking in circles*).

BRUNO:
Well? Will you say something?

BELLARMINO:
I am not your murderer.

BRUNO:
I know.

BELLARMINO:

I was forced.

BRUNO:

You mean to say, they broke your free will.

BELLARMINO:

I could not endure it. The pressure was too strong.

BRUNO:

I forgive you. From the very beginning, everything was set in such a way that I had to be condemned. Also Pope's offer for clemency was nothing but Juda's kiss.

BELLARMINO:

Clement VIII required your death.

BRUNO:

I am completely indifferent to the issue of who is my murderer and who is not. I do not need to seek him and accuse him. I only have to die. The debate about whether my death is just or unjust is no concern of mine.

BELLARMINO:

But it is of mine. Because of you I can no longer sleep.

BRUNO:

Any feeling of guilt that lasts longer than three minutes is unreasonable and harmful to your mental health. Three minutes are plainly enough for a man to become aware of his errors.

BELLARMINO:

And then? What comes then?

BRUNO:

Nothing. The error must be amended, if it can still be done, of course.

BELLARMINO:

And if not?

BRUNO:

Then it must be remembered to avoid it next time. Repeating the same mistakes is useless self-torture.

BELLARMINO:

Giordano. – Do not be surprised when I tell you why I am here.

BRUNO:

I will not be easily surprised.

BELLARMINO:

I came to get you out of here.

BRUNO:

You will take me to the Campo de' Fiori? Since when do inquisitors lead their victims personally to execution?

BELLARMINO:

I have arranged everything for your escape.

BRUNO (*starts laughing*).

BELLARMINO:

Do not laugh. Horses are waiting outside. Tomorrow night you will be on the boat.

BRUNO (*still laughing*):

Roberto, my poor Roberto, what are you doing?

BELLARMINO:

This is a great wrong and I cannot allow it to happen. I was forced to condemn you. Therefore, I have the right to save you.

BRUNO:

My life is over. There is nothing more in me that ties me to this world.

BELLARMINO:

So you are not coming?

BRUNO:

I see no reason to escape.

BELLARMINO:

I wanted to help you.

BRUNO:

Yourself, not me.

BELLARMINO:

I am burning inside!

BRUNO:

I know. You have a bad conscience. You are haunted by the sense of guilt. But, Roberto. I am not the real cause of your pain. You alone are the cause of your suffering. You were double-crossed. All the time, you were nothing but a tool in the hands of the Catholic Church, but you never knew it – or did not want to know. You are a victim, just like me. Unfortunately, a much more tragic one.

BELLARMINO:

Something similar happened to me fifteen years ago. I felt the same pain in my heart, and I was haunted by the same anxiety. It was the case of a young woman accused of witchcraft. Even though all the evidence showed that she had participated in secret rituals, she seemed innocent all the time. She was not afraid of anything; she endured the torture virtually unscathed. Her answers were honest, and she stayed calm until the end, with some inexplicable internal joy. By the order of the bishop, who was accusing me of

dealing with the satanists and threatened my excommunication, I was forced to condemn her. The night before the execution, I came to her cell and took her out. I myself organized the escape. I paid for the horses and the boat. She sailed down the river to the first seaport, where she boarded a ship and every trace behind her was lost. After this incident, I felt a huge relief in my soul. I felt I had done a great and noble act. I preserved the purity of the profession. I allowed justice to win.

BRUNO:

How about other convicts, did you never feel the need to help them or to try and save them?

BELLARMINO:

Sometimes I have felt something similar, but never so forcefully.

BRUNO:

This means you were making a distinction between real and fictitious guilt or innocence. And what was your criterion?

BELLARMINO:

An inner sense. Feelings.

BRUNO:

You felt no positive feelings with other convicts?

BELLARMINO:

I did. But those feelings were different – unspecified, mixed with doubt. Only in this woman was there something that persuaded me of her innocence.

BRUNO:

My dear Bellarmino! What happened to you is something most human. You were touched by love, that's all. Love spoke to you from this woman, probably for the first and last time.

BELLARMINO:

In a way, I was really in love with her.

BRUNO:

What a pity you did not fall in love with more people.

BELLARMINO:

This woman was truly innocent. Regardless of my feelings.

BRUNO:

How do you know?

BELLARMINO:

Years of experience as a judge sharpen your senses, with which you can clearly see into the defendant's soul. This woman meant no harm to anybody. She dealt with witchcraft because she enjoyed it, and that was all. She loved life. Never accused anybody of anything. Never looked for enemies or scapegoats for the disaster when she found herself in the hands of the inquisition. She said: condemn me if you want. My soul is pure. Nothing can happen to me. God is with me.

BRUNO:

You never heard anything like it from others?

BELLARMINO:

I did, oh yes. But none of the statements were so persuasive, so real.

BRUNO:

Of course not! Because you felt nothing but contempt and hatred for all the others! So, all judgments seemed fair to you. You went crazy, Bellarmino.

BELLARMINO:

No. I knew very clearly all the time what I was doing. I respected the legal provisions of the inquisition laws. I aligned the legal offence

with the equivalent statute. If they matched, judgment was not difficult to pronounce. I acted by the letter of the law.

BRUNO:

And what was your mind doing all this time?

BELLARMINO:

I was doing my job.

BRUNO:

And you never paused and questioned it?

BELLARMINO:

When I chose it, I knew what kind of work awaited me. Even if I had moments of discouragement, I never fully questioned whether what I did was truly good. I never wondered whether the laws I execute were righteous, or whether they really reflected God's will. The judgments were routine for me. Until I ran into you. In your case, everything went wrong.

BRUNO:

Well, I am pleased to see that today you finally realize how in all these years you judged by the law of crime. All the judgments that you have pronounced are a crime that will burden you as long as you live. God gave everyone their own mind and conscience. Therefore, those who refuse to use them, particularly if they do it consciously, act against him. Even if the judge is just an executor of the law, he cannot avoid the responsibility of judging according to his conscience.

BELLARMINO:

What can I do?

BRUNO:

The least and the most you can do is to stop judging. Your decision to save me is pure nonsense. I do not need help. Had I wanted, I

could have saved myself already. Alone. You underestimate me, Bellarmino. You think that a man like me is not familiar with the magic and rituals for opening the door of Sant'Angelo a thousand times already? (*Enter Tibor.*)

TIBOR:

Mister inquisitor, the city guards are here.

BELLARMINO:

Let them wait.

TIBOR:

I will tell them. (*Exits.*)

BELLARMINO:

You are my defeat. Total defeat. You took away my last remaining hope. How can I live now, when there is no more will to live, nor will to work in me? Nor faith in God!

BRUNO:

Roberto, I forgave you. You need not have a guilty conscience over me.

BELLARMINO:

You have grown into me. You have consumed me from within. I can no longer think as I could yesterday. Bruno, what have you done to me? (*Falls to his knees before him and cries.*) Save me, please!

BRUNO (*touches his head with his hand*):

Calm down, calm yourself. My destiny would be the same with or without you. I lived in a certain time among such people.

BELLARMINO (*still on the floor*):

Giordano, please, do me a favour. (*Takes a small bottle from his pocket.*) To die in living flame is not easy. I have seen many times how

people suffer before they lose consciousness. This bottle can ease your death. One sip is enough and you will be gone in minutes.

BRUNO:

Why are you doing this, Roberto?

BELLARMINO:

I don't know, I don't know...

BRUNO:

You offer me escape, you offer me poison – acts with which you only humiliate me.

BELLARMINO:

No, no! This is not what I wanted!

BRUNO:

If I were somebody else, your suggestions would almost surely make me happy. But now you can only make yourself unhappy.

BELLARMINO:

I am not doing it myself. Someone else inside me is doing this. As if a foreign soul got hold of my body and now through me does things that I otherwise never would. I organized your escape in a fever of activity. I could not have a minute's peace until everything was ready. Only then was I somewhat relieved.

BRUNO:

And why did you bring poison?

BELLARMINO:

Because someone in me said you might not want to escape, or if we got caught on the way – this would be a solution for everyone: you, me and the attendants.

BRUNO (*starts laughing*):

You see, if such fear were in me as it is in you, we could agree on everything. The process would probably not have occurred. But now we will remain strangers until the end. The only difference being that I can understand you, because I used to be afraid too, while you cannot understand me, since you have never lived without fear. God bless you, Bellarmino, a true, inner God. (*Enter Tibor, again.*)

TIBOR:

The commander asks for you, Mister inquisitor!

BELLARMINO:

Tell him I am coming.

TIBOR:

Will you bring Bruno away?

BELLARMINO:

No. You will.

TIBOR:

Then you must come with me, Giordano.

BELLARMINO:

Good luck!

BRUNO (*approaches Bellarmino and hugs him*):

Good luck, brother! (*Exits with Tibor.*)

[Bellarmino waits for them to leave, then assumes the meditative position in which Bruno used to sit and closes his eyes; in a little while he takes the cross from his neck, takes the bottle with the poison and drinks it; in mortal spasm, he falls down and dies.]



***JOURNEY TO ROME
(CARAVAGGIO)***

Play
1988

Staged version
2009

Translated by Tomaž Onič

CHARACTERS

MICHELANGELO MERISI DA CARAVAGGIO, painter
LUCIA ARATORI, his mother (also SKELETON)
GIOVANNI BAGLIONE, art critic and curator
FRANCESCA BAGLIONE, his wife
FRANCESCO MARIA DEL MONTE, cardinal
MATHEO CONTARELLI, cardinal
MISS PHYLLIS, courtesan
GRAZIA LENA, her niece
GENERAL HOLOFERNES, supreme commander
RANUCCIO TOMASSONI, his chauffeur, military pilot
GIULIO, cabaret performer (also GUIDE DWARF)
TOTO, cabaret performer (also CHARON THE FERRYMAN)

First Man

(COURTIER, AVIATION OFFICER, BISHOP, MAN ON
BOARD THE SHIP)

Second Man

(COURTIER, AVIATION OFFICER, PRIME MINISTER, MAN
ON BOARD THE SHIP)

Third Man

(CHAMBERLAIN, AVIATION OFFICER, MILITARY
COUNCIL SECRETARY, POLICE CHIEF, MAN ON BOARD
THE SHIP)

Fourth Man

(AVIATION OFFICER, CHIEF OF STATE SECURITY,
INTERROGATOR, MAN ON BOARD THE SHIP)

First Boy

(ANGEL, ROMAN SOLDIER, DIONYSUS, FLOKI THE
MONKEY)

Second Boy

(ANGEL, LEADER OF ROMAN SOLDIERS, DIONYSUS)

Third Boy

(ANGEL, ROMAN SOLDIER, DIONYSUS, POLICEMAN)

Fourth Boy

First Dancer
(ORIENTAL GIRL, MAENAD, DWARF)
Second Dancer
(ORIENTAL GIRL, MAENAD, DWARF)
Third Dancer
(ORIENTAL GIRL, MAENAD, DWARF)
Fourth Dancer
(ORIENTAL GIRL, MAENAD, DWARF, TV SPEAKER)

All actors play the parts of artists' models and guests/viewers.

The text of the play also includes these paintings by Caravaggio:
DAVID WITH THE HEAD OF GOLIATH, SALOME WITH
THE HEAD OF ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST, DEATH OF ST.
MATTHEW, MARY MAGDALEN IN ECSTASY, ST. JOHN THE
BAPTIST, JUDITH BEHEADING HOLOFERNES, REST ON
THE FLIGHT TO EGYPT, YOUTH WITH A RAM, SACRIFICE
OF ISAAC, DEATH OF THE VIRGIN, THE LUTE PLAYER,
MEDUSA, THE ENTOMBMENT OF CHRIST, BOY WITH A
BASKET OF FRUIT,

*and the music of W.A. Mozart, REQUIEM
(Dies Irae, Agnus Dei, Requiem).*



*The Premiere took place in the Slovene National Theatre
in Maribor (Drama SNG Maribor) on 9 October 2009.*

Directed by Sebastijan Horvat.

PROLOGUE

Characters:

BAGLIONE, TWO COURTIER, CHAMBERLAIN,
DEL MONTE, CONTARELLI

*[Night. Rome. Palazzo Madama. Gallery hall. High silver wall with the framed Caravaggio painting, **David with the Head of Goliath**. Two courtiers appear. They look at the painting, they try to remove it; they do not succeed, so they leave. They are followed by Giovanni Baglione, who also stops in front of the painting.]*

BAGLIONE:

Finally! Finally you're gone, too. Now it's our turn. To correct the wrong and write the last will. I am sweating. July in Rome is terribly hot, even at night. I hope del Monte will receive me. At this hour he usually has intercourse with the spirits. *Leaves.*

[The courtiers return, one is carrying a portable ladder, Chamberlain comes with them.]

FIRST COURTIER:

So, it is true?

CHAMBERLAIN:

True.

SECOND COURTIER:

Great!

FIRST COURTIER:

We'll be rich again. We are so lucky! Great painters don't die every day.

SECOND COURTIER:

Is del Monte asleep?

CHAMBERLAIN:

No. He has a visitor. Cardinal Contarelli.

SECOND COURTIER:

Who?

FIRST COURTIER:

What? You are delirious, chamberlain! As far as I know, Cardinal Contarelli has been dead for at least five years.

CHAMBERLAIN:

I tell you, he suddenly appeared. They locked the door and now they are whispering silently.

SECOND COURTIER:

Hohohoho... This is something! I never knew Del Monte believed in apparitions. Let's hurry! Hold the ladder! His hallucination will not last forever.

CHAMBERLAIN:

I am not quite sure that what we are doing is right.

FIRST COURTIER:

Really? A few minutes ago you spoke differently.

CHAMBERLAIN:

He knows everything, even when he is asleep. Nothing escapes his eye, it is impossible to escape him.

FIRST COURTIER:

Ah, nonsense! You pick up rumours, chamberlain, you are worse than a woman. The painting arrived with last night's post from Naples; you displayed it about half an hour ago, and del Monte went to bed at least three hours ago, right?

SECOND COURTIER:

Then del Monte doesn't even know yet that Caravaggio is dead.

CHAMBERLAIN:

No, he cannot know; however...

FIRST COURTIER:

Let's take it off, quick! Tomorrow it will be worth one hundred million liras. Don't be so worried, chamberlain, you will get a nice share. Do you have a guilty conscience?

CHAMBERLAIN:

The painting was a personal gift to Cardinal del Monte.

FIRST COURTIER:

He can still have it! He can buy it from us first thing in the morning. What is all this fidgeting? Take it down!

SECOND COURTIER (*on the ladder*):

I can't. Something is stuck.

FIRST COURTIER:

Let go! I will do it!

CHAMBERLAIN:

But he will know. He has always traced the thief.

FIRST COURTIER:

And why has he not surrendered anyone to the police? Neither has he dismissed you two.

CHAMBERLAIN:

He is – above us all; he knows our sins, he knows we know it, but he never chooses to punish us.

SECOND COURTIER:

You are terrible!

FIRST COURTIER:

Who the hell drove these nails in? We will need a pair of pliers.

SECOND COURTIER:

Hush! I hear something. They are coming!

CHAMBERLAIN:

I am doomed!

SECOND COURTIER:

Hurry!

FIRST COURTIER:

I can't!

CHAMBERLAIN:

Let's run!

SECOND COURTIER:

Baglione and both cardinals!

FIRST COURTIER:

But Contarelli is dead!

SECOND COURTIER:

Here he comes, alive!

FIRST COURTIER:

Oh! What partners have I got.

[They run away with the ladder.]



[Enter del Monte, Contarelli and Baglione.]

DEL MONTE:

Caravaggio was the one and only. Like da Vinci or Michelangelo. Such artists are no more. The times of geniuses are gone.

CONTARELLI:

You are getting carried away by emotions.

DEL MONTE:

He was very dear to me, I must say. He was a kindred spirit, but he did not know it. He was so close to appreciating God and the sense of the cosmic game. Pity. He died ignorant and lost.

BAGLIONE:

Yes. His character was unbearable. You never knew whether he served God or the Devil.

CONTARELLI:

He served art, Baglione. And it was not easy for him. Just look at this painting! (*They stop in front of the painting on the wall.*) David With the Head of Goliath. It looks like a self portrait.

BAGLIONE:

Of course, what else but a self portrait. Could the initials M A C O engraved onto David's sword mean anything other than Michel Angelo Caravaggio Opus? Somebody who lives a life as divided as our Caravaggio can ultimately see himself only as the severed head of Goliath.

DEL MONTE:

You forget that contradictions and paradoxes are the essence of reality. Inflexibility of character and spirit shows a lack of creativity and personality. Only by joining what cannot be joined can the spirit of eternity emerge.

CONTARELLI:

Baglione's relationship to Caravaggio is momentarily slightly exaggerated, but it will calm down through the years. I think we could engage him to write an introductory study for the Milan exhibition of Caravaggio's works in 1951.

BAGLIONE:

I beg your pardon, I do not quite understand. Are we not in 1610?

CONTARELLI:

I am sorry. I keep forgetting that you only know the Present Tense. The afterlife interferes with one's sense of time. I wanted to say this: soon your longing will come true, Baglione; Caravaggio will sink into oblivion, but not for good. For over 3 centuries, he will live in the shadows, but he will be resurrected. In 1951 there will be a great exhibition of his works in Milan. Would you not be tempted, Baglione, to appear as the first critic on this occasion and praise your immortal contemporary, a current enemy?

BAGLIONE:

I do not believe in reincarnation. And also your theories about the afterlife do not persuade me. Unfortunately.

DEL MONTE:

Listen to the cardinal, Baglione, or you will be recorded only on the shady side of history.

BAGLIONE:

Why such scorn towards me? Without me, there would be no Caravaggio.

DEL MONTE:

You are right. Where would geniuses be without opponents? Where would they get strength and inspiration? Funny. Conta-relli, I think learning will be hard, but I guess it is worth it. Start with the theory of relativity!

CONTARELLI:

Indeed. What are time and place? What is history? What is a man? What interesting and intriguing questions. (*Looks at Del Monte, who is rapt.*) Francesco, what is happening? Where did you go?

DEL MONTE (*enraptured*):

Here he is! He is coming back.

CONTARELLI:

I can see him. He is coming. – Well, Baglione, let's go. I think the cardinal would like to be alone.

DEL MONTE:

They will not let him cross the river; they want to send him back to Earth.

CONTARELLI:

Goodbye, Del Monte. Dealing with the afterlife changes people.

BAGLIONE:

I hope you also get earthly benefits from these ecstasies.

CONTARELLI:

You will become rich and wealthy. Is this not enough for you? (*They exit.*)

DEL MONTE (*alone*):

Oh, Caravaggio! My son! Swim! Do not stop! You must cross the river! On the other side, there are meadows of pure joy. There is sunshine. There is a light that gilds all suffering. Swim! My spirit is with you, fear not! The course is right. Trust not the voices that lure you to the abyss. Why have you stopped? Nothing of yours is left here on Earth...



[In the background, the thieves of Caravaggio's painting sneak in: the chamberlain, the first courtier and second courtiers, the later brings a ladder. They notice the kneeling del Monte.]

FIRST COURTIER:

There is a shadow!

CHAMBERLAIN:

It's Del Monte. I am going mad!

FIRST COURTIER:

He moves and talks.

SECOND COURTIER:

It is probably an apparition. But what do you care? You better help. We'll make it. A little bit more. There.

CHAMBERLAIN:

It's him! Him!

FIRST COURTIER:

Stop panicking! It is just his ghost. Hold the ladder!

DEL MONTE:

Do not rob! You will be robbed.

CHAMBERLAIN:

Well, now we have it! He speaks.

FIRST COURTIER:

Quick! This place is haunted.

SECOND COURTIER:

Hold. *(They remove the painting.)*

DEL MONTE:

Don't trouble yourself, my boys. It's not worth it. The painting will be stolen four more times before it reaches the Milan exhibition in 1951.

FIRST COURTIER:

Let's go! This world is upside down! (*They exit.*)

DEL MONTE:

Chamberlain! Chamberlain, where are you running off? Come here!

CHAMBERLAIN:

He is calling me!

FIRST COURTIER:

We are going. We'll wait for you in the garden. (*They exit.*)

CHAMBERLAIN (*approaches*):

Yes, what can I do for you, sir?

DEL MONTE:

Prepare everything for the funeral mass tomorrow. I will conduct it myself. Invite only those who loved him. That is not many, I suppose.

CHAMBERLAIN:

What shall we do with the corpse?

DEL MONTE:

Leave it in Porto Ercole. He should have a Christian funeral if possible. You may go.

CHAMBERLAIN:

With respect. (*Exits.*)

DEL MONTE:

You are back. And you were so close to the truth! How could you not see? Now you will have to walk the same well-trodden way again. – Well then, Caravaggio, welcome to Earth, the only place where it is possible to take in the Kingdom of God.

*[The wall with the painting starts to crack: stones and plaster crumble down, blood pouring; earthquake, the Earth rumbles, smoke and dust rise; a tempest storms. And music – W. A. Mozart: **REQUIEM, Dies Irae.***

FLYING COURSE

Scene One

Characters:

CARAVAGGIO, GIULIO, FOUR ANGELS

[In the open. Behind, the open sky. Giulio leads a flying course. Angels practice taking off and landing. Caravaggio stands on the side, watches them and paints sketches.]

CARAVAGGIO (*drops the sketches*):

This is altogether nothing. I am totally empty. No ideas, no real inspiration. I feel like I will never produce another painting.

GIULIO:

You should fall in love, Caravaggio! Inspiration comes with falling in love. I am always in love. It keeps me on my feet. And them as well! What do you think we angels live on if not on love?

CARAVAGGIO:

I don't like infatuation. When I am infatuated, I totally change. I become terrible. The being I love obsesses me completely.

GIULIO (*laughs*):

Such is this human, Earthly love. That is why one must rise above it. Look at these boys; nothing human can chain them to the Earth, stain them, so they can freely make love to anybody.

CARAVAGGIO:

Unfortunately, there is no such strength in me.

GIULIO:

Yes, yes; it is not easy to be God, I know. But it's worth the effort. At least to try. – Cupids! Form up! (*Angels land and line up.*) We will revise the first exercise, flying in free formation, but with the use of bow and arrow. We will fly in flock and individually. Understood?

ANGELS (*all together*):

Understood.

GIULIO:

Check your wings, make sure they function. Good. Now, take a deep breath, fill your lungs with fresh air and start taking off. Spread your arms and start flapping evenly and persistently. Your wings are becoming airy, your bodies weightless. Splendid! See how good you are. And now you can take off into the sky.

ANGELS (*flutter in the air*).

GIULIO:

And when you are high up, when you blend in with the heavenly blue completely, you will stretch your bows and start shooting Cupid's golden arrows towards the Earth. (*Looks at them flying away.*) They are wonderful. I love them. This is my best class.

CARAVAGGIO:

And how do you get to become an angel?

GIULIO:

Come to our course. We are here every Thursday afternoon. Oh, where did they go? I mustn't leave them alone. Wait! (*Rises up in the air.*) See, Caravaggio, what human will is capable of. You need only believe and be bold! Destiny loves the brave. Do not hesitate! You will grow wings, believe me! (*Flies away.*)

CARAVAGGIO:

Giulio! All this is but an illusion! A cheap theatrical fantasy!

GIULIO (*returns*):

Are you saying my boys are a mere apparition? Well, show him what you can do!

ANGELS (*start shooting arrows into him*).

CARAVAGGIO (*runs away before angels*):

Giulio, what are you doing? Stop!

GIULIO:

We are sowing the seed of your wings. You will see how quickly they grow. But be careful, It is difficult to fly on Earth, wings are for the sky! (*Flies away with the angels.*)

SALOME

Scene Two

Characters:

CARAVAGGIO, TOTO, GIULIO, LENA, PHYLLIS,
TOMASSONI, FOUR ROMAN SOLDIERS,
FOUR ORIENTAL GIRLS/MAENADS
(ALL CHARACTERS ARE PRESENT AS VIEWERS –
GUESTS)

[Cabaret theatre Orlando Furioso. People are sitting at their tables; they talk, drink and smoke. Artistic program on the stage. The audience applauds enthusiastically. Toto, the MC, comes running onto the stage euphorically.]

TOTO:

Bravo, bravo, bravissimo! Real and to the life, darling, real and to the life was this flapping of Eros' wings. The arrows that our fluttering handsome boys sent to Earth will long keep glowing in our hearts. Thank you, and thanks to our honourable hermaphrodite, Giulio! We, the respectable guests of tonight's special program in the Orlando Furioso bar, we will stay between Heaven and Earth for a while. The next act is yours. By special request of our esteemed guest, the great baroque painter Michelangelo Merisi da Caravaggio, who is among us tonight, we have ornamented the famous dramatic sketch *Salome* with postmodern elements. My dear Ladies and Gentlemen, we are moving two millennia back, to the times of Jesus Christ, to Cana of Galilee, the kingdom of Herod Antipas. Imagine: spring, green leaves, warm sun, sea waves in the distance, a celebration in the Machaerus fortress, Herod's birthday. The actors are coming. Soon our teenage Madonna, Grazia Lena (*applause*), will make an appearance and reveal the glow of Salome's passions. But alas! Too much beauty can evoke

misfortune. In the dark dungeons of the Machaerus fortress lies the chained body of the prophet John the Baptist.

[In the staging of Salome, the actors appear in masks. The orchestra plays something stunningly sensual. Oriental girls dance.]



[Phyllis and Caravaggio at their table to the side, in conversation.]

PHYLLIS:

Tonight's show will probably be something special?

CARAVAGGIO:

I want to surprise you.

PHYLLIS:

Will you show your new painting?

CARAVAGGIO:

Yes. It is part of the show.

PHYLLIS:

It is so great that you are full of ideas again. I feared for you. You were so lost.

CARAVAGGIO:

I'm all inspiration now. I'm working on five paintings simultaneously. I'm finishing the cycle of St. Matthew for the Contarelli chapel. Only the protagonist is missing. I'm trying to find a model for the executioner.

PHYLLIS:

So, you need someone to fall in love with?

CARAVAGGIO:

You know I cannot work without a muse.

PHYLLIS:

Cheers! (*They propose a toast.*) To love!

CARAVAGGIO:

And to art!

PHYLLIS:

To luck in love and art!



TOTO/HEROD (*Interrupts the dance of the oriental girls.*):

Enough! Enough! Let Salome dance! Do not hide her so jealously, Herodiada, the beauty of her body was destined by the gods for all to see.

GIULIO/HERODIADA:

Yes, my little Herod. I was expecting your order, but I cannot follow it. Salome has plunged into a sadness of which nobody knows the cause. For the whole week, she has been pale as a ghost, with a blank look in her eyes. I fear she is not up to dancing right now.

TOTO/HEROD:

What? Is there no cure in the whole world for this history of hers?

GIULIO/HERODIADA:

Yes. There is only one way to bring back her joy.

TOTO/HEROD:

Well, say it then.

GIULIO/HERODIADA:

Salome has a secret wish.

TOTO/HEROD:

Yes? Let her reveal it.

GIULIO/HERODIADA:

She wants your promise that it will be fulfilled.

TOTO/HEROD:

Tell her that the king promises it will be fulfilled. Just make her dance! I am getting impatient.

GIULIO/HERODIADA:

I will follow your order, oh, king. (*Brings Salome.*) Here she is. The king is prepared to fulfil your wish, Salome, so dance!

LENA/SALOME:

Have you thought it over well, king?

TOTO/HEROD:

There can be no wish that the king could not fulfil. I will give you up to one half of my kingdom, just dance!

LENA/SALOME:

Be careful, king, one must pay for pleasure, let the price not be too high for you! Swans, play! (*Dances to the sounds of a sensual melody.*)



CARAVAGGIO:

So tonight you are going to General Holofernes?

PHYLLIS:

Yes. He said he wanted to see me immediately. I don't know why his driver is late.

CARAVAGGIO:

Something probably kept him in the barracks or he got stuck in traffic.

PHYLLIS:

He is chasing girls. It's probably that!

CARAVAGGIO:

You can't blame him. You said he is young and more than gifted for love.

PHYLLIS:

Let him have fun. I don't mind, but not on my account.

CARAVAGGIO:

Holofernes loves you?

PHYLLIS:

Too much. He is obsessed with me.

CARAVAGGIO:

Faithful lover, devoted; rich, regular payer, could you ask for more?

PHYLLIS:

But it is not like that. This game is getting dangerous. He's started calling me Saint Judith. He claims that one day I will behead him. And that he can't do anything against such a fate, so he stays with me and puts himself in God's hands.

CARAVAGGIO:

Does he read the Bible?

PHYLLIS:

I don't know. Probably. He is getting more and more insane.

CARAVAGGIO (*admires Salome's dance*):

The splendid Salome is your niece.

PHYLLIS:

I am grateful that you gave her the main role.

CARAVAGGIO:

She is very talented. She has an outstanding erotic charm. Refined sensuality. She must be learning from you.

PHYLLIS (*laughs*):

And from you!

CARAVAGGIO (*applauds enthusiastically*):

Bravo! Bravo!



[The audience at the tables and the actors on the stage applaud. Salome takes a bow.]

TOTO/HEROD:

Excellent! Excellent! I cannot believe my eyes! Come over here, let me touch you and convince myself that you are real.

GIULIO/HERODIADA:

First the fulfilment of the wish, then touching and hanky panky. Salome, speak up!

LENA/SALOME:

Oh, king! Have John the Baptist's head cut off and brought to me on a silver plate.

TOTO/HEROD:

Whaaat? This is a mad wish! There are no such wishes!

GIULIO/HERODIADA:

You promised, king!

TOTO/HEROD:

This girl is obsessed! The devil speaks from within her. Who is this John the Baptist? I don't know him.

GIULIO/HERODIADA:

I am not surprised you don't know him. Running the country is your last concern. You don't even know your political opponents. Shame on you! And John the Baptist wanders through the land, baptises people in Jordan and preaches a new communism.

TOTO/HEROD:

What? New communism? Bring him here immediately and behead him. O, daughter, I must commend you for your most exemplary help in ruling!

LENA/SALOME:

But, king, I have nothing to do with this. These are my mother's intrigues. My heart is hurt! John the Baptist doesn't want to make love to me!

TOTO/HEROD:

Terrible! To understand the passions of two wild women? No! Impossible! But I promised. So it should happen. Bring her the head of John the Baptist!

[Roman soldiers disperse, the orchestra is playing the dramatic finale. Ranuccio Tomassoni enters the bar.]



PHYLLIS:

Finally, finally! Holofernes' driver.

CARAVAGGIO:

That's him? I know this handsome fellow!

PHYLLIS:

You do?

CARAVAGGIO:

Two years ago we met on the Cote d'Azur. He was there on vacation with his parents. Of course, it's him. We played tennis. What's his name?

PHYLLIS:

Ranuccio, Ranuccio Tomassoni.

CARAVAGGIO:

That's it: Ranuccio.

TOMASSONI (*enters*):

Greetings, Miss Phyllis!

PHYLLIS:

You are presumptuous. Where have you been? I have waited for an hour.

TOMASSONI:

And why?

PHYLLIS:

Be serious! You know that General Holofernes does not like us to be late.

TOMASSONI:

There will be no date tonight.

PHYLLIS:

What do you mean?

TOMASSONI:

The General had some strange and unusual premonitions. He is sitting motionless at the airport, staring into space.

PHYLLIS:

Tomassoni, you are joking!

TOMASSONI:

No, it's true.

PHYLLIS:

Take me to him immediately. He will do something stupid.

TOMASSONI:

I can't. Nobody can get to the base tonight. A state of emergency has been proclaimed. Besides, I am here privately. I'd like to relax and have some fun.

PHYLLIS:

Now, this is something!

CARAVAGGIO:

Calm down, dear, that's how it is. Life is unpredictable. Tomassoni, please, sit down!

TOMASSONI:

If Miss Phyllis allows?

PHYLLIS:

Why ask? Be seated. Well then, let's see the rest of the show. I haven't introduced you, but apparently you know each other from before.

TOMASSONI:

Do we? I don't know.

CARAVAGGIO:

Do you remember, it was two years ago, on the Cote d'Azur; you played tennis with your friend, then we played together... then we swam in the evening sea... remember?

TOMASSONI:

Yes, yes; you are Michel; of course, I remember. We meet again, and where?

CARAVAGGIO:

The world is small.

PHYLLIS:

Luckily.



LEADER OF ROMAN SOLDIERS:

King! Oh, king! Terrible news: John the Baptist is no longer in his cell!

GIULIO/HERODIADA:

What? This is a political conspiracy!

TOTO/HEROD:

Ran away? This is impossible?

LEADER OF ROMAN SOLDIERS:

It is! He disappeared miraculously. Nobody knows where.

TOTO/HEROD:

Traitor!

LENA/SALOME:

You betrayed me, king! This is your own intrigue.

TOTO/HEROD:

Not true! Can't you see that even my jaw's dropped on the floor?

GIULIO/HERODIADA:

If this is true, then order that he should immediately be found among the residents of Cana of Galilee.

TOTO/HEROD:

How can you find him among that many people?

GIULIO/HERODIADA:

He is easy to recognize. Even a politically uneducated person could find him, anybody but you. Send out the soldiers and they should find him!

TOTO/HEROD:

Soldiers! Follow your orders. Find him!



TOMASSONI:

Interesting development.

CARAVAGGIO:

Yes. A variation on the biblical story of Salome.

PHYLLIS:

Caravaggio is in it, too.

TOMASSONI:

Really? How?

CARAVAGGIO:

You will see.



LENA/SALOME:

I feel him. Here he is! Bring him before me, and he should be mine. Persuade him to be mine! Or he should die! Threaten him with death. Well, no, he should live! I want him for a lover. Persuade him to renounce his religion and take me as a woman. I want to be his dream desire and serve him as an object of delight. For he is God!

[Soldiers walk among the people, i.e. among the audience in the bar; they search for someone who looks like John the Baptist.]

GIULIO/HERODIADA:

Like the people, like the king. Can't you see they are making a fool out of you?

TOTO/HEROD:

Don't play, people, believe what I tell you!

GIULIO/HERODIADA:

Who believes in words today?

TOTO/HEROD:

Then you go among them and persuade them! I am out of this game.

LENA/SALOME:

I want John!



TOMASSONI:

If I understand correctly, somebody from the audience will be John?

CARAVAGGIO:

That's right. As a reward, he will be able to sleep with the niece of Miss Phyllis, with the beauty who plays Salome.

TOMASSONI:

You have a beautiful niece.

PHYLLIS:

Do you like her? But you can't get at her so easily.

TOMASSONI:

What if I get her as a present?

PHYLLIS:

You are presumptuous!



LENA/SALOME:

Give me my John!

TOTO/HEROD:

Look, what kind of daughter you've raised! A regiment of blacks wouldn't satisfy her.

GIULIO/HERODIADA:

Oh, you, impotent whoremonger! You're worse than a woman! John the Baptist, I see you! Get here immediately. Come on over, you anarchistic piece of shit, so that I can spit in your face. I tell you, a year from now the Red Brigades will be wiped from the face of the Earth.

LENA/SALOME:

John, my John!

TOMASSONI (*comes on stage*).

TOTO/HEROD:

What? Such a beautiful young man and such an anarchist! Terrorist! Beauty leads to sin; only fools think they see holiness in it.

GIULIO/HERODIADA:

Get an axe and a chopping block!

LENA/SALOME:

No! I want him alive!

GIULIO/HERODIADA:

One must be tough with these new communists.

TOTO/HEROD:

You are more bloodthirsty than a live revolutionary!

GIULIO/HERODIADA:

Hands off! I caught him and I will chop off his head.

LENA/SALOME:

Mom, I love him, let him live!

GIULIO/HERODIADA:

You spoke differently before!

LENA/SALOMA (*embraces Tomassoni*):

I am not letting him go!

GIULIO/HERODIADA:

Away! Soldiers, take her away!

TOTO/HEROD:

Women, oh, women! I'm out of text. I could just faint.

GIULIO/HERODIADA:

I want death! I have waited for it the whole evening!

LENA/SALOMA:

Mother, please! He must not die!

GIULIO/HERODIADA:

No! I've had it. I'll kill him myself!

TOTO/HEROD:

I can't take it any more. Deus ex machina, let it happen!

*[The stage is covered by a reproduction of Caravaggio's painting **Salome with the Head of St. John the Baptist**. Music finale. Audience applauds. From under the curtain crawls Toto, the MC.]*

TOTO:

Finally! Finally! Can you imagine what else you should see if we did not get help from our great Michelangelo Merisi da Caravaggio. Please, come on stage, Mr Caravaggio! (*Caravaggio comes on stage, audience applauds.*) Welcome to the night program of the Orlando Furioso night club, to the theatre based on the art of paintings by Mr Caravaggio. Mr Caravaggio, congratulations on this extraordinary work of art. Apparently, you painted it in 1606, but it looks like it was finished yesterday. What do you have to say to this?

CARAVAGGIO:

Nothing.

TOTO:

But you probably feel good?

CARAVAGGIO:

Excellent.

TOTO:

Of course! Why wouldn't you? To be alive for so long, to be – so to speak – immortal, this is splendid! I hear you arrived in Rome only yesterday and that you are not staying here for long?

CARAVAGGIO:

I don't know.

TOTO:

So the date of your departure remains a secret... just as it remains a secret what Mr Caravaggio has been doing for these last 400 years. Once again, thank you very much. (*Caravaggio leaves the stage.*) Dear viewers, let's watch the finale as seen by love and wisdom. (*Curtain rises.*) No more psychological traumas and sexual frustrations! No more emotional blockages. Apollo and Dionysus made peace.

[On the stage is Ranuccio Tomassoni as Dionysus, Grazia Lena is putting an ivy wreath on his head, maenads around them.]

TOTO:

Let the veneration of tonight's winner start! Maenads, the stage is yours!

[Music, dance of the maenads.]

THE WINNER REQUIRES HIS PRIZE

Scene Three

Characters:

TOMASSONI, TOTO, PHYLLIS, CARAVAGGIO, LENA

[Street in front of the Orlando Furioso bar. Late at night. Toto and Tomassoni quarrel at the entrance door.]

TOMASSONI:

This is not fair! I was promised a prize, and now you don't give it to me. You said I could sleep with Grazia Lena, and now I can't even see her.

TOTO:

They may have told you so, young man, but Miss Lena does not want to do this tonight.

TOMASSONI:

You're making this up.

TOTO:

The lady probably has the right to decide on her lovers?

TOMASSONI:

Why then do you offer such prizes?

TOTO:

We artists must live on something too.

TOMASSONI:

I will speak to her myself.

TOTO:

Don't be foolish! You seem wise; that's why I'm surprised that you're unable to distinguish between reality and imagination. This was all a game – a game that included you, young man, as a participant. Why did you accept it then?

TOMASSONI:

I was drawn into it. Nobody told me what this was about. If I'd known about the joke, I wouldn't have fallen in love.

TOTO:

Ah, you fell in love? Well, then there is no help for you.

[Enter Phyllis and Caravaggio.]

TOTO:

Phyllis, please, he has fallen in love with Grazia Lena and insists on sleeping with her.

PHYLLIS:

Oh, sancta simplicitas! Ranuccio, honey! That over there was the stage, and this here is life. Only if Miss Lena alone fell in love with you, could this happen. Otherwise, you don't have enough money to pay her.

TOMASSONI:

But you promised her to me!

PHYLLIS:

Toto, you will really have to come up with different prizes; it is not the first time that you have put me in an awkward position.

LENA (*comes with flowers in her hands*).

TOMASSONI:

Lena, love, say you love me! Admit the truth of your heart, Grazia Lena!

LENA:

You are impertinent, young man!

PHYLLIS:

Don't be a pain, Tomassoni; get back to the barracks. Holofernes will be angry.

LENA:

You love me. I like that. But this is not enough to sleep with me. You must allow me to fall in love with you.

TOMASSONI:

But you do love me. You love me, I see it in your eyes.

PHYLLIS:

Enough, enough; it's time for us to go. Soon it will be dawn. Good night, Toto, keep an eye on Giulio; he had too much to drink again. (*Leaving.*)

LENA:

Good night, winner. (*Kisses him on the cheeks.*)

CARAVAGGIO:

So you are not coming with us – too bad. (*Offers his hand.*) Well it's been a pleasure seeing you again. Keep in touch. You have the address. Good night.

[All three of them leave.]

TOMASSONI:

Fuck such theatre! I can jerk off alone.

AIRPLANES IN THE EVENING DUSK

Scene Four

Characters:

FOUR AVIATION OFFICERS, HOLOFERNES,
TOMASSONI, PHYLLIS, FLOKI THE MONKEY

[Airport of the military base San Sebastiano. General Holofernes is sitting on the runway, watching the planes taking off. It is getting dark. A group of aviation officers around him.]

FIRST OFFICER:

General, sir, it's urgent, consider our opinions.

SECOND OFFICER:

Damn, it figures. Doesn't hear.

THIRD OFFICER:

Leave him. He is insane.

FOURTH OFFICER:

Will you take responsibility for bombing the refugee camps?

THIRD OFFICER:

Not me! He ordered the attack.

FIRST OFFICER:

Does anybody remember when he was last himself?

SECOND OFFICER:

You, mate, will have to take over the command.

THIRD OFFICER:

Are you joking? By no means.

SECOND OFFICER:

The lives of our boys are in question. They will be shot down like flies.

THIRD OFFICER:

Holofernes always says that the opponent's air defence is worth shit.

FIRST OFFICER:

Don't be cynical. He has no clue what he is saying.

FOURTH OFFICER:

Indeed, that is why he is in charge.

SECOND OFFICER:

Ok, let's not quarrel here.

FOURTH OFFICER:

Will you fly?

FIRST OFFICER:

Not tonight.

FOURTH OFFICER:

But you are on the list.

FIRST OFFICER:

For nothing in the world. Tonight death will be reaping as never before. Look how red the sky is!

SECOND OFFICER (*tries again to wake the General*):

Hopeless. He doesn't even move. Let's go, gentlemen.

FIRST OFFICER:

We will send a protest letter to the supreme command on account of the impossible working conditions.

FOURTH OFFICER:

To whom? The supreme command? Don't you know that yesterday General Holofernes was appointed Commander General of the whole armed forces in the country?

THIRD OFFICER:

This will be very entertaining. I prefer to step aside.

FIRST OFFICER:

Me too. Bye!

SECOND OFFICER (*shrugs*).

FOURTH OFFICER:

Us as well.

[Officers disperse, Holofernes stays alone, Ranuccio Tomassoni comes in a few moments.]

TOMASSONI:

Mr Holofernes, Mr Holofernes, she is here.

HOLOFERNES:

Who?

TOMASSONI:

Miss Phyllis. I brought her.

HOLOFERNES:

Where is she?

TOMASSONI:

Waiting in the car. She wants you to say again if you really want her.

HOLOFERNES:

You must be pulling my leg, man! You know I want her passionately. Let her come at once. I've thought about her all evening. I am all melancholy.

TOMASSONI:

Yes, Mr General.

HOLOFERNES:

Wait – does she want me too?

TOMASSONI:

How could she not? All she does is sigh for you, and she suffers wondering why she can't see you more often.

HOLOFERNES:

Poor thing. She probably doesn't know that I am fighting on five fronts. I am going mad from commanding. – What are you waiting for? Bring her!

TOMASSONI:

Yes, Mr General.

HOLOFERNES:

Wait! You understand what I am saying, don't you?

TOMASSONI:

Very well, Mr General.

HOLOFERNES:

You little rascal, you! There are very few people like you. So good and trustworthy... – Well, get going! Are you two not back yet?

TOMASSONI:

Yes, sir, General. (*Leaves.*)

HOLOFERNES:

Yes, yes, it is not good to be too honest. Excessive sincerity can cost you. But, have you seen those shitty officers? And what they said about me? I'll show them. How dare they disturb me in my evening meditation? I know: they hate me, they mock me and laugh at me; they cannot appreciate my strategic leadership skills. Just let them wait!

[Tomassoni and Phyllis enter.]

HOLOFERNES:

Judith! Merciful!

PHYLLIS:

Dear. (*They kiss passionately.*)

HOLOFERNES:

Why didn't you come sooner?

PHYLLIS:

You didn't want to see me.

HOLOFERNES:

You are so beautiful! Oh, you are so beautiful!

PHYLLIS:

And you've grown, and grown younger. I hear you've become the most powerful man in the Middle East.

HOLOFERNES:

Ah, it's nothing, it's nothing. Others wanted it this way, what could I do? Well, to have at least an approximate impression of my current

power and reputation, enjoy a short spectacle of supersonic bombers. (*Points at the sky full of airplanes.*) Aren't they gorgeous? The bombs in their bodies are blessed. I would never in the world desecrate the Holy Land. Just look at them! Aren't they divine, those swollen cocks with wings? Women and girls look forward to them in particular. The squirt of their sperm is a reliable way to paradise. And where is our bed? Tomassoni, what are you waiting for?

TOMASSONI:

Hey, boys!

[Officers build an oriental bedroom.]

HOLOFERNES:

See how they obey me; they do everything I order. It is really nice to be the supreme commander. Will you honour me with a striptease, dear? It's been too long since I saw you dance.

PHYLLIS:

As you say!

HOLOFERNES:

I want to look at you, bathed in the rays of the setting sun. Look what a wonderful sky we have.

PHYLLIS (*starts the striptease*):

By the way, before I forget. You haven't sent the money order this month.

HOLOFERNES:

How come? Tomassoni showed me transfer confirmations.

PHYLLIS:

He may have shown some others.

HOLOFERNES:

I'll check tomorrow. I'll repay you in gold if necessary, but now focus on the ritual of undressing. Oh, if I could only die in your arms!

PHYLLIS:

Oh, you will, dear, you will; it is not too late; the show is actually only starting.

[An explosion in the background. Holofernes hides under the bed: Floki the monkey emerges from the smoke.]

PHYLLIS:

Floki, love, what are you doing here? *(Takes it in her arms.)*

HOLOFERNES:

Oh, this unfortunate monkey! She began to interfere with my work.

MARY MAGDALEN

Scene Five

Characters:

CARAVAGGIO, TOMASSONI, LENA

[In a painter's studio. Caravaggio works. Tomassoni watches him.]

TOMASSONI:

You make nice paintings. People in them are so alive, as if they really existed.

CARAVAGGIO:

You think so?

TOMASSONI:

Like Grazia Lena.

CARAVAGGIO:

I see you like her a lot. Am I wrong?

TOMASSONI:

Phyllis said she usually comes to you at this hour to sit for the portrait. I'd like to see her.

CARAVAGGIO:

Do you think she'd like to see you, too?

TOMASSONI:

She only pretends not to, but, in fact, she knows our souls are connected.

CARAVAGGIO:

So you want her sincere, pure and innocent love. You know that this does not work with prostitutes?

TOMASSONI:

I have never been so in love with anyone. Even though the first heat of passion has cooled down. I am no longer impatient. My heart no longer beats stronger when I see her. I just feel pleasantly warm.

CARAVAGGIO:

There is something in her that is worth loving. Her mind is too subtle for an ordinary courtesan. There is something divine in her beauty. Each time with her is an experience. Do not be angry; I took her virginity. I found her on the road, she was thirteen, a child without parents; I took her for a model, and at night she slept in my bed. Then I gave her to Miss Phyllis to apprentice. This is how she became her niece. I still have certain sexual prerogatives with her, of course. I will fix it, so you can sleep with her.

TOMASSONI:

You want to hurt me.

CARAVAGGIO:

No. Why?

TOMASSONI:

You're jealous.

CARAVAGGIO:

Am I really?

TOMASSONI:

You're not sincere.

CARAVAGGIO:

Maybe. Close to you, I get confused. You are much alike. I feel you the same as her. You are her male counterpart.

TOMASSONI:

Will you fall in love with me?

CARAVAGGIO:

I already have.

TOMASSONI:

Hohoho... This will be difficult! I won't be able to return your love like Lena does.

CARAVAGGIO:

I painted you as the executioner of St. Matthew. Look, it is you!
(Shows him the design for the painting **Death of St. Matthew**; the executioner is almost finished.)

TOMASSONI:

This is me?

CARAVAGGIO:

Yes.

TOMASSONI:

They say you are an odd fellow. I think this is quite true.

[Doorbell rings. Lena enters.]

CARAVAGGIO:

She is here. Hide! I'd like us to surprise her!

TOMASSONI:

Ok. (*Hides.*)

LENA (*comes*):
Ciao, daddy! How are you?

CARAVAGGIO (*kisses her*):
Fine, honey, fine; and you?

LENA:
I'm late. Since they've introduced one-way traffic, you can't get anywhere. Shall we get on with it? We should finish today.

CARAVAGGIO:
Why are you so cold? What is going on? You don't want to tell me?

LENA:
Ah, that foolish Tomassoni! Won't leave my mind. Phyllis said he'd be here today.

CARAVAGGIO:
I don't know.

LENA:
I love him! (*Cries.*)

CARAVAGGIO:
You are so beautiful when you cry. Your innocence and softness melt into fragile tears (*kisses her on the cheeks*) glittering like morning dew. Oh, Grazia Lena, my love... And now close your eyes and imagine that you are gliding across the sky in the plane of Ranuccia Tomassonija. High, high above the clouds, close to the sun. Try to see the picture as vividly as possible. Do you feel Ranuccio's energy come to you? Blend with yours?

TOMASSONI *emerges from his hiding place and gently touches Lena's hands.*

CARAVAGGIO:

And now open your eyes.

LENA (*throws herself in Tomassoni's arms*):

Oh, Caravaggio, say this is not an illusion! Please!

YOU WILL BE VISITED BY AN ANGEL

Scene Six

Characters:

CARAVAGGIO, BAGLIONE, FRANCESCA,
DEL MONTE, CONTARELLI, CHAMBERLAIN,
PHYLLIS, HOLOFERNES, TOMASSONI

[San Luigi dei Francesi Church in Rome. Opening of the exhibition of Caravaggio's paintings in the Contarelli chapel. Enter Giovanni Baglione and his wife Francesca. Baglione steps to the altar and peeks behind the curtain covering the paintings. Caravaggio approaches.]

FRANCESCA (*shouts to Baglione*):
Pssst! Giovanni! Giovanni!

BAGLIONE:
What is it? (*Sees Caravaggio.*) Oh, it's you.

CARAVAGGIO:
Do take a look. You can watch.

BAGLIONE:
No, no! I'd rather be surprised. I can wait.

CARAVAGGIO:
I thought the opening would be after the mass.

BAGLIONE:
As you see, the guests are not here yet. I hear General Holofernes is among them. I really don't see what he has to do with art.

CARAVAGGIO:

Just as much as you.

BAGLIONE:

Ooo! You're still poison.

CARAVAGGIO:

Maybe, for some people.

BAGLIONE:

Do you know that your artistic career mostly depends on me? I wouldn't act like this in your shoes.

CARAVAGGIO:

You think you could ever become what I became?

FRANCESCA:

Hee hee hee hee hee...

CARAVAGGIO:

Do you know what such laughter means? Sexual frustration.

BAGLIONE:

You disgust me!

CARAVAGGIO:

It would be a surprise if I didn't.

BAGLIONE:

I can't look at you any more.

CARAVAGGIO:

Turn around, away.

BAGLIONE:

I really don't know what devil has allured the cardinal to entrust you with decorating this chapel. Your art belongs to a brothel rather than to a church.

CARAVAGGIO:

Are you sure?

BAGLIONE:

What does God have to do with the content of your paintings? Do you know at all, what God is?

CARAVAGGIO:

No. But I believe He will reveal himself to me one day, just like that.

BAGLIONE:

Discussion with you is pointless. Nothing is sacred to you. You mock everything. Francesca, let us retreat to silence and prayer. (*Kneels to pray.*)

FRANCESCA (*also kneels, but keeps flirting with Caravaggio*).

CARAVAGGIO (*after a longer silence*):

Enough of this comedy! (*Steps to the altar and tears the curtains from the paintings*).

FRANCESCA:

What's the matter with you? You are mad!

BAGLIONE:

No! You have ruined the opening of the chapel.

CARAVAGGIO:

I tell you, Francesca, you will be visited by the angel that inspired the executioner of St. Matthew. Goodbye! (*Leaves.*)

BAGLIONE (*runs after him*):

Don't leave! I beg you! I am in charge of the ceremony.

FRANCESCA:

Holy Mother of God, what beauty!

BAGLIONE:

Stop staring at this pile of sin! (*Tries to replace the curtains over the paintings.*)

FRANCESCA:

What did he say? Some day, I will be visited by an angel. Have I not been telling you, Giovanni, that I am a sexually suppressed woman? And it's your fault.

[The sound of the organ. Enter Del Monte, Contarelli, Chamberlain, Two Courtiers, General Holofernes, Miss Phyllis, Tomassoni. In panic, Baglione leaves the paintings half covered.]

DEL MONTE:

Baglione, what is this? I told you that the paintings should be uncovered in our presence.

CONTARELLI (*enraptured by the beauty of the paintings*):

Splendid! Heavenly! Is there anyone who can create like Caravaggio?

BAGLIONE:

No. Unfortunately, he is the only one.

CONTARELLI:

The only one! You are right. And be not bitter for this.

HOLOFERNES:

And where is he? Invites me to the opening and fails to show up.

CHAMBERLAIN:

Look! There he is, in the picture. (*Points to Caravaggio's portrait in the painting **Death of St. Matthew**.*)

HOLOFERNES:

That's him?

BAGLIONE:

Yes. His self-portrait. He is a very narcissistic person.

HOLOFERNES:

Wait a minute! There's my driver too! Tomassoni, is that you?! What are you doing in the picture?

PHYLLIS:

You have good eyesight, dear, but this does not mean you see the truth.

HOLOFERNES:

You're trying to say it isn't him? Admit it, Tomassoni, is that you?

DEL MONTE:

Too demanding a question. To recognize oneself is not easy.

FRANCESCA:

You will visit me; you are Caravaggio's angel! (*Falls to her knees in front of him.*) Come, oh, king! The door is unlocked and the bed is made!

JOHN THE BAPTIST

Scene Seven

Characters:

CARAVAGGIO, TOMASSONI

*[In Caravaggio's studio. Ranuccio Tomassoni poses to Caravaggio for the painting **St. John the Baptist**, which is today kept in a museum in Kansas City.]*

TOMASSONI:

You say this is me in this painting.

CARAVAGGIO:

Could it be someone else?

TOMASSONI (*smiles*):

No, no; I do not agree; this is just an image of your yearning, yearning for something non-existent that you would want to exist. I am not as you see me. Maybe I could be like you if I dreamt your dream, lived through your imagination.

CARAVAGGIO:

You see, this is exactly what I want: to transform dreams and imagination into reality. To turn the impossible to the possible.

TOMASSONI:

But you don't distinguish between reality and imagination. I am not John the Baptist from your painting.

CARAVAGGIO:

No matter. From your beauty and my love something marvellous has ben born. This is the most beautiful painting I ever created.

TOMASSONI:

You are constantly running from reality. Why don't you accept me as I really am? I, Ranuccio Tomassoni.

CARAVAGGIO:

Because you are not an ordinary object of my desire. Your presence makes me divine. With you I become as great as the Creator himself.

TOMASSONI:

Oh, Caravaggio! How far apart we are. Even if we seem to be one. – Therefore, I will now do something I would not do for anyone else. I have decided to turn wine into blood. I give myself to you. Let my carnal body ultimately burn in the fire of your passion!

CARAVAGGIO:

No, Ranuccio, no! I don't want the light that dies with the end of an orgasm! What is mortal beauty, mortal love? I want eternity. I want the God that is in you.

TOMASSONI (*takes a sheet of paper*):

Let me read this to you: "Beauty is in the eyes of the beholder and love in the one who loves."

CARAVAGGIO:

Whose is this text?

TOMASSONI:

Cardinal Del Monte's. Instruction on the control of sperm fire. There is fire in sperm. Make sure that you do not put it out too early, or better yet, never put it out completely, let it burn low but permanently to light to you as the holy spirit of eternal light.

[Drops the red mantle of John the Baptist and kisses him passionately.]

FESTIVAL OF THE SUN

Scene Eight

Characters:

CARAVAGGIO, PHYLLIS, LENA, TOMASSONI,
HOLOFERNES, BAGLIONE, FRANCESCA, DEL MONTE,
CONTARELLI, CHIEF OF STATE SECURITY,
FOUR MAENADS, FOUR DIONYSUS FIGURES, GIULIO,
SKELETON, FLOKI THE MONKEY
(ALL CHARACTERS PARTICIPATE AS GUESTS)

[In a gallery of Caravaggio's paintings, which at the same time is the amusement area of the Orlando Furioso bar. Great party in honour of the pagan Sun God. All characters are present, in appropriate costumes.]

[Caravaggio and Phyllis watch Ranuccio and Lena from afar.]

CARAVAGGIO:

Aren't they a lovely couple?

PHYLLIS:

You're pushing your luck. Tomassoni can come off badly because of you. Holofernes is unpredictable.

CARAVAGGIO:

Tonight he will not even notice him.

PHYLLIS:

You're using them.

CARAVAGGIO:

No. I love them.

PHYLLIS:

You cannot hide your emotions from me. You burn with jealousy. But why? You sleep with them both and both are nice to you.

CARAVAGGIO:

Nice?

PHYLLIS:

You want something more? They are enough to one another. You can be satisfied that the relationship among you is so soft and sympathetic, although I fear that this is only on the outside.

CARAVAGGIO:

You are exaggerating. I am happy to see them happy. How would I not be? They are like my children!



[Cardinal del Monte, dressed as the ancient God of the Sun, enters accompanied by the maenads and Dionysus figures, who bring gifts of nature and distribute them among the visitors.]

DEL MONTE:

Children of the sun! Make paradise, which has always belonged to you, real. Do it now, immediately! Accept the joy of life, breathe with it, become one with it! Be brave. Cry when you suffer and rejoice when you feel good. With bare hands and open hearts give yourself to life, let it embrace you as a storm. Burn out in it and rise from its ashes like the Phoenix! Become worthy of your God! Be like the Sun. Warm yourself and you will be able to warm others. Enjoy and love each other! And remember: everything is us. Here and now. One moment is our eternity. Children of the sun, I greet you in the realm of freedom!

*[Del Monte starts to dance wildly with the maenads and Dionysus figures.
A general enthusiastic dancing follows.]*



CARAVAGGIO:

I have a small request. You will not deny it, will you?

TOMASSONI:

To a friend, never.

CARAVAGGIO:

Do you like Baglione's wife?

TOMASSONI:

That is the one who wanted to jump me in the church?

CARAVAGGIO:

Yes, yes; she has been looking at you all evening. See how she smiles at you? I promised to send her the angel who inspired the image of the executioner of St. Matthew. That means you.

TOMASSONI:

She is beautiful, young also, but...

CARAVAGGIO:

Why the hesitation? You want to stay faithful to Lena? Come on; when has a prostitute been faithful to anyone? You will see the lot that she makes happy tonight. Why not take the opportunity? And grab some other one. Tonight there are plenty of women. And they are here with one single purpose: to make love and make love again.

TOMASSONI:

Introduce me to her.



HOLOFERNES:

Giovanni! Please, hold Floki and be still. (*Pushes his monkey into his lap.*) You are responsible for him, and if anything happens to him, I will have you beheaded. (*Sees Caravaggio.*) Mister Caravaggio, I just wanted to speak with you. Baglione has just showed me your painting ***Judith Beheading Holofernes***. Could you explain to me what you meant with it?

CARAVAGGIO:

Nothing that would agitate you.

HOLOFERNES:

Are you aware that my last name is Holofernes, and my companion's name is Judith?

CARAVAGGIO:

When creating the painting, I did not know.

BAGLIONE:

Mister General, I'm afraid that your notions of reality and imagination have become slightly mixed up.

HOLOFERNES:

Baglione, I wouldn't joke if I were you. Do you have any idea how hard it is to watch Floki?

CARAVAGGIO:

This is a liberal remake of a biblical story.

HOLOFERNES:

Is that so? You are lucky that I am a great admirer of art, otherwise I would have you locked up. Let's go on. What is this? (*Uncovers Caravaggio's painting ***Rest on the Flight to Egypt***.*)

CARAVAGGIO:

Rest on the Flight to Egypt.

HOLOFERNES:

This time you are right. Egypt is not in this war. Sits at home, sharpens the toothpicks and rests.



CARAVAGGIO:

Lena!

LENA:

Leave me alone!

CARAVAGGIO:

Cardinal Contarelli would like to meet you.

LENA:

I don't want to. You can't be my pimp.

CARAVAGGIO:

Lena, child, what's the matter? I promised the Cardinal to arrange something pleasant for tonight.

LENA:

Find someone else! There is a bunch of girls here.

CARAVAGGIO:

You are a professional. Deal with him quickly. Our family has so much to thank him for. He bought five of my paintings.

LENA:

I am not a member of your family!

CARAVAGGIO:

Lena. Honey.

LENA:

I hate you!

CARAVAGGIO:

Ok, ok, we'll talk at home. But now I demand that you treat Cardinal Contarelli properly.

LENA:

God how I hate you!

CARAVAGGIO (*sees Contarelli*):

Ah, mister Cardinal, please come over! I have tried all evening to introduce this young lady to you.

CONTARELLI (*approaches, all enthusiastic*):

Your grace! I kiss the hand, singing an ode to love in my heart.

CARAVAGGIO:

This is the niece of Miss Phyllis.

CONTARELLI:

I must say she surpasses her aunt in beauty and in charm.

CARAVAGGIO:

I agree. Excuse me for a moment. My presence is required elsewhere. (*Leaves.*)

CONTARELLI:

You graceful little thing! You are as fragile as spring dew. May I ask your name?

LENA:

Grazia Lena, at your service. But I will have this diamond necklace around your neck for payment.

CONTARELLI:

Yes? That expensive are you?

LENA:

One must pay for pleasure.



CHIEF OF STATE SECURITY:

You are an intimate friend of General Holofernes?

PHYLLIS:

What business is that of yours? Ask him.

CHIEF OF STATE SECURITY:

No need to be nervous. You have nothing to hide from me. We know everything about you.

PHYLLIS:

And? What do you want?

CHIEF OF STATE SECURITY:

You know that we are colleagues in several respects. Prostitution and spying have always worked well together. They are sisters, in fact. I need your help.

PHYLLIS:

What kind of help?

CHIEF OF STATE SECURITY:

We need someone close to General Holofernes.

PHYLLIS:

No, thanks. I don't take part in concrete actions.

CHIEF OF STATE SECURITY:

I am sure you will make an exception this time.



CARAVAGGIO (*uncovers his painting **Youth with a Ram***).

HOLOFERNES:

Is the sheep real?

CARAVAGGIO:

Why don't you check?

HOLOFERNES (*touches the painting*):

It's a painting. And it looks as if it were alive.

CARAVAGGIO:

Art is home to what we think it is or could be. For example, now you see it (*draws the curtain open; behind it are Tomassoni and Francesca Baglione engaged in sexual intercourse*), now you don't (*draws the curtain*). You see, what just seemed real to you does not exist.

HOLOFERNES:

Can you repeat this magic art?

CARAVAGGIO:

Sure. So – now you see it (*draws the curtain open; the lovers notice they are being watched*).

BAGLIONE:

No! My wife! (*Gets sick.*)

CARAVAGGIO:

And now you don't! (*Quickly draws the curtains.*)

HOLOFERNES:

Amusing. I didn't know art could be so amusing. It got me completely. And you say that's your wife in there? This is even more amusing.

CARAVAGGIO:

Shall we try again?

HOLOFERNES:

No, no, let the lovers enjoy themselves. Let's see some more magic art. What if one wanted to enter such a work of art and arrange one thing or another? Would that be possible?

CARAVAGGIO:

These effects are charged double.

HOLOFERNES:

You will arrange one for me. What is it, Baglione? Why are you so pale? You watch Floki, he vouches for your head, not the wife, who is into art with some guy in there. I would say he resembles my driver, but now I know that everything I see is an illusion, isn't it Caravaggio? And it is much easier to live.

CARAVAGGIO (*draws the room with the maenads dancing*):

There. Here you can enter and arrange one thing or another.

HOLOFERNES:

Hmm! You are a real wizard! I will not forget this. Baglione, you and Floki wait here. You, Caravaggio, can go. You can continue painting. You have my moral support. (*Enters among the enthusiastic maenads, Caravaggio draws the curtains behind him.*)



TOMASSONI (*runs from his hiding place*):

Holofernes will send me to the front; oh, God, I am lost! You are a swine, Caravaggio!

FRANCESCA:

Ranuccio, dear, don't leave me unsatisfied! Please!

TOMASSONI:

Where can we go? There is fornication around every corner.

FRANCESCA:

Let's go back.

TOMASSONI:

No, they will be back!

FRANCESCA:

Then let's be here.

TOMASSONI:

Are you mad? In everybody's sight?

FRANCESCA:

I have never enjoyed myself so much as with you today.

TOMASSONI:

You are talented, but totally uneducated, you little voluptuary.

FRANCESCA:

Here, here.

TOMASSONI:

Yes, yes... (*They retreat behind a curtain.*)

BAGLIONE (*comes secretly to his wife's hiding place*):

You whore! You insatiable bitch! Here in front of everyone? In front of Caravaggio so he can mock and humiliate me even more? Come out, you slut! (*The hiding place is empty.*) Oh, she ran away. I knew it. Sorrows never come singly. Here is a track. (*Trips over and falls.*)

Floki escapes.) Ooh! Now I am done for. Floki! Floki! Honey, where have you gone, don't hide; uncle loves you, come, show yourself. And all for this bloody strumpet! I will get a divorce! A divorce! Floki! Floki! (*Looks for the monkey, who has climbed high up.*)

[Silence. Dancing has stopped in the garden, too.]



DEL MONTE (*changing into ordinary cardinal dress*):
What is it, my son? Why are you so withdrawn?

CARAVAGGIO:
I am seeking myself, father.

DEL MONTE:
Then stop.

CARAVAGGIO:
I cannot. Something is coming from inside, it tortures me and makes me do things I do not understand.

DEL MONTE:
One must be persistent. It is not everybody's privilege to look in their own real face.

CARAVAGGIO:
I'm in love with a boy.

DEL MONTE:
And he does not love you?

CARAVAGGIO:
No. He loves a girl that I love, too.

DEL MONTE:

That is to say, you've achieved a perfect love triangle.

CARAVAGGIO:

No. I am completely left out.

DEL MONTE:

How is that? You love him, he loves her, and she loves you?

CARAVAGGIO:

In truth, they love only each other.

DEL MONTE:

And so you feel uneasy and sad?

CARAVAGGIO:

I am only human.

DEL MONTE:

But one must become God! I tell you, Michel, you could achieve a more lofty perspective on life. Thus you would get over jealousy forever. You would enjoy their happiness.

CARAVAGGIO:

Too late! Tonight I destroyed their peace.

DEL MONTE:

What we do to others, we do to ourselves.

CARAVAGGIO:

I fear suffering, father.

DEL MONTE:

Unfortunately, you will not be able to avoid it. But the good thing is that suffering is the shortest way to enlightenment. If one is intelligent enough, of course.



[Giulio flies in through the window, dressed as a black angel.]

DEL MONTE:

Oh, Giulio! Where did you come from?

GIULIO:

Heaven.

DEL MONTE:

And how's it going up there?

GIULIO:

Like on Earth.

DEL MONTE:

You've changed your wings. Don't you serve Eros anymore?

GIULIO:

No. We had a quarrel with the Cupids, so I changed my God. Now I am Kronos, the lord of time and master of fate.

DEL MONTE:

And thus the only one. No need to quarrel with anybody. Everyone must obey you. And why have you come to us?

GIULIO:

Well, this I cannot tell you. That would ruin the game.

TENNIS

Scene Nine

Characters:

CARAVAGGIO, TOMASSONI

[Tennis court. Tomassoni and Caravaggio play tennis.]

CARAVAGGIO:

Seven five, in the third.

TOMASSONI:

You're cheating! You stepped over the line twice.

CARAVAGGIO:

You totally can't play tennis.

TOMASSONI:

I won't take that from you. I was the champion of the first youth league.

CARAVAGGIO:

And I was playing it before you were even born.

TOMASSONI:

Oh, stop it, or I will stop playing.

CARAVAGGIO:

You can't. What about the bet?

TOMASSONI:

It was your bet, not mine. I don't understand why you care about this game so much. You want to beat me?

CARAVAGGIO:
Or you want to beat me?

TOMASSONI:
I really don't care.

CARAVAGGIO:
Oh, but you do.

TOMASSONI:
Why?

CARAVAGGIO:
Play!

TOMASSONI:
I won't!

CARAVAGGIO:
Play, I tell you!

TOMASSONI:
Shut up! You dog! Oh, how I hate you!

CARAVAGGIO:
And why is that?

TOMASSONI:
You disgust me. I have never met such a vile and dirty person. You ruined my life. You invited me to Del Monte's party and set me up with Baglione's chick, to get your revenge on him and to disgrace me before Holofernes. Because of you, I lost my job as the General's driver and must return to the job of a military pilot. I must go to the front. Nobody has returned from the Dead Sea. They've all been shot down. Why are you doing this to me?

CARAVAGGIO:
Because I love you.

TOMASSONI:
Don't be cynical.

CARAVAGGIO:
O, God! How I wish that you'd be shot down, that the plane with your massacred body would fall into the sea, that your beauty would tumble down into the abyss, that no trace would remain of you, as if you'd never existed.

TOMASSONI:
You're mad! You're simply mad! Do you know what you're saying?

CARAVAGGIO:
Oh, pretty well.

TOMASSONI:
Tell me, what have I done to you?

CARAVAGGIO:
How can I get rid of you? You're following me, you've obsessed me, you are with me all the time. My heart beats in you, I breathe in you, I think with your brain. I have become you.

TOMASSONI:
I couldn't care less about you. You have always been a stranger to me. My affection towards you was nothing but fake. Being your lover was all just a game. I am leaving. Tell me; where can I find Lena?

CARAVAGGIO:
In the hospital.

TOMASSONI:

What? Where?

CARAVAGGIO:

She had a nervous breakdown when they told her she was pregnant, and by Cardinal Contarelli. When she had an abortion, she totally lost it. She is now insane, I guess. You'll find her in the closed ward. But they say she recognises nobody any more.

TOMASSONI:

I challenge you to a duel!

CARAVAGGIO:

Excuse me?

TOMASSONI:

I said I challenge you to a duel. What? Are you saying you don't do fencing?

CARAVAGGIO:

Yes, yes; my time was not his time, his way was not my way; ok. When?

TOMASSONI:

Tomorrow at dawn among the trees of Giardino Fiesco.

THE CIRCLE IS CLOSING

Scene Ten

Characters:

CONTARELLI, BISHOP, BAGLIONE, PHYLLIS,
PRIME MINISTER, CHIEF OF STATE SECURITY,
MILITARY COUNCIL SECRETARY,
DEL MONTE, SKELETON

[On governmental premises. Afternoon. Bishop and Contarelli in the middle of a confidential conversation.]

BISHOP:

How, for the love of God, could you have made this underage girl pregnant? You surprise me mister Cardinal; you will soon be seventy.

CONTARELLI:

Don't shout, for God's sake, everyone will hear you.

BISHOP:

Well, you are naïve. All of Rome is talking about you. I mean gossiping about you.

CONTARELLI:

Tell me, how I can save my honour. How can I silence this juvenile? Apparently, she was released from hospital today. A press conference has been called for tomorrow.

BISHOP:

Oh, come on! You will get dragged into the media, now, at your advanced age, are you mad? Well, my advice is a simple, tried Roman recipe. Lena should be drowned in the Tiber. Nobody will know whether it is murder or suicide – trust me.

CONTARELLI:

You are cruel. I will think about it. (*They move to the back.*)

[Phyllis and Baglione come down the hall.]

BAGLIONE:

Tomassoni simply came, took two swords and left. He said Caravaggio needed them for painting.

PHYLLIS:

This is insane! Do you know that they will fight a duel tomorrow?

BAGLIONE:

No. Is that so? Interesting.

PHYLLIS:

You will call the police and report the swords stolen.

BAGLIONE:

Why do you care so much about them?

PHYLLIS:

They will kill each other. They are totally possessed by passion.

BAGLIONE:

So what if two people like Tomassoni and Caravaggio leave this world? Finally, luck has smiled on me, as well. Two birds with one stone: the one who dies and the one who will be convicted for murder. Splendid!

PHYLLIS:

You're a monster.

BAGLIONE:

No, no, just trying to be objective.

[The Prime Minister and Chief of State Security pass by.]

PHYLLIS:

Mr. Prime Minister, if you do not tame this idiot and tell him to obey me, I will cancel my participation

PRIME MINISTER:

You are so beautiful when you're angry! You become a fire of passion. Go, Baglione, go! Shouldn't you be getting on with that watching already?

BAGLIONE:

But I was invited to the meeting.

PRIME MINISTER:

Of course. To do the job that suits you.

BAGLIONE (*leaves*).

PHYLLIS:

I can't take it any longer! I can't take it any longer! (*Cries.*) You've broken me.

PRIME MINISTER:

Your emotions are rich. I admire them.

PHYLLIS:

Must everything that is dear to me really decay?

CHIEF OF STATE SECURITY:

Miss Phyllis, your conclusions are incorrect. We are offering you the chance to purify your whole sinful past with a single deed. And become the saviour of the nation overnight, so to speak. Its shining example. A symbol of victory and freedom.

PHYLLIS:

You want to soil my hands with murder. But I care for Holofernes. What can I do if he is a military dictator and a political fool? That's your problem. I'm not a politician.

PRIME MINISTER:

But you are a friend of the police and of diplomacy.

CHIEF OF STATE SECURITY:

Can you imagine how many people have had to leave the political scene, if not the face of the Earth, because of your information?

PHYLLIS:

You say this to me? Have you ever opened your file?

PRIME MINISTER:

Emotions – it's your emotions again. Elimination of General Holofernes is necessary, or we will never pull out of this war and political crisis. All power is in his hands. The civilians in the government are mere decoration. He will change the state into a military camp. Is this what you want? You see, the matter is simple: it is either us or him.

PHYLLIS:

And you trust me? Are you so sure I won't betray you, and we eliminate you in this game?

CHIEF OF STATE SECURITY:

It is probably too late for this kind of action. An hour ago, the Ministry of Interior sent the general a dispatch with your file.

PHYLLIS:

Swine!

CHIEF OF STATE SECURITY:

The only way for you to save your life – and to even praise yourself as a saviour of the nation – is to kill general Holofernes.

PRIME MINISTER: Do not fear, nothing will happen to you. We are your warranty.

[Contarelli and the Bishop sneak into the room from the back.]

CONTARELLI:

Be strong, Miss Phyllis, we stand behind you. We will praise you and honour you as a reincarnation of the Biblical Judith. Please, do tell me one more thing: how to get to Grazia Lena? We would like to pay her a visit with the Bishop.

BISHOP:

We will take her flowers. In these difficult times she surely needs spiritual comfort.

PHYLLIS *(in tears)*:

Oh, God, why all this? I don't understand.

MILITARY COUNCIL SECRETARY *(comes running)*:

Ah, here you are, gentlemen.

PRIME MINISTER:

What has happened? What is it?

CHIEF OF STATE SECURITY:

Speak, you thick-headed cretin!

MILITARY COUNCIL SECRETARY:

My God, I am totally out of breath, these stairs beat me. So, we learnt that Holofernes will sleep at the San Sebastiano base tonight. This is an ideal opportunity for our plan.

PRIME MINISTER:

Have you done anything concrete? Phyllis is here, she is waiting.

MILITARY COUNCIL SECRETARY:

The helicopter is ready. It can fly to the base immediately.

[Cardinal Del Monte enters, behind him, Skeleton with a sword.]

PRIME MINISTER:

Finally, you are here.

PHYLLIS *(falls on her knees before Del Monte)*:

Father, you who watch all this and know why this is happening, why don't you do something? You who understand cause and effect, give me your blessing; I am ignorant and weak, and I am entering a night that I fear and don't understand.

DEL MONTE:

Take this sword, my daughter, and peace be with you.

PHYLLIS:

What about my guilt? I will kill a man!

DEL MONTE:

This is your destiny. There is nothing you can do against it.

[Sound of the alarm.]

PRIME MINISTER:

What is this?

CHIEF OF STATE SECURITY:

A public safety drill.

PRIME MINISTER:

Nobody notified me.

CHIEF OF STATE SECURITY:

Me neither. I learned through my own channels. Let's get away!
There will be tear gas.

MILITARY COUNCIL SECRETARY:

Oh, my breath!

CONTARELLI:

I hope they will not shoot, at least. The detonations throw me off completely.

BISHOP:

What about vespers?

PRIME MINISTER:

Well, you'll hold them in the bunker. Let's go. Thank you, del Monte. Take a gas mask or you will suffocate. Gregor, take the sword! Phyllis, give me your hand. It will be dangerous.

CHIEF OF STATE SECURITY (*takes the sword*):

It is heavy!

DEL MONTE:

Pure silver.

CHIEF OF STATE SECURITY:

But a woman cannot handle this.

PRIME MINISTER:

You are ridiculous. In the performance, she will be, obviously, using a prop.

MILITARY COUNCIL SECRETARY:

Oh dear, I smell it, let us run! (*Runs.*)

PHYLLIS:

Remember me, father, when I am gone, remember me...

[All but del Monte and Skeleton disperse.]

DEL MONTE *(sits down)*:

Oh these kids, they don't understand anything.

BAGLIONE *(enters, carrying flowers)*:

Somebody here ordered flowers.

DEL MONTE:

Nobody is here any longer. Everyone left through the back door.

BAGLIONE:

Phyllis too?

DEL MONTE:

Yes.

BAGLIONE:

And I wanted to ask her where the duel will take place. I would like to be a spectator. —What is this? Something is in the air? You don't smell anything? It's poison. *(Runs away, coughing and screaming for help.)*

DEL MONTE:

Open the windows. They stank the place out. Pha!

SKELETON *(opens the windows, a starry night outside)*.

DEL MONTE:

Don't all our deeds have a higher purpose, some hidden meaning? Isn't there a higher purpose behind every human step, every change in nature, every volcano eruption, river flood, or motion among the stars? A higher meaning we cannot comprehend? Yes, yes, life is really a secret...

SKELETON:

You are always so philosophically inspired, father. – We will have to check the mail. A lot of it has accumulated.

DEL MONTE:

Is there anything urgent?

SKELETON:

Here are two telegrams from Jupiter and a registered letter from Saturn. Then a whole bunch of letters from the Moon, two postcards from Mars, one from your aunt who is there at a spa, and mail from Beijing, London, Cairo... Have a look. (*Presents the letters to him.*)

DEL MONTE:

Your hands are shaking, my friend.

SKELETON:

I am old, father; lonely. Nobody cares for me any longer.

DEL MONTE:

Surely, your time is once again near. However, you have always seemed in good shape to me. – I will dictate something.

SKELETON (*sits down to the typing machine*).

DEL MONTE (*dictates*):

Rome, Anno Domini 1606, May 29, when Jupiter was in Taurus, and Aries and Capricorn in the firmament of Ursus major. Some people I knew have had a misfortune. An unimportant event for eternity, but for those who had to burn out in it an event as broad as the universe.

AGNUS DEI

Scene Eleven

Characters:

GIULIO, TOTO, TOMASSONI, LENA, CARAVAGGIO,
DEL MONTE, MODELS OF THE PAINTING DEATH
OF THE VIRGIN

*[Orlando Furioso Bar. Empty. The sound of blues comes from the gramophone. On stage there is Giulio, dressed as a woman, dancing alone. In the distance, a huge panoramic reproduction of Caravaggio's painting **Sacrifice of Isaac.**]*

GIULIO:

Blues, oh, magical blues that wakes in me the passions of a woman! Yes, sir, trust your dreams because with me you make them come true. You have never had so much enjoyment; whatever you wish for, you get because I am everything. Blues, oh, magical blues...

TOTO (*quarrels with Tomassoni at the door*):

Don't be violent! There is no one here. It is empty. You see?

GIULIO:

Oh, handsome young man, over here, over here, dance with me!

TOMASSONI (*grabs Giulio*):

Where is Lena?

GIULIO:

I am your Lena.

TOTO:

Understand – she is no longer here. She does not have a contract.

GIULIO:

Our brothel is decaying, isn't it, king? Since Salome left, everything is empty. Ranuccio, be our first guest, set an example. Tonight, you can make love to me for free.

TOMASSONI:

Hands off! You disgust me, you disgusting cripple!

GIULIO:

Lock the door, king.

TOTO:

What's the matter with you?

GIULIO:

Tomassoni is staying with me. Lock it, I tell you! You aren't jealous, are you?

TOTO (*leaves and locks the door*).

TOMASSONI:

Lena, my Lena, you are nowhere. I have searched everywhere, but no sign of you. And I am going to the front tomorrow.

GIULIO:

You are not going anywhere. You will stay here and wait for the storm to pass. Hold me.

TOMASSONI:

Don't touch me!

GIULIO:

My love, be wise and listen to me. Everything that exists moves, but it sometimes stops. And now it is time for you to let yourself rest.

TOMASSONI:

Stop deceiving me with empty words, let me go.

GIULIO:

Stop! Everyone is against everyone. There will be bloodshed. You can save yourself if you are wise.

TOMASSONI:

What are you hiding from me? Speak!

GIULIO:

I know the future. Stop! And don't wish to know anything.

TOMASSONI:

Who are you?

GIULIO:

One who sees more than one should.

TOMASSONI:

Please, tell me where Lena is?

GIULIO:

If you are good and kind to me and if you await the morning of the fourth day with me, then I will tell you. Can you play cards?

TOMASSONI:

No.

GIULIO:

You'll learn. We have plenty of time. Things will fall into place while we rest and have fun. There is plenty of wine.

TOMASSONI:

Witch. Where are the keys? I want out!

GIULIO:

Gone! They are lost. (*Laughs.*) Now you are mine! Only mine!

TOMASSONI:

Open the door! I will break them down. You want to stop me, to prevent me from helping people in trouble. You want to murder Lena. Open up! Or I will make my own way! (*Takes the knife and stabs the panoramic reproduction of Caravaggio's painting **Sacrifice of Isaac.***)

GIULIO:

Nooooo!

*[Blood pours from the painting. Music starts, Mozart's **Requiem, Agnus Dei.**]*

TOTO (*comes running*):

For God's sake, don't! Don't do this!

TOMASSONI (*destroying the painting that bleeds more and more, suddenly he cries*):

The eyes! My eyes! No! My eyes! (*Fights with blindness.*)

[Behind the painting rises the setting of the following scene: a foggy morning, dawn, Lena's body is being pulled from the Tiber.]

TOMASSONI:

Giulio! What have you done to my sight? Giulio! This is not me! No, this is not me! Give me back my eyes, please! My eyes! (*Sees dead Lena.*) Lena! Lena!

GIULIO:

This is the reality of your future.

DEL MONTE (*suddenly appears*):

What are you doing to this child? You are abusing the third eye.
You have no right.

GIULIO:

I wanted to save her. She is too young, too good to die. She should
get some rest, get some rest.

DEL MONTE:

You would like to change the course of destiny, something that not
even the gods can do?

GIULIO (*cries*):

But why? Why then was I allowed to cross the boundaries of time?
Oh, Cronos, I will no longer be your angel; I will strip off your
wings, Fate; I will be only an angel of human Death. And I have
been so high, I thought I knew everything?

DEL MONTE:

Well, now you are human again. What you have always been. Even
when you were flying.

A BODY IN THE TIBER

Scene Twelve

Characters:

TOMASSONI, LENA, CARAVAGGIO,
POLICEMAN, CURIOUS BYSTANDER,
MODELS OF THE PAINTING DEATH OF THE VIRGIN

*[Embankment of the Tiber at dawn, Caravaggio's painting studio on the other side. Police, rescuers and a few bystanders. In his studio, Caravaggio is finishing the painting **Death of the Virgin**. In the rear is the background scenery of the painting, but without people.]*

TOMASSONI (*cries over Lena*):

Lena! Lena! Honey! Sister! What have they done to you? Tell me, who did it? Oh, Lena, wake up, It's me, your Ranuccio!

CURIOUS BYSTANDER:

The young man obviously knows her.

POLICEMAN:

You will come with us.

TOMASSONI:

You said that every person is a star, you said; so small when seen in the sky and so big when approached, and you said that when you die, you really become a star and you move to the sky, and from there you look down at the Earth that is so small – as small as you once seemed to yourself. But where among the innumerable stars can I find you, because what will I do without you?

POLICEMAN:

Move back, young man. You are obstructing our work. Lift her onto the stretcher.

TOMASSONI:

Don't touch her. I will carry her myself.

*[Grabs Lena's body and carries it to Caravaggio's studio, he lays it in the landscape of the painting **Death of the Virgin**; the mourners approach and weep over her.]*

CARAVAGGIO *(is speechless before the painting, which a few meters away is turning into reality)*.

TOMASSONI:

I am here. Not as art, but as reality I am here. Let's go! The dawn is breaking.

BEHEADING

Scene Thirteen

Characters:

HOLOFERNES, FLOKI, PHYLLIS

[San Sebastiano air base command. TV screens are showing military actions. Floki the monkey is sitting at the control panel pushing the buttons and changing TV channels. General Holofernes spreads out a sleeping bag, sits down and starts unlacing his shoes.]

HOLOFERNES:

Floki, don't play with that! You will blow us up. You must be careful. *(Lies down to sleep.)* If we win anywhere, wake me up; no need to disturb me with defeats; I am weary of those. *(Changes his mind and gets up.)* Ah, I won't go to sleep, someone could attack me when I'm unprepared. One is never safe before the officer pest. Everywhere they lurk around me and wait to get me. Is there anyone who does not wish me dead? Floki, you are my only faithful soldier. Others just pretend to be so. Oh, I am so tired. I would like to sleep. But they will come and slay me. They will cut off my head in my sleep and brag about it in front of the military and the people in the morning. Liberators, liberators is what they will shout. What liberators? Murderers! Oh, oh, I would like to sleep. Sleep. *(Picture disappears from the TV screens.)* Floki, what are you doing? We will lose the war because of you! Let it go. It is enough. Go play outside, tomorrow I will teach you real commanding. *(Floki leaves.)* He mixes up all programs. What now? No contact with the front lines. How do I command now? Well, picture again after all!

[The image of Miss Phyllis appears on the screens.]

PHYLLIS:

Hi.

HOLOFERNES:

What? You? Away from me!

PHYLLIS:

Your effort is useless. You cannot erase me from the screen. The computers are blocked.

HOLOFERNES:

What? You? Judith! Why? Why did you do this to me, love? It was so nice when we made love.

PHYLLIS:

Do you believe what they told you about me? Who tells you the truth anyway? They feed you with lies to confuse and isolate you.

HOLOFERNES (*cries over the control panel*):

Love, I cannot take it anymore. Everybody is against me, I have no one left to lean on. I am so scared. I am afraid to die.

PHYLLIS:

Calm down, love, I am with you. I will protect you and lead you through the danger calmly. And now take off your clothes and go to sleep.

HOLOFERNES:

No! Not to bed, no, please. When I lie down in bed, I feel that I am lying in a grave.

PHYLLIS:

You're tired, nervous, and tense. You will never win the war like this. Do as I say!

HOLOFERNES:

Oh, Judith, merciful one, step down from the screen and come to me!

PHYLLIS:

I will, dear, when you are in bed, I will climb in with you and we will make love like never before.

HOLOFERNES:

Yes, I need you, please, come, I will do anything you say. I love you.

PHYLLIS:

First, take off your cap; see, you can do it; now unbutton your shirt, take it off; and the buttons on the shirt; can you feel me touching your belly, my hand moves across your hairy chest, and now the trousers.

HOLOFERNES:

No! Not the trousers!

PHYLLIS:

Why not?

HOLOFERNES:

Somebody might come.

PHYLLIS:

Nobody will come. We are alone. All alone in the whole world. Come on. First the belt, ok, now the button and the zipper, your shoes are unlaced, just throw them off and the trousers will slip off. So. Now you can lie down.

HOLOFERNES:

And where are you? When are you coming?

[Phyllis disappears from the screens, we again see scenes from the battlefields.]

HOLOFERNES:

There. She is gone. Again an apparition. And so real. Oh my, I took off my clothes. I really should sleep. My brain is tired. My eyes are hazy. *(He lies down.)* Yes, really, I feel that I am lying down on a butcher's block. I will be murdered tonight. I have been left alone in this huge castle; everyone has left me, I will die alone. Oh, people! Your hearts will stay cold; my pain will not even be noticed; my fear will go by you. Why? I am not such a bad man; I only seem that way; and I would like to live, like you, live, live. Oh, night, good night, come and erase everything I did or could have done; let me forget with you everything I was to myself and to others. And let me sleep, sleep... *(Wraps himself in the sleeping bag and falls asleep.)*

PHYLLIS *(comes from the rear with a butcher knife)*.

HOLOFERNES *(leaps up)*:

Judith, please, don't!

PHYLLIS *(stabs him once, twice, until she kills him)*.

DUEL

Scene Fourteen

Characters:

CARAVAGGIO, TOMASSONI, PHYLLIS

[Park. Sunrise. Birds, distant noise of a highway. Tomassoni and Caravaggio with swords.]

TOMASSONI:

I dreamt that I was staring into a big blue eye, washed in a stream of pure tears; an eye in light I have never seen before. Then some secret force pulled me in. Long I walked around the inside of the eye, through landscapes of various colours, until I spotted someone watching me. This someone was me.

CARAVAGGIO:

Let us start.

TOMASSONI:

And may God bless our swords and forever reconcile our paths.

CARAVAGGIO:

Amen.

[They embrace and begin to duel. At first, they fight peacefully, Tomassoni is noticeably better; however, he is not aggressive and gives priority to Caravaggio, whom he wounds in his right leg; a few moments later, Caravaggio stabs Tomassoni straight to the heart.]

CARAVAGGIO:

No! Ranuccio, no! Please do not die!

TOMASSONI:

Ah, dear Michel, why all these emotions? I liked to live; I like dying. My life has been a gift to me, so now I return this gift with gratitude. I am moving among the stars. I will dwell somewhere there, in the north. We will be together with Leno. When you look for us in the sky, we will wink at you. You will not miss us. (*Dies.*)

[It is beginning to get dark. The Sun darkens, A thick black mass starts to flow from it and spill over the stage. Phyllis comes from the side with Holofernes' head, dripping with blood.]

CARAVAGGIO (*screams in fear*):

Phyllis!

PHYLLIS:

I am your Judith, and this is Holofernes' head. The blood is still warm; a few minutes ago there was life in it, but now it is nothing; bare death.

CARAVAGGIO:

Away! Away from me! You tear up my eyes!

PHYLLIS:

You created me, Caravaggio, I am your heroine, and I am violating the law of art by stepping into life. Ah, my creator, erase my crime, wash my guilt away! Look, here I kneel powerless before you and I beg you, oh, my Creator, why have you created me for killing?

CARAVAGGIO:

Away! Get away from me!

[Rumbling of a volcano can be heard in the background; it is almost completely dark.]

PHYLLIS:

Can you hear how loud human blood is? Can you hear the crime stamping? Can you hear how the doors of hell have been flung open? You fall with me into the abyss!

[In front of Caravaggio, the Earth tears open, a volcano erupts; Phyllis is pushing him into the flames; together they fall into the gulf of fire.]

IN THE KINGDOM OF DWARFS

Scene Fifteen

Characters:

CARAVAGGIO, CHARON, GUIDE DWARF,
FOUR DWARFS, DEL MONTE

[Underground river. Charon the ferryman navigates the boat with the sleeping Caravaggio. After the underground world, landscape in moonlight. Dwarfs on the embankment, waving with lanterns to Charon the ferryman.]

GUIDE DWARF:

Come on over, come on over, Charon, sir! The passenger is anxiously awaited.

CHARON THE FERRYMAN (*stops the boat*):

The poor guy fell asleep. – Caravaggio, wake up; we have arrived.

CARAVAGGIO (*wakes*):

Where am I?

CHARON THE FERRYMAN:

In the kingdom of dwarfs.

GUIDE DWARF:

Disembark and follow us. Thank you, Charon, sir, for your help.

CHARON THE FERRYMAN:

Good luck! (*Navigates away.*)

[The dwarfs lead Caravaggio away.]

CARAVAGGIO:
Where are we going?

GUIDE DWARF:
You will see when it is time.

[The dwarfs lead Caravaggio across the mountain countryside while singing quietly. They walk into a snow storm. A castle appears in the distance. As they approach, the door opens by itself. They find themselves before a silver staircase.]

GUIDE DWARF:
Take off your shoes.

CARAVAGGIO:
Why?

GUIDE DWARF:
You cannot enter the last kingdom in shoes.

CARAVAGGIO (*takes off his shoes*).

GUIDE DWARF:
There. Now you are ready. (*Rings the bell.*) The initiate is waiting.
Let him in.

[The dwarfs move away imperceptibly.]

DEL MONTE (*comes to meet him*):
This is not an initiate. Or is he? Hello, Caravaggio! Welcome to the homeland of the Northern sun. I came to meet you, to ease your way up to the silver door. Come. I will walk with you.

*[They walk together. In the distance, the scene from Caravaggio's painting **The Lute Player** appears. We hear playing and singing of Jacques Arcadelt's madrigal "Voi sapete ch'io v'amo" – "you know that I love you". Del Monte steps away imperceptibly. Caravaggio is walking towards the painting and music. He walks through it but suddenly turns around and sets his eyes on the severed head with snakes; he hears bestial sounds coming from his painting **Medusa**. Screams with terror and falls down.]*

A FAMILIAR STRANGER

Scene Sixteen

Characters:

LUCIA, CARAVAGGIO, GIULIO, DEL MONTE

[Caravaggio's apartment in Naples. Bed where he and Giulio sleep. Sunny morning. Enter Caravaggio's mother, Lucia Aratori. Puts coffee down and starts to wake him.]

LUCIA:

It is time to get up, my children, get up. Hey, wake up, Michel; it is eleven o'clock; honey, you said you had a meeting at twelve.

CARAVAGGIO:

I had a terrible dream.

LUCIA:

You screamed in your sleep.

CARAVAGGIO:

My God, I tired myself out...

LUCIA:

I had to comfort you in the middle of the night. You were crying so strongly.

CARAVAGGIO:

Did I? Oh, mom, what would I do without you? No one understands me better than you. No one puts up with my madness better than you. Where do you get your patience from? Why don't you scold me? Why don't you tell me what to do?

LUCIA:

If I wanted you to live as I want you to, it would be better that I had never borne you. Why don't you accept the freedom you got with your birth?

CARAVAGGIO:

Freedom? Where do you see freedom?

LUCIA:

It is everywhere: around you, in you; it is just you that have not noticed it yet.

CARAVAGGIO:

I would like some coffee.

LUCIA (*hands him the cup*):

Here you are.

CARAVAGGIO:

Thank you.

LUCIA:

You too, Giulio? What a nice fragrance! Get up, you will miss your appointment.

CARAVAGGIO:

Sleepy head! Move your arse! Come on!

LUCIA:

I will put your coffee here.

GIULIO:

You tossed around all night and breathed your smelly alcoholic vapours into me. I didn't get any sleep. (*Gets up.*)

[A bell rings in the hall.]

LUCIA:
Someone is here.

GIULIO:
Probably the police.

CARAVAGGIO:
Do not joke, kid! Mom, go and see who it is.

LUCIA (*leaves*).

GIULIO:
They will catch you some day anyway. You can be sure. Nowadays, you cannot cover up your crime easily.

CARAVAGGIO:
Stop it!

LUCIA (*returns*):
There is a stranger at the door. He claims he is from Rome. He is looking for you, Michel.

CARAVAGGIO:
From Rome? Impossible! What does he want?

LUCIA:
I don't know. He just asked for you.

GIULIO:
Why are you so panicky? Let him come in. Nothing can happen to you. You are in the jurisdiction of Naples.

CARAVAGGIO:
Shut up, little brat!

LUCIA:
Shall I let him in?

CARAVAGGIO:
Let him in. No! He can go to hell! Let him in! What are you staring at?

LUCIA (*leaves*).

GIULIO:
I am really curious who could have thought of you in Rome. I am going to the bathroom. The conversation will probably be private.

CARAVAGGIO:
Get lost!

GIULIO (*leaves*).

LUCIA (*brings in Cardinal Del Monte*).

LUCIA:
Del Monte?!

DEL MONTE:
Hello, Caravaggio.

CARAVAGGIO:
You in Naples? At this time?

DEL MONTE:
Duties. (*Offers him his hand.*)

CARAVAGGIO:
I cannot believe it's really you.

DEL MONTE:
Don't you feel my hand?

CARAVAGGIO:
Will you take off your coat? Please, take a seat. This is my mom.

LUCIA:
Lucia Aratori.

DEL MONTE (*shakes her hand*):
Francesco. I know you, I read Caravaggio's biography.

LUCIA:
Can I get you anything?

DEL MONTE:
No, thank you. I will be brief.

LUCIA:
I will bring a little something anyway. (*Leaves.*)

CARAVAGGIO:
What are you here for?

DEL MONTE:
You.

CARAVAGGIO:
I dreamt of you last night.

DEL MONTE:
I know. I sent you this dream to remind you of Rome.

CARAVAGGIO:
What about Rome?

DEL MONTE:

Many things. Ranuccio Tomassoni, for example, waits there.

CARAVAGGIO:

You are joking. He has been dead for four years.

DEL MONTE:

This is not true! His death only took a short moment. When will you learn that nothing is final? Tomassoni's spirit lives in a human body again. The game of your previous life continues. Admit your crime, repent and return to Rome.

CARAVAGGIO:

I feel no guilt.

DEL MONTE:

That is a lie! Four years in exile. From whom did you run away? The Roman authorities pardoned your crime. And you? Have you pardoned it? Repent, shake Ranuccio's hand and finish the game in peace. No game is finished before the tensions in it balance out. You cannot run away from your conscience. It will go with you to your grave and to the eternity of the future.

LUCIA (*who brought a cup of coffee while the cardinal was speaking, bursts into tears*).

DEL MONTE:

Remove this woman!

CARAVAGGIO:

She is my mom.

DEL MONTE:

Tell her she cannot cry in your place.

CARAVAGGIO:

I don't care for your truth; it is as cold as ice. Where is your compassion?

DEL MONTE:

Outside, where I left my shoes.

CARAVAGGIO:

Satan!

DEL MONTE:

You can call me God. The essence is the same.

GIULIO (*enters, sees Lucia on the floor*):

Lucia, what is it? You are crying? – Oh, Cardinal Del Monte? You?

DEL MONTE:

Hi, kid! When are you coming to Rome?

GIULIO:

Rome?

DEL MONTE:

Yes. Everyone expects you two. Take the first train and come. I am leaving. I am warning you one more time, Caravaggio: you can avoid anything, but you stay forever with yourself. (*Leaves*).

GIULIO:

Rome? He said Rome?

ON BOARD SHIP

Scene Seventeen

Characters:

CARAVAGGIO, GIULIO, FOUR MEN ON BOARD SHIP

[Night. The waves of the sea can be heard. Caravaggio and Giulio are asleep among the bags, next to the mast.]

CARAVAGGIO (*jumps up in his sleep*):

Aaaaah! Who is it? I was so frightened. Hey, Giulio, where are we?

GIULIO (*turns around*):

Leave me alone. On a ship.

CARAVAGGIO:

Didn't we say we were going to Rome?

GIULIO:

We did. You can get there by boat. Good night.

[They fall asleep again. In the background, there are really shades moving. Caravaggio jumps up again.]

CARAVAGGIO:

Somebody is walking! Hey, somebody is walking around here!

GIULIO:

You are being paranoid. Calm down and go to sleep. You will get seasick.

CARAVAGGIO (*lies down and gets up again*):

I tell you somebody is walking around here. They're looking for us. Can you hear?

GIULIO:

It's the sailors. Go to sleep.

[Men jump on them from the darkness.]

FIRST:

They are here! Get them! Get some light over here!

SECOND:

Hold him! Gag him!

BAGLIONE:

Caught on the run. You are under arrest.

FOURTH:

Bind them up!

SECOND:

Easy target!

THIRD:

Take them away!

MISTAKE

Scene Eighteen

Characters:

CARAVAGGIO, GIULIO, INTERROGATOR,
POLICE CHIEF, TV SPEAKER

[Provincial police station. Interrogator questions Giulio. Cartoons are showing on TV.]

GIULIO:

No! This is a mistake. We are not the people you are looking for.

INTERROGATOR:

We're the ones who say whom we are looking for. Look at me when you're talking to me!

GIULIO:

I understand, sir. But Michel and I are innocent. We have no connection with your affair.

INTERROGATOR:

Do not lie! Let's start from the beginning. Date and place of birth.

GIULIO:

22 January 1591, Palermo.

INTERROGATOR:

Are you making fun of me or what?

GIULIO:

That's my date and place of birth. I have no other.

INTERROGATOR:

You lie like a gas meter! Bring in the other one. I've had enough of this one.

[The guards bring in the battered Caravaggio.]

INTERROGATOR:

What were you doing on the day of the assault?

CARAVAGGIO:

When?

INTERROGATOR:

When? 29 May 1988?

CARAVAGGIO:

Nothing. I was not alive that day.

INTERROGATOR:

Fine. Let's skip this detail. How do you know General Holofernes?

CARAVAGGIO:

I don't. On second thoughts. In 1598 I painted a painting entitled Judith Beheading Holofernes.

INTERROGATOR:

Where exactly do you come from? From what world? What language do you speak? Are you totally crazy? Do you have any idea that you are involved in the assassination of the military commander of NATO?

CARAVAGGIO:

No idea.

GIULIO:

Michel, admit it, don't be stubborn.

INTERROGATOR:

Once again: what were you doing on 29 May?

CARAVAGGIO:

On this day in 1606, I killed a friend in a duel.

INTERROGATOR:

I am not interested in private matters. Mister Caravaggio, be sensible, cooperate with us. So, kid, what do you know about General Holofernes?

CARAVAGGIO:

I told you. In 1598 I used him as a model for my painting. I took the motif from the Bible.

INTERROGATOR (*hits him*):

Continue!

CARAVAGGIO:

Why are you torturing me? I am not a dissident. I am not interested in politics. I have always gladly cooperated with the authorities. I am only a poor painter, born on 17 October 1517 in Milan, died 18 July 1610 in Porto Ercole. Today it is 15 July, and I have exactly three days till my death.

GIULIO:

He speaks the truth, I can back him up!

INTERROGATOR:

Have I asked you anything? Watch the cartoons or you will go back to the gaol. – Continue.

CARAVAGGIO:

In fear of punishment, I escaped from the crime scene. First I was hiding in the suburbs of Rome, then I ran to Naples, from there to

Malta, from Malta to Sicily. In the mean time, I was in Messina and Palermo until I came back to Naples in 1609, where I stayed until the day before yesterday when I received an invitation from Cardinal Del Monte to return to Rome because my offence had been pardoned.

INTERROGATOR:

You have some imagination, boss, some imagination. You should be the weather man. And why did you not go from Naples to Rome by car or by train? Why ship? You had to go way around.

CARAVAGGIO:

I feared that Roman enemies would set a trap on the road, so we wanted to avoid the beaten path and enter Rome from the totally different side and surprise everybody.

POLICE CHIEF (*enters*):

You can let them go. You arrested them by mistake. The right ones were found.

CARAVAGGIO:

What? You made a mistake?

GIULIO:

See? I told you we were not the right ones!

INTERROGATOR:

Thank God. They were driving me crazy.

[The portrait of Miss Phyllis appears on the TV.]

GIULIO:

This is Phyllis. Our Phyllis.

POLICE CHIEF:

This is her. The assassin. (*Turns up the TV volume.*)

TV SPEAKER:

... And thus, all top leaders of the Red Brigades are behind bars. This morning, in a flat in Rome, they found the body of Miss Phyllis, alias St. Judith, the murderer of General Holofernes. It is believed that the famous terrorist committed suicide. This was our final news item. We continue with the program for our young viewers. (*Cartoon.*)

CARAVAGGIO:

And what about us?

POLICE CHIEF:

You may go.

CARAVAGGIO:

Where are our things?

GIULIO:

What things?

CARAVAGGIO:

Our luggage; my suitcases, my paintings, colours, brushes, canvases?

INTERROGATOR:

We have nothing.

CARAVAGGIO:

What? It was all on the ship.

INTERROGATOR:

We took nothing from there.

CARAVAGGIO:

This is robbery! Everything I had was on the ship with me. Where did you take my things?

POLICE CHIEF:

They are probably where you left them. But I am afraid the ship sailed for Cyprus.

GIULIO:

Oh, no!

CARAVAGGIO:

Impossible!

POLICE CHIEF:

Well, it is! And now be gone! Or I will have you locked up. Go! Throw them out!

AT THE COAST

Scene Nineteen

Characters:

CARAVAGGIO, GIULIO, TOTO

[Sandy sea shore. Giulio and Caravaggio walk aimlessly.]

CARAVAGGIO:

Where can I go? I have nothing left. I am nothing.

GIULIO:

We must get to Rome, dear, come on, just a bit more, hang on. See now how your fears were empty. We were locked up by mistake, ha ha ha...

CARAVAGGIO:

But our Rome is gone.

GIULIO:

No, dear. It must still be there. Rome is eternal, dear. Other people live in it, but the streets and buildings of our memories still exist. Please, Michele, we must get there. Today is Thursday. There is a premiere in the Orlando Furioso bar.

CARAVAGGIO:

I am sick. I'm going to die. Go on alone.

GIULIO:

No, we will go together.

CARAVAGGIO:

I can't anymore. (*Loses his strength and falls into the sand.*)

GIULIO:

Michel, Michel!

CARAVAGGIO:

Three more days to my death. I will stay in Porto Ercole, I will get sunstroke, I will die in a high fever hallucinating, ravaged by malaria.

GIULIO:

I must get to Rome! (*Cries.*)

CARAVAGGIO:

Go! I will stay here and wait for you, death.

TOTO (*quietly sneaks in from the side*):

Giulio! Hey, Giulio!

GIULIO (*turns*).

TOTO:

Pssst!

GIULIO:

Toto! Toto! My dear Toto!

TOTO:

I came to take you to Rome.

GIULIO:

To Rome? – Yes! To Rome! Today is Thursday. There is a premiere in our bar.

TOTO:

Unfortunately, the Orlando Furioso doesn't exist anymore.

GIULIO:

What do you do then?

TOTO:

I make religious shows for the television. Baglione hired me.

GIULIO:

Really? Can you give me a job?

TOTO:

Sure. I have a great part for you – the Angel of Death in the Passion of Christ.

GIULIO:

Super! I've never played that role.

TOTO (*looks at the dying Caravaggio*):

Is this Caravaggio?

GIULIO:

We must bring him along.

TOTO:

That will not be easy. He is nearly dead.

CARAVAGGIO:

Leave me, please, I would like to die by the sea.

GIULIO:

What are you saying, Michele? You are eternal. Do you recall Cardinal Del Monte's words? There is no death, just life. (*They get Caravaggio on his feet.*) See, you can do it. Now we can go. Easy, step by step. (*They walk along the shore.*)

TOTO:

What heat! Not a cloud in the sky. Just the sky and the sea and the sand and the sun.

GIULIO:

It is all one vast plain. Is it far to Rome?

TOTO:

Far. But the sun is high. We will get there before evening.

GIULIO:

Yes, yes; one must believe, hope. Then things just happen. Can you imagine, Michel, everyone in Rome expects us and wonders from which direction we will come. And we descend from the air. Ha ha ha... They will not believe we are really back.

[It starts to thunder.]

TOTO:

What is this? The thunder belongs in the next scene.

GIULIO:

Sometimes the Gods make a mistake.

[It starts to get dark, there is lightning, the thunder increases; wind blows; a storm will soon be here.]

TOTO:

They are taking it seriously. We'll get soaking wet.

GIULIO:

Not a chance! The theatre management forbade the use of rain.

TOTO:

Good for us. But the sky is still strange. Look at the clouds, a minute ago they were not there.

CARAVAGGIO (*starts laughing*).

TOTO:

Finally you've woken up. Can you walk now?

[An impetuous downpour starts.]

TOTO:

What? This is real rain!?

[He and Giulio run from the stage to the shelter, but Caravaggio stays in the storm, arms outstretched, glowing of joy.]

CARAVAGGIO:

"Father, into your hands I commend my spirit."

RESURRECTION

Scene Twenty

Characters:

CARAVAGGIO, GIULIO, TOTO, BAGLIONE, LENA,
TOMASSONI, MODELS OF THE PAINTING THE
ENTOMBMENT OF CHRIST

*[In the TV studio. Mozart's **Requiem** is playing. Preparations for Toto's Easter religious show. Large screens show the recordings of Golgotha and Christ's crucifixion. Toto is giving final instructions before the shooting starts. Cameras are also ready in the auditorium, where they record the audience.]*

TOTO:

Attention, we are starting! Sound, camera, action!

*[The cameras focus on the scene, which is choreography of Caravaggio's painting **The Entombment of Christ**. Christ is played by Caravaggio. First he is taken down from the cross, then carried to the tomb. When Giulio rolls away the stone from the tomb, Caravaggio suddenly interrupts the scene.]*

CARAVAGGIO:

No, not anymore; I've changed my mind. I don't want a part in this story any longer. It was enough.

[An overall commotion captures the studio; the illusion of the painting is gone; shooting is stopped, even though the TV monitors still show "Entombment".]

TOTO (*confused*):

Dear viewers, this is a misunderstanding. – Stop, stop! Cut! Stop that! This was not in the scenario.

[TV screens are switched off. Emergency lights turn on.]

BAGLIONE (*rushes in, furious*):

Shame! You are fired!

*[Confusion in the studio is covered by a reproduction of Caravaggio's still life **Boy with a Basket of Fruit**. Tomassoni appears in the still life and offers Caravaggio – through the painting – a real apple.]*

TOMASSONI:

“Beauty is in the eye of the beholder and love in the one who loves.”

EPILOGUE

Characters:

BAGLIONE, CARAVAGGIO, TOMASSONI

[The same setting as in the prologue: gallery hall, night; through the empty silver wall, a garden with moonlight can be seen.]

BAGLIONE:

This is the beginning of a biography of a man who will keep my name in history too. Otherwise, who would remember a tiny, unimportant and, above all, envious and bitter art critic and curator, if from all the pain he caused himself and others did not emerge art like the painting of Michelangelo Merisi da Caravaggio? Time, the only true master of all existence, God above Gods, who settles everything! Who would have thought that Contarelli's predictions would come true. But they did. Today they opened an international exhibition of Caravaggio's paintings in Milan. With grand success. I wrote an introductory essay for the catalogue. Of course, without revealing my true opinion. I didn't want to make a fool of myself.

[Through the wall, the audience can see how Caravaggio pushes away the stone from his grave and rises.]

BAGLIONE:

But how can I love and respect someone who troubles me even after his death?

CARAVAGGIO (comes to *Baglione*, speaks to him, but his voice cannot be heard).

BAGLIONE:

Look, he is here again! And every night it is like this. The things he does to me! Thank God, I have already got used to these ghosts. But once I used to die of fear. Particularly when the moon is shining, he is friendly. Then he plays tennis with Ranuccio Tomassoni back in the garden. (*Hands tennis rackets to Caravaggio through the wall.*) The only problem is that I need to take care of their rackets. After the game I must store them until the next day when I must give them back. This is actually my punishment. Frankly, it is not at all exaggerated, just there is no sign of any end to it.

[Caravaggio and Tomassoni start playing tennis in the garden. The moon is shining. Baglione moves away discreetly.]





Vili Ravnjak, rojen leta 1960 v Celju, je diplomiral iz dramaturgije na Akademiji za gledališče, radio, film in televizijo v Ljubljani. Od leta 1983 je povezan z Dramo Slovenskega narodnega gledališča v Mariboru, kjer je z vmesnimi prekinitvami do danes zaposlen kot hišni dramaturg ali kot umetniški direktor. Napisal je več dramskih besedil in televizijskih scenarijev (*Potovanje v Rim, Tugomer, Giordano Bruno, Življenje v krogu, Tretje oko ...*). Je avtor esejističnih knjig o gledališki umetnosti (*Umetnost igre, Gledališče kot stvarnost in iluzija ...*) in o novodobni duhovnosti (*Spoznavanje Višjega Jaza, Smaragdna pot, Lotosov cvet nad vodno gladino ...*).

Dramski teksti in scenariji Viliya Ravnjaka med letoma 1982 in 2010:

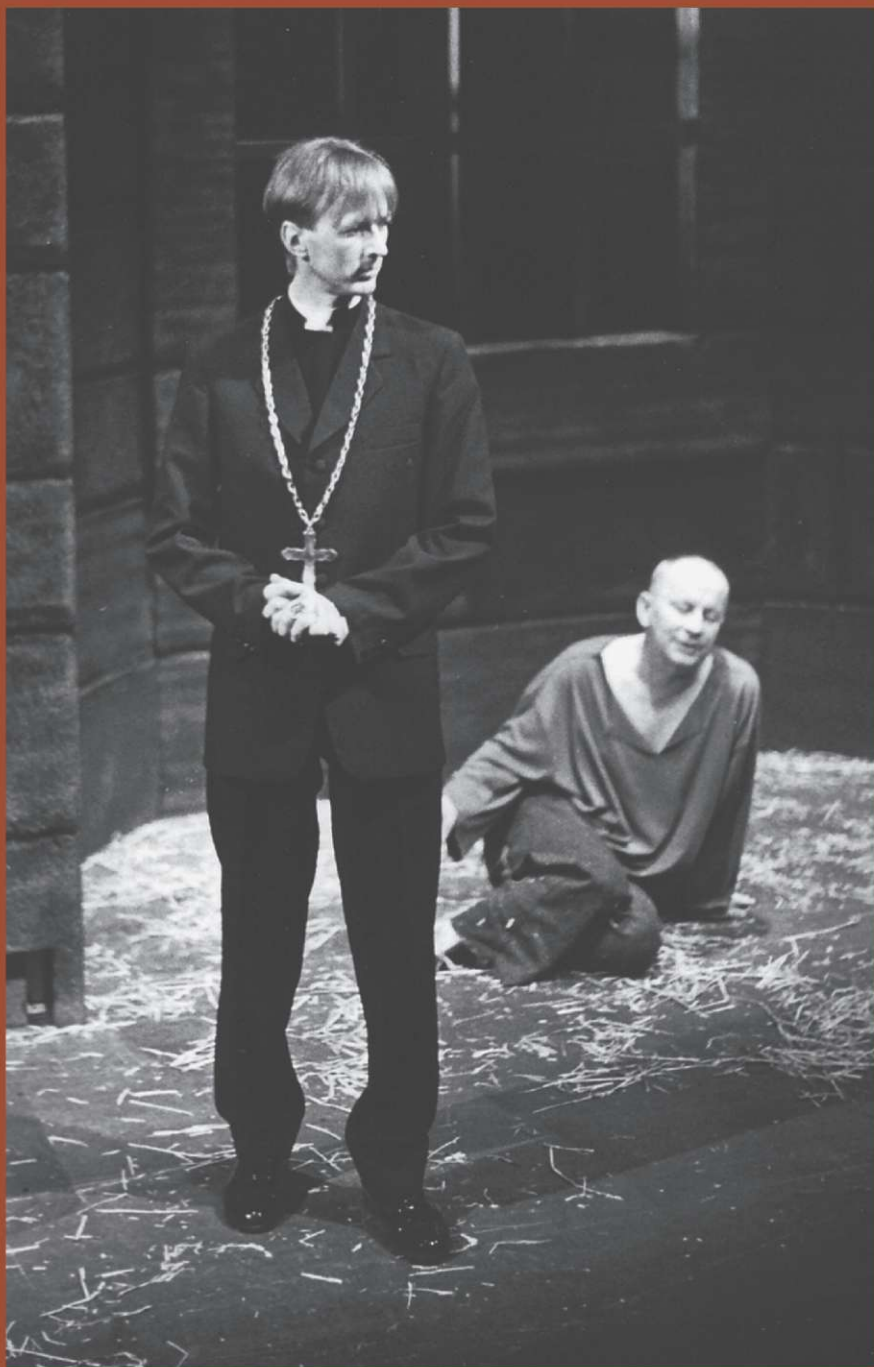
- ŽIVLJENJE V KROGU (Pusta zemlja) (1982)
- VSAKDANJE SLIKE (1982)
- POTOVANJE V RIM (Caravaggio) (1988)
- ANEKS (1989)
- TUGOMER ALI TISTI, KI MERI ŽALOST (1990)
- VONJ ČRNIH VRTNIC (1991)
- FENIKSOV LET (1994)
- TRETJE OKO (O poteh samospoznavanja) (1994)
- GIORDANO BRUNO (1995)
- EGIPČANSKI MISTERIJ (Prebujanje v svetlobo) (2001)
- ORFEJEVA VRNITEV (Stopinje v zraku) (2010)



Vili Ravnjak, born in 1960 in Celje, graduated in dramaturgy from the *Academy of Theatre, Radio, Film and Television* in Ljubljana. Since 1983 he has been affiliated with the Slovene National Theatre in Maribor, where he has worked – with minor interruptions – as a dramaturge or artistic director. He wrote several plays and television screenplays (*Journey to Rome, Tugomer, Giordano Bruno, Life in a Circle, Third Eye, etc.*). He authored a number of essay-monographs on theatre (*The Art of Acting, Theatre as Reality and Illusion, etc.*) and contemporary spirituality (*Getting to Know a Higher Self, Emerald Way, Lotus above Water Surface, and others*).

Plays and screenplays by Vili Ravnjak between 1982 and 2010:

- LIFE IN A CIRCLE (Waste Land) (1982)
- EVERYDAY IMAGES (1982)
- JOURNEY TO ROME (Caravaggio) (1988)
- ANNEX (1989)
- TUGOMER, OR HE WHO MEASURES SORROW (1990)
- THE SMELL OF BLACK ROSES (1991)
- FLIGHT OF THE PHOENIX (1994)
- THIRD EYE (Paths of Self-Recognition) (1994)
- GIORDANO BRUNO (1995)
- EGYPTIAN MYSTERY (Waking into the Light) (2001)
- THE RETURN OF ORPHEUS (Steps in the Air) (2010)



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Samozaložba, Maribor 2012