

NURSE.

(© a play by Volodymyr Serdiuk)

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CHARACTERS: Nurse (*relatively young*)
Bald Man (*relatively old*)
Bearded Man (*relatively old*)

SETTING: A ROOM in a hospital. It is late at night. To stage-right is a large window. At the back, two wheelchairs in which Bald Man and Bearded Man are sleeping. To the left is a door.

SCENE 1

(Voices from the dark, which gradually, step by step, turns into light.)

BALD MAN: No?

BEARDED MAN: No.

BALD MAN: No, no, no?

BEARDED MAN: Not to-day, at least.

BALD MAN: Who knows.

BEARDED MAN: Know nothing.

BALD MAN: Nothing new.

BEARDED MAN: This is not a play.

BALD MAN: No, listen.

BEARDED MAN: Bullshit.

BALD MAN: Really.

BEARDED MAN: Of course.

BALD MAN: Yes.

BEARDED MAN: Yes!

BALD MAN: Of course, no!

BALD MAN: Of course, this is N ~O play.

BEARDED MAN: Your face must be square in that case.

BALD MAN: Your beard must be red.

BEARDED MAN: But it is. Is there something else? Have you got something to say to me?

BALD MAN: Tell it by yourself if you are so clever.

(Strikes Midnight.)

BALD MAN: Noon!

BEARDED MAN: No, not especially.

BALD MAN: Moon? Yeah... nice Planet. How do you think, where is the best place for the mankind? Maybe there?

BEARDED MAN: Place for what monkey?

BALD MAN: Yeah... Maybe on the nurse?

BEARDED MAN: What a nonsense. Shame on you! How low is your attitude to our nurse! She can do anything she wants. Mind your own business.

BALD MAN: H-m... monkey. Why not? I remember in my youth...

BEARDED MAN: Goose? No-no-no it's too fat. Milk, yogurt or cream will be healthier, better.

BALD MAN: Butter is butter. Don't yell, I can hear you all right.

BEARDED MAN: Right. Right, right or wrong that is the question.

BALD MAN: To be or not to be - that is the question!

BEARDED MAN: Man, are you really deaf? I'll tell you...

BALD MAN: No, don't. Please don't. I can hear all right.

BEARDED MAN: When?

BALD MAN: When I only wish.

BEARDED MAN: S-h... s-h...

BALD MAN: Shut up!

BEARDED MAN: What a cruel guy you are.

BALD MAN: September.

BEARDED MAN: Well?

BALD MAN: Nothing.

BEARDED MAN: Well? Continue. Please..?

BALD MAN: Please? Barbarian.

BEARDED MAN: Oh, yes. Barbarossa I am.

BALD MAN: So sleep well. Don't touch me.

BEARDED MAN: Detachment. Don't tell me about it.

BALD MAN: Don't «don't» to me!

BEARDED MAN: Take off your headphones. Just response, what «September».

What?

BALD MAN: My son.

BEARDED MAN: So?

BALD MAN: I saw him last September for the last time.

BEARDED MAN: He paid visit to you?

BALD MAN: He paid for the cab and drove us for free. You and me. You, old fool.

BEARDED MAN: And our Nurse.

BALD MAN: We were fishing, remember, and she was swimming when that nice pelican flew about.

BEARDED MAN: Around.

BALD MAN: By.

BEARDED MAN: There were nice flowers also.

BALD MAN: I hate her.

BEARDED MAN: Why?

BALD MAN: She was changing just before us.

BEARDED MAN: And before your son!

BALD MAN: Shut up! My son is a well-bred boy.

BEARDED MAN: He is sixty! But not sixty. With his mouth that looks like he wears lipstick. He is an impotent.

BALD MAN: Yes, he is very important to me. He is forty six years old, majoring in civil engineering and doing very well.

BEARDED MAN: He is an invalid.

BALD MAN: You are an invalid. He is just having hard times. He has a very attractive girlfriend named Monique. He is just an unable person.

BEARDED MAN: So, what about us then?

BALD MAN: We are still strong. At least I am. 'Cos I do my morning exercises every morning. I can help him... If he is in need.

BEARDED MAN: Indeed. Liar. Yesterday you was sleeping till noon.

BALD MAN: Noon? Again? But it is still dark.

BEARDED MAN: Oh, man, you are really fool. September.

BALD MAN: Yes, yes.

BEARDED MAN: Tell me about Septembers.

BALD MAN: Day «D», that was the day!

BEARDED MAN: Chap, you are crazy.

BALD MAN: So what? You are crazy too.

BEARDED MAN: Crazy about what?

BALD MAN: ‘But her! I see everything. I know.

BEARDED MAN: No, no, no! You are deaf.

BALD MAN: But not dead. I am still able.

BEARDED MAN: Of course, you eat that fucking garlic.

BALD MAN: And pepper. And salt. And sugar. And ham. I am dying with pleasure.

BEARDED MAN: You can’t die. You want to, but can’t.

BALD MAN: That’s because of that damned medicines. Those pills and syringes. My
old man quit more easily, just hiked up.

BEARDED MAN: Spit them.

BALD MAN: Needles! They stuck them needles into your body and what can you
do?

BEARDED MAN: Oh, I see now. This is your little area - your special preserve -
where you do your business.

BALD MAN: My what?

BEARDED MAN: Don’t stand on the end!

(Look at themselves in astonishment. Rolling a bit.)

BALD MAN: I hate them.

BEARDED MAN: Whom?

BALD MAN: None of your business.

BEARDED MAN: Then don’t speak to me.

BALD MAN: Women destroyed the whole my life... I am doing my best to convince
everyone except my son that I am mentally deranged.

BEARDED MAN: My folks complains that their friends won't come to the house since they learned of my strange behavior.

BALD MAN: Were you strange?

BEARDED MAN: «...Me «strange»? Then who is not?»... Is she a woman?

BALD MAN: Who?

BEARDED MAN: The Nurse.

BALD MAN: Man, what are You talking about?

BEARDED MAN: «MAN»!?

BALD MAN: I spoke of You, jerk!

BEARDED MAN (*To himself*) : Unbelievable...

BALD MAN: Say it to sailors.

BEARDED MAN: Spit to them.

BALD MAN: To whom?

BEARDED MAN: To the doctors. Hoodo and woodo.

BALD MAN: They are smiling like slit throats looking at us as if we were some guinea-pigs. They are all crank, those all diabolic doctors.

BEARDED MAN: You are lucky, you wasn't familiar with my former dentist.

BALD MAN: Dentist can't be former. President may be former - dentist is always dentist.

BEARDED MAN: A fascist.

BALD MAN: What did he do to you?

BEARDED MAN: Took off all my teeth.

BALD MAN: A surgeon.

BEARDED MAN: No, watch my lips: he was a C-A-P-T-A-I-N.

BALD MAN: Do you want to drink?

BEARDED MAN: No! Why?

BALD MAN: Why then you call for the captain?

BEARDED MAN: Top ten. I can't communicate with you.

BALD MAN: Why? We are friends. It is noon. Captains always bring drinks: soft and strong. I mean. Liquid.

BEARDED MAN: Liquors.

BALD MAN: «We haven't have the spirit here since nineteen ninety nine!...»

(Loud music. Song «Hotel California». Both men sing: «WELLCOME TO THE HOTEL «CALIFORNIA», SUCH A LOVELY PLACE...»

END OF PART ONE.

PART TWO.

SCENE 1

BEARDED MAN: My boy... We were so lucky living together. Everything went good. Soon after girls began visiting our home regularly, my son took to washing his own sheets. I was quite proud of him. What do you want of that shoe of yours? What are you truing to find therein? Stop it.

BALD MAN: A nail is there. Hurts my heel. It's already bleeding.

BEARDED MAN: So what? You can stand it. Such a trifle - heel.

BALD MAN: Well, I could, but I am worrying about my sock, it may brake.

BEARDED MAN: It need to be vamp.

BALD MAN: To suck my blood? You are mad.

BEARDED MAN: Okay, ask Nurse if your shoes need vamping.

BALD MAN: Who is Nurse? I hardly know her.

BALD MAN: When she makes a bowl you always look at her sits. Shame on you!

BEARDED MAN: Man, must I look at yours?

BALD MAN: Luckily I am rooted in my chair.

BEARDED MAN: Luckily, really?

BALD MAN: Is she a lady-vamp?

NURSE: There is no nails in your shoes.

BALD MAN: Is it possible to make shoes without nails?

BEARDED MAN: These days, you know... Who knows, I mean... I mean...

NURSE: Sure, chap, there is not a nail in your shoe. I think they use glue these days.

BALD MAN: Then what is itching there?

BEARDED MAN: Where? In your ass?

NURSE: Let me see it.

BALD MAN: My ass?

BEARDED MAN: What a stupid assle.

NURSE: No, mister Pete, just your shoe.

BALD MAN: Oh, yes, yes, my shoe.

BEARDED MAN: And what is there finally? Is something broken?

(Nurse screams, showing a toe in bloody napkin, then throw it away in disgust.)

It is made of plastic. Don't be afraid. *(To his fellow.)* That's why you took ketchup with you the other day.

NURSE: Preposterous, preposterous! I can't stand it no longer.

BEARDED MAN: So what?

BALD MAN: We are bored here to death, you know.

BEARDED MAN: Awfully. And I am deaf in addition.

BALD MAN: That's I am deaf. You have a bad sight.

BEARDED MAN: Weak sight. But good visions.

BALD MAN: Another extra prophet in my room.

NURSE: Disgusting! Disgusting.

BEARDED MAN: See?

BALD MAN *(To the nurse.):* But I got you, I got you!

NURSE: Where did you get the toe?

BALD MAN: Ho, ho! Top secret.

BEARDED MAN: I think he have it with him since those dirty colonial Wars.

BALD MAN: We struggled for Democracy then!

BEARDED MAN: Bla, bla, bla... Slogans and verses. They paid you a good salary, that's all.

BALD MAN: I was in the active service not for money but for the gospel.

BEARDED MAN: Murderer.

BALD MAN: Liar.

BEARDED MAN: What? Who just cheat the poor Nurse?

BALD MAN: You always made bad films.

BEARDED MAN: Until very recently I was a most famous member of the community!

BALD MAN: Bla-bla-bla.

BEARDED MAN: If you were able to stay awake till night and strong enough to turn on the TV-set you could probably see my name on TNT!

BALD MAN: On some bomb with trinitrotoluol? So you are also a bloody terrorist! Maybe you even a commy?

BEARDED MAN: What an ignorant beast. You can only think of cummy, nothing else. And I remember those film-festivals you cannot even imagine. Behaving bad during one of them I was remanded in custody for fifteen days for psychiatric evaluation.

BALD MAN: Even then you were crazy.

BEARDED MAN: No. I just wanted to impress a blond starlet with a nick-name instead of real name. You know, there are hundreds of them and they all yours. Why was I so exaggerated then?

BALD MAN: And what was the diagnoses?

BEARDED MAN: According to their analysis of my handwriting I was perfectly sane.

BALD MAN: Blood sucker.

BEARDED MAN: Who? Me?

BALD MAN: Who else?

(Pause. The bald man begin to flip small objects and pillows at the TV. The TV-set turns on, then turns out all by itself in complete silence.)

Answer! Are you alive? Damn! Drowsy again. Strong character, ha?

NURSE: What a good boy. And you try to sleep too, okay?

BALD MAN: Okay. Good night...

NURSE: Sleep well...

(Nurse stretch off her white wings and fly away accompanied by the tune from the «Moonlight Serenade».)

(Darkness.)

SCENE 2

BALD MAN: I can't stand it anymore. I want to die... I have never liked to be unkind to anyone. I tolerated them all. And now what?

BEARDED MAN: Apathy - the hardest thing in the World. Everything is gray then, you want nothing to do except of waiting for the end of play.

BALD MAN: This one?

BEARDED MAN: No. I mean the comedy of Life.

BALD MAN: We are all comedians.

BEARDED MAN: And players.

BALD MAN: Rather prayers. Sit here and pray for the quick and indolent end.

BEARDED MAN: Quick? Look at you - you were waiting for that end for so long. Now you are old enough.

BALD MAN: Enough for so long.

BEARDED MAN: We both know it.

BALD MAN: Doctors also.

BEARDED MAN: Forget them.

BALD MAN: Forgive them.

BEARDED MAN: And forgive. The gift of forgiveness will be the best gift for them from us.

BALD MAN: Don't worry they all forget us.

BEARDED MAN: I forget them all too.

BALD MAN: But Nurse.

BEARDED MAN: Nurse is not a doctor.

BALD MAN: Who is she? Such a mysterious person. Quick and silent.

BEARDED MAN: May we ask her to stay with us.

BALD MAN: For what?

BEARDED MAN: Do I know? Just for a little chat at least.

BALD MAN: We are not familiar. We were not even introduced.

BEARDED MAN: We may initiate the first step. Begin with some trifles like «Do we know each other?»

BALD MAN: Or «What time is it?»

BEARDED MAN: Juice and milk - morning, porridge - noon, fish and cheese - five o'clock, fruit - evening. What is the difference what time is it?

BALD MAN: Forget it. I was just dreaming.

BEARDED MAN: I had a daughter like her.

BALD MAN: They are all alike.

SCENE 3

Late at night. Someone is knocking to the wood. That's Bearded man.. He is knocking at the handle of his wheel-chair.

BALD MAN: Okay, okay. I don't sleep. After that I was employed as a leading constructor and had held my position for some thirty years... *(Pause.)*

BEARDED MAN: Continue, you, fuzzy person! Don't sleep!

BALD MAN: ...The whole Universe is rest on it. It is an immense topic. You cannot cover all the themes.

BEARDED MAN: I can't. That's why I ask you. Go on.

BALD MAN: Imagine some bee flying round a great temple and keeping that temple and the Universe in balance.

BEARDED MAN: Then?

BALD MAN: Then imagine that that bee is killed by some invisible rays.

BEARDED MAN: Imagine. What else?

BALD MAN: Nothing. Just after the bee is being killed that great temple also will blow and disappear, because that bee was its only guardian and the only holder.

BEARDED MAN: Phony slob. Dreams. You got to consume some tablet.

BALD MAN: I just tried to explain to you the structure of atom and its inner connections.

BEARDED MAN: We were speaking about the ozone hole before you begin that story.

BALD MAN: That's it. The Ozone lay cover us and every living creature from ultra-violet rays. When it is not enough thick, rays from the cosmos will be able to reach us easily and knock away every bee-guardian-neutron, so every our temple - proton begin to vapor and distract. The end.

BEARDED MAN: The end.

BALD MAN: Total. We are not exist any more.

BEARDED MAN: I am not curious about us. What will probably happen with the other creatures?

BALD MAN: And plants.

BEARDED MAN: And plants.

BALD MAN: They also vanish. Only rocks will continue to exist.

BEARDED MAN: But the Earth?

BALD MAN: It will be one big rock like Moon. *(Pause.)*

BEARDED MAN: Very sad view.

BALD MAN: Further - worse.

BEARDED MAN: Further more?

BALD MAN: People try to forget that totally reliable devices do not exist on our planet. Even Japanees do not have them.

BEARDED MAN: But they seem o'kay.

BALD MAN: Seem. Another illusion before something happened.

BEARDED MAN: Things regularly happen.

BALD MAN: People call them to come.

BEARDED MAN: So that was your profession?

BALD MAN: Yes, lasers. We've learned to kill then.

BEARDED MAN: Learned enough?

BALD MAN: More than enough. Now they can't stop that process. My colleagues I mean. Russian were first, then we were. Then everything crushed. My career was blew up after the beginning of some so called disarmament peaceful process.

BEARDED MAN: So called?

BALD MAN: So called, because they still continue those researches. Making money, coming stronger, reaching new horizons of science...

BEARDED MAN: Do you really wish to be with them?

BALD MAN: I was confused many years ago. I sought I could join white and black. I was sure that prosperity without loses is possible. And I lost everything.

BEARDED MAN: Man, imagine all them scientists sitting down there in their hidden underground laboratories. Kind of prison.

BALD MAN: Being together with them I feel younger. I feel alive there.

BEARDED MAN: But you are here.

BALD MAN: Oh, yes. Forgotten and forbidden abandoned oldie.

BEARDED MAN: They still feed you.

BALD MAN: Accidentally.

BEARDED MAN: If I was in charge, I would stop to feed you till you die. As so as
your dirty sick brain.

BALD MAN: Ideas survive.

BEARDED MAN: Such ideas must die.

BALD MAN: So you are ready to kill too.

BEARDED MAN: Only you.

BALD MAN: Nevertheless, you are ready. Just can not. Or not permitted to.

BEARDED MAN: I'll poison you to death.

BALD MAN: And the process of killing will go on...

BEARDED MAN: How did it happen?

BALD MAN: What?

BEARDED MAN: That your wife has left you.

BALD MAN: Who've told you that nonsense? (*Pause.*)

BEARDED MAN: Was she pretty?

BALD MAN: Alongside her other women were merely women.

BEARDED MAN: So your career and your family life were alright?

BALD MAN: You are, damn, right, I always managed things extremely badly, I
know. It is, I suppose, because I have had no practice.

BEARDED MAN: Alright, alright, why did you separate?

BALD MAN: She belonged to those «peace-makers».

BEARDED MAN: So?

BALD MAN: So, she used to say almost literally those words of yours.

BEARDED MAN: Nothing unusual, I used to be a member of Movement for peace.

BALD MAN: And you also left your wife?

BEARDED MAN: Which time?

BALD MAN: Harsh jokes...

BEARDED MAN: I was not a fanatic. But now I see that we struggled for the common peace being unable to build our own small peace in our small universities which were our families.

BALD MAN: Phony slob!

BEARDED MAN: I can understand how you feel. A man who's once gone to war reminisces about the war all the rest of his life.

BALD MAN: She was not a bloody fanatic! She was young enough, that's it. She was a very nice girl. I still love her and all our children. Although they say I will burn in hell.

BEARDED MAN: All love is horrible, and there are no rules. Why don't we drop the subject?

BALD MAN: Why? Do.

BEARDED MAN: Our nurse is certainly lovely.

BALD MAN: By moonlight even an old witch would look beautiful.

BEARDED MAN: When you see her in the moonlight, she's an angel, an angel from heaven.

BALD MAN: Yes. As long as I can still talk about such things I should count myself lucky. Now if I were to die...

BEARDED MAN: You think your ex-wife would be stricken with grief? Man, that would be the best thing you could do. Please do die. That will give her a reason to go on living.

BALD MAN: I think you are right.

BEARDED MAN: Sorry.

BALD MAN: About what?

BEARDED MAN: Maybe I am wrong.

BALD MAN: That sounds stupidly like «Long Star State».

BEARDED MAN: Hm... Lone.

BALD MAN: I never loan.

BEARDED MAN: Before you alone. Or lonely?

BALD MAN: And you'd better keep silent. You know me.

BEARDED MAN: Sure, I know you. How dare you to threaten me? You're always drowsing, mumbling something, but never do what you say.

BALD MAN: And you're always say what you do. Or did. Most often.

BEARDED MAN: Nevertheless, I am sorry...

BALD MAN: Sorry again! About what again?

BEARDED MAN: I am sorry I am not able to give a birth to some new living creature. Some pussy-cat for example.

BALD MAN: Or a baby.

BEARDED MAN: Baby! Am I a woman?

BALD MAN: Just kitty? Do you wish so little?

BEARDED MAN: Or a rabbit. They look so funny. And they are silent.

BALD MAN: All right, I go to bed.

BEARDED MAN: What are you talking about, kwazimodo, monster, you are on your wheels!

BALD MAN: That's the point: I sit on my wheels you sit on your needle. We almost reach nirvana.

BEARDED MAN: Junky!

(Both are laughing.)

SCENE 4

Nurse comes to feed them both. Bearded man pulls up her skirt's lap with his stick, trying to look underneath.

BALD MAN: Stop it!

NURSE: What?

BEARDED MAN: Traitor!

BALD MAN: Pervertor!

BEARDED MAN: I just wanted to see the color of her underwear.

BALD MAN: That's perversion.

BEARDED MAN: But I need to know it.

BALD MAN: No, again! Stop it!

BEARDED MAN: What do you know about real lust?

BALD MAN: Foam on the water. I remember everything. It was good for me then but it has no importance now.

BEARDED MAN: For you, but not for me. (*To the Nurse.*) What color is your underwear?

NURSE(*Hesitates.*): Do I know?

BEARDED MAN: Let's have a look together!

NURSE: Color... It is of cotton, that's the main condition, not color.

BEARDED MAN: Don't you care of colors?

NURSE: Could we change the theme?

BALD MAN: Easily. Let's speak of some real things.

BEARDED MAN: What do you mean «real»?

BALD MAN: They have to pay us.

BEARDED MAN: Very funny. Who have to?

BALD MAN: Our children.

BEARDED MAN: Are you still making fun of me? They are sure that our funeral took place long long ago.

BALD MAN: Then our State have to pay for the tortures we suffer. We need to have suitable compensation.

BEARDED MAN: We already have such compensation: see, we are still alive.

BALD MAN: What state of being do you call «life»? Not this one, I suppose?

BEARDED MAN: Answer: positive.

BALD MAN: Positive «yes» or positive «no»?

BEARDED MAN: «No» is negative answer.

BALD MAN: Come on! When a woman says: «no», it is positive for her, but negative for you.

BEARDED MAN: I don't ask woman about anything anymore.

BALD MAN: Really? I eagerly remind you: the previous morning you asked for extra milk. Who answered «no»? Nurse. Positive for her, positive for you, because your pants are still dry!

BEARDED MAN: Demagogue. I hate you! And by the way keep your hands off Nurse, I saw what you did.

BALD MAN: Then leave. The door is open.

BEARDED MAN: I stay.

BALD MAN: I am not a very curious person, but, once more, please?

BEARDED MAN: I still stay!

BALD MAN: What a strange decision. Instead of drive your vehicle, paying visits to much younger persons, you prefer to stay here. You prefer to listen to my jabbers...

BEARDED MAN: And tell mine in addition. The attendants are all spies as are most of the inmates.

BALD MAN: 'Cause they are younger out there, yellow-mouse.

BEARDED MAN: They are making new things out there: machines, music, clothing, even, let's say, films. They still create something ...

BALD MAN: Money, for example.

BEARDED MAN: It is such an engrossing process!

BALD MAN: Speak English, please. They must understand your words.

BEARDED MAN: Why do you always pretend to be stupid?

BALD MAN: Not by bell, I suppose. I just simply observing. And I strongly recommend you not to lose your chance to reflect and meditate. That's what old age is for: to remember and feel joy. Ha?

BEARDED MAN: Another hack! Nobody needs your advises!

BALD MAN: All right, let's ask her? «The voice of a baby...» Remember?

BEARDED MAN: She is not a baby. She is our Nurse!

BALD MAN: Are you sure? That's I've told you!

BEARDED MAN: Joking again?

BALD MAN: Not a bit!

BEARDED MAN(*Insists.*): Joking?

BALD MAN (*Hesitatingly*): Well... Yes.

BEARDED MAN: What a relief.

BALD MAN: Oh, yes, now.

BEARDED MAN: Did you come?

BALD MAN: Shame on you! She is so close she can hear it!

BEARDED MAN: If she was a human she'd better help us herself or help us to see other girls. (*Bald man chocks flushing.*)

BALD MAN: Flesh! Please do not make me think of things that are distasteful to me.

BEARDED MAN: I am not trying to make you think of anything. But your powers are virtually gone.

SCENE 5

BEARDED MAN: What's wrong with you? Relax.

BALD MAN: It's odd - when I hear it this way it makes me feel as if a rainstorm were pounding far off in the distance. *(Pause.)* Oh, now I hear a bell ring. The sound of a carriage and horse's hoofs... Whose carriage would it be? None of the princes has come yet this evening.

BEARDED MAN: Why do you look so grim? What's the meter?

BALD MAN: It's nothing - I just felt a little dizzy.

BEARDED MAN: Shall we call someone?

BALD MAN: No, it's better now. It's some noises inside me.

BEARDED MAN: Don't move, stay quiet.

BALD MAN: The music has stopped. It's the intermission. How quiet it becomes.

BEARDED MAN: Yes, there is only silence around us now. *(Nurse is coming.)*

NURSE: Pete, you look swell!

BALD MAN: Do I look swell? Do I?

NURSE: I give you my word.

BALD MAN: Where is it?

NURSE: Here, you may feel it.

BEARDED MAN: Don't play with him. He is finally out of his mind.

NURSE: John, behave yourself. Be a good boy. Look at Pete, isn't he lovely?

BEARDED MAN: Believe me, he is far not Ken.

NURSE: But I am Barbie. I have plenty of magic power.

BEARDED MAN: Enough for rejoicing?

NURSE: Shame on you! You are both still alive.

BEARDED MAN: And you must always die once before you can live. From that point we are alive.

BALD MAN: I can smell it even.

(Both men are laughing while Nurse changes their napkins.)

NURSE: Time for injections, gentlemen.

BALD MAN: Oh, hurry on, please, come closer, hold me tight.

(Bald man and Nurse play lovers. Bearded man feels insulted.)

BEARDED MAN: That's why our dear Lord punish you, taking away your dirty senses. *(Pause.)* And brain.

BALD MAN: Why everything that comes out of your mouth is always dirty?

BEARDED MAN: Out of your business.

BALD MAN: Out of my way!

BEARDED MAN: That's my place! Give me my place!

BALD MAN: That's my toy, give me my toy!

BEARDED MAN: Pigeon.

BALD MAN: What pigeon?

BEARDED MAN: My pigeon, not yours.

BALD MAN: You have not any. Nobody loves you.

BEARDED MAN: Pigeon does.

BALD MAN: So, where is it?

BEARDED MAN: There, in the corner, above my book-shelf.

BALD MAN: Bird is not suppose to be here.

BEARDED MAN: Don't you want to see it?

BALD MAN: Yes, I want but this is kind of a hospital. And birds are dirty, full of bacteria.

BEARDED MAN: Not mine. It is white and clean, It's mine.

BALD MAN: Where, where, where is it? Show me that bird of Peace. Ha? You cannot, an old Fool!

BEARDED MAN: There, look up. Can you see the ceiling?

BALD MAN: Of course not. You know it, dirty scoundrel, I can't move my neck, I can't see so far and I can't look up, 'cos I can't turn my head!

BEARDED MAN: Wait, I'll show you my pigeon, such a lovely bird.

(Bearded man takes a little looking-glass. Men come closer to each other.)

Wait, I'll find it. Here. Look. You can see it with your right eye.

BALD MAN: Better left.

BEARDED MAN: All right. There, in the corner. *(Pause. Silence.)*

BALD MAN: What a perfect creature. How nice it is, like in the picture.

BEARDED MAN: Don't mention pictures. This one is alive and real.

BALD MAN: Good... It moves!

BEARDED MAN: See. I've told you.

(Nurse is nursing. Pigeons flying across the room. She makes no notice.)

BALD MAN: What a happiness.

BEARDED MAN: Almost like in Paradise.

NURSE: My injection?

BALD MAN: No, no, these birds.

NURSE: I thought it my injection makes you feel happy.

BEARDED MAN: She's such a chatterbox.

BALD MAN: Oh, sorry. Of course, yes.

NURSE: Then enjoy it. Sleep. It will make you good for sure. You will fly away to the countries you've dreamt of... Rest a while. Your lives were such heavy...

(Oldies feel asleep. Plenty of children come out on the stage singing their cheerful song. Nurse is conducting the tune. Children decorate both man and their wheel-chairs with chains of flowers. The light becomes so bright and music so loud that stage is sinking in it vanishing.)

SCENE 6

Nurse enters with a plastic woman. That is suppose to be Bald man's daughter.

DAUGHTER: Well, where is he?

NURSE: Tsh-sh... Speak easy, please.

DAUGHTER: He is asleep, isn't he?

NURSE: Yes, he's sound asleep.

DAUGHTER: And that man, is he his friend?

NURSE: They manage to communicate.

DAUGHTER: How gently they breathe, they who are about to die. It won't waken him if I talk in a normal voice, will it?

NURSE: You can talk a little bit louder if you wish. The medicine is taking effect.

DAUGHTER: He's in pain?

NURSE: In terrible pain.

DAUGHTER: Sorry, but what can I do?

NURSE: Could you wait a bit?

DAUGHTER: I am sorry, but I won't stay a bit longer. You are specialists. Do something you have to.

NURSE: If he could face you he may feel better.

DAUGHTER: I have never once waited for anything .

NURSE: I waited for you all day today, too...

DAUGHTER: So what? You are paid for that.

NURSE: As a special favor, please don't shout.

DAUGHTER: I was on a business trip when I got word he was sick. They said it was nothing serious. But when somebody gets put under medical control it must be serious, mustn't it?

NURSE: Your father has often had attacks like those, hasn't he?

DAUGHTER: It's not the first time. But it was a very important business trip. I managed this morning to get through my work and I rushed back as fast as I could. Being away from my family made me worry all the more.

NURSE: I'm sure it did. But he is still your father...

DAUGHTER: I know it.

NURSE: He often dreams of his daughter.

DAUGHTER: You mean to say, in this house...

NURSE: In this house we accept no responsibility for the dreams of our patients.

DAUGHTER: This house seems crazier every minute. I do not like your activity.

NURSE: I am trying to make him ease.

DAUGHTER: He must pay for everything.

NURSE: Please don't abandon him.

DAUGHTER: He was abandoned long ago.

NURSE: You still love him.

DAUGHTER: Say it plainly, did you make me come here to tell you that?

NURSE: To tell him.

DAUGHTER: No, thank you. (*Going away.*) Let me know when he die.

SCENE 7

Oldies feel embarrassed but affected by flower-chains acting if nothing happened.

BALD MAN: Wasn't those voices somewhere just now?

BEARDED MAN: You could hardly hear. No, it must have been a Nurse.

BALD MAN: I couldn't hear. It sounded as if someone were groaning. I can't hear them any more.

BEARDED MAN: It's the creaking of the door. (*Nurse is coming.*)

BEARDED MAN: Dear, we come here to die. And what are you doing at such a sad place?

NURSE: I serve.

BEARDED MAN: I mean why do you do this? (*Pause.*)

NURSE: Well, once I had a father...

BOLD MAN: One may notice.

BEARDED MAN: Shut up, pal. Continue, child, make no notice.

NURSE: We left him. I mean me and my mom. I was told that he was not a good Father, and so on. But we litigated from him enough money for us to live in comfort. I mean not in a spiritual comfort, of course. I mean housing, clothing. (*Sighs.*) But I think I remember my Pap. And as far as I remember he was always kind to me and very attentive. He use to comb my hair. And mammy never did the same. You know, alcohol and other men. We use to move almost every half a year. I had no friends in my youth. And I think Mom felt better when I was

absent. *(Pause.)* My Granny, before she died, she called for me and said: «I'll die within a few days. You have to know before I go, after all, that your father was the best guy your Mom met in her life-ways. And she is the bitch. My daughter, I must admit.» - she said. «Sorry that you never knew your father and cannot find him.»

BEARDED MAN: Did you try?

NURSE: Several times. They call him: «Missing».

BALD MAN: Did you return to your place?

NURSE: Aha. There they said he also drank a lot and was not married after that. After all. After divorce.

BALD MAN: So what?

BEARDED MAN: «So what»! You, leatherneck! «So what». That's why she is here.

BALD MAN: Why?

NURSE: I am looking for my father.

BALD MAN: Ask doctors, they know all about us: our names and our shit. Besides, you are the nurse - walk around and see. Sure you'll find him.

NURSE: I am afraid he changed a bit.

BALDMAN: Ask his name.

BEARDED MAN: You are out of your mind.

BALD MAN: «Mind, mind.» Mind your own business. I propose reasonable solutions and indispensable measures.

BEARDED MAN: A stupid ass.

NURSE: When I say «he changed» I mean he is out of his body now.

BALD MAN: Is it possible?

BEARDED MAN: He is not living anymore: his soul separate his body!

BALD MAN *(To the bearded man):* Then she can stop searching now. *(To the nurse)* Free yourself. Have a rest.

NURSE: I can't. I feel obliged. That's why I help you and the other old men. I love to do it. 'Cos I love my father.

BALD MAN: Nonsense. All the men are bad, especially old men.

NURSE: Don't jump to any conclusions like that.

BEARDED MAN: All the people are bad.

NURSE: I don't think so. Sins happen, but people are good in common. I believe.

(Weeps.)

BEARDED MAN: See, she is crying. Don't you ever touch her, or I will crash your teeth with my stick..

BALD MAN: Impossible. They are made of good materials. *(Takes his jaws out.)*
See. Moreover I had my own stick too. *(They all laugh.)*

BEARDED MAN *(Close to the Nurse):* You are not a nurse only, you have a name, right?

NURSE: Judith.

BEARDED MAN: Judith, dear, once I had a daughter. I mean I still have a daughter, but happened that we are no longer one family. Me and her mother, well... we separated... It is a very common story.

NURSE: And you are a man of common sense. Don't worry, people often separate.

BEARDED MAN: This is not the point.

NURSE: What is the point?

BEARDED MAN: Are you not my daughter?

NURSE *(After a pause):* Sorry, I think not.

BEARDED MAN: Well, it's just your own opinion. If we probably research the problem and find certain evidences we may discover some interesting connections and also some new proofs...

NURSE: Mister Smith.

BEARDED MAN: What I am talking about. Please, Judith, promise not to tell this to him?

NURSE: I know what secret is. I can keep secrets.

BALD MAN: Conspiracy?! What are you talking there about? Bet about me! Ha?

BEARDED MAN: Don't listen to him. He is absolutely deaf. Judith, could you let me to count you my daughter? Just before we clear the question, please?

NURSE: Thank you. You are a great father in despite of this and that. Of course, you may count me. But not very serious. We just play the game, okay?

BEARDED MAN: Certainly! Just before we ventilate the question!

BALD MAN: I'm coming! I'm coming! What's on? Why don't you tell me?

NURSE: ‘Cos we have a secret.

BALD MAN: O, no! O, no!

NURSE: Bye, daddies! Please don’t be unreasonable. I beg of you.

BEARDED MAN: Hope to see you soon!

BALD MAN: Share your joy with me! Share now!

BEARDED MAN: O, no, sorry, it is very personal.

BALD MAN: What may be personal in morgue? For instance personal number on your toe?

BEARDED MAN: May be this is not too much. But this is something at least...

BALD MAN: Your brain is weak. Almost liquid I say.

BEARDED MAN: Ho, ho. It was gray from the very beginning. Such things never work properly. Things must be fine and colorful then everything will go right. Brains! Phoo. My liver is my problem nowadays. Brains. Who cares? Forget them. If you have no liver, what is good of having a bright mind?

BALD MAN: Or brilliant brains.

BEARDED MAN: That’s my words. If you can’t sit properly, how can you think properly?

BALD MAN: Or meditate.

BEARDED MAN: Or what?! Sink. They come to wash you and then you sleep. What is good of thinking?

BALD MAN: If I could only sink in my mind like in the Ocean...

BEARDED MAN: There, on the very bottom you’ll find yourself, sick and unable. Chap, agree with your Destiny: you are not a man anymore!

BALD MAN: I know.

BEARDED MAN: Again «I know»? Better sleep.

BALD MAN: Sleep well. *(Pause.)*

BEARDED MAN: Good night.

BALD MAN: It is evening yet.

BEARDED MAN: Whatever. Nevertheless. Will you sleep or not?

BALD MAN: I’ll try. Thank you.

BEARDED MAN: Sink you!

BALD MAN: Brake a leg! *(They laugh like cough.)*

BEARDED MAN: Watch your legs, watch your arms, watch your own spine.

BALD MAN: Forget my leg! My liver is almost broken.

BEARDED MAN: Sounds as strange as a scientific approves of God's existence.

BALD MAN: God?

BEARDED MAN: God.

BALD MAN: Why not?

BEARDED MAN: Because any science is impossible without God.

BALD MAN: So why do I have to prove it?

BEARDED MAN: Don't you believe in God?

BALD MAN: «In Gold we trust». Did you ever heard that expression?

BEARDED MAN: You are an pessimist.

BALD MAN: I could hardly believe in your optimism, knowing how ill you are.

BEARDED MAN: Cancer, brother.

BALD MAN: We are not brethren. Neither you, nor cancer.

BEARDED MAN: Shmuck!

BALD MAN: Goy!

BEARDED MAN: What's that?

BALD MAN: Do I know? Must be something humiliating. I just tried to speak the same language as you do.

BEARDED MAN: We'll never speak the same language till you are here. Die first.

BALD MAN: You first.

BEARDED MAN: Ha!

BALD MAN: Ha. *(Pause.)* I wish I could. *(Pause.)*

BEARDED MAN: I can help you.

BALD MAN: Help yourself. *(Pause.)* If we only could arrange it...

BEARDED MAN: Are you serious?

BALD MAN: Why not? Two adult sober-minded persons can always execute their own decision.

BEARDED MAN: And four hands are four hands.

BALD MAN: And eight wheels...

BEARDED MAN: Hm. We may discuss this.

BALD MAN: May we? Why don't we leave as soon as possible, tonight even?

BEARDED MAN: Why not? What do we lose?

BALD MAN: Nothing.

BEARDED MAN: Nothing, except Nurse.

BALD MAN: Yes, that's the problem. I don't want to insult her.

BEARDED MAN: And even hurt.

BALD MAN: So am I.

BEARDED MAN: So, let's speak about it. Come closer. Turn on your loud-speaker.

BALD MAN: Nobody can hear us.

BEARDED MAN: Nobody. Let's whisper.

BALD MAN: Straight to the microphone, please, all right?

BEARDED MAN: Okay. Listen, if you can keep secrets...

BALD MAN: And if you can keep your word...

BEARDED MAN: I swear...!

(The stage becomes dark.)

SCENE 8

(The stage becomes light again.)

BEARDED MAN: Oldsters and youngsters must live together...

BALD MAN: Tell it to youngsters.

BEARDED MAN: I just remind those old-fashion families.

BALD MAN: I remember my oldie was sick, when I was twenty...

BEARDED MAN: And?

BALD MAN: I hated him then.

BEARDED MAN: Naturally. Who was not. But now you understand him, do you?

BALD MAN: Hardly. He jumped out of his office's window after his bank was collapsed.

BEARDED MAN: And?

BALD MAN: And after the jump he himself was really collapsed. His every stupid bone was broken. I mean really broken.

BEARDED MAN: Money, boy. Money have their great power on the earth.

BALD MAN: But not in Heaven.

BEARDED MAN: Luckily. Not in Heaven. Once I bought one kidney. Lots of money I spent, tel'ya. And now I am still dying.

BALD MAN: Omit this word.

BEARDED MAN: Omit this world. Say: I am leaving and my money are spent.

BALD MAN: Remember they sang: «Money can't buy you Love»?

BEARDED MAN: Of course. I use to be hippie too. That's one of my favorites. Come on, let's dance and sing aloud. Turn on your speaking machine!

(They roll around, pretending to dance, trying to sing the song.)

SCENE 9

BEARDED MAN: Eat something?

BALD MAN: Kind of humor? I have only one third of my stomach. I want to smoke my cigar, I want to drink my whisky but I vomit even after I consume some melt cheese.

BEARDED MAN: Yesterday you didn't vomit.

BALD MAN: Yesterday was Monday.

BEARDED MAN: You mean «my day»?

BALD MAN: Not yours but nobody's, but Monday. Simply Monday.

BEARDED MAN: Means...?

BALD MAN: Means I am all right at Mondays.

BEARDED MAN: When everybody else feel discontent?

BALD MAN: What a fool you are! I think of me only. I have no strength to care of anybody else. I just feel me. I can not even feel myself. See?

BEARDED MAN: Sublime tragedy.

BALD MAN: My tragedy. My, my, my, not his, not yours. What are you staring at?

BEARDED MAN: «Stare decis». I am gazing.

BALD MAN: You have the only right - to glimpse.

BEARDED MAN: I am half blind. May I use my own eyes in my own manner?

BALD MAN: Yes, but not at me. *(Nurse is coming.)*

BEARDED MAN: Did you bring my camera?

NURSE: Shooting again? When do we stop?

BEARDED MAN: We will repeat till win.

NURSE: The last dance was almost perfect.

BEARDED MAN: Don't teach me. I am the director here.

BALD MAN: No limits for the perfection and also no limits for the foolishness.

BEARDED MAN: Rebellion? Do you want to be fired?

BALD MAN: Oh, no, please, not. Give me another chance. *(All stop.)* ...What am I saying? Fired from what? Expelled from where?

NURSE: O, dear, it's just a game and we play it.

BEARDED MAN: Understand? That's what I call «the magic of the Art». You underlie its magic power. You believe in it! You live in it!

BALD MAN: All right, all right. What shall we play to-day? A comedy again?

BEARDED MAN: No, this time it may be a Love Story. Will you play?

BALD MAN: Oh, God, I'm afraid not.

NURSE: I will, I will! I love «Love - stories»!

BEARDED MAN: Then use your charms on him. We need as many actors as we can have. *(To the bald man.)* Are you in, or we play «pas - de - duo»?

BALD MAN: I'm in. In. «Pas - de - trua».

BEARDED MAN: Terrific! So take your places. Action!
(They play «love-story» as they use to play in old speechless movies.)

(After they finished.)

BEARDED MAN: Send this band immediately to the TV company. Remember their address? Could you be so kind?

NURSE: Yes, sir. With your name this time?

BEARDED MAN: No, no, no. Let them think we are some amateurs.

BALD MAN: We are worse, we are former professionals.

BEARDED MAN: Don't complain. We have to deliver better future to the Nurse. She mustn't continue to be nurse after we leave her. She needs not suffer no more.

BALD MAN: We are as poor as church mice. How can we help her?

BEARDED MAN *(Stately):* We'll make a movie.

BALD MAN: What a movie?

BEARDED MAN: A great one. And she will be the author, not us. And she'll receive all the money and honorarium. That's my decision.

BALD MAN: Not mine?

BEARDED MAN: Decide now, again. Man must decide every minute: «in» or «out», «black» or «white», «devil» or «God», «jump» or «stay», «see» or «sleep»...

BALD MAN: I'm in. In. Do you think I'm an enemy of hers? It would be the last act of love I could ever perform for Nurse.

BEARDED MAN: This is the first time I've seen you lose your pride so.

BALD MAN: I had no pride, from the very beginning.

BEARDED MAN: You should have confessed it earlier.

BALD MAN: It was your fault not to have realized it.

BEARDED MAN: I always trust you. You are not so bad guy. You just look like hell.

BALD MAN: You too.

(Laughter.)

SCENE 10

BEARDED MAN: Let's brake ice.

BALD MAN: Me? Brake ice?

BEARDED MAN: An figurative locution.

BALD MAN: Mumbling. Remember, once and forever, I am not crazy.

BEARDED MAN: You are crazy all right, but you are my kind of crazy.

BALD MAN: Know what?

BEARDED MAN: What?

BALD MAN: I am her father.

BEARDED MAN: Why do you think so?

BALD MAN: I do not think. I can prove it.

BEARDED MAN: How?

BALD MAN: I have her greeting-plate. Remember, those days we greet each other with such speaking-cards having recorded our dear voices?

BEARDED MAN: So?

BALD MAN: I have one. That's from my first family. Especially of my beloved daughter Emily.

BEARDED MAN: Her identification plate reads Judith.

BALD MAN: I know. I am not blind. I am deaf. *(Pause.)* She simply changed her name for she was ashamed of me. But now we can coalesce again. Okay? Be my witness?

BEARDED MAN: Listen, may we probably...

BALD MAN: I decided to do it now. You just hear, because I am not able to. Please?

BEARDED MAN: Well...

BALD MAN: Judith, dear, look what I have. An old talking machine and a card you wrote to me! Look, listen!

(An young recorded voice begin to speak with strong European accent.)

YOUNG VOICE: *«Dear Daddy! We live in Australia now. It is a good place 'cos Ma says we are happy to be far from you. I do not know. Pap, may you change a little and behave yourself? Then Ma could accept you back again? Happy X-mass!*

Your Son Andrew.»

BALD MAN: Do you recognize it? See, you've sent it to me and I still have it. Now recognize your father? *(Addressing to Bearded man.)* I prove it, see!

BEARDED MAN *(Exchanging glances with Nurse):* Of course, You did...

NURSE: Okay, let me embrace you, daddy.

BALD MAN: See? «Daddy»! We finally found each other!

(He is gay. Bearded man and Nurse are crying.)

SCENE 11

Shooting stars are falling down in the cloud of mist almost covering the stage. We hear thousands of people marching. They shout: «One, two, three, four! We don't need the bloody war!», «Make Love!». Then some choir try to sing: «We

shell overcome...». Other voices shout: «Young power! Young power! Die for it before you are young!»