



finalist of the XXXIIIth BORN Award 2008

The WEST SIDE of the GOLDEN GATE

text found by PABLO IGLESIAS SIMÓN

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ONE POSSIBLE SYNOPSIS

A broken marriage risks its future in an uncertain toast to life and death. An uninspired writer finds an abandoned notebook containing an unfinished story. A retired magician receives a strange letter that promises to give him back what he once loved in return for a simple assignment. A young couple with no future rehearses a play to be released in an impossible deadline.

Man and wife will try unsuccessfully to reconcile the unintended effects of the fatal decision. The writer will travel to where the story began, only to find out that what is written in the notebook is something she does not want to acknowledge she has lived. The former illusionist will be unable to fulfill the assignment, perhaps for fear of what he will receive in return. The young couple, trapped in a past that perhaps never was, will struggle to represent their contradictory characters.

The vicissitudes of all of them will be intermingled in a universe where reality, fiction and magic are superposed, and uncertainty replaces chance and fate. On one side of the Golden Gate lies, perhaps, the solution to all their conflicts.

BRIEF BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE OF THE AUTHOR

Pablo Iglesias Simón (Madrid, 1977) has a degree in Stage Directing by RESAD and a PhD in Media by Universidad Complutense of Madrid.

In the theatrical field he has worked as theatre director, sound designer and playwright. He started staging plays of contemporary authors, such as Heiner Müller or Sarah Kane, but since 2002 he has been staging his own plays. In November of 2009 it was the opening night of his last play *El lado oeste del Golden Gate* (*The West Side of the Golden Gate*) for whose staging he was awarded with the "José Luis Alonso" Award for the Best Young Director 2010. He has designed the sound of more than ten shows working for both public and private companies. He has published the plays *11-N*, *Sin móvil aparente* (*For no Apparent Reason*), finalist of the IIIth "Teatro Exprés" Award 2002, *Alicia frente al espejo* (*Alice Facing the Mirror*), *Tu imagen sola* (*Your Lonely Picture*), written in collaboration with Borja Ortiz de Gondra and winner of the XIXth "Carlos Arniches-Ciudad de Alicante" Award 2003, *El lado oeste del Golden Gate* (*The West Side of the Golden Gate*), finalist of the XXXIIIth Born Award 2008, and *Justo en medio del paralelo 38* (*Exactly In The Middle Of Parallel 38*), finalist of the XXXVIth Born Award 2011.

He has taught film directing at the Universidad Complutense of Madrid and, nowadays, he is professor of stage directing at RESAD where he had taught the subjects Stage Directing Practice, History of Theatre and Sound for the Theatre.

He is now developing a research in theatre and cinema that has led him to give conferences in seminars in Spain, France and Chile, and to publish more than twenty articles in specialised magazines of Spain and Brazil. He has written two books, "Postproducción digital de sonido por ordenador", republished in Mexico with the title "Postproducción digital de sonido por computadora", and "De las tablas al celuloide" ("From the Stage to the Celluloid"), winner of the "Leandro Fernández de Moratín" Award for Theatrical Studies 2008. He has also taken part in the collective books "Análisis de la dramaturgia" and "Cinema i teatre: influències i contagis".

PUBLISHED PLAYS

- *Justo en medio del paralelo 38*. Madrid: Ediciones Antígona, 2014.
- *El lado oeste del Golden Gate*. Madrid: Asociación de Autores de Teatro, 2009. ISBN: 978-84-96837-15-7.
- "El lado oeste del Golden Gate", ADE-Teatro. N. 125. April-June 2009. Pages. 104-123.
- "Alicia frente al espejo", in VVAA. *Maratón de Monólogos 2004*. Madrid: Asociación de Autores de Teatro, 2004. Pages. 99-105. ISBN: 84-88659-45-8.
- *Tu imagen sola*, written in collaboration with Borja Ortiz de Gondra. Alicante: Ayuntamiento de Alicante and XII Muestra de Teatro Español de Autores Contemporáneos, 2004. ISBN: 84-931131-8-2.
- "11-N" in VVAA. *Zona Cero*. Ciudad Real: Instituto de la Juventud and Ñaque Editora, 2002. Pages. 24-55. ISBN: 84-89987-44-0.

- "Sin móvil aparente" in VVAA. *Teatro 8. El huevo, Susana Sánchez; I am not that I am, David Graus; La piedra, Paco Becerra; Sin móvil aparente, Pablo Iglesias*. Madrid: Asociación de Autores de Teatro, 2003. Pages. 37-44.

AWARDS

As playwright

- Finalist of the XXXVIth Born Award 2011 for the play *Justo en medio del paralelo 38 (Exactly In The Middle Of Parallel 38)*.
- Finalist of the XXXIIIth Born Award 2008 for the play *El lado oeste del Golden Gate (The West Side of the Golden Gate)*.
- XIXth "Carlos Arniches-Ciudad de Alicante" Award 2003 for the play *Tu imagen sola (Your Lonely Image)*, written in collaboration with Borja Ortiz de Gondra.
- Finalist of the IIIth "Teatro Exprés" Award 2002 for the play *Sin móvil aparente (For no Apparent Reason)*.

As theatre director

- "José Luis Alonso" Award for the Best Young Theatre Director 2010 for his staging of *El lado oeste del Golden Gate (The West Side of the Golden Gate)*.

As theatre researcher

- "Leandro Fernández de Moratín" Award for Theatrical Studies 2008 for the book *De las tablas al celuloide (From the Stage to the Celluloid)*.
- PhD Extraordinary Award for the thesis *Trasvases discursivos del teatro de finales del siglo XIX y de principios del XX al Cine Primitivo y al Cine Clásico de Hollywood (Discursive Transfers from the Theatre of the Late Ninetieth and the Early Twentieth Century to the Early Film and Classical Hollywood Cinema)*.

The West Side of the Golden Gate was first presented at Centro de Nuevos Creadores – Sala Mirador, Madrid, Spain, on November 26, 2009. Pablo Iglesias Simón was awarded with the "José Luis Alonso" Award for the Best Young Theatre Director 2010 for this staging. The artistic team was as follows:

SCENIC TEAM:

Cast: Arantza Arteaga, Jorge Basanta, Ruth Díaz, Pablo Huetos y Ángel Savín

Text, Direction and Sound Design: Pablo Iglesias Simón

Set Design: Elisa Sanz

Costume Design: Yaiza Pinillos

Lighting Design: Alfonso Ramos

Magic: Manuel Vera

Artistic Production: Maite Sanz

Assistant to the Director: Cecilia Geijo

Assistant to the Set and Costume Designers: Alessio Meloni

Sound Technicians: Eloy Ramos y Adolfo Velayos.

MEDIA TEAM:

Direction and Design: Miguel Errazu

Art Direction: Ana Muñiz

Photography: César Belandia

Production Direction: Helion Grande

Assistant to the Director: Casandra Macías

Assistants to the Art Director: Beatriz Muñiz, Marta Ramos y Álvaro Congui

Gaffer: Ole C. Thomas

Camera Operator: Fran García Vera

Assistant to the Camera Operator: Víctor Benavides

Graphics: Iván Solbes

THE WEST SIDE OF THE GOLDEN GATE

[Editor's note: the following is the transcription of a handwritten text found in a notebook abandoned in the surroundings of the Golden Gate.

There was a label on its red cover with the following inscription: 'Howdy! Hola! Bonjour! Guten Tag! I'm a very special book. You see, I'm travelling around the world making new friends. I hope you I've met another friend in you. Please go to www.BookCrossing.com and enter my BCID number (shown below). You'll discover where I've been and who has read me, and can let them know I'm safe here in your hands. Then... READ AND RELEASE ME! BCID: 468-6014300'.

The notebook showed two handwritings suggesting that it may have been written by two different anonymous authors. In the present edition, the text written by the first author will be in Times New Roman font and the text written by the second author will be in Arial font].

I

I should start from the beginning. But it's been a while that I can't remember where it all started. I'm writing to you. That, I still know. And I want you ~~to read~~¹ ~~to understand~~ to see what I'm writing here.

I know I'm coming at the right time. When you need to step aside of the road. Stop to walk. Look at strangers. Feel that not everything is like it was yesterday.

And you know that too. And I don't have to tell you. And when you read this, you outline a sideways smile. You still don't know it but you know me. ~~You know who I am.~~ Maybe more than myself.

I understand you. I also needed to walk away. I also wanted to be just a spectator. And I'm showing you here what I could observe from the roadside.

This is not a book. It's ~~a diary~~ a notebook. It's not enough that you read what you'll find in it, you must also write on it. You must fill in the gaps. Continue the story from where it was left unfinished. Ready for you.

This notebook contains a lot of ways. A skein of routes that you must learn how to unravel. Here you will just find suggestions. Run. Sail. Fly. I'll wait here for you.

At the end of the road there's a treasure waiting for you. A treasure that you will be the only one to value. ~~I've got what you're looking for.~~ Come here. And I'll give it to you.

Once you've found it you must release the notebook. For others to take over from where you stopped. For others to find the way they must follow.

Go wherever it takes you. In a different time but to the same place. Gaze at what I saw. Where I found the beginning when I was looking for the end. I would like that you also feel it. Here. With me. Like it was at the beginning.

¹ Crossed out in the original. It has been decided to preserve the crossings included in the handwritten notebook. (Ed.)

II

(A park. A notebook has been released under a bench by its former owner. There isn't any title on its red cover. The only hallmark is a small label with the BookCrossing ID. THE WRITER WITHOUT A STORY rushes in jogging. She's exhausted. She sits on a bench. She tries to relax listening to the birds. She draws a pack of cigarettes from the pocket of her sweater. When she pulls out the lighter from her other pocket, she drops it. She crouches down and she finds the notebook. However, nothing stops her attempt to evade reality with the smoke of a cigarette. She tries to light the lighter over and over but it won't work. As time goes by she keeps trying without success. She doesn't know whether to laugh or cry. Suddenly she gives up and remembers. She makes sure that she's not being watched and she takes the notebook. She's about to open it but, feeling a rush of shame, she stops. She reads the label on the cover).

III

(The only room of THE BOY WHO DIRECTS's ramshackle studio turned into an ad hoc rehearsal room. Countless books, old and worn, a microwave oven, a Smeg fridge, a sofa-bed, a small table and leftovers of Chinese food coexist with what could well be the props of an impossible play).

THE BOY WHO DIRECTS: - Ok, this scene is all right as it stands. Shall we move on?

THE GIRL WHO ACTS: - Why me?

THE BOY WHO DIRECTS: - I didn't know who to call for something like this.

THE GIRL WHO ACTS: - When was the last time you called me?

THE BOY WHO DIRECTS: - Now we're here the two of us. We will do it. Besides, you've memorised the script in a record time, how do you do it?

THE GIRL WHO ACTS: - Outstanding memory.

THE BOY WHO DIRECTS: - Otherwise, who would get me out of this mess?

THE GIRL WHO ACTS: - I feel sorry for you. You're lucky because I feel sorry for you.

THE BOY WHO DIRECTS: - I'm a poor, helpless guy.

THE GIRL WHO ACTS: - What you have is a lot of gall all right.

THE BOY WHO DIRECTS: - Come on, you've also told me you liked the script.

THE GIRL WHO ACTS: - That's force of habit because of my job.

THE BOY WHO DIRECTS: - I know you like it.

THE GIRL WHO ACTS: - I didn't have any better thing to do.

THE BOY WHO DIRECTS: - You didn't have anything to do.

THE GIRL WHO ACTS: - Let's not get started.

THE BOY WHO DIRECTS: - Who is starting what?

THE GIRL WHO ACTS: - It's always been like that.

THE BOY WHO DIRECTS: - Don't get dramatic.

THE GIRL WHO ACTS: - Only your stuff was important. You never liked what I wrote.

THE BOY WHO DIRECTS: - You're an actress, you don't know how to write.

THE GIRL WHO ACTS: - You haven't got a clue.

THE BOY WHO DIRECTS: - I know better than you.

THE GIRL WHO ACTS: - I wonder how I can stand you.

THE BOY WHO DIRECTS: - Remember, you feel sorry for me.

THE GIRL WHO ACTS: - You're lucky.

THE BOY WHO DIRECTS: - You're not ready?

THE GIRL WHO ACTS: - I don't know. Some things are still no clear to me.

THE BOY WHO DIRECTS: - Look, we'll see while we do it. Let's try to keep doing each scene in one go. Then, if you want, we can stop after each scene and talk about it, ok?

THE GIRL WHO ACTS: - You are crazy.

THE BOY WHO DIRECTS: - Twenty-four hours, that's all we have.

THE GIRL WHO ACTS: - If you had called me from the beginning, none of this would have happened.

THE BOY WHO DIRECTS: - You wouldn't have come.

THE GIRL WHO ACTS: - Is that why you didn't do it?

THE BOY WHO DIRECTS: - Look, don't play hard to get. It will be good for you as well. There may be interesting people coming over to watch it.

THE GIRL WHO ACTS: - I hope not... In those conditions... Aren't you afraid it's going to be a total failure?

THE BOY WHO DIRECTS: - We're doing all right.

THE GIRL WHO ACTS: - All right?

THE BOY WHO DIRECTS: - As good as it can be. I'm serious. I would even say that it's getting better.

THE GIRL WHO ACTS: - I hope she's not listening.

THE BOY WHO DIRECTS: - She shouldn't have let me down.

THE GIRL WHO ACTS: - That's how things are. One day they call you and you can't say no.

THE BOY WHO DIRECTS: - We were rehearsing for many months.

THE GIRL WHO ACTS: - A total waste.

THE BOY WHO DIRECTS: - It's going to be ok. Fuck her. It's going to be very good.

THE GIRL WHO ACTS: - Of course. You should have called me from the beginning.

THE BOY WHO DIRECTS: - What if I had done it and they would have called you?

THE GIRL WHO ACTS: - This play would have only one actor.

THE BOY WHO DIRECTS: - Hey, don't give me ideas. You really like to tease me.

THE GIRL WHO ACTS: - I would have left too.

THE BOY WHO DIRECTS: - And your feeling sorry for me?

THE GIRL WHO ACTS: - If they call me, I leave.

THE BOY WHO DIRECTS: - She didn't understand, you don't understand either.

THE GIRL WHO ACTS: - Don't be like that.

THE BOY WHO DIRECTS: - No, and it sucks, because none of you understands, you know? You keep waiting for someone to call you and you still don't understand. Nobody calls and you don't know anything, you haven't got a fucking clue.

THE GIRL WHO ACTS: - And you do.

THE BOY WHO DIRECTS: - No, I don't. But at least I try. That's why we do this, to tell them that we're not expecting anything from them. Nothing. You get it?

THE GIRL WHO ACTS: - I've been waiting far too long.

THE BOY WHO DIRECTS: - Forget about before. Now we're here the two of us. And I'm happy, and I'm glad we're doing this together. I'm glad I didn't call you so I didn't lose you when they would have called you. I'm glad you're the one who is here. Now, shall we do some work?

THE GIRL WHO ACTS: - What do you think I'm here for.

IV

(The room where THE WRITER WITHOUT A STORY has been living for some time).

THE WRITER WITHOUT A STORY: - Did you bring my cigarettes?

THE CONFIDENT: - Did I ever fail to do so?

(THE WRITER WITHOUT A STORY opens the pack of cigarettes and tries to light the lighter without success).

THE CONFIDENT: - Here, I'll do it for you. *(He lights the cigarette)*. So you want to leave. Just like that, suddenly?

THE WRITER WITHOUT A STORY: - I should have done it before.

THE CONFIDENT: - Why now?

THE WRITER WITHOUT A STORY: - Now?

THE CONFIDENT: - Yes, right now. Not sooner, not later.

THE WRITER WITHOUT A STORY: - I found a notebook.

THE CONFIDENT: - Where?

THE WRITER WITHOUT A STORY: - In the park.

THE CONFIDENT: - You were in a park?

THE WRITER WITHOUT A STORY: - I went for a run.

THE CONFIDENT: - Why were you running away?

THE WRITER WITHOUT A STORY: - I wasn't running away, I was just jogging.

THE CONFIDENT: - What for?

THE WRITER WITHOUT A STORY: - People go to parks.

THE CONFIDENT: - Do you know who wrote that notebook?

THE WRITER WITHOUT A STORY: - Who cares.

THE CONFIDENT: - You're not well.

THE WRITER WITHOUT A STORY: - I haven't written a single line. I'm too scattered. I have too many stories going through my head. I must focus.

THE CONFIDENT: - I don't understand.

THE WRITER WITHOUT A STORY: - As soon as I started reading I realised it was what I've been waiting for all this time.

THE CONFIDENT: - What are you looking for?

THE WRITER WITHOUT A STORY: - I don't know, but I know that I will find it in this notebook.

THE CONFIDENT: - Forget about the notebook. You can't lie to me. What are you looking for?

THE WRITER WITHOUT A STORY: - It's been a long time.

THE CONFIDENT: - You can't go. To whom will I tell my new adventures?

THE WRITER WITHOUT A STORY: - New adventures? I thought you were with that gorgeous guy, the nurse at the NHS.

THE CONFIDENT: - He's fabulous... You never know... You know how I am... What is this all about?

THE WRITER WITHOUT A STORY: - It's like a game. What did it say? (*Trying to recall*) 'This notebook contains a lot of paths. A skein of routes that you must learn how to unravel.'

THE CONFIDENT: - When did you last hear about him?

THE WRITER WITHOUT A STORY: - When I stopped seeing him, I started to write.

THE CONFIDENT: - You never told him you wrote it.

THE WRITER WITHOUT A STORY: - He would never have tried to stage it if he had known.

THE CONFIDENT: - Did you see him again afterwards?

THE WRITER WITHOUT A STORY: - I ran away.

THE CONFIDENT: - Why did you stop writing, then?

THE WRITER WITHOUT A STORY: - I need a change of air.

THE CONFIDENT: - Why is it that there are questions you never want to answer?

THE WRITER WITHOUT A STORY: - I found what I needed.

THE CONFIDENT: - And am I going to lose my best friend for that reason?

THE WRITER WITHOUT A STORY: - Your only friend.

THE CONFIDENT: - And where are you 'running away' now?

THE WRITER WITHOUT A STORY: - It's a seaside village. I don't think I'll stay there for too long.

THE CONFIDENT: - How do you know that? (*with a mocking, tragic voice*) 'A skein of routes that you must learn how to unravel...' Hey, you didn't make up this whole thing about the notebook just to get rid of me, did you?

THE WRITER WITHOUT A STORY: - Don't be silly. I'll send you a postcard.

THE CONFIDENT: - Nobody sends letters, these days.

THE WRITER WITHOUT A STORY: - Come on, it will be funny. I'll have a lot of things to tell you.

THE CONFIDENT: - Things to tell me? I thought I was the one to talk and that you just listened.

THE WRITER WITHOUT A STORY: - Not that it's been very useful.

THE CONFIDENT (*somehow shocked*): - I didn't know it was like that.

THE WRITER WITHOUT A STORY: - Don't be silly. I'm the silly one. I'm going through a hard time.

THE CONFIDENT: - It will be good for you to be with other people like you.

THE WRITER WITHOUT A STORY: - I don't feel like it.

THE CONFIDENT: - It would be good for you.

THE WRITER WITHOUT A STORY: - Never mind. Don't worry. I'll write you.

THE CONFIDENT: - I don't care, I've already told you that I won't reply. No, don't play games with me, just don't insist.

THE WRITER WITHOUT A STORY: - Nothing? Not even just a few very little words for a good friend?

THE CONFIDENT: - Good? If stories are what you want, you call me, I'll come over and I'll tell you stories. You are supposed to be the writer, my darling.

THE WRITER WITHOUT A STORY: - Come on, don't get angry.

THE CONFIDENT: - You have no idea how I am when I'm angry.

THE WRITER WITHOUT A STORY: - You bet! Of course I know. I remember that Dane, you were so mad, I remember your face when you said you were going to...

THE CONFIDENT: - Oh my God, shut up.

THE WRITER WITHOUT A STORY: - Oh yes, it was so good.

THE CONFIDENT: - Hey baby, I was having a rough time.

THE WRITER WITHOUT A STORY: - What? You said you were going to...

THE CONFIDENT: - Enough.

THE WRITER WITHOUT A STORY (*Imitating him*): - 'Leave me alone!'

THE CONFIDENT: - Stop.

THE WRITER WITHOUT A STORY (*Still imitating him*): - 'You don't understand!'

THE CONFIDENT: - You never understand anything.

THE WRITER WITHOUT A STORY: - You enjoy it so much when I don't understand you.

THE CONFIDENT: - The sad thing is, you are the only one who understands me.

THE WRITER WITHOUT A STORY: - Really?

THE CONFIDENT: - Don't be silly.

THE WRITER WITHOUT A STORY: - I've already told you that I'm going through a hard time.

THE CONFIDENT: - You haven't gone out for a long time.

THE WRITER WITHOUT A STORY: - Don't start.

THE CONFIDENT: - No, I'm serious. Stop inventing notebooks. What you need is...

THE WRITER WITHOUT A STORY: - Stop it.

THE CONFIDENT: - Go out.

THE WRITER WITHOUT A STORY: - That's what I'm going to do.

THE CONFIDENT: - It's not what I mean, you know it. You must face that...

THE WRITER WITHOUT A STORY: - Stop it.

THE CONFIDENT: - When are we going to talk about it?

THE WRITER WITHOUT A STORY: - You are the only one talking. Don't you remember?

THE CONFIDENT: - Well, not really. You come up with quite a story, sometimes. You could have gotten something out of your stories, couldn't you?

THE WRITER WITHOUT A STORY: - Well, they haven't been useful.

THE CONFIDENT: - Some of them were really interesting.

THE WRITER WITHOUT A STORY: - Hey, don't make me feel confident and then strike back, that's cheating. You know I'll kick you out in the glimpse of an eye, ok?

THE CONFIDENT: - Actually, it wouldn't be the first time.

THE WRITER WITHOUT A STORY: - Don't start.

THE CONFIDENT: - All right, then I'm leaving.

THE WRITER WITHOUT A STORY: - Already?

THE CONFIDENT: - Yes. It's late. I just came to say hello. I have a Mister Doctor waiting at home, not a nurse.

THE WRITER WITHOUT A STORY: - I'll miss you.

THE CONFIDENT: - Well, it won't be for a long time, right?

THE WRITER WITHOUT A STORY: - Don't change. Stay the same.

THE CONFIDENT: - Don't worry. If you write, I'll reply.

[...]²

III V

(A coffee shop where magicians use to go. THE MAN WITH THE LETTER IN A CLOSED ENVELOPE and THE WOMAN WITH THE SUITCASE).

THE MAN WITH THE LETTER IN A CLOSED ENVELOPE: - Hello. *(Hesitating)* I don't know if...

THE WOMAN WITH THE SUITCASE: - You always dress like that?

THE MAN WITH THE LETTER IN A CLOSED ENVELOPE: - Like what?

THE WOMAN WITH THE SUITCASE: - Blue and green, it's horrific.

THE MAN WITH THE LETTER IN A CLOSED ENVELOPE: - I'm not really used to getting dressed on my own and I've never been good with colours.

THE WOMAN WITH THE SUITCASE: - That blue shirt is horrible. And you're late.

THE MAN WITH THE LETTER IN A CLOSED ENVELOPE: - Did you bring it?

THE WOMAN WITH THE SUITCASE: - Did YOU bring it?

(THE MAN WITH THE LETTER IN A CLOSED ENVELOPE sits next to THE WOMAN WITH THE SUITCASE).

THE MAN WITH THE LETTER IN A CLOSED ENVELOPE: - What is this all about?

THE WOMAN WITH THE SUITCASE: - You give me what you've got for me and I'll give you what I've got for you, right?

THE MAN WITH THE LETTER IN A CLOSED ENVELOPE: - Why did you send me that letter?

THE WOMAN WITH THE SUITCASE: - I didn't send you anything.

THE MAN WITH THE LETTER IN A CLOSED ENVELOPE: - Who sent you?

THE WOMAN WITH THE SUITCASE: - I'm just following the instructions of a letter I received some time ago. Didn't you send it?

THE MAN WITH THE LETTER IN A CLOSED ENVELOPE: - What is behind this?

² There is a blank page in the notebook after this dialogue until the following scene (Ed.)

THE WOMAN WITH THE SUITCASE: - Do you know?

THE MAN WITH THE LETTER IN A CLOSED ENVELOPE: - Why are you doing this?

THE WOMAN WITH THE SUITCASE: - I need what you have. What you received inside the letter.

THE MAN WITH THE LETTER IN A CLOSED ENVELOPE: - If you didn't send me the letter, how can you possibly know all this?

THE WOMAN WITH THE SUITCASE: - Everything was explained in my letter. I had to meet up with a man, in a given place, at a given time. I had to give him the closed envelope that contained the letter and he would give me that suitcase in return. According to the letter, if I was right here today at this time, you would come with another envelope containing something for me. Something I've been expecting for a long time. In order to get it, I only have to give you the suitcase.

THE MAN WITH THE LETTER IN A CLOSED ENVELOPE: - My letter said exactly the same. Why all that?

THE WOMAN WITH THE SUITCASE: - Did you bring my envelope?

THE MAN WITH THE LETTER IN A CLOSED ENVELOPE: - What's inside?

THE WOMAN WITH THE SUITCASE: - What's inside the closed envelope that you will get if you make the delivery?

THE MAN WITH THE LETTER IN A CLOSED ENVELOPE: - This doesn't make sense. Any sense whatsoever. I don't have time to lose with these games.

THE WOMAN WITH THE SUITCASE: - Give me the envelope.

THE MAN WITH THE LETTER IN A CLOSED ENVELOPE: - Do we know each other?

THE WOMAN WITH THE SUITCASE: - I need it.

THE MAN WITH THE LETTER IN A CLOSED ENVELOPE: - Whose idea is this?

THE WOMAN WITH THE SUITCASE: - Give me my envelope.

THE MAN WITH THE LETTER IN A CLOSED ENVELOPE: - I received it.

THE WOMAN WITH THE SUITCASE: - It's mine.

THE MAN WITH THE LETTER IN A CLOSED ENVELOPE: - Then why didn't they send it directly to you?

THE WOMAN WITH THE SUITCASE: - It's because of the suitcase. It's the only way to move it from one place to another and to make sure the delivery takes place.

THE MAN WITH THE LETTER IN A CLOSED ENVELOPE: - What's going to happen to the suitcase?

THE WOMAN WITH THE SUITCASE: - I don't know. My instructions end here.
Where do you have to take yours?

THE MAN WITH THE LETTER IN A CLOSED ENVELOPE: - I'm not taking anything anywhere.

(THE MAN WITH THE LETTER IN A CLOSED ENVELOPE stands up).

THE WOMAN WITH THE SUITCASE: - Don't you understand?

THE MAN WITH THE LETTER IN A CLOSED ENVELOPE: - I'm not in the mood for playing games.

THE WOMAN WITH THE SUITCASE: - I need that envelope.

THE MAN WITH THE LETTER IN A CLOSED ENVELOPE: - Tell whoever is sending you that nobody plays games with me.

THE WOMAN WITH THE SUITCASE: - I'm here for the same reason than you. The envelope, please.

(THE WOMAN WITH THE SUITCASE's ringtone starts playing. Both of them remain silent for a while).

THE MAN WITH THE LETTER IN A CLOSED ENVELOPE: - Aren't you going to answer?

THE WOMAN WITH THE SUITCASE: - Will you excuse me a second? *(Picking up the phone)*. Hello? (...) Oh, hi. (...) I thought you wouldn't do it. (...) Yes, I'm serious. (...) Trying to forget you. (...) No, nothing will prevent me from doing it any more. (...) Now it's not that important. (...) Did I promise you that? (...) I'm not running away any more. (...) Just out of interest, where are you taking me? (...) I don't have doubts any more. (...) I'm not scared any more. (...) I'll be there. (...) I promised.

(THE WOMAN WITH THE SUITCASE hangs up. THE MAN WITH THE LETTER IN A CLOSED ENVELOPE's shirt is now yellow).

THE WOMAN WITH THE SUITCASE: - Your shirt...

THE MAN WITH THE LETTER IN A CLOSED ENVELOPE: - It's horrific, isn't it?

THE WOMAN WITH THE SUITCASE: - And now it's yellow.

THE MAN WITH THE LETTER IN A CLOSED ENVELOPE: - Like I said, I've never been good with colours. What's going to happen when I deliver the suitcase?

THE WOMAN WITH THE SUITCASE: - They will give you your envelope.

THE MAN WITH THE LETTER IN A CLOSED ENVELOPE: - And, what will be inside?

THE WOMAN WITH THE SUITCASE: - Do you really think it matters? Do you really think we're here just because of an envelope? You could have read the letter and thrown it away and not have cared about the odd things it said. But no, you didn't do that. You are here because you want to. You have a reason.

THE MAN WITH THE LETTER IN A CLOSED ENVELOPE: - How do you know all that?

THE WOMAN WITH THE SUITCASE: - I've had time to think.

THE MAN WITH THE LETTER IN A CLOSED ENVELOPE: - How long ago did you receive that letter?

THE WOMAN WITH THE SUITCASE: - Give me the envelope.

THE MAN WITH THE LETTER IN A CLOSED ENVELOPE: - No, I'm not playing this game. It's crazy.

THE WOMAN WITH THE SUITCASE: - Then stop playing. Take the suitcase and do whatever you want with it. Get rid of it, it doesn't matter. I don't care. But give me my bloody envelope. Please. I need it.

(THE MAN WITH THE LETTER IN A CLOSED ENVELOPE hesitates, then takes a closed envelope out of the inside pocket of his jacket).

THE MAN WITH THE LETTER IN A CLOSED ENVELOPE: - Here you are.

(THE WOMAN takes the envelope and gives him the suitcase).

THE WOMAN WITH THE CLOSED ENVELOPE: - Thank you.

(THE MAN WITH THE SUITCASE tries to open the suitcase without success).

THE MAN WITH THE SUITCASE: - Where's the key?

THE WOMAN WITH THE CLOSED ENVELOPE: - There is no key.

THE MAN WITH THE SUITCASE: - What's inside the suitcase?

THE WOMAN WITH THE CLOSED ENVELOPE (*After an embarrassing silence*): - I thought you would tell me.

VI

(*THE BOY WHO DIRECTS's studio*).

THE BOY WHO DIRECTS: - Wait a minute. Don't move, stay there. Let's do it again, and now you say the last sentence in one go, without making that pause, ok?

THE GIRL WHO ACTS: - Should we take a break?

THE BOY WHO DIRECTS: - If you want.

THE GIRL WHO ACTS (*Moving towards her purse and getting her phone*): - Great. (*She walks in the room with the mobile*) Did you know there is no signal here?

THE BOY WHO DIRECTS: - Usually there is no signal in basements.

THE GIRL WHO ACTS: - How can you live like that?

THE BOY WHO DIRECTS: - It's all I can afford.

THE GIRL WHO ACTS: - What if somebody wants to call you?

THE BOY WHO DIRECTS: - It's not that awful.

THE GIRL WHO ACTS: - It's a tragedy. What if somebody wants to call me?

THE BOY WHO DIRECTS: - I thought we were rehearsing.

THE GIRL WHO ACTS: - Do you have a landline?

THE BOY WHO DIRECTS: - No.

THE GIRL WHO ACTS: - How can you live like that?

THE BOY WHO DIRECTS: - Humidity is a lot more annoying than that, and not having windows, and living in a basement that was remodelled without a permit... 'Offered for rent is this lovely loft in Madrid city centre.' So what? For eight hundred Euros a month I couldn't find anything better than the old warehouse of this office building. And don't worry; there is coverage outside in the landing.

(*THE GIRL WHO ACTS walks straight to the exit. The door is closed*).

THE GIRL WHO ACTS: - When did you lock the door?

THE BOY WHO DIRECTS: - We are rehearsing. Anybody could come in if it were open.

THE GIRL WHO ACTS: - Who would want to come in at this time?

THE BOY WHO DIRECTS: - Who would want to call you?

(Neither of them answers).

THE BOY WHO DIRECTS *(Taking the keys out of his pocket)*: - There you go.

(THE GIRL WHO ACTS opens the door and exits. The ringtone of the phone being switched on can be heard from the landing. THE GIRL WHO ACTS comes back after a while).

THE BOY WHO DIRECTS: - Any luck?

THE GIRL WHO ACTS: - Nobody comes here at this time, right?

THE BOY WHO DIRECTS: - There is not a soul until Monday.

THE GIRL WHO ACTS: - Ok. Then I'll leave my phone out in the landing in case somebody calls me.

THE BOY WHO DIRECTS: - Who would call you?

THE GIRL WHO ACTS *(Giving him the keys)*: - I need a coffee.

THE BOY WHO DIRECTS: - Help yourself.

THE GIRL WHO ACTS: - I need a cigarette.

THE BOY WHO DIRECTS: - When did you start smoking?

(THE BOY WHO DIRECTS locks the door again while THE GIRL WHO ACTS gets the pack of cigarettes from her bag. She can't light her lighter. He comes near her and does it for her).

VII

(THE WRITER WITHOUT A STORY smokes while an old jukebox plays something that could be her voice).

'Let myself go. I see him. I try. Do it. Why? For what? Knowing it and letting myself go. Understand. Do. Feel. Be. I must do it. I know I must do it. I continue. I search but I don't find. I know. I know it. I see him. Let myself go.'

'That he would understand me. The two of us. I understand. I understand you. Together. And I want you to understand me. To walk this path hand in hand. You tell me what and I suggest you how. I don't know any more. I don't know what I'm doing. Here. With you.'

'If I might be able to tell you. If you could intuit what. We shouldn't have to. And you know it. You know very well. That I would like to walk this path with you. Hand in hand.'

'Eager. To leave this behind. To leave you behind to find you again. Around the corner. The corner of that street. Next to that bar where I used to work. Where you showed up with your weird clothes. And you asked me a cigarette. And I told you I didn't smoke. And you assured me that I would. Where you asked me something else. And I outlined that sideways smile for the first time.'

'At some point I started to write. And at some point I stopped. I don't have anything else to tell. And even if I know it, I don't want to admit it. I hold on to this stupid notebook. Like a castaway grasping the last plank of wood of a shipwreck that still floats. I search and I don't find. When did I lose you?'

'That first night I don't know where we went. You never told me. I know what we talked about. And only you know what we did.'

'Then you left. And I didn't dare disappear with you. I'll do it next time, I told you. Call me when you're back. I won't have any more pending issues. Nothing to wait for. What are you waiting for?, you asked me. Nothing to be afraid of. I promised. And, I still don't know why, you believed me.'

'I understand. Today is not yesterday. Tomorrow, maybe. Never. I never knew. What to do about you. I ran away from you and you always knew where to find me. When I thought you wouldn't call me, you did. And when I lost you in the end, I didn't know where to look for you.'

'That's why I want to go far away. Far away to find you again. Crossing glances. Like in that corner. Where you looked for me that time. Next to that bar. Where you asked me that cigarette. When you saw that I didn't smoke.'

(THE WRITER WITHOUT A STORY extinguishes her cigarette).

[...]³

IV VIII

(The last trains keep passing from time to time over the bridge located above the bar. The noise is deafening and the bottles on the dusty counter tinkle every time. An old jukebox is playing the end of 'Get Back' of The Beatles. Only one woman turned up so late at night. A bottle of beer, half empty. THE LONELY WOMAN is staring at the last customer. THE MAN TRAPPED BY ROUTINE is crossing out what he just wrote on a notebook. He starts to scrutinise carefully his glass of wine, half full. As if it contained the exact word he's looking for. She keeps observing him. THE MAN TRAPPED BY ROUTINE, like in a spasm, stands up, puts the notebook away and goes next to THE LONELY WOMAN. He leaves his glass on the bar, almost empty. THE MAN TRAPPED BY ROUTINE looks down).

THE MAN TRAPPED BY ROUTINE: - It's late.

THE LONELY WOMAN: - Excuse me, what time is it?

THE MAN TRAPPED BY ROUTINE: - Here it's always late.

THE LONELY WOMAN: - I should go.

THE MAN TRAPPED BY ROUTINE: - Why did you come?

THE LONELY WOMAN: - I didn't know where to go.

THE MAN TRAPPED BY ROUTINE: - That's not a reason.

THE LONELY WOMAN: - What's yours?

THE MAN TRAPPED BY ROUTINE: - I always come.

THE LONELY WOMAN: - It's late. I should go.

THE MAN TRAPPED BY ROUTINE: - Come with me.

THE LONELY WOMAN: - Why?

³ There are two and a half blank pages in the notebook after this dialogue until the following scene (Ed.)

THE MAN TRAPPED BY ROUTINE: - So that you have a reason to stay.

THE LONELY WOMAN: - I couldn't stay at home.

THE MAN TRAPPED BY ROUTINE: -You know, my wife will end up leaving me.

THE LONELY WOMAN: - I couldn't stay at home waiting.

THE MAN TRAPPED BY ROUTINE: - What are you waiting for?

THE LONELY WOMAN: - Why aren't you with her now?

THE MAN TRAPPED BY ROUTINE: - I work all day. Otherwise, we wouldn't make it to the end of the month. I catch a train. I sleep. Then I come here.

THE LONELY WOMAN: - Hopeless.

THE MAN TRAPPED BY ROUTINE: - I go home. Drunk. And I fall asleep. Drunk. The day after, I dress with the clothes that my wife left there for me and I go catch a train, without having breakfast. I sleep. I work. Otherwise, we wouldn't make it to the end of the month. I come here. I drink. I go home. Drunk. And I fall asleep.

THE LONELY WOMAN: - Time goes by so quickly.

THE MAN TRAPPED BY ROUTINE: - It's always late.

THE LONELY WOMAN: - Do you love her?

THE MAN TRAPPED BY ROUTINE: - We could have another baby.

THE LONELY WOMAN: - All days are the same.

THE MAN TRAPPED BY ROUTINE: - We don't understand each other.

THE LONELY WOMAN: - Does she still love you?

THE MAN TRAPPED BY ROUTINE: - I don't know yet because we still don't have it.

THE LONELY WOMAN: - It's been a while that I don't have any hope.

THE MAN TRAPPED BY ROUTINE: - Everybody is hoping something here.

THE LONELY WOMAN: - We should have done that trip. We had a private agreement, a macabre joke that we were the only ones to find funny. When I ran away with him in that tour, we couldn't think of any better thing to do between performances. Nobody would have understood why we did it, no matter how well we had explained. In the Niagara Falls we saw the spot from where people jump into the abyss. In the Empire State they showed us how people go round the safety fence

before the jump. After he left the Japanese bewildered with his magic tricks, we wandered around the Mount Fuji's suicide forest. We saw the young Japanese getting lost forever at the bottom of a pill bottle or at the end of a rope. We read the signs at the entrance encouraging people to stay alive and we followed the white laces on the bushes that marked the path followed by those who were already dead. We saw the mobile phones, the clothes, the notes, and we helped the volunteers take down the bodies and pick up the backpacks abandoned by the students. I remember that we found the inert body of a young girl under the shade of a fir tree. On her lap lied two glasses of sake, witnesses of a death by poisoning. Despite our efforts, we never found the remains of the one who would have joined her in her very last toast. Did he know that it would be the last time they would look into each other's eyes? Did he know that the contents of his glass were harmless? Looking at that girl's body I tried to figure out what their feelings were in that particular moment when each of them handed over their destiny to a glass that could be the anteroom of a deadly outcome. Back to our hotel in Sinjuku, in that room where we almost could touch the sky, we made love and, with a toast of Asahi, we promised each other that next year we would visit the Golden Gate. Even if we lived from hand to mouth we had everything we wanted. Then he was born. *(Pause)*. What are you looking for?

THE MAN TRAPPED BY ROUTINE: - Nothing. I don't have time to look for anything anymore. Otherwise, we wouldn't make it to the end of the month. *(Pause)*. What about you, what are you looking for?

THE LONELY WOMAN: - On her dying bed my mother told me: 'Always remember that you are older every second. You are more dead every second.'

THE MAN TRAPPED BY ROUTINE: - When you reach the end of the way, everything you've walked seems useless. It's late.

THE LONELY WOMAN: - Today I decided not to stay waiting.

THE MAN TRAPPED BY ROUTINE: - And you came here.

THE LONELY WOMAN: - When I was a little girl, I used to fantasize during the night what I would do when I would be older. Now, I don't remember what I wanted to be. When was it that I grew older?

THE MAN TRAPPED BY ROUTINE: - On March 23rd 1918, the great Chung Ling Soo was about to catch with his teeth the bullet that would be fired by his assistant in

a boxer disguise. As many other evenings, his wife, Sue Sing, had the bullet signed by someone in the audience. Back up on stage, she gave it to her assistant, he loaded the rifle, took a deep breath and aimed at the magician, who was already holding the china plate where he would spit the bullet. The roar of the shot let everyone stunned. But that night something had changed in that London theatre. The plate was no longer in his hands but breaking into pieces when it fell on the wooden floor. It seemed that time stopped. Nobody knew what to do or what to say. It was then when the great Chung Ling Soo would whisper his last words far away from his native Brooklyn. 'Oh my God, I've been shot'. That would be the first time in nineteen years that William Ellsworth Robinson would speak English in public. Everybody found out then that his best illusion was himself. But he didn't care about that. On the way to hospital there was just one question coming over and over. And the great Chung Ling Soo ended up leaving this world without having a clue of the reason for his death. It was Saturday. *(Pause)*. My father used to tell me that story, maybe in the vain hope that someday I would be able to catch a bullet with my teeth. The only thing I regret is that I've never tried such a feat.

THE LONELY WOMAN: - Before going to bed, I always leave his clothes ready for the next day. He always comes home at the same time. Even if I wait for him, he never finds me out of bed and he sneaks into the bedroom because he thinks I'm already sleeping. Sometimes, when he starts snoring, I sit up and I watch his sleep for hours. Every day he looks younger than me... I had a baby.

THE MAN TRAPPED BY ROUTINE: - What's his name?

THE LONELY WOMAN: - We should have abandoned him in a junk from the beginning. I know it was all my fault. I decided for both of us. I never should have imposed my wishes on him. We loved each other like brother and sister and our marriage was a loving one. That's what I thought. *(Pause)*. The first time I held my son in my arms I started to cry. I didn't know it then but I wasn't crying with joy, not at all. I was crying with anger for having given birth to that sick baby that I was holding against my chest. *(Pause)*. We moved house. Far away from the city. It was good for his health. A rare illness. That's what doctors said. With all the money we spent on them we couldn't afford anything better. He had to find a permanent job. Throw away his youth's dreams and make a living from a tedious job that devours his soul. Out there in the city, now further than ever. And we are here by a sea that I

detest. Work every day to buy medicines for the little one. A child that needs constant attention. I can't leave him alone for a second. I can't even write a dialogue, now. We don't have a life because of an infant we don't dare to accept that we hate. My womb is boiling. And he doesn't care any more. I would prefer to abandon him in that junk. *(Pause)*. I've been watching you all night and you haven't stopped writing for a second.

THE MAN TRAPPED BY ROUTINE: - Have you been spying on me all that time?

THE LONELY WOMAN: - What is there in that notebook?

THE MAN TRAPPED BY ROUTINE *(Handing the notebook over to her and looking at her face)*: - I want you to read it.

THE LONELY WOMAN *(Looking him in the eyes)*: - Do you think I should?

(After an eternal moment, both look away).

THE MAN TRAPPED BY ROUTINE: - Do it.

THE LONELY WOMAN: - I'm not sure I would know what to do with it. *(Moving away)* It's late. I should leave.

THE MAN TRAPPED BY ROUTINE: - Will you wait for me awake?

THE LONELY WOMAN: - I always do.

(THE MAN TRAPPED BY ROUTINE stands up, moves towards THE LONELY WOMAN and gives her a tender kiss).

IX

(THE BOY WHO DIRECTS's studio. He's kissing THE GIRL WHO ACTS. She moves away).

THE GIRL WHO ACTS: - This is not in the script.

(THE BOY WHO DIRECTS kisses her again).

THE BOY WHO DIRECTS: - It makes sense, doesn't it?

(THE GIRL WHO ACTS moves away entirely).

THE GIRL WHO ACTS: - I got lost a while ago.

THE BOY WHO DIRECTS: - I think this scene is based on the fable of Izanami and Izanagi.

THE GIRL WHO ACTS: - I'm not only talking about this scene. What does all this mean, exactly?

THE BOY WHO DIRECTS: - That's what we must find out.

THE GIRL WHO ACTS: - You already know, don't you?

THE BOY WHO DIRECTS: - I don't want to know. Why do we rehearse, then?

THE GIRL WHO ACTS: - What is she after?

THE BOY WHO DIRECTS: - She doesn't even know herself.

THE GIRL WHO ACTS: - Why are you lying to me?

THE BOY WHO DIRECTS: - What!

THE GIRL WHO ACTS: - You don't care, right?

THE BOY WHO DIRECTS: - I don't care about what?

THE GIRL WHO ACTS: - You don't give a shit.

THE BOY WHO DIRECTS: - I don't know what you're talking about.

THE GIRL WHO ACTS: - What are we doing here?

THE BOY WHO DIRECTS: - We are rehearsing.

THE GIRL WHO ACTS: - Fuck you.

THE BOY WHO DIRECTS: - What are we doing, then?

THE GIRL WHO ACTS: - Has it really been so much time? Now you don't care about anything, right?

THE BOY WHO DIRECTS: - You haven't got a clue.

THE GIRL WHO ACTS: - Yes I do.

THE BOY WHO DIRECTS: - No you don't. You don't know what it means to put everything at risk.

THE GIRL WHO ACTS: - Everything? It seems you are doing quite well. I wouldn't be able to afford that fridge.

THE BOY WHO DIRECTS: - Are waiters so poorly paid, really?

THE GIRL WHO ACTS: - I'm an actress.

THE BOY WHO DIRECTS: - Is there any difference?

THE GIRL WHO ACTS: - I'm leaving. (*She tries to open the door and notices it's locked.*) Give me the keys.

THE BOY WHO DIRECTS: - We are rehearsing.

THE GIRL WHO ACTS: - Fuck you.

THE BOY WHO DIRECTS: - What are we doing, then?

THE GIRL WHO ACTS: - Has it really been so much time? Now you don't care about anything, right?

THE BOY WHO DIRECTS: - You haven't got a clue.

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THE GIRL WHO ACTS: - I'm an actress.

THE BOY WHO DIRECTS: - Is there any difference?

THE GIRL WHO ACTS: - I'm leaving. (*She tries to open the door and notices it's locked.*) Give me the keys.

THE BOY WHO DIRECTS: - We are rehearsing.

THE GIRL WHO ACTS: - Fuck you.

THE BOY WHO DIRECTS: - What are we doing, then?

THE GIRL WHO ACTS: - Has it really been so much time? Now you don't care about anything, right?

THE BOY WHO DIRECTS: - You haven't got a clue.

THE GIRL WHO ACTS: - Yes I do.

THE BOY WHO DIRECTS: - No you don't. You don't know what it means to put everything at risk.

THE GIRL WHO ACTS: - Everything? It seems you are doing quite well. I wouldn't be able to afford that fridge.

THE BOY WHO DIRECTS (*shocked*): - Shit! This sounds familiar to me.

THE GIRL WHO ACTS: - You haven't changed anything. I know you don't give a shit. I don't know why you want us to rehearse this play, but I do know you don't give a shit.

THE BOY WHO DIRECTS: - That's not true.

THE GIRL WHO ACTS: - What's inside, exactly?

THE BOY WHO DIRECTS: - Don't you understand?

THE GIRL WHO ACTS: - No, I don't understand. Before you used to have an answer to everything and now...

THE BOY WHO DIRECTS: - Who cares what is inside?

THE GIRL WHO ACTS: - What the fuck do you want to tell with this play?

THE BOY WHO DIRECTS: - We haven't finished rehearsing yet.

THE GIRL WHO ACTS: - As far as I'm concerned, I have.

THE BOY WHO DIRECTS: - It must open tomorrow.

THE GIRL WHO ACTS: - You don't give a shit.

THE BOY WHO DIRECTS: - It matters a lot to me.

THE GIRL WHO ACTS: - It's not the same. Nothing is the same anymore.

THE BOY WHO DIRECTS: - I need this play to open tomorrow.

THE GIRL WHO ACTS: - Do you need it or do you want it? I can't stand it anymore. Give me the keys.

THE BOY WHO DIRECTS: - If it doesn't come out tomorrow, I'll have to give back the subsidy.

THE GIRL WHO ACTS: - Subsidy? I thought we were doing this for the sake of art. Without any money involved.

THE BOY WHO DIRECTS: - And there isn't any.

THE GIRL WHO ACTS: - And the subsidy?

THE BOY WHO DIRECTS: - I couldn't afford that fridge either.

THE GIRL WHO ACTS: - You spent the entire subsidy on a fridge?

THE BOY WHO DIRECTS: - And the sofa, the little table...

THE GIRL WHO ACTS: - Give me the keys.

THE BOY WHO DIRECTS: - If it doesn't open... I don't have the money, now.

THE GIRL WHO ACTS: - Because you spent it.

THE BOY WHO DIRECTS: - I ran out of money.

THE GIRL WHO ACTS: - Work.

THE BOY WHO DIRECTS: - As a waiter, like you?

THE GIRL WHO ACTS: - Give me the keys.

THE BOY WHO DIRECTS: - I'm sorry.

THE GIRL WHO ACTS: - Give me the fucking keys.

THE BOY WHO DIRECTS: - Please, stay. Do it for me.

THE GIRL WHO ACTS: - I used to do a lot of things for you. We used to do a lot of things together. Just for the sake of it. But not for money.

THE BOY WHO DIRECTS: - This play has to open. Me neither, I'm not really convinced, but it must open tomorrow.

THE GIRL WHO ACTS: - Give me the keys.

THE BOY WHO DIRECTS: - The author sent it to me. I don't know why me. I don't know her at all. I haven't even seen her. I don't even think the text is totally finished. But we got the subsidy. And I couldn't say no. I didn't have money.

THE GIRL WHO ACTS: - I didn't have money either after...

THE BOY WHO DIRECTS: - We can do it. We can do it, the two of us, together. Like before.

THE GIRL WHO ACTS: - For money?

THE BOY WHO DIRECTS: - Forget about it.

THE GIRL WHO ACTS: - How can I possibly forget?

THE BOY WHO DIRECTS: - I can't stand you.

THE GIRL WHO ACTS: - I know, that's why it didn't work.

THE BOY WHO DIRECTS: - No, it wasn't that.

THE GIRL WHO ACTS: - Nobody called her, right?

THE BOY WHO DIRECTS: - What?

THE GIRL WHO ACTS: - Nobody called her, right? She left because she found out that you weren't going to pay her.

THE BOY WHO DIRECTS: - She knew from the beginning that there would be no pay.

THE GIRL WHO ACTS: - Did she know from the beginning that you had spent all the money in furnishing your fucking studio?

THE BOY WHO DIRECTS: - You don't understand anything.

THE GIRL WHO ACTS: - No, I don't understand.

THE BOY WHO DIRECTS: - You never did.

THE GIRL WHO ACTS: - Neither did you.

THE BOY WHO DIRECTS: - Look, let's stop it. Let's focus on this. You're doing great. I'm serious. We are about to finish.

THE GIRL WHO ACTS: - Will you give me the keys?

THE BOY WHO DIRECTS: - What happened to us? Don't you remember how great it was before?

THE GIRL WHO ACTS: - Yes, I do remember.

THE BOY WHO DIRECTS: - Let's do it again.

THE GIRL WHO ACTS: - No, let's do it better.

THE BOY WHO DIRECTS: - This is my girl.

THE GIRL WHO ACTS: - I won't dress like Oedipus again, understood?

THE BOY WHO DIRECTS: - It was good.

THE GIRL WHO ACTS: - It was kind of a disaster.

THE BOY WHO DIRECTS: - We had a good time.

THE GIRL WHO ACTS: - You had a good time. I never understood why you wanted me to be Oedipus.

THE BOY WHO DIRECTS: - So that you could atone for your faults.

THE GIRL WHO ACTS: - You are the one with faults.

THE BOY WHO DIRECTS: - Everything is always my fault. I'm used to it. I even missed it during the last few months.

THE GIRL WHO ACTS: - I'm tired. How much is left?

THE BOY WHO DIRECTS: - We'll be done in a couple of hours. It's going very well. And tomorrow afternoon it opens and it's over.

THE GIRL WHO ACTS: - Are you sure? Are you sure it's over?

X

(The sea is calm. There is a fishing rod standing on the sand, inviting the fish to bite the hook).

THE WRITER WITHOUT A STORY: - How long does it take?

THE OLD MAN WHO FISHES: - As much as you want to wait.

THE WRITER WITHOUT A STORY *(After a long silence)*: - And when do they bite?

THE OLD MAN WHO FISHES: - When they want to.

THE WRITER WITHOUT A STORY *(After another long silence)*: - What if they don't want to?

THE OLD MAN WHO FISHES: - Then you wait longer. *(Silence)*. You've never fished, right?

THE WRITER WITHOUT A STORY: - Why do you say that?

THE OLD MAN WHO FISHES: - You don't know how to wait.

THE WRITER WITHOUT A STORY: - There was a time where I knew how to wait.

THE OLD MAN WHO FISHES: - You talk too much. When you fish you must know how to wait, in silence.

THE WRITER WITHOUT A STORY: - I also knew how to be quiet.

THE OLD MAN WHO FISHES: - That's good.

THE WRITER WITHOUT A STORY: - What?

THE OLD MAN WHO FISHES: - That you know how to be quiet. Then you just have to remember how it's done.

THE WRITER WITHOUT A STORY: - Does it bother you if I talk?

THE OLD MAN WHO FISHES: - Chatting and fishing don't go well together.

THE WRITER WITHOUT A STORY: - Then I'll shut up. (*After a long silence*)
What's the bait?

THE OLD MAN WHO FISHES: - Ragworm.

THE WRITER WITHOUT A STORY: - Is that a worm?

THE OLD MAN WHO FISHES: - From the Atlantic. (*Silence*). I've used a medium-sized one. Portion size. (*Silence*). They are long like this, like my little finger, and twice as thick. (*Silence*). You need a special needle to hook them, a little thicker. You want to put it through the mouth, carefully, otherwise it will burst. (*Silence*). They say in the shop that the Chinese eat them fried in restaurants.

THE WRITER WITHOUT A STORY: - And what do you fish with that?

THE OLD MAN WHO FISHES: - Seabass, sea bream, hake...

THE WRITER WITHOUT A STORY: - That much?

THE OLD MAN WHO FISHES: - Not that much. They don't bite often, here.

THE WRITER WITHOUT A STORY: - And why don't you go fish elsewhere?

THE OLD MAN WHO FISHES: - I've always fished here since they retired me.

THE WRITER WITHOUT A STORY: - Have you ever been out fishing again?

THE OLD MAN WHO FISHES: - I left my boat moored at the harbour. (*Silence*). I've never used it again. (*Silence*). Every now and then, youngsters use it during the night, to do their things, you know what I mean. (*Silence*). But I don't care about the boat. Now I come here every day. In silence.

THE WRITER WITHOUT A STORY: - Now you're the one who's talking.

THE OLD MAN WHO FISHES: - I like to talk if the conversation is good.

THE WRITER WITHOUT A STORY: - Can we talk, then?

THE OLD MAN WHO FISHES: - Let's not do it. If we do, they won't bite. They are not stupid.

THE WRITER WITHOUT A STORY: - I'd rather say, they are not deaf.

THE OLD MAN WHO FISHES: - Sarcasm. When I heard that word I thought it would be a good name for a dog. (*Silence*). I looked it up in the dictionary. I have a dictionary, you know? (*Silence*). I use it a lot. Every time there is something I don't understand, I look it up and there it is. (*Silence*). It's a beautiful word, 'sarcasm'. (*Silence*). You make fun of me, like everybody who comes over here, and that's sarcasm. That's what they say in the dictionary.

THE WRITER WITHOUT A STORY: - There was all that? (*No answer. After a long silence*). What do you do here all that time?

THE OLD MAN WHO FISHES: - Fish.

THE WRITER WITHOUT A STORY: - What if they don't bite?

THE OLD MAN WHO FISHES: - I don't care, I keep fishing.

THE WRITER WITHOUT A STORY: - What if they bite?

THE OLD MAN WHO FISHES: - I try to take out the hook so that they don't suffer. And I send them back to the sea if I can.

THE WRITER WITHOUT A STORY: - You send them back?

THE OLD MAN WHO FISHES: - Sometimes they swallow the hook deep inside their guts and you can't do anything about it.

THE WRITER WITHOUT A STORY: - Why do you release them?

THE OLD MAN WHO FISHES: - There are some fish that are better not to fish. (*Silence*). Besides, I don't like fish.

THE WRITER WITHOUT A STORY: - Then why do you fish?

THE OLD MAN WHO FISHES: - I can tell you're not from here.

THE WRITER WITHOUT A STORY: - I came in the search of a story.

THE OLD MAN WHO FISHES: - Nothing ever happens here.

THE WRITER WITHOUT A STORY: - That's why it's a good place to fish, isn't it?

THE OLD MAN WHO FISHES: - You did it again. You can't help it.

THE WRITER WITHOUT A STORY: - What?

THE OLD MAN WHO FISHES: - Sarcasm.

THE WRITER WITHOUT A STORY: - If you say so.

THE OLD MAN WHO FISHES: - It's not me, it's the dictionary.

THE WRITER WITHOUT A STORY: - And you trust it?

THE OLD MAN WHO FISHES: - You lie a lot, you people. You're all the same. You tell a lie and you spend the rest of your life telling stories to cover it.

THE WRITER WITHOUT A STORY: - My best friend, actually my only friend since not long ago, does exactly as you say. What was the first lie he told that triggered everything?

THE OLD MAN WHO FISHES: - What did you come here for?

THE WRITER WITHOUT A STORY: - I'm just passing by.

THE OLD MAN WHO FISHES: - How long are you going to stay?

THE WRITER WITHOUT A STORY: - I came here to write.

THE OLD MAN WHO FISHES: - This is a quiet place.

THE WRITER WITHOUT A STORY: - I came here in the search of a story.

THE OLD MAN WHO FISHES: - Nothing ever happens here.

THE WRITER WITHOUT A STORY: - I came here because of this notebook.

THE OLD MAN WHO FISHES: - Who wrote it?

THE WRITER WITHOUT A STORY: - I don't think I know you. Do you find it weird?

THE OLD MAN WHO FISHES: - No. I don't. You're not from here. It's clear to me that you have nothing to do in the city. You are really bored in the city, you people. You rush everywhere, always in a hurry, and when you don't know what to do you come here to ask us questions. And you come here with a little notebook you don't even know who wrote it. You are not well in the city. I don't know why you're always in a rush if you don't know where to go.

THE WRITER WITHOUT A STORY: - Is that sarcasm?

THE OLD MAN WHO FISHES: - That's what the dictionary said.

THE WRITER WITHOUT A STORY: - Tell me what happened that day.

THE OLD MAN WHO FISHES: - Nothing ever happens here.

THE WRITER WITHOUT A STORY: - Then tell me what happened that day in which something did happen.

THE OLD MAN WHO FISHES: - I spend the day here, fishing. I never get to know anything.

THE WRITER WITHOUT A STORY: - Tell me what you know. (*Silence*). Please.

THE OLD MAN WHO FISHES: - Will you let me fish quietly if I do?

THE WRITER WITHOUT A STORY: - If you tell it to me I'll shut up.

THE OLD MAN WHO FISHES (*After a long silence*): - When they were young they were one of those holidaymakers who fall in love here. (*Silence*). After a lot of years they returned and settled in the village. I never saw her. She

stayed at home almost all the time. And he worked all day in the city. You could find him in the canteen, late in the evening.

THE WRITER WITHOUT A STORY: - What did they come here for?

THE OLD MAN WHO FISHES: - You could tell they were not from here.

THE WRITER WITHOUT A STORY: - What happened?

THE OLD MAN WHO FISHES: - It was a day like any other day. I had just set up the fishing rod when, suddenly, I heard that noise. Women stopped their housework and ran like crazy looking for the sirens. The man was lying on the floor with a glass in his hand. Nurses tried to resuscitate him. It was the first time that an ambulance had come to the village.

THE WRITER WITHOUT A STORY: - What happened exactly?

THE OLD MAN WHO FISHES: - We all knew something like that was bound to happen, sooner or later.

THE WRITER WITHOUT A STORY: - Why?

THE OLD MAN WHO FISHES: - She was not well in her head. 'What do I want? What do I want?' That was the only thing she said. They locked her up in an asylum and they threw away the key. She hasn't come back. I don't think she ever will.

THE WRITER WITHOUT A STORY: - Did you know them in person?

THE OLD MAN WHO FISHES: - They never wanted to fish with me.

[...]⁴

✚ XI

(THE MAN WHO ALWAYS WANTED TO BE A MAGICIAN is about to present one of his favourite tricks).

THE MAN WHO ALWAYS WANTED TO BE A MAGICIAN: - Now for this trick I will need a volunteer. *(Approaching the audience)* Don't be shy. This doesn't hurt. *(Addressing THE YOUNG GIRL WITH A HEROINE LOOK):* - Do you mind joining me onstage.

⁴ After this dialogue and until the next scene, there is half a blank page in the notebook (Ed.)

(THE YOUNG GIRL WITH A HEROINE LOOK, a little shaken from being the focal point of stares, ends up complying and joins THE MAN WHO ALWAYS WANTED TO BE A MAGICIAN back onstage.)

THE MAN WHO ALWAYS WANTED TO BE A MAGICIAN *(addressing the girl):*

- Do you know what a tragedy is? *(THE YOUNG GIRL WITH A HEROINE LOOK does not respond)* Do you know what a classical tragedy consists of? *(THE YOUNG GIRL WITH A HEROINE LOOK does not know how to respond)* Don't worry, I will explain it to you. All classical tragedies require two elements: A hero, if you don't mind it will be you, in this case you will be the heroine, and a destiny, and as a good oracle, only I know. Now what I'm going to do *(pulling a piece of paper and pencil out of the inside pocket of his jacket)* is write your destiny on this piece of paper. *(While writing)* Do you know what your destiny will be? *(THE YOUNG GIRL WITH A HEROINE LOOK still does not know how to respond)*. Don't worry, you will know in a moment. *(After writing, he folds the paper and hands it to a member of the audience chosen at random)*. Do you mind holding my forecast? Thank you very much. Good, now let's begin. And in order to do so we will need a domino set that my assistant will kindly bring me, let's give her a round of applause.

(Amid the applause THE GIRL WHO ACTED comes from backstage and places a chest made of mother-of-pearl on a small game table. She leaves the stage after taking a graceful bow).

THE MAN WHO ALWAYS WANTED TO BE A MAGICIAN *(addressing the girl):* -

Do you know how to play dominos? *(THE YOUNG GIRL WITH A HEROINE LOOK responds affirmatively with a timid gesture)* Good. That is very good. Especially because if not, we would not be able to play this hand. *(Extracting the chips from the chest and placing them face-up on the game table)* Here we have a complete domino set. Now I am going to ask you, being a heroine that you are, to choose with which chip you want to begin. I know that normally one starts with the double six, but you can choose the chip that you prefer. In the end, you are the heroine and your destiny is in play. *(THE YOUNG GIRL WITH A HEROINE LOOK places one of the chips in the center of the game table)* Good. You have chosen freely the piece that you wanted, correct? Do you want to change? No. Are you sure? Good. Do you know what you have just done? *(Addressing the audience)* She has just made her first

decision and with it she has committed the hamartia, the tragic error which inexorably will bring her face to face with her destiny. *(To the girl)* Now I ask that you begin placing all the pieces that you prefer as if you were playing a game with yourself. Place the pieces in the order which you feel are most opportune, but make sure to follow the rules of domino. *(While THE YOUNG GIRL WITH A HEROINE LOOK sets the chips on the game table creating a capricious route, the conjurer addresses the audience)* Now you will see how little by little, the hero maps out the path which he believes is the most favourable. He knows that his destiny is set but this does not impede him from going into paths which he believes no one knows. Little by little the pieces begin spontaneously arranging themselves on the game table according to the decisions that the hero adopts. The hero feels free but, is he really? *(Seeing that the young girl has already placed a third of the pieces)* Do you want to change anything? *(The girl does not understand)* Do you want to alter the course of the game in order to cheat destiny? If you want you can change part of the game and start over again *(THE YOUNG GIRL WITH A HEROINE LOOK removes that last four pieces that she had placed)* Good, now you can continue. *(THE YOUNG GIRL WITH A HEROINE LOOK returns to placing the domino decisively. THE MAN WHO ALWAYS WANTED TO BE A MAGICIAN addressed the audience)* She has chosen to change the game and to try to follow a different path. But, will it lead her to another destiny? Do you know? When people realize that the future is written, written on a piece of paper like the one that I just handed to this kind man, they experience newfound feelings. There are people who believe that if that were the case, it would be distressing. What use is freewill if whatever we do the result will be the same? In any case not everyone thinks the same way. There are those who are comforted by a prefixed destiny. They feel they are in an orderly world, whose laws impede that man's deviations break the harmony of the cosmos *(Turning to address the girl who has placed more than two-thirds of the domino)* Do you like how the game is going? Do you want to change again? No, are you sure? *(The girl continues to turn down the conjurer's offering)* Good. Do you know what you have just done? *(To the audience)* Like any self-respecting hero she just experienced hubris, the tragic pride. Although she knows that her destiny is close and inevitable, she persists with her irrational fight. *(To THE YOUNG GIRL WITH A HEROINE LOOK)* Please, finish the game. *(Again to the audience)* She has almost finished the game. The heroine slowly places the remaining domino, the last desperate decisions which she makes freely to escape her fate. Done? *(She nods)* Good. The game is over. You have placed the domino in the order which you felt most appropriate, is

that not so? *(The girl nods again)* Good, then it's time that you face your fate. The game, let us remember, has been played as you wanted, finishing with a six at one end and an unsettling blank at the other. At the end of the path you have it all, but you don't find anything. A six at one end and a blank at the other. And now, as every hero, at the conclusion of the tragedy you experience the epiphany, the sudden recognition that will lead you to assume that your destiny was inevitable. *(Turning to the man from the audience to whom he gave the piece of paper)* The game has finished with a six at one end and a disturbing blank at the other. Can you please read what I had written?

THE MAN FROM THE AUDIENCE *(Reading the paper)*: -'The game will end with a six at one end and a disturbing blank at the other.'

THE MAN WHO ALWAYS WANTED TO BE A MAGICIAN *(Addressing THE YOUNG GIRL WITH THE HEROINE LOOK who neither overcomes her astonishment nor understands the scope of what just happened)*: -Thank you very much for your collaboration. Don't be afraid, fate isn't always so bad. Just remember that, as Euripides said 'those whom the gods wish to destroy, they first make mad.'

(Big applause).

XII

(THE BOY WHO DIRECTS's studio. After taking advantage of an unexpected and spontaneous sexual situation, both are getting dressed).

THE GIRL WHO ACTS: - What do you think?

THE BOY WHO DIRECTS: - What?

THE GIRL WHO ACTS: - How are we doing?

THE BOY WHO DIRECTS: - We're not off track.

THE GIRL WHO ACTS: - Come on, give me a cigarette

THE BOY WHO DIRECTS: - You're always smoking.

THE GIRL WHO ACTS: - Does it bother you?

THE BOY WHO DIRECTS: - Why did you always blame me for everything? I think you've never stopped doing so. Not even when we stopped seeing each other for a few months. Not even when you disappeared forever. I was

the perfect excuse. Your excuse so as not to recognize your own guilt in what happened.

(THE GIRL WHO ACTS goes towards the table and grabs a cigarette from the pack. Once again she is unable to light the lighter and he ends up doing it for her.)

THE GIRL WHO ACTS: - Don't you smoke?

THE BOY WHO DIRECTS: - No.

THE GIRL WHO ACTS: - Don't you like me?

THE BOY WHO DIRECTS: - I don't feel like it.

THE GIRL WHO ACTS: - You used to smoke.

THE BOY WHO DIRECTS: - Sometimes.

THE GIRL WHO ACTS: - Well then smoke a cigarette.

THE BOY WHO DIRECTS: - I don't feel like it.

THE GIRL WHO ACTS: - If you smoke, smoke. If you don't smoke, don't smoke.

THE BOY WHO DIRECTS: - Do I have to smoke a cigarette so that you'll relax?

THE GIRL WHO ACTS: - Normally you feel like it.

THE BOY WHO DIRECTS: - And if I don't?

THE GIRL WHO ACTS: - Why do you always have to make everything so complicated?

THE BOY WHO DIRECTS: - All right, give me one.

THE GIRL WHO ACTS: - Don't do it for me, ok?

THE BOY WHO DIRECTS: - Which is it?

THE GIRL WHO ACTS: - Look, just drop it.

THE BOY WHO DIRECTS: - How long has it been since you acted?

THE GIRL WHO ACTS: - Am I doing it badly?

THE BOY WHO DIRECTS: - It's just to talk about something.

THE GIRL WHO ACTS: - Talk about how badly I'm doing it?

THE BOY WHO DIRECTS: - You're not bad.

THE GIRL WHO ACTS: - How long has it been since you directed?

THE BOY WHO DIRECTS: - You want to argue, it's clear that you want to argue.

THE GIRL WHO ACTS: - Without conflict, there is no drama.

THE BOY WHO DIRECTS: - Do you ever stop acting?

THE GIRL WHO ACTS: - Do you ever stop directing everything?
THE BOY WHO DIRECTS: - Why do we have to spend all of our time arguing?
THE GIRL WHO ACTS: - Let me smoke in peace.
THE BOY WHO DIRECTS: - Fine.
THE GIRL WHO ACTS: - Thank you.
THE BOY WHO DIRECTS: - You're welcome.
THE GIRL WHO ACTS: - Okay.
THE BOY WHO DIRECTS: - Good.
THE GIRL WHO ACTS: - It's fine.
THE BOY WHO DIRECTS: - It doesn't matter.
THE GIRL WHO ACTS: - Don't worry.
THE BOY WHO DIRECTS: - It's nothing.
THE GIRL WHO ACTS: - I know.
THE BOY WHO DIRECTS: - Let's just leave it.
THE GIRL WHO ACTS: - What?
THE BOY WHO DIRECTS: - Whatever's going on with you.
THE GIRL WHO ACTS: - Nothing is going on with me.
THE BOY WHO DIRECTS: - If you say so.
THE GIRL WHO ACTS: - What's going on with me?
THE BOY WHO DIRECTS: - Nothing, nothing.
THE GIRL WHO ACTS: - Something's going on with you.
THE BOY WHO DIRECTS: - What is?
THE GIRL WHO ACTS: - You should know.
THE BOY WHO DIRECTS: - No, I don't know.
THE GIRL WHO ACTS: - Do you want to argue?
THE BOY WHO DIRECTS: - Without conflict, there is no drama.
THE GIRL WHO ACTS: - Now you're the one who's acting.
THE BOY WHO DIRECTS: - And you're directing.
THE GIRL WHO ACTS: - You wouldn't let me.
THE BOY WHO DIRECTS: - You don't know how.
THE GIRL WHO ACTS: - What I really like is writing.
THE BOY WHO DIRECTS: - You don't know how to either.
THE GIRL WHO ACTS: - What do you know?
THE BOY WHO DIRECTS: - You tried, but you were incapable.
THE GIRL WHO ACTS: - I've changed a lot in these months.
THE BOY WHO DIRECTS: - Not that much.

THE GIRL WHO ACTS: - I'm going to write.

THE BOY WHO DIRECTS: - You're a really good actress, don't waste your time.

THE GIRL WHO ACTS: - I'm sick of just performing, I want to create.

THE BOY WHO DIRECTS: - Isn't performing creating?

[...] ⁵

THE BOY WHO DIRECTS: -Why do you want us to argue?

THE GIRL WHO ACTS: - It's so boring when we don't.

THE BOY WHO DIRECTS: - You get bored with me?

THE GIRL WHO ACTS: - That wasn't the problem.

THE BOY WHO DIRECTS: - Do you really think that about acting?

THE GIRL WHO ACTS: - Do you really think that about me?

THE BOY WHO DIRECTS: - What?

THE GIRL WHO ACTS: - What you're thinking about.

THE BOY WHO DIRECTS: - I'm not thinking about anything.

THE GIRL WHO ACTS: - I can hear you think.

THE BOY WHO DIRECTS: - I'm hungry. (*She gets closer to the table*) I think that there was something here. Do you want half a roll?

THE GIRL WHO ACTS: - How long has that been here?

THE BOY WHO DIRECTS: - Come on, hand me a knife. They are there in that chest of drawers.

THE GIRL WHO ACTS: - What a place to store knives. (*Taking out a knife from the chest of drawers*) This one?

THE BOY WHO DIRECTS: - (*Grabbing the knife that she brings to him*) A smaller one would have been fine.

THE GIRL WHO ACTS: - A clock with no hands. I've never been there. Not in that moment. I'm late. I don't know what time it is, but I'm late. Don't know where to go. Passers pass me by without stopping. I could ask them, but I don't know what to ask. Where to go? I don't understand. In the middle. I'm standing there in the middle. It's late. Go. I want to go. But who knows where. The clock. With no hands. It's sphere surrounded by seventeen Roman numerals.

⁵ In this part, and as the page numbering corroborates in the notebook, three pages are missing that could have been torn out.(Ed.)

Motionless. Unharmmed. Inert. Trapped in that moment of that toast to life and death. I wait. Then I see him. Standing there as well. Look at the clock. And understand something that I cannot understand. Suddenly the shrill of the bells' strokes can be heard. He turns and looks at me. He interrogates me with his grey eyes. I don't know what to do. I'm late. And I cannot move. He continues observing me. Time passes. I'm drowning. His grey eyes. I can't breathe. The strokes won't stop. He looks at me. The clock. He asks me. With no hands. And I don't know the answer. What do I want? What do I want? What do I want?

THE BOY WHO DIRECTS: - Do you want half a roll, yes or no?

XIII

(The last trains keep passing from time to time over the bridge located above the bar. There are no customers. THE WAITER WHO DOESN'T JUST SERVE is drying some shot glasses that he places in a row on the bar. THE WRITER WITHOUT A STORY, abruptly enters the bar causing the bells that are hanging from a dream catcher placed on the door to ring.)

THE WRITER WITHOUT A STORY: - Sorry. The door was heavy.

(THE WAITER WHO DOESN'T JUST SERVE continues with his task).

THE WRITER WITHOUT A STORY: - Can you give me a beer?

THE WAITER WHO DOESN'T JUST SERVE: - We're closing.

THE WRITER WITHOUT A STORY: Well then give me one before you're totally closed.

(THE WAITER WHO DOESN'T JUST SERVE gets a beer bottle from underneath the bar, takes off the cap with his teeth and places it next to her. After performing the pertinent examination, he begins filling the shot glasses with tequila following a routine that he performs night after night).

THE WRITER WITHOUT A STORY: - It's very practical. Your bar, I mean. The only place open at this time.

THE WAITER WHO DOESN'T JUST SERVE: - It's late.

THE WRITER WITHOUT A STORY: - It's always late. Is it yours?

THE WAITER WHO DOESN'T JUST SERVE: - I don't understand.

THE WRITER WITHOUT A STORY: - The bar, is it yours?

THE WAITER WHO DOESN'T JUST SERVE: - I still have a lot of payments.

THE WRITER WITHOUT A STORY: - If you can pay them, it's yours.

THE WAITER WHO DOESN'T JUST SERVE: - In that case, it belongs to the bank.

THE WRITER WITHOUT A STORY: - Is business bad?

THE WAITER WHO DOESN'T JUST SERVE: - Do I know you from somewhere?

THE WRITER WITHOUT A STORY: - I've been around town for a few days.

THE WAITER WHO DOESN'T JUST SERVE: - It's not tourist season.

THE WRITER WITHOUT A STORY: - I'm not a tourist.

THE WAITER WHO DOESN'T JUST SERVE: - You look like one.

THE WRITER WITHOUT A STORY: - I've come here for...business.

THE WAITER WHO DOESN'T JUST SERVE: - There's nothing to do here.

THE WRITER WITHOUT A STORY: - I'm writing.

THE WAITER WHO DOESN'T JUST SERVE: - It's also not reporting season.

THE WRITER WITHOUT A STORY: - I'm also not one.

THE WAITER WHO DOESN'T JUST SERVE: - If you're not a tourist nor a reporter, what are you doing in this town?

THE WRITER WITHOUT A STORY: - They told me that you were the only one who knew who I'm looking for.

THE WAITER WHO DOESN'T JUST SERVE: - I don't have any friends around here.

THE WRITER WITHOUT A STORY: - He came by here every night. I understand that he was your best customer. What did you two speak about?

THE WAITER WHO DOESN'T JUST SERVE: - I tend not to talk with the customers.

THE WRITER WITHOUT A STORY: - What would he tell you?

THE WAITER WHO DOESN'T JUST SERVE: - There are people who like to talk and there are those who do not.

THE WRITER WITHOUT A STORY: - Can you explain to me what happened?

(THE WAITER WHO DOESN'T JUST SERVE doesn't respond. She gets up, extracts a large change purse from her bag and goes towards the jukebox located at the other end of the bar).

THE WAITER WHO DOESN'T JUST SERVE *(Seeing that she is going through her change purse)*: - It doesn't work.

(THE WRITER WITHOUT A STORY goes back to her stool).

THE WAITER WHO DOESN'T JUST SERVE: - You know after the tragic death of his wife and his judgment, he left for the city.

THE WRITER WITHOUT A STORY: - Was she the one who died?

THE WAITER WHO DOESN'T JUST SERVE: - Either one of the two could have died. In reality, that day, somehow or another, they both died. He continued coming back around here every night. He would sit in the same place. Exactly at the other end of the bar. As if he were waiting for something. Next to the old jukebox. And he kept ordering the same wine that he drank before she tried to end both of their lives. 'Where there is no wine, there is no love', he said Euripides wrote. Why did she do that? He never asked himself that question. He would limit himself to repeating the same anecdotes over and over again. As if I had never heard them. As if it were the first time. They were interesting, I'm not saying that they weren't. Do you know what Kristian Wilson, manager of Nintendo, responded when they asked him in 1989 about the negative effects that videogames would have on children? 'If Pac-Man had affected us as kids, we'd all be running around in a darkened room munching pills and listening to repetitive music.' You have to admit that he knew a lot of interesting stories. I don't know why he would tell them to me. Always the same ones. Night after night. It's been a while since I've heard them. Why did he do it? I would ask myself. Why did she decide to pour that lethal liquid into a glass that one of them would forcefully end up drinking? Did she choose the cursed glass on purpose? Or did she leave it up to chance to decide the disastrous fate of one of them? What did she feel during that toast that would inevitably be the last for one of the two? Whenever he would walk through the door those questions would go off like a machine gun in my head. Why did she do it? Why? It's been a long time since I've stopped paying attention to his anecdotes.

THE WRITER WITHOUT A STORY: - Do you also believe that she killed the boy?

THE WAITER WHO DOESN'T JUST SERVE: - He never cared about having given up the stage. From time to time, between anecdotes, he would take out a deck of cards and would perform a trick. Be it let me read your mind, or I'm going to make a prediction or I'm going to turn this card into another. He was a good man. He didn't seem to mind that he had ended up in a town where nobody wanted them. He didn't seem to mind that he gave up magic to spend his life on a train to work.

THE WRITER WITHOUT A STORY: - What about her? Did she care?

THE WAITER WHO DOESN'T JUST SERVE: - The doctors recommended that they get some fresh air by the sea, even though I don't believe that he really thought that the boy would be saved here. Have more time to spend with him. A time that was escaping from between his fingers. When the boy died, he started coming here.

THE WRITER WITHOUT A STORY: - Why didn't they leave this town?

THE WAITER WHO DOESN'T JUST SERVE: - Do you want another beer?

(Without waiting for an answer THE WAITER WHO DOESN'T JUST SERVE places another beer bottle on the bar that he also opens with his teeth.)

THE WAITER WHO DOESN'T JUST SERVE: - You know, he loved 'Get Back.' He would listen to it various times. 'Play it again', he would say. He wouldn't even get up from his stool. He would hand me a coin. 'Play it again.' And I didn't have any reason not to please him.

THE WRITER WITHOUT A STORY (*Taking out the notebook*): - Do you know what this is?

THE WAITER WHO DOESN'T JUST SERVE: - A notebook?

THE WRITER WITHOUT A STORY: -I am here because of what your friend wrote.

THE WAITER WHO DOESN'T JUST SERVE: - Does it say anything about me in there?

THE WRITER WITHOUT A STORY: - Why did he keep coming here night after night?

THE WAITER WHO DOESN'T JUST SERVE: - I guess he liked the music.

THE WRITER WITHOUT A STORY: - I need to find him.

THE WAITER WHO DOESN'T JUST SERVE: - I don't think he wants anybody to find him.

THE WRITER WITHOUT A STORY: - I have problems.

THE WAITER WHO DOESN'T JUST SERVE: - We all do.

THE WRITER WITHOUT A STORY: - Nobody has the problems I have.

THE WAITER WHO DOESN'T JUST SERVE: - That's true. Your problems are your own.

THE WRITER WITHOUT A STORY: - I can't write.

THE WAITER WHO DOESN'T JUST SERVE: - Then don't write.

THE WRITER WITHOUT A STORY: - I can't sleep.

THE WAITER WHO DOESN'T JUST SERVE: - Then don't sleep.

THE WRITER WITHOUT A STORY: - It's all a nightmare.

THE WAITER WHO DOESN'T JUST SERVE: - That's where you're mistaken.

No nightmares come in here. Do you see what that hanging on the door? That wooden ring of willow with a net in its interior is a Dream catcher. Before they were doomed to extinction by alcohol and the diseases that came from the new continent, the Lakota used them to capture nightmares. The good dreams were the only ones able to escape the net and slip down to the feathers that hang from it. That is what he told me. The bells I put those on myself. I thought that that way it made it prettier.

THE WRITER WITHOUT A STORY: - What occurs after a tragedy?

THE WAITER WHO DOESN'T JUST SERVE: - Maybe a tragedy is no more than just a comedy that has not ended.

THE WRITER WITHOUT A STORY: - Where did he go?

THE WAITER WHO DOESN'T JUST SERVE: - He received a letter. 'I have something I have to get back.' That was the last thing he said.

THE WRITER WITHOUT A STORY: - Do you miss him?

THE WAITER WHO DOESN'T JUST SERVE: - I know that I will never see him again.

(Now no trains are passing by. THE WAITER WHO DOESN'T JUST SERVE goes towards the jukebox, inserts a coin and selects a record. THE WRITER WITHOUT A STORY tries to light a cigarette with a lighter. THE WAITER WHO DOESN'T JUST SERVE stands in front of the first shot glass.

'Get Back' by the Beatles comes on. Rhythmically her vain attempts and her sips blend with his successive shots.)

[...] ⁶

∞ XIV

(An old warehouse that once was a magic shop. THE WOMAN WHO NEVER WANTED TO BE A MAGICIAN seems to be waiting for someone while she plays with a card deck. The doorbell rings with an atavistic sound. After checking through the peephole who is calling, she opens the door. THE MAN WITH THE SUITCASE comes in).

THE MAN WITH THE SUITCASE: - I had trouble finding this place.

THE WOMAN WHO NEVER WANTED TO BE A MAGICIAN: - You have the suitcase, that's the important thing.

THE MAN WITH THE SUITCASE: - Do you have my envelope?

THE WOMAN WHO NEVER WANTED TO BE A MAGICIAN: - I have something.

THE MAN WITH THE SUITCASE: - Show it to me.

(We don't know how but THE WOMAN WHO NEVER WANTED TO BE A MAGICIAN brings up two envelopes).

THE WOMAN WHO NEVER WANTED TO BE A MAGICIAN: - As I was told in a letter I received some time ago, I must give you one of these two envelopes. As you can see, one of them is violet and the other one is red. The letter clearly said that you must pick up the red envelope and that, once chosen, I must burn the other one.

THE MAN WITH THE SUITCASE: - Is that a joke?

THE WOMAN WHO NEVER WANTED TO BE A MAGICIAN: - I'd rather say it's stupid. Knowing that you must choose the red envelope, what sense does it make to offer you the other one as well?

THE MAN WITH THE SUITCASE: - It's not stupid at all. I would call it a bad joke.

THE WOMAN WHO NEVER WANTED TO BE A MAGICIAN: - Take the red envelope and give me the suitcase.

⁶ There is a blank page in the notebook after this dialogue and until the next scene (Ed.)

THE MAN WITH THE SUITCASE: - I'm getting tired of this game.

THE WOMAN WHO NEVER WANTED TO BE A MAGICIAN: - You just have to take the red envelope.

THE MAN WITH THE SUITCASE: - Give me both envelopes and let's get done with it.

THE WOMAN WHO NEVER WANTED TO BE A MAGICIAN: - I can only give you one.

THE MAN WITH THE SUITCASE: - Give me the envelopes and I'll give you the suitcase.

THE WOMAN WHO NEVER WANTED TO BE A MAGICIAN: - I can't. In the letter it was clearly stated that you could only take one of them, the other one must be burnt.

THE MAN WITH THE SUITCASE: - Look, I'm not having a good day today. As a matter of fact, I haven't had a good day for a while. I've made a nonsense trip following the nonsense instructions written on a letter without a known sender. I'm tired. Give me my envelope and let's get done with this once and forever.

THE WOMAN WHO NEVER WANTED TO BE A MAGICIAN (*Laughing nervously*): - You must choose. The choice is simple. What's the problem?

THE MAN WITH THE SUITCASE: - Problem? I have a lot of problems. Loads of problems. And now you're the main one.

THE WOMAN WHO NEVER WANTED TO BE A MAGICIAN: - Now you're the one who is joking? Why don't you take the red envelope? Come on, take it.

THE MAN WITH THE SUITCASE: - Give me the red envelope.

THE WOMAN WHO NEVER WANTED TO BE A MAGICIAN: - Take it.

THE MAN WITH THE SUITCASE: - Give me that damned red envelope.

THE WOMAN WHO NEVER WANTED TO BE A MAGICIAN: - Hey, relax. Take the red envelope, give me the suitcase and let's go back where we came from.

THE MAN WITH THE SUITCASE: - What do you want the suitcase for?

THE WOMAN WHO NEVER WANTED TO BE A MAGICIAN: - They have something that belongs to me, when I give them the suitcase they will give it back to me.

THE MAN WITH THE SUITCASE: - They will give it back to you? Just like you are giving it to me now.

THE WOMAN WHO NEVER WANTED TO BE A MAGICIAN: - Exactly.

(The ringtone of THE WOMAN WHO NEVER WANTED TO BE A MAGICIAN's phone starts playing. Both remain silent).

THE MAN WITH THE SUITCASE: - Aren't you going to answer?

THE WOMAN WHO NEVER WANTED TO BE A MAGICIAN: - Will you excuse me a second? *(Picking up the phone)*. Hello? (...) Oh, hi. (...) I thought you wouldn't do it. (...) Yes, I'm serious. (...) Trying to forget you. (...) No, nothing will prevent me from doing it any more. (...) Now it's not that important. (...) Did I promise you that? (...) I'm not running away any more. (...) Just out of interest, where are you taking me? (...) I don't have doubts any more. (...) I'm not scared any more. (...) I'll be there. (...) I promised.

(THE WOMAN WHO NEVER WANTED TO BE A MAGICIAN hangs up).

THE MAN WITH THE SUITCASE: - Which one is the red envelope?

THE WOMAN WHO NEVER WANTED TO BE A MAGICIAN: - The red colour one.

THE MAN WITH THE SUITCASE: - Which one is it?

THE WOMAN WHO NEVER WANTED TO BE A MAGICIAN: - Don't you know it?

THE MAN WITH THE SUITCASE: - Tell it to me.

THE WOMAN WHO NEVER WANTED TO BE A MAGICIAN: - I can't tell you. But it's obvious, isn't it? What kind of game are you playing?

THE MAN WITH THE SUITCASE: - Look, enough with games. You want the suitcase and I want what is inside of one of those envelopes. Give me both and let's leave it there.

THE WOMAN WHO NEVER WANTED TO BE A MAGICIAN: - The instructions were very specific. You can only take one envelope.

THE MAN WITH THE SUITCASE: - Give me the fucking envelopes.

THE WOMAN WHO NEVER WANTED TO BE A MAGICIAN: - I can't.

THE MAN WITH THE SUITCASE: - I won't ask you another time.

THE WOMAN WHO NEVER WANTED TO BE A MAGICIAN: - You have to choose one.

THE MAN WITH THE SUITCASE: - Choose? In 1935 Erwin Schrödinger designed a wicked theoretical experiment. It was about proving the implications of extrapolating the postulates of quantum mechanics to the macroscopic world. The Austrian-born physicist could not think of any better thing than a system which consisted of a closed and opaque box where inside would sit a cat, a bottle of lethal gas and a

particle with a fifty percent probability of disintegrating. If the particle disintegrated, a device would break the bottle and the gas would kill the cat. Therefore, the whole system would rely on a particle that behaved according to the principles of quantum mechanics. The particular state of the particle would be an uncertainty and, until it was measured, it would present all its possible states superimposed. As long as the box remained closed, it would be impossible to know if the cat was dead or alive. However, as soon as the box was open, the simple fact of observing the cat would make the superimposed states collapse and would make the cat either happily alive or sadly dead. It would be our look that would decide. Inside the box the cat would be neither dead nor alive, but simultaneously dead and alive. Do you understand? As far as we are concerned, when we are in doubt, we live in a similar kind of universe which, although they seem independent from each other to us, coexist superimposed. If we didn't have to make choices, everything would be and would not be at the same time. Consummate our decisions has the sole purpose of making impossible what could have ended up happening. You know, I would like to be locked inside that box. Safe in a world where nothing is permanent. With no choices to make. Where the only noise that probably exists is the tranquil purr of Schrödinger's cat.

THE WOMAN WHO NEVER WANTED TO BE A MAGICIAN: - Look, I don't know what you are talking about. I only came here for a suitcase. Please, give it to me, take your envelope and go back where you came from.

THE MAN WITH THE SUITCASE (*Getting close to the woman in a threatening way*):
- I'm not giving you the suitcase. Do you understand? I'll never give it to you. Give me the envelopes or else I'm capable of...

(THE WOMAN WHO NEVER WANTED TO BE A MAGICIAN aims at THE MAN WITH THE SUITCASE with a revolver, brought up magically).

THE WOMAN WHO NEVER WANTED TO BE A MAGICIAN: - Step back. Don't get any closer.

THE MAN WITH THE SUITCASE: - Who are you exactly?

THE WOMAN WHO NEVER WANTED TO BE A MAGICIAN: - Leave the suitcase on the floor.

THE MAN WITH THE SUITCASE: - Why do you carry a weapon?

THE WOMAN WHO NEVER WANTED TO BE A MAGICIAN: - Leave the suitcase on the floor and move away from it.

THE MAN WITH THE SUITCASE: - I don't understand anything.

THE WOMAN WHO NEVER WANTED TO BE A MAGICIAN: - There's nothing to understand. Just leave the suitcase on the floor.

THE MAN WITH THE SUITCASE: - What are you afraid of?

THE WOMAN WHO NEVER WANTED TO BE A MAGICIAN: - Do as I say.

THE MAN WITH THE SUITCASE (*After a pause*): - No.

THE WOMAN WHO NEVER WANTED TO BE A MAGICIAN: - What?

THE MAN WITH THE SUITCASE: - I won't leave the suitcase anywhere. Give me the envelopes.

THE WOMAN WHO NEVER WANTED TO BE A MAGICIAN: - Leave the suitcase on the floor first.

THE MAN WITH THE SUITCASE: - No.

THE WOMAN WHO NEVER WANTED TO BE A MAGICIAN: - Are you crazy?

THE MAN WITH THE SUITCASE: - I don't know who sent me that letter. I don't know who you are. I don't know what's inside the suitcase. I don't know if all this time I've been walking around with a pack of cocaine, confidential documents of some corrupt government or an artefact stolen by industrial spies to a German consortium. As a matter of fact, I couldn't care less. The only thing I want... The only way for me to give you the suitcase is that you give me those two envelopes. That. And only that. It's the only thing I'm sure about in this very moment.

THE WOMAN WHO NEVER WANTED TO BE A MAGICIAN: - Leave the suitcase on the floor. Please, don't make things difficult and live your life.

THE MAN WITH THE SUITCASE: - What do you know about my life?

THE WOMAN WHO NEVER WANTED TO BE A MAGICIAN: - Take the red envelope and go away.

THE MAN WITH THE SUITCASE: - What will they give you when you deliver the suitcase?

THE WOMAN WHO NEVER WANTED TO BE A MAGICIAN: - It's none of your business.

THE MAN WITH THE SUITCASE: - It is indeed. Because if I don't give you the suitcase, you won't get what they promised.

THE WOMAN WHO NEVER WANTED TO BE A MAGICIAN (*Raising the revolver*): - I won't ask you again.

THE MAN WITH THE SUITCASE (*Getting close to her*): - Neither will I.

THE WOMAN WHO NEVER WANTED TO BE A MAGICIAN: - I'm ready to fire.

THE MAN WITH THE SUITCASE: - Death is not the worst that can happen to me.

THE WOMAN WHO NEVER WANTED TO BE A MAGICIAN: - Don't get any closer.

THE MAN WITH THE SUITCASE: - Don't force me.

THE WOMAN WHO NEVER WANTED TO BE A MAGICIAN: - Please. Don't do it. Please. I don't want to shoot you. Don't make me do it, Tomás.

(TOMÁS lunges at THE WOMAN WHO NEVER WANTED TO BE A MAGICIAN. Feeling threatened, she pulls the trigger. Both stay paralysed. THE WOMAN WHO NEVER WANTED TO BE A MAGICIAN Starts shaking and burns the envelopes compulsively. TOMÁS stays still. Still in amazement he drops in his cold hands the bullet he just caught with his teeth).

TOMÁS: - I remember that at the beginning I didn't dare tell you. I don't know why very well. Then I think I didn't find the right time. You seemed to enjoy buying my clothes with me and you didn't mind leaving it ready for me every morning. You never wondered why I needed it so much. It's something I always knew and it was no secret to anyone. Mind you, it's not something of what I'm ashamed. It's true that when I was a kid my mates used to joke about it. This, that... But it didn't last long. They didn't find it funny anymore. Not that they had pity, no. Novelties, surprises, they die in an instant. When I knew someone new, at the beginning it became the centre of every conversation. 'Acromatopsy? What is that?' Some found it original. 'Then how do you know which suit a card belongs to?', they asked in disbelief at the end of the performance. Colours are irrelevant. That's what I said to myself constantly. What does colour bring? Would the saints stop going to heaven if the sky were not blue? Would people stop suffering if blood were not red? Colours are irrelevant. The rest of the world lives the same life that I live. That's what I said to myself constantly. People wander without caring about details. Looking at things as though the world was in black and white. Colours don't exist. What does it mean that something is red, green, yellow or blue? What's the difference? I've never known. Did you know it that summer afternoon when you kissed me in that boat abandoned in the harbour? Did you know it when I found you again after several years? Did you know it when you found out that you were pregnant? Did you know it that day when you planned that fatal toast? Even today, I don't know why I never told you. I don't think it would have changed anything, or that it would have helped you and I to... No, I don't think so. Maybe that's why I never mentioned it. Colours are irrelevant.

That's what I said to myself constantly. And even today, I don't know why, no matter how often you repeat it, I still don't fully believe it.

(THE WOMAN WHO NEVER WANTED TO BE A MAGICIAN vanishes before TOMÁS can do anything about it).

XV

(The room where THE WRITER WITHOUT A STORY has been living for some time).

THE CONFIDENT: - I came as soon as I could.

THE WRITER WITHOUT A STORY: - Did you bring my cigarettes?

THE CONFIDENT: - Here you are.

(THE WRITER WITHOUT A STORY takes a cigarette from the pack and gives the lighter to him. THE CONFIDENT lights the cigarette without any effort. She starts to smoke deeply, as if the smoke was the only thing she wanted to breathe).

THE CONFIDENT: - How was your trip?

THE WRITER WITHOUT A STORY: - Good. I think.

THE CONFIDENT *(Seeing her unpacked luggage)*: - Did you just arrive?

THE WRITER WITHOUT A STORY: - I'm too lazy to unpack.

THE CONFIDENT: - Did you eventually write anything?

THE WRITER WITHOUT A STORY: - I wrote you a postcard.

THE CONFIDENT: - I didn't get anything.

THE WRITER WITHOUT A STORY: - I didn't send it in the end.

THE CONFIDENT: - Why?

THE WRITER WITHOUT A STORY: - I wasn't telling you anything interesting.

THE CONFIDENT: - Did you start writing again?

THE WRITER WITHOUT A STORY: - I was in that place.

THE CONFIDENT: - So did you start writing again?

THE WRITER WITHOUT A STORY: - I tried to understand.

THE CONFIDENT: - Can I read what you wrote?

THE WRITER WITHOUT A STORY: - I couldn't finish it.

THE CONFIDENT: - It doesn't matter. Please, let me read it.

THE WRITER WITHOUT A STORY: - I don't think I should.

THE CONFIDENT: - Maybe I'll come up with an idea for the end?

THE WRITER WITHOUT A STORY: - I'm not sure it would be ok.

THE CONFIDENT: - We've told each other almost everything.

THE WRITER WITHOUT A STORY: - Almost?

THE CONFIDENT: - You are still keeping a lot of secrets.

THE WRITER WITHOUT A STORY: - I don't think there is anybody who knows more about me than you.

THE CONFIDENT: - That's why you should let me read it.

THE WRITER WITHOUT A STORY: - I don't know, I'm not sure.

THE CONFIDENT: - Come on, just a few lines.

THE WRITER WITHOUT A STORY: - I don't like people reading my work before it's finished.

THE CONFIDENT: - It's been a while since you last wrote. Maybe I'll help you and you won't be stuck anymore.

THE WRITER WITHOUT A STORY: - Look, you'd better not. I can't explain why but I prefer that nobody reads it until it's finished.

THE CONFIDENT: - This thing about the notebook, you didn't make it up, did you?

THE WRITER WITHOUT A STORY: - What are you talking about?

THE CONFIDENT: - As an excuse.

THE WRITER WITHOUT A STORY: - It's not an excuse. It's a reason. A reason to write.

THE CONFIDENT: - Then show me what you wrote.

THE WRITER WITHOUT A STORY (*She extinguishes her cigarette*): - I'm sorry. I shouldn't have called you. I prefer to be alone.

THE CONFIDENT: - I'm here to help.

THE WRITER WITHOUT A STORY: - You'd better go.

THE CONFIDENT: - I just arrived.

THE WRITER WITHOUT A STORY: - I'm sorry. You'd better go.

THE CONFIDENT: - Let me help you.

THE WRITER WITHOUT A STORY: - Please, go.

THE CONFIDENT (*Grabbing her arm*): - Show it to me.

THE WRITER WITHOUT A STORY: - What are you doing?

THE CONFIDENT (*Without letting her go*): - Show me what you wrote.

THE WRITER WITHOUT A STORY (*Getting rid of him*): - What the hell is wrong with you?

THE CONFIDENT (*He takes her bag and opens it*): - Is the notebook here?

THE WRITER WITHOUT A STORY: - Look, you don't need to do that.

THE CONFIDENT: - Is it here?

THE WRITER WITHOUT A STORY: - I want you to go.

THE CONFIDENT: - I'm not leaving until you show me the notebook.

THE WRITER WITHOUT A STORY: - If you don't go I'll start to scream.

THE CONFIDENT: - Scream if that's what you want. Where's the notebook?

(THE CONFIDENT starts searching her bag).

THE CONFIDENT: - There's nothing here.

THE WRITER WITHOUT A STORY: - Yes, it's there.

THE CONFIDENT: - It's just your clothes as usual.

THE WRITER WITHOUT A STORY: - What are you talking about?

(THE WRITER WITHOUT A STORY searches her bag without success).

THE CONFIDENT: - We are not making any progress.

THE WRITER WITHOUT A STORY: - You don't understand.

THE CONFIDENT: - You are the only one who doesn't understand, here.

THE WRITER WITHOUT A STORY: - Go.

THE CONFIDENT: - They are both dead.

THE WRITER WITHOUT A STORY: - What are you talking about?

THE CONFIDENT: - Verónica, when are you going to accept what you did?

VERÓNICA: - There you go again.

THE CONFIDENT: - You killed him.

VERÓNICA: - It's just a nightmare.

THE CONFIDENT: - It's your life.

VERÓNICA: - I'm not dead?

THE CONFIDENT: - That's not the way to progress.

VERÓNICA: - You shouldn't have come back

THE CONFIDENT: - You never left.

VERÓNICA: - What will happen to memories when those who shared them are not between us anymore?

THE CONFIDENT: - You didn't say a word when you arrived.

VERÓNICA: - Maybe they will find a shelter somewhere while they wait to be dreamed.

THE CONFIDENT: - You still haven't forgiven yourself for having chosen that glass?

VERÓNICA: - Why are you coming back with your lies?

THE CONFIDENT: - Accept it, you left it in the hands of luck.

VERÓNICA: - Wasn't it destiny?

THE CONFIDENT: - Let me see the notebook.

VERÓNICA: - It's not finished.

THE CONFIDENT: - It's not finished because it doesn't exist.

VERÓNICA: - He wrote it and I found it.

THE CONFIDENT: - Where did you find it?

VERÓNICA: - In the park.

THE CONFIDENT: - You haven't been out of here for too long.

VERÓNICA: - I'm just coming back.

THE CONFIDENT: - You never left.

VERÓNICA: - Leave me alone. Go!

(THE CONFIDENT leaves the room. VERÓNICA searches her bag again and eventually finds the notebook. She tries to finish the remaining scene. After several attempts in which she fails to write anything at all, she gives up. She can't finish the play. In despair, she starts to tear some pages from the notebook. She tries to leave the room. The only door is locked. Locked from outside).

XVI

(THE BOY WHO DIRECTS's studio).

THE GIRL WHO ACTS: - What do you think?

THE BOY WHO DIRECTS: - You just had to pamper it.

THE GIRL WHO ACTS: - I had to do it.

THE BOY WHO DIRECTS: - Tomorrow we'll have to buy another notebook before the performance.

THE GIRL WHO ACTS: - The play won't open tomorrow.

THE BOY WHO DIRECTS: - What?

THE GIRL WHO ACTS: - You know it only too well.

THE BOY WHO DIRECTS: - What are you talking about? We're almost done.

THE GIRL WHO ACTS: - I don't think this play should ever open.

THE BOY WHO DIRECTS: - It will, tomorrow.

THE GIRL WHO ACTS: - Nobody will understand it.

THE BOY WHO DIRECTS: - Don't you understand it?

THE GIRL WHO ACTS: - Some things are unclear. We should make a lot of changes.

THE BOY WHO DIRECTS: - We don't have time, what do you know about it?

THE GIRL WHO ACTS: - I know better than you.

THE BOY WHO DIRECTS: - No, you don't know.

THE GIRL WHO ACTS: - Yes, I do know. Now I do. A few months ago, maybe not. But now I do.

THE BOY WHO DIRECTS: - And, what are we supposed to do?

THE GIRL WHO ACTS: - I got used to loving you and hating you at the same time. I never knew which of the two feelings was the strongest. I loved you because of what you once were and I hated you because of what you wouldn't let me be. The day I left you, I wrote the first scene of my *opera prima*. You never would have allowed it. I want to be more than just the actress of the story that somebody else wrote for me. Now I want to be the author. The one who writes her own story. If I hadn't said to myself all those sentences so many times day after day, I never would have been able to convince myself. And if I hadn't learnt how to hate you. To hate you like only those who have loved before can hate. I wouldn't have written a single line. I started to do it just because of you. I accept it. Because of what you never wanted me to be. Because of what you were afraid I would inevitably become. I will always be in debt to you. I know it. And everything might have been different if I never had dreamed that I could live my life without you. *(Pause)*. I know now that this play will never come out.

THE BOY WHO DIRECTS: - What about the subsidy?

THE GIRL WHO ACTS: - I'm leaving.

THE BOY WHO DIRECTS: - Stay.

THE GIRL WHO ACTS: - Open the door.
THE BOY WHO DIRECTS: - You're letting me down?
THE GIRL WHO ACTS: - Let's not start it over again. Open the door.
THE BOY WHO DIRECTS: - No.
THE GIRL WHO ACTS: - I can call the police.
THE BOY WHO DIRECTS: - Your cell phone is outside.
THE GIRL WHO ACTS: - I'm going to scream.
THE BOY WHO DIRECTS: - Nobody will hear you.
THE GIRL WHO ACTS: - What do you want?
THE BOY WHO DIRECTS: - The play open tomorrow.

(From the landing, across the closed door, the particular ringtone of THE GIRL WHO ACTS's phone starts playing).

THE GIRL WHO ACTS: - Shit. Open the door.
THE BOY WHO DIRECTS: - I can't do that.
THE GIRL WHO ACTS: - I must take that call.
THE BOY WHO DIRECTS: - Who's calling you at this time?
THE GIRL WHO ACTS: - Open the door.
THE BOY WHO DIRECTS: - What can be that important?
THE GIRL WHO ACTS: - Please, open it.
THE BOY WHO DIRECTS: - We must finish rehearsing.
THE GIRL WHO ACTS: - Why don't you want me to answer that call?
THE BOY WHO DIRECTS: - Why do you want to answer it?
THE GIRL WHO ACTS: - They are going to hang up.
THE BOY WHO DIRECTS: - We must rehearse.
THE GIRL WHO ACTS: - Open.
THE BOY WHO DIRECTS: - Calm down. Let's move on to the next scene.
THE GIRL WHO ACTS: - Are you deaf? I must take that call.
THE BOY WHO DIRECTS: - We are rehearsing.

(The phone stops ringing).

THE GIRL WHO ACTS: - Shit.
THE BOY WHO DIRECTS: - We must focus.
THE GIRL WHO ACTS: - Fuck you.

THE BOY WHO DIRECTS (*Offering her the pack of cigarettes*): - Hey, have a cigarette and relax. (*Seeing that she doesn't react*) Don't you want one?

THE GIRL WHO ACTS: - Leave me alone.

THE BOY WHO DIRECTS: - You've given up smoking? Cold turkey?

THE GIRL WHO ACTS: - Leave me alone.

THE BOY WHO DIRECTS: - Shall we rehearse, then?

THE GIRL WHO ACTS: - I had to take that call.

(The phone starts ringing again).

THE GIRL WHO ACTS: - Open. Please, open.

THE BOY WHO DIRECTS: - I'm not going to.

THE GIRL WHO ACTS (*Grabbing his flap*): - You have to open that door.

THE BOY WHO DIRECTS (*Pushing her*): - Forget that call.

THE GIRL WHO ACTS: - I came here to help and that's how you pay me back.

THE BOY WHO DIRECTS: - There's no time to lose.

THE GIRL WHO ACTS: - Now will you help me?

THE BOY WHO DIRECTS: - It will open tomorrow.

THE GIRL WHO ACTS: - That's all I matter to you?

THE BOY WHO DIRECTS: - We must go on rehearsing just because of that, because you matter to me.

THE GIRL WHO ACTS: - I'm sick and tired of your macabre games.

THE BOY WHO DIRECTS: - Then don't play. Let's rehearse.

THE GIRL WHO ACTS: - Why do you hate me so much?

THE BOY WHO DIRECTS: - Why do YOU hate me?

THE GIRL WHO ACTS: - You don't have an answer to that?

THE BOY WHO DIRECTS: - You only have questions like that?

THE GIRL WHO ACTS: - Open.

THE BOY WHO DIRECTS: - No.

(THE GIRL WHO ACTS has been moving closer to the little table where the pack of cigarettes and the food leftovers lies).

THE BOY WHO DIRECTS: - What are you looking for?

(THE GIRL WHO ACTS drags a cigarette).

THE GIRL WHO ACTS *(Trying to light her lighter compulsively without success)*: - Open the door. Open the door. Open the door. Open the door. Open the door. Open the door. Open the door. Open the door. Open the door. Open the door. Open the door. Open the door.

THE BOY WHO DIRECTS: - I'm not going to.

(THE GIRL WHO ACTS, in despair, throws away the lighter and the cigarette as far as she can. She pulls the tablecloth with anger and everything falls over with a loud smash).

THE GIRL WHO ACTS *(Taking the kitchen knife, still dirty, from the remains on the floor)*: - Open.

THE BOY WHO DIRECTS: - Don't insist.

THE GIRL WHO ACTS *(Getting close to him without releasing the knife)*: - Please.

THE BOY WHO DIRECTS: - I won't do it.

THE GIRL WHO ACTS: - Why?

THE BOY WHO DIRECTS: - What for?

THE GIRL WHO ACTS: - Open!

THE BOY WHO DIRECTS: - No!

THE GIRL WHO ACTS: - Don't do this to me.

THE BOY WHO DIRECTS: - I'm not going to open.

THE GIRL WHO ACTS: - Don't make me do it.

THE BOY WHO DIRECTS: - Do it.

THE GIRL WHO ACTS: - What?

THE BOY WHO DIRECTS: - Do it once and forever.

THE GIRL WHO ACTS: - I took that call.

THE BOY WHO DIRECTS: - And, the play? Did it ever open?

THE GIRL WHO ACTS: - I don't remember.

THE BOY WHO DIRECTS: - You don't want to.

THE GIRL WHO ACTS: - I took that call. I ran away with him. It didn't end up like that.

THE BOY WHO DIRECTS: - It never should have ended.

THE GIRL WHO ACTS: - Why are you forcing me to do it?

THE BOY WHO DIRECTS: - No, it didn't happen like that. But maybe, if it had ended like that, you would have been able to forget.

(The phone stops ringing. THE GIRL WHO ACTS closes her eyes and lifts up the knife).

XVII

(The Golden Gate. VERÓNICA and TOMÁS, from the East side, are waiting for the twilight. San Francisco to the right, facing Alcatraz, the Pacific behind. VERÓNICA is writing something on the notebook).

TOMÁS *(Grasping the suitcase and speaking to himself)*: - See the end. That's what I want. Only. How can one... I don't know... decide... what to do... where to go...without knowing the end? In a way... I want not to want. I accept it. Let myself go. See the end. It's like not having to want. Play it safe. Knowing where one's going. Knowing what to expect. Is that too much asking? You always used to read the end of the books first. And I told you it didn't make sense. It took away the fun. And now I'm the one who wants to read the end. Not having to wait till the glass is half empty. Drink it all in one go. Wait for what? Read the end and end it for good. It takes away the fun. I know. And I don't remember having ever laughed. And maybe that's why. See the end. And I'm tired of this... here and there. Where. I don't know. I know... that I should know. But I don't. Here and there. And I don't know. You have to go here and there. Not stay still. That's what you said. And I don't now... where to go. Skip all the pages. That's what I want. Read the end. Not having to want. Move on. And see the end. It's not possible. And I know it. But there must be a way. Every problem has a solution. That's what I told you. That's why they are problems. Otherwise they wouldn't. And you believed me. At the beginning. Here and there. Move on. Not stay still. For a reason. What reason? You asked. A reason. No. It's better an end. See the end. Then what? Then, I don't know. *(He stays thoughtful. He looks away into infinity. He moves his arms wide open. He grabs his suitcase in one of his hands. He prepares to jump but he changes his mind in the last second. He holds on to the rail so he doesn't fall over)* No. Not yet. It has to be at the

right time. No sooner, no later. *(He looks at his watch. He hesitates. He finds out VERÓNICA)* Could you please tell me what time it is?

VERÓNICA: - I never wear a watch.

TOMÁS: - Where you listening to me?

VERÓNICA: - It is about to dawn.

TOMÁS: - How long have you been here?

VERÓNICA: - Why do you want to do it?

TOMÁS *(Sharp)*: - Just because.

VERÓNICA: - Why here?

TOMÁS: - There's a lot to see here. San Francisco. Oakland. Alcatraz. Albany. Angel Island. Everybody does it on the East side. From the other side you only get to see the Ocean. How did you know I was going to... do that?

VERÓNICA: - No, I don't know.

TOMÁS: - You too you were going to...?

VERÓNICA: - I like the other side better. You can see the horizon better.

TOMÁS: - What are you doing here?

VERÓNICA: - I came here to see.

TOMÁS: - Me?

VERÓNICA: - Well, not exactly.

TOMÁS: - What do you want from me? Are you going to try to prevent me from...?

VERÓNICA: - No. That's not what I came here for.

TOMÁS: - What for, then?

VERÓNICA: - Like you, I guess. Just because.

TOMÁS: - They are going to build a fence or something like that. The mayor wants to put an end to this. And I don't blame him. Do you know how old this bridge is?

VERÓNICA: - I'm not sure.

TOMÁS: - The bridge was built in the middle of the Depression. Those were difficult times. Since its inauguration on May 27th 1937, more than a thousand and two hundred people have jumped from it. This means seventeen people every year, forty-one years old on average. And they want it to end. The sooner the better. Harold Wobber, a First World War veteran, was the first. On August 7th, 1937. Before he jumped he told a stranger: 'This is as far as I go'. It was Saturday.

(TOMÁS moves away from her).

VERÓNICA: - You know a lot of stories.

TOMÁS: - Do you know any?

VERÓNICA: - When I was a little girl and I couldn't fall asleep, my mother always told me the same fable. In a winter afternoon, Mulla Nasrudin ran into something when he was walking down the stairs, fell over and rolled down. 'What was that?', asked his wife. 'Nothing. It was just my coat that fell down the stairs'. 'What was all that noise?', she asked. 'It was just me who was inside'.

TOMÁS *(Smiling)*: - 'It was just me who was inside'.

VERÓNICA: - Every time she told me that story I laughed and then I slept all night at a stretch. It was long ago. Then I read again that story in a storybook by Jodorowsky. *(Pause)*. Yesterday I had a horrible nightmare.

TOMÁS: - What does it mean?

VERÓNICA: - What?

TOMÁS: - What does the fable mean?

VERÓNICA: - I never asked her. Yesterday I dreamed that it was all a lie. I was me but the rest of the world had changed. It was all so weird.

TOMÁS: - Now you're here.

VERÓNICA: - You haven't told me your reason yet.

TOMÁS: - But you think I need one!

VERÓNICA: - Everybody has.

TOMÁS: - No, there are no reasons. We let ourselves go, that's all.

(TOMÁS moves away from VERÓNICA again).

VERÓNICA: - You know, there are only two kinds of people: those who believe they know and those who know they believe. The first take you to places, the latter go to places. I still don't know who are the most dangerous. What have you got in that suitcase?

TOMÁS: - It's not mine.

VERÓNICA: - What are you doing with it?

TOMÁS: - I stole it to a woman in the tram. I don't know if she was asleep or dead.

(TOMÁS moves towards the rail. He's going to climb but he hesitates. He sees that VERÓNICA has written something on the notebook again).

TOMÁS: - What are you writing?

VERÓNICA: - Nothing.

TOMÁS: - It's not true.

VERÓNICA: - It's nothing important.

TOMÁS: - Yes, it is.

VERÓNICA: - None of your business.

TOMÁS: - Are you a journalist?

VERÓNICA: - Not at all.

TOMÁS: - A writer?

VERÓNICA: - I read more than I write, lately.

TOMÁS: - My suitcase for your notebook. Deal?

VERÓNICA: - I didn't write it alone.

TOMÁS: - Did you also steal it?

VERÓNICA: - I found it.

TOMÁS: - Can I see it?

VERÓNICA: - Can I borrow your suitcase?

TOMÁS *(Laughing and giving it to her)*: - It's all yours.

(VERÓNICA takes the suitcase).

TOMÁS: - Can I have the notebook?

VERÓNICA: - It's all yours.

(VERÓNICA hands the notebook over to him).

TOMÁS *(Browsing through the notebook)*: - Is it a play?

VERÓNICA : - More or less.

TOMÁS: - What is it about?

VERÓNICA: - I think I managed to tell my own story.

TOMÁS: - Is that all?

VERÓNICA: - It's just the beginning. It's not finished yet.

TOMÁS (*Looking at the empty cover and giving her the notebook*): - You must write a title.

(*VERÓNICA takes the notebook. She thinks for a moment, then she draws a fountain pen from her purse and, outlining a sideways smile, she starts to write on the first page*).

TOMÁS (*Reading the title*): - Now it's finished. Have you got a cigarette?

(*VERÓNICA takes a pack of cigarettes from her purse and she lights at the first try the cigarettes that the two of them start to smoke*).

TOMÁS (*Looking at the suitcase she is still holding*): - Aren't you going to open it?

(*VERÓNICA opens the narrow suitcase and pulls out, in an impossible manner, a bottle of wine and two glasses*).

TOMÁS: - What sense does it make?

VERÓNICA: - What do I want?

TOMÁS: - You are asking that to me?

VERÓNICA: - What are you going to do with it?

TOMÁS: - Read it.

VERÓNICA: - When?

TOMÁS: - Now.

VERÓNICA: - Here?

TOMÁS: - No. It's better on the other side.

VERÓNICA: - What will you do when you finish?

TOMÁS: - I'll wait there for you.

VERÓNICA: - And then?

TOMÁS: - You will come with me. And time will stop like in an uncertain toast
(Shaking the notebook). On the West side of the Golden Gate.

(The day is dawning. Facing VERÓNICA, the sun starts to delineate the shape of the old prison. TOMÁS, at her back, has just crossed to the other side. He leans over the rail, leaving the Ocean behind him. Like in rapture, he starts reading. From the beginning).