

# Stig Dalager

## American Elektra

and other plays



EC Edition

Stig Dalager is an internationally acclaimed author and dramatist. His books have been translated into many languages and published in more than 15 countries. And his plays may be seen in theatres all over the world.



S T I G D A L A G E R

# Między jawą a snem

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“What interests me, deep down, about the waiter in Vienna, the judge in Brooklyn, the refugee in London, or the boy in a Rødovre shopping centre is their existential situation. For what do they live, and what does the human being beside them, if there is anyone, mean to them? For me, that is what literature and drama are all about. This is what I write.”

*Stig Dalager*

# A Danish dramatist on the world stage

By Olav Harsløf, *Professor at Performance-design, Roskilde University, and former Principal of The Danish National School of Theatre in Copenhagen*

Stig Dalager's plays take place inside your head or in the world outside. Some of them take place inside and outside your head simultaneously - between Denmark and the world outside Denmark, between dream and reality. Dalager experiments with the form and the format - monologue, dual monologue, chamber drama, the invisible visible on the stage, realism and symbolism. However, one kind of law - the theatre's fundamental law - he observes with almost zealous care: The law governing the theatre's three unities.

In several of his plays, the unities of time, place and action take on a scenographic character and create set pieces of breathless catastrophes, in which the time of the drama is the time of the audience, the lines spoken by the actors are the thoughts of the audience, and the action become the actors' and the audience's joint project. Stig Dalager has developed this 'unity theatre' to ruthless perfectionism in his plays for 3 to 8 actors. The time of the play is the time of the beholder, and a few seconds' inattention or absence in own thoughts is like a cerebral haemorrhage with a brief period of amnesia. The *Dream*, *Family Night* and *American Elektra* insist on being the 'present' of the action and the 'present' of the audience at one and the same time. Like a conveyor belt, these plays move the actors, the action and the audience from one hour to the next. The theatre's time is 'the time'. And in *Family Night* and *American Elektra* also the time of the hour - approx. 19-22.

In these plays, Stig Dalager is dramatically related to Edvard Albee - where he composes in compact statements and quick shifts in the chamber drama's arrangement for trio, quartet and octet. The lines fly across the stage and the drama is wound up in the manner of a transformation ball in all the colours of the rainbow and where black becomes white and white becomes black. In fact, sometimes both white and black when the peeling off and the washing out have been concluded - the

drama's absolute zero. The infamous language is entirely on a par with *Who's Afraid of Virginia Wolf?*, as when the son Peter in *Family Night* completely rattles his father Henning:

Peter: She's been "crazy" so long that no one remembers any more.

Henning: I cannot accept that you talk about your mother in this way...

Peter: In what "way"?

Henning: She is not "crazy", and I remember precisely when she was admitted the first time. My memory hasn't failed me.

Peter: You can't even remember my birthday.

Henning: That has nothing to do with it.

Peter: When's my birthday?

Henning: Sometime in March...

Peter: How about the third of April?! There are things you can't be bothered to remember and things you can.

The characters of the play constantly undergo changes, they shift, mix, fall apart and become reassembled, now in a transformed or perhaps entirely new character. A villain becomes a hero and a hero becomes an anti-hero. Clear motives are erased or distorted. Hard-won reconciliations suddenly break out in violent confrontations which lead to new or other reconciliations. Assertions become naked truths which are forced towards the clarity and the essential insights that Stig Dalager have set as the target for all his plays and his entire writing. As in the good detective novel, the audience experiences how accusations and circumstantial evidence are directed at several characters and come to centre on first one suspect, then other suspects, and towards the end, before the final unmasking, come to point at - the wrong suspect or suspects.

The exposure of the incriminating material occurs like the excavation of a kitchen midden full of skeletons and stinking garbage. Life-lies are shot down with shotguns, beaters and dogs, or like a regular hunt - as in *The Dream* where Elisabeth has survived in her marriage in the memory of the love of her youth and his heroic participation in the failed assassination attempt against Hitler in 1943 and subsequent execution. Her granddaughter destroys this fairy-tale image in two lines:

Susanne: Peter Aschenbürger was not a member of any

coup, was he! I did a little research. There are books about that sort of thing and the name Peter Aschenbürger doesn't appear in any of them. I called a professor of history at the University of Copenhagen, and I even called the Wiesenthal Centre of documentation in Vienna. No one's ever heard of him...

Elisabeth: Haven't you been busy...

Susanne: He was nothing but an Austrian officer who believed in Hitler. He probably died during the Russian campaign...

During the play, its characters undergo an irreversible process. A course of events which cannot be reversed. They are brought into a complex of social, psychological and family-related knots which are apparent impossible to unravel or loosen in a 'Gordian' manner. Only through human interaction may the individual or the collective 'reach' a new basis of existence and realization. This new realization only rarely leads to a new and improved life. More often to death. As in four of this selection's six plays.

Stig Dalager's drama is about something. Not only are problems submitted to debate, but the plays also make the state of the world the subject of debate. The great wars are both the occasion and the back cloth - World War II, the Vietnam War, the civil war in former Yugoslavia, the war between Israel and Palestine, the Iraq War. Dalager knows his political world history and is able to present it in an international perspective so that it may be understood by all rational beings throughout our planet. Dalager worries about the world's political situation and he lets his characters play through thoughts, memories and dreams which put their sufferings on display. He makes the absurd theatre realistic theatre when he lets a Serbian woman in a monologue count the hours to her own end as well as the end of western humanism. Scenographed in a stinking air-raid shelter where, cut off from the world outside which can only be heard as machinegun fire, the crash of bombs and loud noise from the cracked walls, she runs through her life - both as a human being and as an individual in a political drama which is real and unreal at the same time: the civil war. She reveals her story to the audience and in this way involves us in the cynicism and bad conscience of the world community.

The woman in *I count the hours* relates her story while waiting for her husband Vaclav who has not returned from his perilous trip through war-torn Sarajevo to fetch water. Several days have gone by. Dalager gives her Beckettian lines which call to mind *Waiting for Godot* (inspired by the playwright's own stay in an air-raid shelter during the German occupation of France). Like Beckett, Dalager also holds out a prospect of hope:

No, I mustn't... I can't give up. Vaclav will be back soon. He will be back.

But Vaclav does not return. And there is no hope - neither from above:

Oh, God... If you really exist then give my child a chance. I'll do anything. (*Silence. Then as an echo of her own voice:*) I'll do anything.

But the play may loan absurd features - its content and thus its form are nevertheless clear realism and documentarism. Dalager states in a note to the play that the monologue includes quotations from Tatjana Protrka's diary from the besieged Sarajevo.

In the dual monologue *Faces*, the pain is shared by an Israeli and a Palestinian woman who - first one, then the other - talk about their life and sufferings during the perpetual conflict between the two territories. Dalager lets the same actress perform the monologues. Towards the end, he writes in the stage direction, "their faces, pain and dreams melt into each other". They stand on the world stage and send joint glowing looks to the world opinion which is unwilling to help or act.

Stig Dalager is a political playwright. He means Iraq when he writes *Iraq - and Vietnam, Sarajevo, Israel and Palestine*. For the simple reason that he wants to tell us about the monstrosities which take place there. However, he is also a dramatic politician who is able to bring inner wars onto the exact same stage - the relationship war, the generation war, the mother-daughter war, the father-son war. Dalager administers his plays' horizontal and vertical wars brilliantly. *American Elektra* is at one and the same time about USA and the coalition's war in Iraq and about a relationship which eats at the whole family. But like the Greek tragedy, which has lent its name to the play, it is the daughter and her

(half)brother who become the tools for this. Here the reason is the Americans' inhumane treatment of the Iraqi prisoners, though - something we all know about from the newspapers and TV. In this way, Dalager projects President Bush' and the consortiums' blunder onto the global screen. From the small quartet play in the house on The Strand outside New York - orchestrated with the diplomat's widow Jo-Anne, her new lover Brett (colonel, stationed in Baghdad), and her daughter Elisa directly from a psychiatric treatment centre and her lawyer boyfriend Peter who turns out to be her half-brother - he bangs the monstrosities onto the giant international screen. We are not far into the family dinner before the skeletons come out of the closet:

Peter: I'd better tell you that colonel Harvey features in my documents from the Justice Department as being one of the officers suspected of having sanctioned torture at the Abu Grahیب prison.

Jo-Anne: What's that got to do with Brett?

Peter: That's a question I'd say you should ask him.

Brett: (*With affected calm*) There are quite a few colonels by the name of Harvey in the American army.

Peter: That may be so, but there aren't so many with direct responsibility for security in that prison. In fact, there is only one.

However, it is not the tragedy's Orestes alias Peter who carries the weapon, but Queen Klytāimēstra alias Joanne who finishes with two fatal shots - at her lover and at herself. The world drama ends as a family drama. In this lies Dalager's dramatic strength: to reveal the big and incomprehensible in the small and comprehensible.

The play can be understood by everyone in the world who watches TV or reads newspapers. The action's USA-in-Iraq-theme is elementary to everyone in Europe, China, Africa and - America. The simple living room-theatre with four principal characters and a servant apparently plays out like a drama by Ibsen or Albee, but despite the American high-life family drama, the stage is nevertheless set in Baghdad and the Pentagon.

Stig Dalager is capable of writing female roles that fill the stage. Simultaneously, he is not afraid of filling the stage with women. Whereas the average number of actors in a European-American drama in 2005 is

5/3 (five male and three female roles per play), Dalager's average is 3/5. Dalager knows the world's female roles - from Medea and Elektra to Nora and Miss Julie to Anne Sophie Hedvig and Martha. In the monologues, *I count the hours* and *Faces*, he has created monumental characters which already now form part of the dramatic national galleries in the world's metropolises where the greatest actresses have presented them. That his breakthrough as a monologue dramatist in 1993 should happen with the most significant Danish actress of the past decades, Kirsten Olesen, created at one and the same time an artistic and moral room of development for the talent and energy of the serious female interpreter.

In American *Elektra* the entire action and play centre on the diplomat's widow Jo-Anne. With the assistance of the other three principal characters, the concealed circumstances surrounding the deaths of her husband and her daughter are exposed in her head layer by layer. Her brain is the stage upon which she reluctantly plays towards the realization which also becomes the audience's realization - that she unknowingly acted in collusion with her lover who not only killed her husband but also sexually assaulted her daughter:

Jo-Anne: I took his life Brett, and you helped me do it. You are very clever, very convincing. You helped me "for my own sake", you said. You consoled me. Tell me, is that something they teach you at West Point - how to console women by day and kill their husbands, their fathers, by night? Or is it the other way round? Killing the women and... I don't know. I am just asking. Audrey's killing - was that your doing too? How convenient, eh? Or was it one of your "minions" - another of the acts you can wash your hands of, more blood that ends up sticking to someone else. You should have kept your hands off the best that I had, the offspring of my womb, here...

Jo-Anne acknowledges that she is guilty - and shoots her lover and herself. While they lay bleeding on the carpet, her stepson Peter puts together a simplified but suitably colourful sequence of the events for the police and the media. In this way, Dalager emphasizes Jo-Anne's existential clarification by bringing his audience at one go from Greek drama to American entertainment.

In *The Dream* where three women - mother, daughter and granddaughter - struggle through the family's trauma during some condensed hours of the night in which the dying mother, Austrian born psychiatrist Elisabeth, tries first to canonize the life-lie as a family saga and then, finally, when it is disclosed, to acknowledge it to create peace - and die in peace. The span of this particular role exerts heavy demands upon the performing actress, which has also been pointed out at the previous performances in Denmark as well as in other countries. Dalager has thus created a play which at once contributes greatly to the serious part of stage literature and to the proportionately small number of female roles. The play ends with Elisabeth dreaming herself into death, while her daughter and granddaughter cheerfully play casino at the kitchen table. Elisabeth's dying wish.

Stig Dalager's plays usually end with the death of the heroine. *Family Night* is different, as this play ends with a sexual intercourse. However, the play about the last hours of Hans Christian Andersen, *Lord and Shadow*, naturally also ends with the poet's demise. On his deathbed, Andersen is tormented by one of his most famous fantasy figures, *The Shadow*, from the fairy-tale of that same name. From Dalager's hand, this play is a psycho-biographic masterpiece which analyzes the poet's life and works without presumption. Fairy-tales, childhood memories and diary scraps are spinning around in the brain of the dying poet, driven forward with sarcasm, irony and cynicism by the Shadow who is invisible to everyone but Andersen. Everything is brought out in these last hours - living and dead, fairy-tale characters and hallucinations, degradation and inferiority. The erotic diary entries from Naples are the Shadow's specialty:

The Shadow: You want to fuck, too. Everyone fucks here.

Andersen: Fuck?

The Shadow: One needs to purge the system once in a while.

Andersen: On the bus I saw a beautiful young girl. Firm as a grape, fresh as a rose.

The Shadow: Wandering the streets.

Andersen: Up and down the streets, what a fool.

The Shadow: Silly old idiot!

The Shadow examines Andersen in his fairy-tales and possible biographic role models. Time and again, the poet is painted into a corner:

Andersen: I don't know what you're talking about. Don't play the role of my bad conscience.

The Shadow: You're just a lonely dreamer. So very much alone.

Lord and Shadow is an empathic portrait and a tribute to a great poet. The play, which was first performed in Washington in 1991 and at The Danish Theatre in 1992, is still the perfect choice for the performance in honour of Hans Christian Andersen which could have been staged on the Royal Danish Theatre during the celebration of his 200-year birthday in 2005.

The plays in this selection of Stig Dalager's dramatic authorship have all been staged or are to be staged around the world - New York, Washington, Moscow, Beijing, Berlin, Wien, Lodz, Sofia, Tsiblisi and many other cities. In several theatres, they are part of the repertoire. The plays are also produced in Danish theatres, but not as much as you would expect - the reason being that Denmark, as one of our art-denying cultural politicians put it while expressing himself in a particularly Danish manner, "represents too small a language area for the staging of a ballet".

All the more reason for Stig Dalager's plays to be produced on the world stage upon which, as we all know, the dramatic language is international.

*Translated into English by Bente Jacobsen - [www.bj-sprogservice.dk](http://www.bj-sprogservice.dk)*

# Lord and Shadow

Translated into English by Jane McVeigh

## **A dream play about Hans Christian Andersen**

Danish poet Hans Christian Andersen is dying. In his delirium, Andersen conducts an intense dialogue with his alter ego - his shadow. Episodes from his life, the women he knew and a number of his fairy-tale characters sweep over him in a wave of materialized recollection. First performed at The Scena Theatre, Washington D.C., in 1991. Danish opening in The Danish Theatre in 1992. Later staged in Tsbilisi and at Teatr Sofia in Sofia (2005) as well as other theatres. Translated into a number of languages and to be staged in New York, Moscow, Rio and Beijing.

## **Note on staging**

Sound plays a central role in the creation of space in this play and to the flow or continuum of the action. The stage should be kept simple with regard to the choice of props and means of expression. I envisage a bare or almost bare room, either circular or without walls which must be fresco-like, with an "italian" feel. One of the walls must have a balcony. Light is an important factor in the creation of this space. A circle of light, contrasted with the dark around it. People appearing and disappearing into this darkness. (Basic light/shadow effects built up of goboes supplemented with pin-spots.)

## **The Play's Basic Situation**

The elderly ailing Hans Christian Andersen is lying on a bed or stretcher reflecting on his past life and writings. Associations and figures crop up...

## **Characters**

Andersen.

The Shadow.

Woman.

Grandfather/Little Claus/The Landlord.

*Andersen in bed. The Shadow is invisible at first. But suddenly he emerges from the darkness behind Andersen. Only his face can be seen. Inspiring cello music, repeating the same passages. Sudden silence.*

Andersen: Had a horrible dream about a little child I was carrying. It dried up into a wizened skin on my shoulder.

The Shadow: When?

Andersen: It was cold and rainy. Jonas and I went to bed as early as nine o'clock. My bed was too short and I was shivering and uncomfortable. My thoughts were in turmoil. I remembered my dream of the other evening here in Duchy about old Collin. I thought he was dead. It was Lucanne 28th June 1861.

The Shadow: Are you sure you've considered the matter carefully enough?

Andersen: I think about it all the time.

The Shadow: You're getting old.

Andersen: I'm not as old as you seem to think.

The Shadow: It was later.

Andersen: Later, what do you mean.

The Shadow: You're always checking up on yourself. You suffer from the delusion that you know yourself.

Andersen: It's not a delusion.

The Shadow: It was on the 1st. August 1862 that you had the dream about the child - what a horrible nightmare.

Andersen: How do you know?

The Shadow: Let's just say I know.

Andersen: Who are you anyway.

The Shadow: Don't be childish!

Andersen: I want to know.

The Shadow: Use your imagination. You like to think that you have so much of it.

Andersen: I don't believe I've had the pleasure of making the acquaintance.

The Shadow: They say you're good-natured.

Andersen: I see, good-natured. I don't remember letting anyone in.

The Shadow: I didn't mean absent-minded.

Andersen: Ah, but so many people come and see me about one thing or another.

The Shadow: It would be wrong to say that you are absent-minded.

Andersen: And yet you're a stranger to me.

The Shadow: Are you so sure.

Andersen: If you'd so kind as to step to one side, I'd be able to see you more clearly.

The Shadow: (*Moves to the periphery of the spot, still only partially visible*) Is that better?

Andersen: You're so uncannily dark. You look like a demon.

The Shadow: Oh, come on now.

Andersen: Well, perhaps it's the light. Would you please move the light a little closer.

The Shadow: There you are.

Andersen: Thank you.

The Shadow: Can you see anything now?

Andersen: Perhaps you're a phantom, so ephemeral. Oh, I'm sorry, I didn't mean to offend you.

The Shadow: You can't.

Andersen: It's as if - you seem so shadowy.

The Shadow: And that comes from you.

Andersen: We've all got our dark sides.

The Shadow: I recall the 14th October 1864. I was walking down the road in a howling storm when suddenly it cleared up and I could see a carriage disappear into the canal. I was naked except for my Scottish plaid and afraid the police would stop me or that the boys would hound me. I wanted to get to Nyhavn by boat and old Collin came and scolded me. I was dreadfully dependent on him and asked if he weren't dead. But he wasn't.

Andersen: That's my dream.

The Shadow: But I'm the one who remembers it.

Andersen: It never happened.

The Shadow: Then why did you write it down?

Andersen: It was interesting and I can't help myself.

The Shadow: What's wrong with your teeth?

Andersen: My teeth?

The Shadow: I distinctly remember something about your teeth.

Andersen: Let me see.

The Shadow: On the 16th. July 1864, for example.

Andersen: I had a terrible nightmare last night. I dreamt all my teeth fell out. I'm depressed, in a demonic mood, as if Saul's evil spirit is upon me; have written several verses.

The Shadow: Just the sort of thing I relish.

Andersen: Look, what exactly do you want of me?

The Shadow: Your teeth!

Andersen: Yes, they were a pestilence.

The Shadow: And your hands.

Andersen: What!

The Shadow: Your right hand, one big scab flaking off.

Andersen: You're making that up.

The Shadow: It was a dream.

Andersen: That's what I mean.

The Shadow: Very vivid.

Andersen: But still just a dream. Nothing significant.

The Shadow: Dreams are heavy stuff.

Andersen: Let's not discuss that now. I want to go on living.

The Shadow: Look, why don't you read it aloud yourself?

Andersen: Read aloud.

The Shadow: It's your dream.

Andersen: (*Sighing*) All right, all right. Let me see. Significant dream this morning, a large scab on my right hand, flaking. Later I dreamt I was wading in deep mysterious waters, my trousers were caked with mud. I rinsed them but discovered that my boots were stuck in the mud beyond the recovery. I dived but couldn't find them - I reached dry land and heard that it was 60 fathoms deep at the place I had stood - I could have drowned. I was frightened and awoke thinking how foolish it had been of me to risk my life for the sake of an old pair of boots.

The Shadow: (*Laughing*)

Andersen: It's not as funny as you think.

The Shadow: (*Still laughing*)

Andersen: If you don't mind, I'd prefer you didn't laugh. What are you doing here anyway?

The Shadow: Don't start on that again.

Andersen: I prefer to be alone.

The Shadow: That's not my impression.

Andersen: Pardon me, but do you realize who I am.

The Shadow: I should think so.

Andersen: I'm famous.

The Shadow: Oh, I see.

Andersen: What do you mean by that.

The Shadow: That they talk about you.

Andersen: They certainly do.

The Shadow: And yet you write, "Deep inside, I don't really feel amiable, grateful or patient".

Andersen: It's far from the truth.

The Shadow: I recall your hate, too. It was fascinating. Let me see. We're in Italy, 1833.

Andersen: Ah yes, Italy. Those glorious days and nights, the calmness of the Mediterranean, its incandescent swell. The breathtaking beauty of the stars. The white sunny streets.

The Shadow: Rome.

Andersen: It's such a long time ago, already.

The Shadow: You're upset, expecting a letter.

Andersen: From my "Agnete".

The Shadow: I have a letter here. Will you read it to me?

Andersen: What are you driving at?

The Shadow: Just read it!

Andersen: I don't feel like it.

The Shadow: All right, all right. I'll read it. It really is terribly egoistical of you to assume that people take such a great interest in you. It must be your own fault, for the public, at least the critics, have never given you any reason whatsoever to think so. "Agnete" is so very much in the style of the old Andersen with its beautiful childish passages we know from this early writings as well as those hopelessly mangled and unstructured passages that also taint his early works.

Andersen: Possibly.

The Shadow: Are you reassured?

Andersen: Yes, you have to be, don't you. I think I recognize that voice.

The Shadow: Are you sure?

Andersen: It reminds me of yours. You're not.., no impossible! It's Edward's.

The Shadow: Our best friend.

Andersen: My best friend.

The Shadow: Edward, your boundless selfishness becomes more and more obvious, as does the injustice I'm suffering. You have created an unbridgeable gulf between the two of us. Everything's false. The whole world, every single one of you, false. What reward am I given for being good-natured. Absolutely none, none at all. Well then, I will become a devil. I have been reduced to despair. Human beings are evil, truly evil! I could have ripped my enemies to shreds. Rome 25th. January.

Andersen: Did I write that?

The Shadow: Your very self.

Andersen: It doesn't come to mind.

The Shadow: I remember.

Andersen: You are so good at remembering demonic things.

The Shadow: And brushing things under the carpet is one of your specialties.

Andersen: You're not Edward, by any chance? Forgive me, I can't see you very well. The light's so bad in here.

The Shadow: You and your wonderful eyesight!

Andersen: No, it's not.

The Shadow: Edward had integrity. There's something pedantic and boring about him. But he had integrity.

Andersen: My very words.

The Shadow: Integrity?

Andersen: Edward, what a monster you are, and the others too!? You're killing me.

The Shadow: What did you say?

Andersen: It must be coming from you. It just flew out of my mouth. You are beginning to get on my nerves.

The Shadow: Really!

*Cello music as before. Suddenly stops*

Andersen: I was to be examined by Chancellor Meisler in the presence of his Majesty. I didn't want to. I knew I couldn't translate the Latin and would be embarrassed and laughed at. Then I awoke.

The Shadow: You are dreaming.

Andersen: Yes.

The Shadow: Recently.

Andersen: Yesterday, maybe even right this minute.

The Shadow: You were sitting there dreaming.

Andersen: I'm resting. "You're lazy", he says, "An insufferable clown, a madman, a stupid fool".

The Shadow: You're the greatest bigot I've ever known. And you really think you're something. If you were a true writer, you would drop your studies! Sacrifice yourself for poetry! If you can't earn enough in Denmark, then the hole of Germany stands awaiting. But you're useless! You can probably jot down a drinking song or a rhyme about the sun and moon. But when it comes to it, it only amounts to boyish pranks...

Andersen: Is Meisling there?

The Shadow: It's only me.

Andersen: I assured him that I was not lazy and that I couldn't write poetry. I put trust in God.

The Shadow: Everyday I try to get to know myself a little better. I'm not succeeding. Mainly owing to vanity I think. Although I can be harsh on myself at times, I'd like to think of myself as being a good person.

Meisling has made me realize that there's something hideous and insubstantial in my nature, something disturbed and unstable in my soul...

Andersen: I was just a boy.

The Shadow: At the time you were upset.

Andersen: Who has invited you anyway?

The Shadow: I've been here all the time.

Andersen: Are you Meisling?

The Shadow: No.

Andersen: I wrote a poem.

The Shadow: "The Dying Child".

Andersen: Oh, you're familiar with it.

The Shadow: A little too sentimental for my taste. (*Quote*)

Andersen: You know the expression, I know the feeling.

The Shadow: Softly. The dying child. The gentle child. A dry skin on your shoulder.

Andersen: You must speak up!

The Shadow: You heard me perfectly well.

Andersen: It's as if you're sitting with your back to me, can't you come a little closer.

The Shadow: I don't think you would like it.

*A womans laughter. A woman in a long grey dress drifts into the circle of light.*

Andersen: Who's there?

Woman: Oh, is someone there?

Andersen: Come closer.

Woman: You misunderstand me. I'm looking for someone.

Andersen: Someone I know.

Woman: A young man, tall and skinny. A poet, have you seen him?

Andersen: Does he have a name?

Woman: Of course. Let me see, I've got it here. (*Flipping through some papers*) No, that's funny. It's gone. I don't remember his name.

Andersen: Your simple grey morning dress suits you.

Woman: Oh, my dress.

Andersen: His name's not Andersen by any chance?

Woman: Who?

Andersen: The young man.

Woman: Do you know him?

Andersen: I wrote to you, do you remember?

Woman: You don't look like him. His long fingers were so sensitive; and his eyes too.

Andersen: What about his eyes?

Woman: They were pale (*Laughing*) but glowing at the same time. I was slightly infatuated. I had to disappoint him. I was engaged. Can't you see?

Andersen: What did you do?

Woman: I sent him a letter.

Andersen: Such a trifling note. Wasn't he worth more than that!?

Woman: That's why I must talk to him. You don't know where...

Andersen: It's too late.

Woman: Why do you say that?

Andersen: I know him.

Woman: Then tell me where he is.

Andersen: He's right here!

Woman: I don't believe you.

Andersen: I wrote to you, isn't that right?

Woman: I don't want to hear any more about that.

The Shadow: I wrote that I wasn't experienced enough to hide my feelings for you and that I cherished a hope of some future for us.

Andersen: I was so naive!

The Shadow: Says he, who was going to give up his writing and become a minister for her sake.

Andersen: I was disappointed in myself.

The Shadow: You lavished it off but couldn't stop thinking about it. You considered yourself foolish. You, who had always mocked love and romance, wandering the streets, afraid and sick - your whole body burning, reeling with dizziness.

Woman: I didn't know.

Andersen: It's such a long time ago - so long ago. You loved another.

Woman: I got married.

The Shadow: To a pharmacist!.

Andersen: In your brown eyes I found a shrine.

The Shadow: A source of wisdom and childhood calm. Throughout my life an eternal balm.

Woman: Did you write that?

Andersen/The Shadow: (*Simultaneously*) Yes.

Andersen: Would you be so kind as to get out of my way!?

Woman: Me?

Andersen: The person who is constantly butting in.

Woman: You're not ill, are you?

Andersen: Ill?

Woman: Just lie down and relax.

Andersen: I'm already lying down.

Woman: I'm sorry but you're actually sitting up with a pen in your hand.

Andersen: Really?

Woman: Well, as a matter of fact, yes.

Andersen: Please don't laugh at me.

Woman: Then I won't laugh.

Andersen: People laugh at me all the time, you know.

Woman: Sorry, I didn't realize.

Andersen: They say I'm spineless and vain. They've noticed that I can't walk past a mirror without looking at myself. But do you know why? I'll let you in on the secret - it's so easy to confide in women. It's because I'm ugly, can't you see. It's dreadful being ugly.

Woman: You're not ugly.

Andersen: Oh, yes, I'm ugly alright and I've no conviction, can't you see I'm falling apart at the seams.

Woman: (*Laughing*) Is that so dreadful!

Andersen: You're laughing at me again!

Woman: Sorry.

Andersen: I've got a funny sensation in my head. I'm afraid of going mad. I had my head measured in Töeplitz. They said it was small and that my brain wasn't too big either. But I supposedly had highly developed emotions and a lively imagination. To such an extent that there was a strong possibility I might go mad, had I not been blessed with will-power and energy.

Woman: You just need to rest for a while.

Andersen: Rest?

Woman: Rest your head on a pillow.

Andersen: Can't you see that you fire my imagination. I'm sweaty and nervous. Today I walked the streets - there was a lot to see when I looked closely. Iron gates on the pavements with cellars under them. People chatting in groups in the street. When I got home I had a feeling inside me that I was going mad.

Woman: You're just tired.

Andersen: I'm at the bottom of a ship, thrown into a dank dungeon tortured and mistreated.

Woman: But you're here.

Andersen: Yesterday at nine o'clock I was to collect my wintercoat from the tailor's - it wasn't finished, so he gave me another to wear instead. When I got out into the street, I felt awful wearing another man's coat - I

kept thinking he'll come up to you and say: "That's my coat you're wearing". I felt people were staring at me so I hurried home.

Woman: You really must lie down.

Andersen: Do you really think so?

Woman: Yes.

Andersen: Will you help me?

Woman: There you are. (*Helping him. Exit.*)

*Cello Music. Andersen holds his head in pain, gets out of bed. It's as if he can hear and see something.*

Andersen: Look at me, what do you see? Shouldn't we be lovers, we're so well suited. You leap and I dance! None could be happier than us!

(*Turning slowly*)

Woman: (*Jumping into the circle a couple of steps*) Oh, so you think so! You probably don't know my father and mother were morocco slippers and that I have a cork for a navel.

Andersen: (*Sees her and moves towards her - she jumps aside*) But I'm made of mahogany and the bailiff has turned me on his own lathe with the estest of pleasure.

Woman: (*Standing still with a childish expression*) Can I believe that?

Andersen: Cross my heart and hope to die.

Woman: You put your case so well, but I can't. I'm practically engaged to a swallow. Every time I'm up in the air, it sticks its head out of its nest and chirps, "Will you? Will you?" So now I've told myself I will and that's as good as being half-engaged, but I promise I'll never forget you!

(*Jumping away from him into the dark*)

The Shadow: (*Behind Andersen*) The you never spoke together again.

Andersen: Am I dreaming?

The Shadow: Yes. (*He walks up to Andersen, they both move forward a little side by side*)

Andersen: Where are we?

The Shadow: It's certain.

Andersen: I can see now. Can't you see?

The Shadow: Not really.

Andersen: My childhood home.

The Shadow: Is that all?

Andersen: A small living room, the cobbler's workshop where my father is sitting, the bed and bench where I slept - look at all those pictures on the wall. The chest with all the beautiful cups, glasses and nicknacks. Over there by the window, there's a little shelf with books and songs. And the kitchen.

The Shadow: It's nothing special.

Andersen: A shelf full of plates. It's so affluent. Just look at the door. A whole gallery of pictures.

The Shadow: I remember it differently. (*Moves in front of Andersen, who pushes him away*)

Andersen: Can't you move, please, so that I can see!

The Shadow: You don't want to see. You lie all the time.

Andersen: It's my dream, if you please.

The Shadow: Your ideal, if I may be so bold!

Andersen: You're ruining the poetry of it.

The Shadow: Oh dear.

Andersen: Then perhaps, you've something better to show us.

The Shadow: Come round the corner here.

Andersen: The corner?

The Shadow: We'll just turn round the corner.

*They walk round the circle of light.*

The Shadow: Look here.

Andersen: Who's that old man.

The Shadow: It's your senile great grandfather.

Andersen: He's not saying anything whittling away at that piece of wood.

The Shadow: Making curious images of people and animals with strange heads and wings, odd birds. He packs them in a basket and goes off into the country where the peasants give him something to eat. Porridge and ham which he brings home in return for the strange toys he gives them and their children. When he returns to Odense the children on the street make fun of him and hide. This is your flesh and blood.

Grandfather: (*Showing Andersen a wooden figure*) Look my boy can you see what this is?

Andersen: I'm not a child!

Grandfather: Oh yes, you are! Can't you see?

Andersen: A funny animal.

Grandfather: (*Laughing*) A toad, a toad, it's a toad!

Andersen: It's difficult to see.

Grandfather: Haven't you got eyes in your head? Have you no eyes at all?

*Andersen nods, frightened. Grandfather looks at him with a sly expression and checks to see if anyone is eavesdropping.*

Grandfather: (*Confidentially*) I was a tad once. My mother was fat and ugly, horrible and obese. But she had a heart all the same. It went boom,

boom, boom. We lived among the stones at the bottom of the well and never saw the sun. (*Brief pause, while he looks suspiciously at Andersen*) Are you listening?

Andersen: (*Nods*)

Grandfather: I wanted to get out, and right up to the top of the well. I felt such a longing for the green lushness up there. And I did make it to the top. Oh yes sir, I jumped into the full bucket. The farmboy poured me out and gave a kick after me with his clog. I croaked and hid under the tall nettles. It was so nice there, but I kept wondering what was beyond. Having come so far, I thought I might as well go a bit further. Hopping around on my hind legs, I frightened a hen and a caterpillar. It said, "You are a hideous sight!"

Andersen: Yes, no doubt.

Grandfather: Now, watch your mouth, little boy. Your turn will come. We're all given a chance in this world and I was given mine. I hopped along and saw a stork clacking away, and I heard what it said: "Man is the most conseited of all creatures and he can't even fly". It was sitting on the farmhouse roof chattering about Egypt and all the wonderful mud there. A lofty creature, that stork, and what a lofty perch he had. I croaked and suddenly it swooped down from the roof and grabbed me in its beak- up, u, and away to Egypt. But it squeezed me so hard that I died. Dead, dead, croak, croak.

Andersen: That's not true. But what about the jewel in the toad's head. You're forgetting the gleam in its eye...

Grandfather: (*Interrupting*) I was dead and now I'm here. (*Holding up the wooden figure for Andersen to see*) And we're going to die and we'll never get up out of the mud. Croak, croak! (*Exits*)

Andersen: I'm afraid.

The Shadow: Look at yourself in the mirror.

Andersen: No.

The Shadow: Look at yourself.

Andersen: I...

The Shadow: But you love looking at yourself.

Andersen: It's a bewitched mirror.

The Shadow: It's just an ordinary mirror.

Andersen: It's not me.

The Shadow: Are you blind?

Andersen: But I'm old, my teeth have fallen out. I... It's my Grandfather, it's not me at all. Why do you continue to torture me?

The Shadow: It's your dream.

Andersen: I don't know. Are you death? I'm afraid of living and afraid of dying. God, don't let go of me yet.

Woman: Hans Christian!

Andersen: Who is it?

The Shadow: Did you hear something?

Andersen: Someone called my name.

The Shadow: I didn't hear anything.

*The woman enters. Long black hair, simply dressed.*

Woman: Have you seen Death pass by with my little child?

The Shadow: Oh yes, but I won't tell you which way he went until you've warmed my heart, for I'm freezing to death, turning to ice.

Woman: Who are you?

The Shadow: The lake!

Woman: Let me come over and find my child!

The Shadow: No, it's not possible - let's make a deal! I'm very fond of collecting pearls and your eyes are the brightest I've ever seen. If you cry so much that they drop out, then I'll carry you over to the big green house where Death lives. There he tends the plants and trees, each of them a human life.

Woman: Where can I find Death, who took my child?

The Shadow: He's not come by here yet. How did you get here? Who helped you?

Woman: Our Lord. He's merciful and you will be too.

The Shadow: What's in it for me?

Woman: I have nothing to give. I've lost my eyes and my warmth, but I'll go with you to end of the world.

The shadow: Well, there's no real reason for me to go there, is there? But if you give me your long black hair - it's pretty, you know, and I like it - Then you can have my grey hair, it's better than nothing.

Woman: Is that all you ask? You can have it with pleasure. (*Gives him her hair. Exits*).

Andersen: Who are you talking to?

The Shadow: A woman who passed by.

Andersen: I was dreaming of my mother.

The Shadow: She was cold, her hair grey and here eyes gone.

Andersen: She's looking for me.

The Shadow: She was searching for Death.

Andersen: But my mother is already dead.

The Shadow: She was looking for her child.

Andersen: I'm her child.

The Shadow: I sent her away.

Andersen: You send everyone away.

The Shadow: I sent her to Death. Over there she could choose between the flower of disaster and good fortune. She didn't know which one of them was her child.

Andersen: Which one did she choose?

The Shadow: None of them. Don't you understand?

Andersen: Yes.

The Shadow: She didn't understand Death. He lifted up her child and bore him into the land of the unknown.

Andersen: She left everything up to the will of God.

The Shadow: How do you know?

Andersen: I know my mother.

The Shadow: A pauper.

Andersen: I forbid you to say things like that.

The Shadow: You sent her money while you were off in Europe, chasing fame.

Andersen: I don't know what you're talking about. Don't play the role of my bad conscience.

The Shadow: You're just a lonely dreamer. So very much alone.

Andersen: I have you, remember that.

The Shadow: You don't want to have anything to do with me.

Andersen: Oh well, if I can't have it any other way. You're in my dream at the moment so there's nothing I can do about it.

The Shadow: Take care. I'll go right through you.

Andersen: Rubbish...

The Shadow: You never played with anyone, even at school you always sat indoors. At home you played with your father's home-made toys.

Andersen: Look, there I am. Looking at my pictures, which transform themselves when you pull a string. See for yourself, a stamping mill, too. See how the millerdances around, listen to the sound!

*Cello music.*

The Shadow: I can't hear anything.

Andersen: I had a peepshow and nodding dolls. I took great pleasure in sitting in the yard by the solitary gooseberry bush sewing doll's clothes. My mother's apron was stretched out over the wall with the aid of a broomstick. It was my shelter in showers and sunshine, sitting there looking into the leaves of the gooseberry bush. I watched how they grew from small green buds into leaves which dropped off large and yellow.

The Shadow: A strange dreamy child who usually walked around with

closed eyes. In the end the though your eyesight was weak.

Andersen: But I have unusually good sight.

The Shadow: *(Suddenly)* I remember the hospital.

Andersen: The hospital?!

The Shadow: Can't you see it?

Andersen: *(Tentative)* Yes, I suppose so.

The Shadow: The hospital down the road. Listen!

*Voices can be heard humming, and suddenly more "offkey" voices singing over them.*

Andersen: Why this all of a sudden?

The Shadow: All the mad who are harmless wandering the grounds of the hospital.

Andersen: Where are they going?

The Shadow: Into a building, along a corridor. Just listen!

Andersen: I am listening.

*A beautiful woman's voice, singing an old Danish ballad. The woman appears to be entering an imaginative door. A door is lowered down.*

The Shadow: It's beautiful. It's the mad woman. She's sitting behind the door over there. Go over to her!

Andersen: You want me to go over there?

The Shadow: Do as you're told.

*He goes up to the door, "looks" at the woman sitting at the floor. His movements are awkward and "childlike".*

The Shadow: What does she look like?

Andersen: I can't see her.

The Shadow: There's a chink in the door.

Andersen: Her hair hangs beautifully over her shoulders, her voice is enchanting.

The Shadow: Suddenly she jumps up and runs to the door.

*The woman jump sup and bang son the door violently. Andersen withdraws and falls.*

Andersen: *(Terrified)* No, no, no.

The Shadow: *(Laughing)* Haha.

Andersen: What do you think you're doing. Just what are you doing.

The Shadow: You are just a boy clinging to the floorboards. One of the guards will come soon and release you.

Andersen: I don't want to lie on the floor.

The Shadow: You'll have to.

Andersen: Help me up!

*Suddenly many voices. The echo of laughter.*

Voice: Well, are you going to sing or not?

Boy's voice: I am singing, master.

Voice: Then join in.

*The boys sing a Danish folk song with high, beautiful voices. Andersen acting like a boy gets up slowly.*

Voice: *(Interrupting)* You're no boy, just a little virgin.

Andersen: *(With a boy's voice)* But...

Voice: Let's see what he's hiding.

*Uproar, laughter from the crowd, it's as if someone grabs Andersen, who backs away terrified, whirling his arms in the air - holding his crotch. Backs away keeping his hands there. Falls again.*

Andersen: *(With a boy's voice)* Don't... *(Whining like a little girl).*

Voice: Look at him, neither woman nor man! *(Laughter).*

Andersen: Help me up. Come and help me up.

The Shadow: You're no boy, just a little virgin.

*The woman enters wearing a beautiful, shimmering blue dress.*

Woman: *(With a Swedish accent)* Here, take my hand!

Andersen: Who are you?

Woman: Don't you recognize me?

Andersen: I'll have to get up.

Woman: I'll give you a hand and you'll have to do the rest yourself.

*Andersen up.*

Andersen: Thank you, I'm a little confused.

Woman: *(Laughing)* You don't recognize me, at all?

Andersen: Ah yes, isn't it...

Woman: Have you forgotten me so soon?

Andersen: It's so dark in here. You're the nightingale?

Woman: The nightingale?

Andersen: I waited for you in Berlin, in every city. Everywhere I went, people spoke of you. They didn't have to. You were always in the back of my mind. My greatest dream was to spend Christmas with you... I felt sure that the Christmas I was in Berlin... but no invitation arrived. I was left alone in my hotel, feeling dejected. I opened the window and looked at the starry night. It was my Christmas tree. I was so soft at heart, some might have called me sentimental.

Woman: I thought you would be celebrating Christmas in the company of princes and princesses.

Andersen: Turned down all invitations to be with you. I came to Berlin for your sake!

Woman: *(Laughing)* What a child you are! I didn't realize - I had another

engagement. But you remember how I had a tree lit for the child on New Year's Eve. For you alone, I had it decorated with candles and tinsel. Yourself, my companion and I were the only ones present. It was just like the children's game, "having guests over". We all had the grandest tea party with sandwiches, cakes, ice-cream and a nice pot of tea. I sang a long aria and a couple of Swedish ballads and you received many presents, very many presents.

The Shadow: I'm no child.

Woman: What are you saying?

Andersen: Your unaffectedness and grace! I saw you in "The Sleepwalker". I laughed and cried, felt myself a better person, and realized that God is inherent in the arts. That God stands face to face with us in this our holy church.

Woman: Now you're exaggerating.

Andersen: You taught me to sacrifice myself for a higher principle. You appeared more refined than hundreds of books. One never knew what to expect in your company.

Woman: You can't mean that. You're not serious.

Andersen: Oh, yes.

Woman: I'm also fond of you and your fairy tales, especially...

Andersen: (*Interrupting*) Jenny.

Woman: Yes.

Andersen: I was watching you from the stalls. My love is unworthy of you.

Woman: Silly, now stop it!

Andersen: Do you recall my letter?

Woman: Yes.

The Shadow: I'm burning.

Woman: what are you trying to say?

Andersen: All my bouquets.

The Shadow: I love.

Woman: You've changed. You're not yourself - you look so sinister.

Andersen: I stopped seeing you.

Woman: I was always amiable to you. I gave you my hand. You were my beloved brother. Everyone wanted to be my brother, but I chose you.

Andersen: You despise me.

Woman: How could I when I've never been in love with you?

The Shadow: (*Softly*) That's right. How could you?

Woman: Did you say anything?

The Shadow: I'll see you to the door.

Woman: Why are sitting there, staring blankly into space?

The Shadow: Please, you must leave now.

Woman: Very well, I'll leave. *(Pause)* I'm leaving. *(Woman exists).*

*Andersen follows her, stops at the periphery of the circle, at the edge of darkness. He stands looking out into the dark, takes a step forward but cannot make the other follow. He is frozen in this position. He feels the wall of darkness on the other side of the circle pressing in on him. He begins to "explore" it with his hands as if he is touching a blank wall. He lets his hands glide up and down and out in small circles like someone trying to fly. He groans out loud. He's exhausted and moves back to the bed, sits down worn out and holds his head. Then the morphine glass catches his eye and he pours himself a couple of drops and drinks them. He's dizzy for a moment, then suddenly gets up. A writing desk is lowered into the centre of the spot. He walks up to it and begins writing. He stops suddenly and approaches the edge of the circle, looking out. Then he returns and hurriedly writes on. The same cello music as before. The same tune.*

Andersen: Were's that musis comming from? Leave me alone!

*The music stops suddenly.*

Andersen: "They were all exactly alike except one, who was different from the others. His leg was missing because he had been the last one to be cast... And through its little windows you could see right into its halls. In front was a little lake in which swans were swimming looking at their own reflections. It was all very lovely. But the most charming part of it was its little mistress, who was standing on the threshold on the open castle door. She was also made of paper, but she was wearing a skirt of white muslin with a blue ribbon draped over her shoulder, fastened with a spangle wich was almost as large as her face. The little lady had her arms stretched out for she was a dancer, and she was poised with one leg lifted so high up that it seemed to disappear under her skirt. The tin soldier could not see it and therefore thought she was one-legged like himself. "She would be a perfect wife for me!", he thought, "But I'm afraid she is above me. She has a castle and I only have a box that I must share with twenty-five soldiers. That wouldn't do for her!"

The Shadow: So what?!

Andersen: You wouldn't happen to know where that music's coming from, would you?

The Shadow: From the balcony directly opposite.

Andersen: From the balcony?

The Shadow: Yes. Continue!

Andersen: It's so hot in here, my shirt is drenched with sweat.

The Shadow: We must be getting on. Pull yourself together now.

Andersen: It's all in my head, but it must be put down on paper.

The Shadow: You can rest later.

Andersen: Oh my head! That music!

The Shadow: The story!

Andersen: He's swallowed by a big fish.

The Shadow: Really!

Andersen: "He's thinking of the little ballerina, but he'll never see her again. A nursery rhyme kept going round and round in his head: All the King's horses and all the King's men couldn't put him together again".

Then he was swallowed by a big fish.

The Shadow: And then what?

Andersen: He's found again. Then a little boy throws him into the fire (*Flames in darkness behind*). There was no need at all to do such a thing. It was the jack-in-the-box who put him up to it, you see.

The Shadow: Not bad.

Andersen: The tin soldier stood illuminated by the inferno which leapt around him. He was suffering a heat so dreadful though he could not tell whether it was caused by the flames of fire or love. His uniform had lost all its colour. He didn't know if it was from sorrow or his journey. He looked at the ballerina and she looked at him. Though he was beginning to melt, he still stood bravely, gun in hand. The door opened and a breeze lifted up the little dancer and like a sylph she flew right into the stove to the tin soldier. She flared up and was gone. Then he melted away. So when the maid took out the ashes the next day, she found a little tinheart which was all that was left of him. Among the ashes lay the spangle from the ballerina's dress, it had been burnt as black as coal.

*The flames growing stronger. The sound of crackling flames. Andersen moves towards the light, watching with fascination. Brief pause. The Shadow moves up behind him. Andersen begins to sweat violently - wipes his neck. The Shadow laughs - brief, dry laughter. Andersen turns around suddenly, confronting the Shadow. The Shadow begins to stalk around Andersen.*

Andersen: In the stove lay a lewd German poem.

The shadow: Dreadful unrest in my blood, a shocking headache.

Andersen: The blood pounding behind my eyes.

The Shadow: A desire greater than I've ever known drives me on.

Andersen: As I'm walking home, I notice there's a brothel nearby my hotel. A respectable old lady is beckoning.

The Shadow: A grey, warm, eerie atmosphere, quiet and secretive, as if an earthquake might suddenly erupt.

Andersen: My body, even my penis, feels like burning boils. As if I'd been stung all over by mosquitoes.

The Shadow: You want to fuck, too. Everyone fucks here.

Andersen: Fuck?

The Shadow: One needs to purge the system once in a while.

Andersen: On the bus I saw a beautiful young girl. Firm as a grape, fresh as a rose.

The Shadow: Wandering the streets.

Andersen: Up and down the streets, what a fool.

The Shadow: Silly old idiot!

Andersen: My heart's pounding.

The Shadow: Inflamed desire, that's for sure.

Andersen: It's so unfortunate that desire is inflamed so often, yet remains ungratified.

The Shadow: Dreadful.

Andersen: It's enough to drive you mad.

The Shadow: I have all the evil you need within me.

Andersen: Save me.

The Shadow: So young.

Andersen: And yet so old.

The Shadow: Women like growths behind panes of glass. Grasping out for human flesh.

Andersen: The woman that just walked by, the one with the white teeth, she wanted to fornicate.

The shadow: You wanted to fuck.

Andersen: I did not.

The Shadow: Oh yes you did...

Andersen: Entered a house. A woman approached with the object of selling human flesh. Four prostitutes were brought before me, the youngest was 18 years old, or so they said. I asked her to stay. She was dressed in a mere slip. I felt sorry for her. I paid the madame five francs and gave the girl five francs when she asked for it, but I did nothing. I just stood there watching the poor child who exposed herself completely and seemed surprised that I merely looked at her.

The Shadow: Wandering...

Andersen: A couple of hours on the boulevards of Paris.

The Shadow: The infernal smell of food from the kitchens.

Andersen: They planted trees which died on their second flowering.

The Shadow: The elegantly dressed women with all that beautiful hair.

Andersen: Thin hair covering a hairpiece. So false.

The Shadow: The bright colours, so fresh in the lamplight.

Andersen: Primped up harlots.

The Shadow: Went home.

Andersen: (*In the centre of the circle*) Arrived home very tired.

The Shadow: Are you dreaming?

Andersen: (*Wrapping his arms around himself, closing his eyes*) Mmmmm...

The Shadow: What did you say?

Andersen: (*Opening his eyes*) Blue - indeed almost black from the cold.

My heart has almost turned to ice. I can't even feel it because the Snow Queen has given me her icy kiss. I carry some sharp flat pieces of ice around with me. Arranging and rearranging them. It's a sort of game, the Game of Reason. It's of great importance to me. I don't know why, but I have a grain of glass in my eye. I can create elaborate patterns, fragments of written words, but I can't produce the word that preoccupies me most - the word Eternity.

Woman: (*Enters in a dress of icicles - face completely white, bearing a shining crown*) If you can find the right pattern you will become your own master and I will bestow the whole world upon you and give you a new pair of skates.

Andersen: I can't.

Woman: Then you must remain in this vast empty hall of ice. (*Exits*)

Andersen: Oh no, let me out of here. Take me to the south. (*Reaches out, following her to the edge of the circle at the darkness where he stops*)

The Shadow: Take me with...

Andersen: To the orangeries, the blue oceans.

The Shadow: Naples.

Andersen: I love the south, Italy, with all my young soul.

The Shadow: Florence.

Andersen: The heat of the south pulses in my blood. The Sirocco is my mist, my arrow the olive and the sour apples from the forest my sunshine; the beautiful oranges.

The Shadow: The Mediterranean.

Andersen: How pleasant to laze here breathing in the Italian air, listening to the tales of parties and the life on the local people. Each trek is a journey into the wonders of nature. One cloudy morning we were riding on donkeys along the banks of Lake Alber and we happened to pass by a large picturesque cave. Its walls were covered in a tapestry of greenery. The extremely delicate and beautiful Venus hair fern formed a sort of drapery within the cave, casting a fairytale light throughout. What glorious evenings in rapture wandering in the beauty of mountain

landscapes. Frivolity and song in this refreshing lushness. We saw the gold-braided Dulcamara himself on his medico wagon holding a blood and thunder speech with servants in fancy dress. We met robbers chained to ox-driven wagons, surrounded by gendarmes and we saw funerals with the body uncovered, the glow of evening reflected in its white cheeks. The little boys running away with their bags of sweets, collecting the wax dripping from the monks' tapers. Bells and songs ringing on the air, the farm hands playing mora and the girls dancing saltarello to the rhythm of tambourines. Italy has never been as lively since, nor so beautiful. It was as if Pinelli's paintings had come to life. Art and reality had become one...

The Shadow: Reality? (*Dry, brief laughter*)

Andersen ignores him and goes over to the bed to lie down.

### Intermission

*Cello music from before. Fast flickering light as in a silent movie. A sudden moment of darkness - then The Shadow stands in a column of light, hat in hand, carrying an old-fashioned briefcase. He brushes the dust from his shoulders and stands to attention, like a sculpture.*

The Shadow: Reality.

Andersen: Leave me be!

The Shadow: (*Formally*) Don't you recognize me?

Andersen: I don't even recognize myself.

The Shadow: My voice?

Andersen: I look at myself in the mirror and forget my own face.

The Shadow: But you do know me!

Andersen: I see, but I don't understand.

The Shadow: I'm your friend!

Andersen: Edward!

The Shadow: (*Leaving the column of light and entering the circle again*) Yes well, I must be going.

Andersen: (*Getting out of bed*) No, stay. Of all people you are the one I regard as my friend in the true sense of the word. I'm in dire need of an open heart to confide in. Yet...

The Shadow: Yes?

Andersen: The people I love must have soul. I must be able to respect them. The others I am fond of, lack this quality. You - among all people of my own age - are the only one to whom I feel truly attached.

The Shadow: I see.

Andersen: Please don't laugh at me. I have one small request - give me some proof of your esteem. You must not get angry; drop the formalities and address me as your equal and close friend. It would make me very happy.

The Shadow: Use your first name?

Andersen: You're not angry, are you?

The Shadow: Of course not, whatever makes you think that?

Andersen: I pester you sometimes.

The Shadow: Not at all.

Andersen: I realize that my social status is quite different from yours.

The Shadow: It's of no consequence.

Andersen: I have told you the story of my childhood. I thought of you while I was writing it, yet you never exchanged one single friendly word with me. I've been so sad and unhappy while you've slept peacefully. It's as a result of over exhaustion they say. I can't act differently. I'm so dreadfully shy, I hardly dare speak to you.

The Shadow: Calm yourself. Rest assured, I'm fond of you.

Andersen: I feel there's something abhorrently grovelling in this need for affection - yet my pride gives way to my love for you!

The Shadow: Perhaps you have overdone things. Occasionally one can feel shock at this and have a need to withdraw. Our temperaments are different, you know that. But do you know that I miss you when you're abroad. I miss your visits to my room and our chats. You're always welcome at our table each Tuesday. My family are fond of you, you know. But we don't hang on your every word as do the German princes, we have our own ways.

Andersen: Then let us address each other as friends.

The Shadow: There's something you must understand.

Andersen: Yes?

The Shadow: Now please don't misunderstand me, promise?

Andersen: Yes.

The Shadow: Some people have an inborn aversion to many insignificant details. I knew a woman once who hated grey paper so much that it pained her to see it. How shall I put it...? When I've known a person which I am fond of and admire for a long time and he suggest we address each other on more intimate terms - an inexplicably embarrassing feeling comes over me. Do you understand? *(Pause. Andersen sighs)*

What's wrong?

Andersen: I'm the poor wretch that everyone kicks and spits at.

The Shadow: You misunderstand me.

Andersen: May God grant that you grow poor and that I become a rich important nobleman then I would let you in on a secret and you would appreciate me more than you do now. If eternal life was bestowed upon us, then we would learn to understand and appreciate each other. Then I would no longer be the poor wretch in need of affection and friends. We would be equals!

The Shadow: You certainly are pretentious and your mania with twisting words is unhealthy.

Andersen: Pretentious.

The Shadow: If only you could decide which role suited you best or what style of clothing.

Andersen: Vain, sick, a nervous wreck, pretentious, generous, childish, which one do you prefer?

The Shadow: It's up to you. *(Pause)*. Are you listening..? *(Andersen leaves the circle of light and disappears. The Shadow stands as before, frozen and alone in the column of light)* Where are you going? You can't just run away like that! There were other things we should have discussed. You just can't leave me here. I know that my business affairs take up a good deal of my time and that I'm not available as often as I would like. But that's the way things are in the real world. Go on, admit it - you're not always easy to be together with. You and your depressing fantasies. What you really need is the company of another writer. For I'm ...well I'm young and carefree, I just need a friend. Don't you understand, you just can't leave me here. *(Quiet)*. I won't stand for it, do you hear me? I won't stand for it... *(The Shadow exits. The circle of light comes back. Andersen is pacing backwards and forwards)*

Woman: *(Enters)* Oh, is it you?

Andersen: I was walking backward and forwards in front of your house. I must speak with you now.

Woman: I presume it's about your play.

Andersen: Have you read it?

Woman: Yes.

Andersen: Well, what did you think of it? There's a large part in it for you.

Woman: Won't you sit down.

Andersen: *(Sits down)* Thank you.

Woman: Are you sitting comfortably?

Andersen: Yes, thank you.

Woman: I'm going to be quite frank with you. Your play doesn't appeal to me in the least. It won't work on the stage because its theme is

confusing and uninteresting. As far as I'm concerned, well you know how many roles I've played. Besides, I'm ill at the moment and this role would deplete me of my last reserves of energy. I won't and I can't.

Andersen: You can't be serious? How dreadful of you.

Woman: You know I'm ill and your play will most likely be staged before the summer season. It's my throat affliction. You must understand - it's no use.

Andersen: It's monstrous of you - the whole play will collapse without you.

Woman: I must stick by my refusal.

Andersen: I beg you.

Woman: I'm sorry.

Andersen: You're the star - you're the one everybody wants to see. How long must I stoop? I feel so humble. Tell me how long must I grovel for you before you hear my plea?

Woman: You don't have to grovel because you're addressing me.

Andersen: It's a question of life and death, don't you understand. I'm lying here at your feet, begging you from the bottom of my heart! Please play the role!

Woman: No - I'm not the only one who feels this way about it.

Andersen: It's Heiberg, isn't it? His jealousy. He runs everything and he can't stand me. Now, he's influenced you.

Woman: (*Coldly, self-contained*) Just what makes you think that? Where ever did you hear such things?

Andersen: I don't know. It's the way I feel.

Woman: Are you incapable of seeing that the very nature of role and my state of health make it impossible for me to help you. Would you seriously demand that I fritter away the last of my energy reserves on such a hopeless task?

Andersen: It's awful of you. Play that role!

Woman: I will not! I don't play roles that are beneath me.

Andersen: You have no heart. You are an evil person. But I'll tell you one thing, at this moment you stand proudly and arrogantly at the top of the wheel of Fortune, but take care maybe one day you'll be at the bottom and I'll be at the top. In which case, I'll crush you!

Woman: Keep away from me, you madman. You are cruel and truly spiteful.

Andersen: Yes. And if I am, it's because of the likes of you. It's not my true nature!

*Andersen is in a furore. Woman exits. The Shadow enters into the periphery of*

*the circle, behind Andersen, who is sitting on the bed.*

The Shadow: You're evil

Andersen: Oh, leave me alone! Will I never be rid of you!

The Shadow: Shhh...

Andersen: Don't shush me! Leave immediately! You are unnecessary.

This is my dream.

The Shadow: Oh yes, your dream. You're the one who can't see the difference.

Andersen: You were the one who started it. You couldn't leave me in peace. You're always hanging around cooking something up. You're taking advantage of my state - I'm far too impressionable, and you know it. You incite me and lead along. I'm tired of you and all your tricks. How many more years and days will this go on?

The Shadow: Talk away. It's what you wanted yourself. Your precious fame.

Andersen: And what about you, my soul. Do you recall the way you chased me around Paris, Amsterdam, London, Constantinoble. I was a nervous wreck, without money, still writing, sly, servile and friendly. Do you realize Heine called me a submissive and emaciated tailor! Do you remember all those dark, dusty hotel rooms?

The Shadow: But you wanted to be loved.

Andersen: Oh yes, loved. Not worshipped! I paid the price there. But you won't get me, do you understand. I'll go on, everything will be utilized to the last drop. I'll mass-produce pure ether, I'll have the driving power of a locomotive.

The Shadow: Dreamer!

Andersen: Oh yes, a dreamer. Give me a pen and I'll write it down for you, I'm good at that. What do you want to know? Would you like to hear about the coming century? Listen! In centuries to come, they will fly on the wings of steam through the air and across the ocean! America's young citizens will visit Europe, the cradle of memory and imagination. Airships will arrive, full of travellers, their speed faster than by sea. Electro-magnetic cables below the oceans of the world have already heralded their arrival. The passengers are still sleeping, they don't want to be woken up until they reach England. Here they'll set foot on Europe's soil in Shakespeare's country as it's called by the spiritual brotherhood, by others the cradle of politics and mechanization. One whole day will be spent here, then a speedy trip through the Channel tunnel to France. Following this, a voyage by steamboat to Spain, Italy, Greece, Germany and Scandinavia. "There's a lot to be seen in Europe!",

says the young American, "And we've done it all in eight days".

The Shadow: You're making it up.

Andersen: I'm dreaming. And would you be so kind as to let me dream in peace! (*Withdraws with a slight bow*) As you wish, but we'll meet again.

You won't get rid of me that easily. (*Exits*)

*Andersen lies down on the bed and closes his eyes. Brief pause. A person in a simple costume enters. He's hiding a sack behind his back.*

Andersen: (*Still with closed eyes*) What! Aren't you drowned yet?!

Little Claus: Oh yes, you threw me into the lake over half an hour ago!

Andersen: But where did you get all that lovely cattle from?

Little Claus: They're sea cows! I'll tell you the whole story, and by the way, thank you for drowning me, because I'm on top of the world and as rich as can be. I tell you, it was just like the time you killed my horse and grandmother. It always turns out for the best. I was so afraid when I lay in the sack, the wind whipped around my ears as you threw me off the bridge and into the cold water. I fell to the bottom straight away but I didn't hurt myself, because the softest, finest grass grew down there. There I lay, the bag was opened up immediately by the most delightful virgin you can imagine in spanking white clothes and with a green garland around her wet hair. She took my hand and said, "Are you Little Claus? I'll give you some cattle to start with! One mile up the road you'll find a whole drove, they're yours". I happened to notice that the river was a major waterway for mermen and mermaids. Right from the bottom they navigate the lake up to the shore, where it ends. It was so beautiful, with flowers and fresh grass, the fish swimming in the water, splashing around my ears. Beautiful people walking the banks and verges.

Andersen: Then why have you joined us again? You wouldn't have, if it was so pleasant down there!

Little Claus: Well actually it's rather clever of me. You heard yourself that the mermaid told me that one mile up the road there's a whole drove waiting for me. When she says road, she means the river, for it's the only place she knows. But I know that the river winds hither and hither. Then it's much quicker to climb up on land. This way I save half a mile and reach my sea cows much quicker!

Andersen: You're such a happy man. I believe I too will be blessed when I get to the bottom of the river.

Little Claus: Probably, but I can't carry you down to the river in my sack for you're too heavy for me. If you were to go down there yourself and creep into the sack, I would throw you down there with the greatest of

pleasure.

Andersen: Thank you very much. But if I don't get any sea cows when I arrive there, I'll give you a good hiding, I assure you.

Little Claus: *(Takes the sack and goes into the centre of the circle of light)* Well, fine. Good, I'm standing here ready by the river.

Andersen: Then make it snappy or I'll give you a beating.

*Little Claus opens the sack.*

Andersen: Am I down there yet.

Little Claus: Yes, fine, very good.

Andersen: Put a stone in the sack for otherwise I'm afraid it won't reach the bottom!

Little Claus: But it's already in there.

*Little Claus takes the sack and throws it into the dark. He stands for a while looking into the darkness.*

Little Claus: I'm afraid he won't find any cattle. *(Exits)*

*Andersen pulls the eiderdown over his head. Blackout. Inciting music. Brief pause. Landlord enters with candelabra in hand alight. The candles cast long shadows in the dimness.*

The Landlord: You called. *(Andersen does not reply)* Did you call me sir?

Andersen: *(Slowly appears)* Oh yes.

The Landlord: I have a candle for you here. It's so dark.

Andersen: I'm all by myself.

The Landlord: Maybe you'd should step outside for a while.

Andersen: There are so many things I would like to do.

The Landlord: I'm sure you'll be successful.

Andersen: The voices!

The Landlord: Voices?

Andersen: They're in my head and won't go away.

The Landlord: I don't understand those sort of things. Maybe you should go for a breath of fresh air.

Andersen: But I've been outdoors already.

The Landlord: Oh, I see. It was just a suggestion, sorry.

Andersen: It's this sweltering heat. One day I'll wake up and find myself black as a negro.

The Landlord: Oh?

Andersen: When you're from the north, it's difficult to accustom oneself to the heat, do you understand? It has a strange effect on one. It's as if you don't know yourself anymore, and knowing yourself is important.

The Landlord: You're probably right.

Andersen: Everything seems to be so strange and enchanting.

The Landlord: I haven't noticed.

Andersen: In the evenings everything becomes so lively, stars appear in the lovely clear sky, everybody moves into the streets, thousands of lights are burning, one is making a speech and another is singing.

Church bells are ringing.

The Landlord: Yes, when you put it that way. I've never had the time to concern myself with such matters. So many strange people come here. Artists and other oddballs. Now that you mention it, I'm not too partial to your Shadow here.

Andersen: My Shadow!

The Landlord: Yes, just take a look.

Andersen: Oh that, it's of no significance. It's so small at midday that it needs to unfurl in the evenings. It's just stretching chatting every now and again. I'm trying to get used to it.

The Landlord: All I'm saying is that it makes me uncomfortable.

Andersen: It won't do any harm, I promise. Are you listening?

The Landlord: Yes, yes.

Andersen: I awoke the other night, my balcony door was open, a breeze lifted the drapes and I caught a glimpse of the opposite balcony. The flowers were a blaze with the most beautiful colours and in their midst stood a lovely maiden - for a moment it was as if she shone so brightly, I had to shade my eyes - in a single leap I stood in front of the curtains, but... The girl had vanished, the light had faded and the flowers looked as they always did.

The Landlord: It must have been a dream.

Andersen: The door over there was ajar and I heard music coming from within. It was so delicately exquisite and enchanting, if you understand what I mean?

*The Landlord shakes his head.*

Andersen: Don't you believe me? Then tell me what you think!

The Landlord: It's difficult to say. First your shadow and now your weird behaviour. Perhaps you're alone too much, yes that's probably what's wrong. You're on your own too much and then things start getting out of control.

Andersen: You heard the music yourself, didn't you?

The Landlord: It depends on what you mean by heard...

Andersen: Well, either you heard something or you didn't.

The Landlord: (*Abruptly, suspiciously*) What are you driving at? You are trying to make a fool of me, are you?

Andersen: No, no, not at all.

The Landlord: I won't stand for it. In this town we see all kinds of people, all kinds of outsiders running around in the heather trying to look important. But we keep an eye on them, yes sir, we keep an eye on them...

Andersen: *(Interrupting)* I can't see why...

The Landlord: Let me finish!

Andersen: There's no reason to...

The Landlord: The world is such a horrible place, can't you see, you can't trust anyone. Everyone's showing and pushing each other, everyone is backbiting, having a go at each other, trying to put each other down. Those at the bottom want up and those that are up want down. If someone has a little pimple behind his ear, a little innocent pimple, then he's ridiculed for it.

Andersen: That's not the way it is.

The Landlord: Oh yes, it is and now I must bid you farewell.

Andersen: You've forgotten something.

The Landlord: I don't think so.

Andersen: You heard the music, didn't you?

The Landlord: The music?

Andersen: You heard the strange music, too?

The Landlord: Oh yes, it's dreadfully boring.

Andersen: Boring?

The Landlord: It's as if someone were practicing the same piece over and over again. "I must get it out", the player seems to say "but it never comes out, no matter how long he plays. And now I must bid you adieu. *(Exits)*

*Silence. Inciting cello music once again. A column of light, outside the circle of light. Andersen sees it and moves in the direction of the light, stopping at the edge of the circle.*

Andersen: I believe my shadow is the only living thing over there.

*(Pause)* See how it has sat down among the flowers. The balcony door is ajar. Now I would like it to go inside. .. and take a look around... and then come back and tell me what it had seen. Yes it ought to earn its keep. *(Shouting louder)* Now go inside. Do you hear me? Go, yes, go!

The Shadow: *(From a distance)* Should I?

Andersen: Go on. But remember to come back again!

*The Shadow goes through the light and disappears into the dark. Andersen returns to the bed, takes a few drops, lies down and dozes off. Brief pause. The Shadow emerges wearing a top hat, boots and a cape. Andersen doesn't notice him. The Shadow claps his hands twice.*

Andersen: (*Wakes with a start*) Come in!

The Shadow: It's me.

Andersen: To whom do I have the pleasure of speaking?

The Shadow: I thought as much, you don't recognize me now that I have a body of my own and clothes. Can't you see it's your old Shadow. Things have gone well for me since we parted. I am now a man of fortune and want to purchase my independence.

Andersen: Is it really you?

The Shadow: I saw everything. I'll tell you all about it, but in view of my knowledge and position I must insist that you give up that tone of familiarity.

Andersen: But of course, sorry! Now, please, tell me what you saw behind the balcony door?

The Shadow: I didn't go all the way in. I stayed in the ante-room. But I had a good view and I saw everything.

Andersen: What did you see?

The Shadow: You probably won't understand. Believe me, I saw everything. You could not have stayed there and remained a human being. But it made a human being out of me! I quickly got to know my inner most nature, my kinship with poetry. Living with you I never gave it much thought. Yes, I was always larger at sunrise and sunset and in the moonlight. I was even more noticeable than you were. I wasn't aware of my nature of that time. That did not come until I was in the ante-room and then I became a human being. When I came out, you'd already left. I was ashamed to walk around as I was. I needed boots, clothes and all the other trimmings that make a man what he is. I lived among people and saw what other people could not see. It's really a base world and I wouldn't be human if it weren't so desirable. People feared me so much for I knew their evil ways and yet they were fond of me. They showered me with honours, clothes and fortune.

Andersen: How strange!

The Shadow: How are things going? You don't look too well.

Andersen: Oh, I've been trying to write poetry about truth, virtue and beauty. But nobody cares to hear about such things. Most of the time, it's like casting pearls before swine. I'm so despondent.

The Shadow: You look a mere Shadow of your former self.

Andersen: Yes, so I've been told.

The Shadow: I live the good life, as one ought to. You've never been able to do that. You ought to travel, you know. I'm leaving soon myself. Perhaps you'd care to join me. It would be nice with a travelling

companion. Perhaps you'd come as my shadow. I'd pay the expenses.

Andersen: Now you're going too far.

The Shadow: I don't think so. Travelling would do you a world of good.

If you would consent to being my shadow, I'd pay all your expenses.

And all you'd have to do is write an account of the journey and entertain me as we move along.

Andersen: Now, that's the limit.

The Shadow: That's the way of the world.

*Music.*

Andersen: Now that we're travelling companions and share the same childhood, shouldn't we get on closer speaking terms?

The Shadow: I'm afraid I must insist that you continue to treat me with respect. But I don't mind dropping the formalities with you. Then we meet halfway.

Andersen: The cheek of it!

The Shadow: What did you say?

Andersen: Oh nothing, nothing at all. *(Pause)* Where are we?

*Voices in conversation. The Shadow is leading Andersen by the arm.*

Andersen: Where are you leading us?

The Shadow: The public baths. Make by beard grow.

*Woman enters.*

The Shadow: Be quiet! Stay in the background. It's the Princess.

Woman: Oh it's you. I've heard so much about you. People tell me you're here to try and grow a beard. But I know better. You're here because you don't cast a shadow.

Andersen: Your Royal Highness must have recovered considerably. I seem to remember that your problem was that you saw too clearly. You have been cured of that now, I see.

Woman: Do you really think so?

The Shadow: Haven't you seen the character that is always following me. Ordinary people have ordinary shadows. I like to think of myself as a bit out of the ordinary. Many people dress their servants in finer clothes than themselves. I have allowed my shadow to assume the appearance of an ordinary human being. I've even given him a shadow to complete the illusion. It cost me a fortune, but I have a weakness for the exclusive.

*Cello music.*

Woman: I'd like a dance with you, I think. You seem to be an interesting sort of person.

The Shadow: My pleasure!

*They dance.*

Woman: You dance divinely. Do you know my country?

The Shadow: Oh yes. I know everything about your country. The land of minarets, fountains and mosques. The men wear white caftans. You dance the sabre dance and mirror yourselves in the coral blue ocean.

Woman: You certainly have a way with words. I think I'm falling in love with you.

The Shadow: Thank you.

Woman: You dance wonderfully, but are you knowledgeable? Do you know what goodness is?

The Shadow: (*Hesitating*) I...

Woman: Ah, got you!

The Shadow: That's mere childhood knowledge. Even my shadow over there can answer that. He has been following our conversation. But beware he has aspirations to become a human being.

Woman: Ah, - I like that.

*Goes up to Andersen, who bows.*

Woman: Do you know what goodness is? Do you know the difference between a person on the outside and the inside?

Andersen: Goodness can be compared to a shy young girl. It emanates humility. It doesn't want to be noticed for its own sake but for its deeds. Goodness is as patient as an old, wise man and as impatient as a horse without a rider. As unobtainable as the water in a hot spring. Goodness enhances people as does the glow of a peach.

Woman: I approve. It must be wonderful to have such a wise shadow.

*(Exit)*

*Music.*

The Shadow: Listen my good friend! Now that I've grown powerful and happy I want to do you a favour. You must always stay with me at the castle, drive with me in my royal chariot and have one hundred crowns a year. But you must allow everyone to address you as Shadow. You must never admit to ever having been a human being and once a year while I am sitting on the balcony in the sunshine being watched by all my subjects, you may lie at my feet as befits a shadow. I am to marry the princess, the wedding will take place this evening.

Andersen: No, this is monstrous! I won't - I will not. It would be deluding the whole country and the princess too. I know perfectly well what's going on. I am the human being and you are the Shadow.

Shadow: Nobody believes that. Be sensible or I'll call the guard.

Andersen: I'll go straight to the princess! I'll leave first and you're to be arrested. Guard!

*The Landlord enters.*

The Landlord: Yes, sir.

Andersen: Take him away. Don't just stand there. Away with him!

The Landlord: Yes, of course, sir.

*The Landlord grabs Andersen and drags him brutally around the circle, throwing him down on the bed. He marches out.*

*Woman enters.*

Woman: You're trembling. You mustn't fall ill now that we're to be married.

Andersen: I have experienced something dreadful. Just think - Oh poor shadow's brain can't take the strain - just imagine, my shadow has gone mad, he thinks he's human and that I - can you believe it?- he thinks that I am his shadow!

Woman: That's shocking! You have locked him away, haven't you?

Andersen: Yes, of course, but I'm afraid he'll never recover.

Woman: Poor Shadow, he's very unhappy. It would be doing him a favour to put him out of his misery and free him from the last remnants of his life. When I think about it, it will probably be necessary to do it in the most discrete way possible.

The Shadow: It will be painful for me because he was a faithful servant.

*(Sighs)*

Woman: You are so noble.

*Many voices. Canon fire. Soldiers standing to attention. A crowd shouting hurrah. The sounds stop abruptly. Andersen suddenly sits up in bed in the midst of the silence. A man's scream is heard and Andersen opens his mouth as if it comes from him and continues to sit in this position. He puts his hands to his head. Woman enters with an apron on. Dressed simply.*

Woman: Did you call?!

Andersen: They have murdered me. They killed me in the castle dungeon with one single blow.

Woman: *(Goes right up to him, pushes him down on the bed in a firm manner)*

Now you really must lie down.

*Andersen lies down, the woman moves away; he gets halfway up again.*

Andersen: That's reward you get for being a respectable person. A fawning dog. Do you understand what I'm saying. *(Little pause. Andersen puts his hands to his head)* Strange. Oh, my head. Where am I?

Woman: In your bed, Mr. Andersen

*Andersen staggers out of bed and stands shakily onto the bedpost. Coughs. Stands for a while staring at the bed.*

Andersen: How've you made this bed? I told you yesterday that the

sheet should be completely flat!

Woman: You said nothing of the sort.

Andersen: And you even contradict me. I won't have it.

*The woman goes up to the bed and starts to make it.*

Andersen: I can feel every single crease. You've no idea what it's like.

*The woman shakes her head and finishes the bed. She takes special pains to smoothe the sheet.*

Woman: There you are!

Andersen: And now you want me to lie down and die. Is that it?

*Woman shakes her head.*

Andersen: Is that all you can do - shake your head?

Woman: Yes.

Andersen: Who are you?

Woman: I am the maid. You employed me two weeks ago.

Andersen: Did I?

*Woman nods.*

Andersen: I don't remember.

*Woman helps him into bed, puts a blanket over him. She's about to leave when he grabs her arm and forces her to sit on the edge of the bed.*

Andersen: Now stay and listen to me.

*Woman looks at him reluctantly and shakes her head.*

Andersen: Don't you like me?

Woman: I don't know:

Andersen: You've got beautiful eyes. You're not the person you pretend to be.

Woman: Who should I be?

Andersen: I think you're a dancer.

*The woman shakes her head.*

Andersen: There you go shaking your head again. It doesn't suit you.

*(He suddenly begins to cough again - a violent coughing fit which forces him up, the woman holds him, gently patting him on the back. The fit gradually subsides and they remain sitting together, she's still holding him)* I open up and God closes me. It's the ultimate truth. What do I care if they erect a statue in my honour, or whatever they call it. Have you heard about it? The sculptors don't know me at all. I'm supposed to have children on my lap, that's the way they'd like to see me, then they won't have to take me seriously. Nobody takes anybody seriously. Death is the only one who does. He laughs at my generosity and love. He has seen me through. The only thing left for me now is to die. First you have to face constipation, then difficulty relieving yourself, then a tube up your penis; what a

wonderful fairytale having a tube up your penis! (*He bends over his sex and straightens up with an expression of distaste*) It's so painful... Is this all we are capable of, have we made so little progress, those of us who dream of dancers, magnificent gardens and great changes... The other day I was given castor oil which gave me diarrhoea which seeped out and soiled my clothes. I had to have a clean sheet, everything was in such a mess. The pain was intolerable. There I lay like a nobody, smelling, no stinking and then someone laughed. I'm sure it was Death. He had me in his grasp.

*The woman dabs his forehead with a cloth.*

Woman: (*Smiling*) You are so funny.

Andersen: Do you think so?

Woman: And annoying.

Andersen: Annoying... Oh yes, (*Savouring his words*) annoying. Do you really think so?

Woman: Yes.

Andersen: I can't help it. It's my age. It's rather like having a vulture sit on your shoulder and hack away your flesh.

Woman: Nothing less?

Andersen: Light, cascades of light, illuminating you from within and without. You feel translucent as a ragged cloud. One moment a child in a perfumed garden, the next a mermaid, then you see your own wrinkled face in the sunlight. You start to long for.

Woman: Longing?

Andersen: A longing for the past and the future. A little bird outside your window is enough to set you going. A bird disappearing into the blue.

*Andersen coughs again. The woman dabs his brow.*

Woman: I'm your sister.

*Andersen looks at her suspiciously.*

Woman: I'm the one you didn't like being seen with - the one you thought you could get rid of by occasionally giving her money.

Andersen: (*Agitated*) Yes, but... how...

*The woman strokes his hair.*

Woman: There, there, it doesn't matter. I'm not the sort to bear a grudge. Don't give it a thought. I like you all the same and besides, I died years ago. I've only come back to take care of you. It's time for your morphine and the barber has arrived - he's waiting for you in the hall. He came earlier this morning.

*She rises and before she leaves the circle she suddenly assumes a pose. She then*