

Viktor Gitin

THE TESTING OF A WIZARD

12+

Viktor Gitin

The Testing of a Wizard

http://www.litres.ru/pages/biblio_book/?art=67085340

SelfPub; 2022

Аннотация

This play was written twenty years ago. Over the years, it has been performed many times in Russian theatres and youth art studios. Ten years ago, music and lyrics were written for this play. It has become a wonderful fantasy musical. The play has now been translated into English. The play will be of interest to anyone who is fond of fantasy literature, modern drama, social psychology, and philosophy.

Viktor Gitin

The Testing of a Wizard

Characters

QUEEN – The ageing widow, quarrelsome and nagging ruler of the country.

FADRIUS – Court Wizard, who is losing his magical powers to old age, also, Gelo's teacher.

GELO – Young apprentice of Fadrius, awaiting to be accepted into Wizardry.

LIZY – Lady in waiting, Gelo's fiancé

HERMIT – Lonely man, living in the mountains away from the world and the people in it.

CANNIBAL – Man-eating robber, who lives in the woods, near a highway.

FISHERMAN – Happy man, living on an island with his family.

VEDALIA – A witch and the owner of 'Store of Temptations', which entices people and sells them different temptations in return for part of their souls.

VOICE OF THE KEEPER OF THE MIRACLE.

* * * * *

Act One

Scene One.

The hall of the Queen's palace. A mixture between a wizard's study and a palace's hall. There is a table with papers, books, and retorts on the stage. On the side of the stage there hangs a big replica hourglass symbolizing the motion of time.

On Stage there are Gelo and Lizy. Gelo is attentively shifting through papers and at the same time reading books. Lizy who is bored, walks from armchair to settee humming to herself. Then she quietly sneaks up to Gelo.

LIZY – Gelo, you are so clever and well read. Why do you need to know even more, than you already do? (*Whilst trying to play with his hair*)

GELO – (*Displeased*) Stop it, Lizy. You are getting in the way. You do know that I have my test soon. Before I can become a real Wizard.

LIZY – So What? Is it really that scary? Probably not as scary as the smile on the Queen's face in the morning!

GELO – Nonsense! I cannot imagine the things Fadrius will conjure up for me. But certainly, it will be a very serious test. And elder Wizards, who Fadrius especially invited, will judge it. Only then will I be raised to the rank of a real Wizard.

LIZY – But you already know some magical spells. You can

heal various wounds, create fire, and freeze water. If necessary, you could stop and freeze beasts or evil men, among various things, which I cannot remember. For our future family life and welfare, it is quite enough.

GELO. (*Unhappy, that he is being disturbed*) But it is not enough to be raised to the rank of a Wizard!

LIZY – (*Playfully*) Why do you need this rank when you have me?

GELO – Lizy, how can you say that! It's two different things!

LIZY – I am a thing?!

GELO – You know what I mean. You know perfectly well that I love you, when the time comes, we will marry, and then we'll be together...

LIZY – I want it sooner.

GELO – What do you want sooner?

LIZY – (*Coquettishly*) Well you know ... be together.

GELO – Be patient. As soon as I become a Wizard, we'll definitely be together.

LIZY – (*Upset and displeased*) But to get married you don't need to be a Wizard! Other people get along fine without a rank, get married and have children. Or cannot you do it without magic...

GELO – (*Very displeased*) I can do anything! Stop this, Lizy!

LIZY – Do you really need to be a Wizard to be a real man?

GELO – What do you mean?!

LIZY – (*Sadly*) Nothing much...

GELO – (*Irritated*) I can't get married until I get tested to become a Wizard, because a Wizard is not an ordinary person. And by the rules, when you agree to marry me you have to fully understand, who you are marrying: An ordinary citizen or to someone whose life is devoted to magic and sorcery. So, if I get married before my testing, I will break the rules and I won't be able to become a Wizard.

LIZY – Just don't get cross. I didn't want to upset you. It's just that I love you. And you don't even notice that I'm next to you.

GELO – Yes, you're rather hard to miss! It is easier to miss a storm or a hurricane, than trying to escape your loving capriciousness.

LIZY – But Gelo I also need attention. But you're just stuck in your books, and don't leave them for days. Why don't you look at me for just a minute?

GELO – (*Wanting to reconcile*) Lizy, you know! Everything I'm doing is not for myself. My goal – is not just to become a Wizard but a truly great one. Teacher Fadrius thinks I have everything you need to become one. But for that I need to work and study hard.

LIZY – But life is so long you will have time to learn everything you need. But sometimes you just have to take a break. To live a simple and non-magical life. To love me... just a little bit.

GELO – Lizy, don't talk like that. I always love you. But I have responsibilities. The current situations in the kingdom are

not going very well. Fadrius is very old and is losing his powers. And he cannot help out the Queen, like he used to. I need to hurry so that I can support my teacher and help the kingdom.

LIZY – So that's why you want to read all those knowledgeable books?

GELO – That's one of the reasons.

LIZY – (*Coquettishly*) Aren't you afraid that we will get old before you will read all of them? And then neither you nor me will want anything.

GELO – (*Laughing*) Only if you turn out to be a nagging and quarrel-some old woman like our Queen. In this case I won't be needing anything from you.

LIZY – But do you really need anything from me now?

GELO – (*Putting his hands around her waist*) Yes, I do! A kiss for example.

LIZY – Do you think you deserve one?

GELO – Am I guilty of something?

LIZY – You men are all so self-confident! You're assured that just because you haven't done anything bad, you can get everything you want. But now you will have to earn it! (*Runs to the side*) You want a kiss – catch me!

GELO – (*Joyfully*) You think I won't catch you?

LIZY – Only if you don't use your magic!

GELO – And here I don't even need it.

They Run around the stage. Gelo tries to catch Lizy. She avoids

being caught.

LIZY – You won't catch me!

GELO – I will!

Gelo catches Lizy, hugs her and they kiss passionately. Fadrius walks on stage. At first, he looks at them puzzled, then he walks to the other side. They don't seem to notice him. He shows a rainbow of expressions, from a smile to a frown. And then starts to cough very loudly. Lizy and Gelo are startled and move away from each other.

GELO – (*Awkwardly, moves from one foot to another*) S-S-Sorry, teacher... We didn't hear you come in... We were ... just....

FADRIUS – I saw you – just!

LIZY – (*Looking sheepishly down*) If I'm not needed here, I think I'd rather go ...

FADRIUS – Don't stay on my account!

LIZY – Thanks. (*Running off*)

FADRIUS – I hope, what I saw wasn't the only thing you were doing while I was away?

GELO – Of course it wasn't, teacher. I re-read carefully the manuscript of «Great Magical Achievements». And learned two new spells of wind.

FADRIUS – Wind? Perhaps, that's why all your feeling and

thoughts are all over the place!

GELO – Teacher, forgive me. I was distracted just for a few minutes. Before that I was working really hard with your tasks.

FADRIUS – Don't defend yourself. A Wizard who gets distracted for even one minute is not a Wizard at all. Those who distract him can use him as a weapon.

GELO – But Lizy is not an enemy! She is the Lady in Waiting of our Queen, and my fiancé.

FADRIUS – That's not the point! The point is, that you could be under somebody's influence. You could become a slave of emotions and feelings. But for a real Wizard, that is intolerable.

GELO – But how can you live without emotions? After all we're humans.

FADRIUS – In the first place we are Wizards! And a Wizard's emotions should be controlled by his mind. And the mind should only be controlled by logic and rationality. And if your mind was to be controlled by someone else, even for just a short moment there could be irreparable damage. You are a Wizard, and in your hands, there lies special powers. And only you should have the power to control them. And nobody else!

GELO – But it's impossible to live like that. It means that you couldn't open yourself to nobody, and you couldn't trust anybody completely...

FADRIUS – Us Wizards are bestowed with many great powers. And it is well known that those who have great powers should have greater responsibilities. We are paying a great price

for our gift.

GELO – Teacher, but Lizy and I love each other.

FADRIUS – Get that rubbish out of your head! You shouldn't love anybody. That's the price for gaining such a power. Love is only permitted to normal people. Love is a sign of weakness. Love is forgiveness of mistakes. You are supposed to be strong and wise. But the strong and wise are not permitted to make mistakes and be weak.

GELO – But how can I create goodness without love?

FADRIUS – Goodness – is a concept of relativity.

GELO – I don't understand what you mean?

FADRIUS – What might be good in someone's eyes might be bad and harmful in another's. A fire in a furnace of a blacksmith is goodness and a blessing. A fire in a larder where food and vegetables are kept will be destructive and damaging.

GELO – Then how can one distinguish, one from the other?

FADRIUS – In time I will explain everything. But for now, remember the most important thing. When you become a real Wizard, you will gain great power. And a great power doesn't need emotions. Power demands a strong mind!

GELO – What about Lizy? You mean I will never be allowed to marry her?

FADRIUS – Of course, I wouldn't recommend you being tied down by marriage for the rest of your life. But if you can't help yourself – marry then. But not under this stupid thing called 'love'. Do it under the name of the basic instinct to reproduce.

Understand?

GELO – In all honesty – No...

FADRIUS – Don't worry, with years you'll smarten up. In the worst-case scenario, you will grow up and understand it. But now there are more important things at hand.

GELO – I'm listening to you attentively, teacher.

FADRIUS – In a moment the Queen will come here. Quickly clean up after yourself, and wait close by, while I talk with Her Majesty. You will be needed soon.

Gelo starts to clean up the papers on the table. The Queen comes on stage. With her appearance Gelo bows and goes off stage.

FADRIUS – I'm glad to see you are in good health, my Queen.

QUEEN – What good health, Fadrius! The treasury is empty! Things are going from bad to worse!

FADRIUS – Does that reflect on your health?

QUEEN – Very much so! Because of everything I have a morbid migraine.

FADRIUS – You need to unravel and have a good time.

QUEEN – With what money?! It's over half a year since the last time I thrown a ball. I haven't ordered a new dress all week. I have nothing to wear into town.

FADRIUS – Your Majesty, you already have a beautiful wardrobe of dresses. There are three thousand three hundred and

twenty-seven dazzling dresses, for all thinkable occasions.

QUEEN – What are you talking about! You think I should go about in old rags? How can you all be so cruel to your Queen!

FADRIUS – But of course not Your Majesty! We all love you. I'm just thinking that the kingdom can survive without new dresses and balls. What is more important is that, by my calculations this year we will have a drought. And a bad harvest would destroy our peasants.

QUEEN – Stop trying to scare me. You're telling me that I might starve!

FADRIUS – Not you. But it will be hard for your subjects to survive the drought.

QUEEN – Well do something then, after all you're a Wizard.

FADRIUS – I'm sorry Your Majesty, but there is nothing I can do.

QUEEN – Why? It is so easy. One magic spell and we will have good weather.

FADRIUS – The matter is, my Queen I have become too old. I do not possess the magic power that is needed to do anything...

QUEEN – Here we go, you're upsetting me again! My migraine is coming back, shame on you!

FADRIUS – Your Majesty, I want you to know the truth. My powers are deteriorating.

QUEEN – I don't want to hear that! You have to do something. I can't lead this disgusting life anymore. I'm sick and tired of all the problems, which my ministers are throwing at me.

FADRIUS – But Your Majesty after the death of the King you are now the head of state, and you should rule the country.

QUEEN – It's always done something, something, something... Why do I owe everyone something, and they don't owe me anything?

FADRIUS – That's the burden of power. A head of state is not only about the right to rule, but the responsibility for the country's affairs and all the people in it.

QUEEN – And who will take care of me?!

FADRIUS – Us, your beloved servants.

QUEEN – I don't feel it! All that I see is your desire to upset me more and more each day.

FADRIUS – (*Disheartened*) Your Majesty, just today I was going to tell you all about my new plan. It is possible; if it succeeds it will solve all our problems.

QUEEN – And I will be able to throw a dazzling ball at last?

FADRIUS – (*Heavy sigh*) Yes, I hope you will.

QUEEN – Fadrius! If your plan will not help me to find money to buy new outfits, then why do I need it? What's the point?!

FADRIUS – There are more important things in the Kingdom than balls and new dresses.

QUEEN – Don't talk such nonsense! I thought you were a smart Wizard. But I guess I was wrong about you.

FADRIUS – I won't argue with you. But anyway, let me explain my plan.

QUEEN – Oh! How boring and frustrating this is... Ok, I'm listening.

FADRIUS – My dear Queen, I have been thinking for a very long time, what can help our Kingdom from the disastrous events, which preceded us after the Kings death. I wanted to find one solution to all the problems. For days and nights, I was restless trying to find the answer...

QUEEN – Fadrius, can you get to the point. I feel my migraine coming back.

FADRIUS – I think I have found the answer. The only thing that will help us is a **MIRACLE**. There is a mention of it in a very old magical manuscript. This **MIRACLE** is hidden very far away, near the edge of the earth.

QUEEN – What is this?

FADRIUS – It is a certain magical substance able to grant the wishes of the beholder. But unfortunately, only one wish is permitted.

QUEEN – (*Disappointed*) Only one! That's a disgrace. I've already accumulated a thousand different wishes.

FADRIUS – That's not the biggest problem my Queen. I think I will be able to create a formula that can grant all the thousand wishes you have. Especially since most of your wishes are not very varied or original.

QUEEN – If this is true, why haven't you brought this **MIRCALE** to my palace?

FADRIUS – That's my biggest problem. I cannot do this.

QUEEN – Here we go! You're trying to upset me again.

FADRIUS – The problem is that my powers aren't what they used to be. And not everyone can get to the place where the MIRACLE is kept. But even if one can overcome all the hurdles and get there, there is still the problem to actually obtain it. The only one who can possess this MIRACLE is someone with a pure soul and elevated intentions.

QUEEN – Someone like me?

FADRIUS – (*With light irony and sarcasm*) I'm afraid neither you nor me will be suitable because we're not young and innocent as we used to be. Our souls are not pure enough to possess this MIRACLE.

QUEEN – Nonsense! My soul is pure and untainted, like a child's tears. Just because I helped my mother in-law to an early grave, surely that doesn't mean that I'm a sinner? That's how everyone acts. And it wasn't my fault that my brother in-law walked into a cage with tigers; I just informed my husband that his brother was plotting against him. I don't know why he thought it was a good idea to go into the cage with a hungry predator, when he was drunk. And after all I'm a woman! And women are forgiven for being mischievous. So, after all I'm aloud to be in control of this MIRACLE.

FADRIUS – I'm sorry Your Majesty but the Wizard's law is very strict. If your soul wasn't pure enough and your intentions weren't elevated enough you could die just by touching it.

QUEEN – (*Scared*) Then I don't need any miracles!

FADRIUS – That’s why I want to send my apprentice to get this MIRACLE. He is still young and pure enough. You saw him when you came in.

QUEEN – Oh, that nice young man. But what do we get out of it? If he gets the MIRACLE, then I won’t be able to use it?!

FADRIUS – He will obtain the MIRACLE so that he can pass the test in order to become a real Wizard. Gelo will bring the MIRACLE to the palace. And I with his help will formularies this MIRACLE. Only then will Gelo become a real Wizard.

QUEEN – And then I will be able to get new dresses and throw extravagant balls every week?

FADRIUS – (*Looking at her with pity*) I should think, much more than that.

QUEEN – You’re not as stupid as you make out to be, Fadrius! How crafty you are. You want someone else to get the MIRACLE for you. But remember the important thing is that all my wishes come true. Don’t waste the entire MIRACLE for the Kingdoms stupid affairs, so that nothing will be left for me.

FADRIUS – Don’t worry Your Majesty, If Gelo brings back the MIRACLE I will try to use it wisely.

QUEEN – Well then, call your apprentice. I personally want to see his departure.

Fadrius walks to the side and calls Gelo. Gelo walks in and humbly waits for further instructions.

FADRIUS – Gelo! You have a great privilege. I, as your teacher have chosen your test so that you can become a real Wizard. You'll have a long and dangerous journey. There you will find a magical substance called the MIRACLE. With its help, one can achieve any magnificent magic.

GELO – (*Excitedly*) Even to make all of humanity happy?

FADRIUS – (*Unhappy that he was interrupted*) Perhaps, even that.

QUEEN – What nonsense! A good subject would want to make his Queen happy first.

FADRIUS – Your Majesty, that's exactly what Gelo meant. (*Talking to Gelo again*) Here I have prepared instructions and extracts from old magical manuscripts. They will help you find the way and acquire the MIRACLE. (*Gives him instructions and extracts*) You must go straight away.

QUEEN – Yes, yes. I'm tired of waiting for my wishes to come true. I have too many of them. That's why you should hurry.

GELO – Can I say goodbye to my fiancé?

FADRIUS – Your Majesty I think you would be magnanimous to let the young ones to have a kiss goodbye. In our Kingdom you never restricted anyone to love one another.

QUEEN – (*Unhappy*) You use my kindness so skillfully. Ok then – Say goodbye, but not too long. (*Tired and coquettishly*) Everybody knows how easy it is to get along with me. One just has to agree with me. Show me to my quarters, Fadrius.

Everybody walks off stage Fadrius and the Queen to one side and Gelo hurriedly goes to the other. There is a sound of a gong.

Music plays. Blackout.

Fadrius comes on stage. He turns over the hourglass symbolizing that some time has passed. Then sits at the table and shifts through some papers. Lizy takes the stage. Lizy appears shyly.

LIZY – Dear Wizard, can I ask you something.

FADRIUS – (*Hides grin and pretends to be dissatisfied*) I'm listening, Lizy. What's the matter?

LIZY – Mr. Fadrius, It's been a week since Gelo left. And I'm sick with worry! I don't know what to do with myself...

FADRIUS – So what?! What do you want from me?

LIZY – Can you tell me in all honesty how dangerous his journey is?

FADRIUS – Very dangerous. I'm not even sure if he will be able to complete the task at hand.

LIZY – Then why did you send him on this horrific journey?!

FADRIUS – Well, Lizy it wasn't me who sent him. He chose his own destiny. Gelo wants to become a real Wizard, a great Wizard. And because of this he will suffer many trials and tribulations. This is the first of many. And if you really do love him then you should know the truth.

LIZY – What truth?

FADRIUS – For example, every woman can achieve someone's love, but that doesn't mean that love will last forever.

LIZY – I don't understand you...

FADRIUS – Just because a man tells his woman that he loves her, it doesn't necessarily mean that he loves only her. For every intelligent, creative, energetic man his dedication and love for his work can be greater than his love for a woman. Not all women understand this. Some of these women are even stupid enough to be jealous of a man's work. And in the end, they make themselves and their loved ones unhappy.

LIZY – But how can one compare our love to Gelo's passion and dedication for work?

FADRIUS – Of course you can't! Vocation is more important! That's why you shouldn't get in the way of his vocation. Don't be an obstacle in his work. You want all his attention and love; you want him to belong to you entirely, but for a determined and dedicated man it is impossible. If he doesn't succeed in his work, he will die.

LIZY – Without our love he will die as well.

FADRIUS – (*With a grin*) Possibly, but I doubt it. But without his work he certainly will. Not physically. He will live like a plant. Like withering grass, he will dry up. You can even teach him to take out the rubbish or to knit. But this won't be the real Gelo; this will be his pale shadow. In the end he will drink himself stupid or dumb-down and waste away. Gelo is the kind of man

for whom work is his life. He is a man of duty! Your love is essential to him but it's not enough for his happiness. That's why if you wish him well, never stand between him and his work, his duty and vocation. To be prohibited to do one's vocation is the worst thing for men. And no love can change this. Believe you me. If you mix a barrel of goodness and a barrel of evilness, you wouldn't get two barrels of goodness. You would get two barrels of diluted evilness.

LIZY – I don't want Gelo to be unhappy.

FADRIUS – I believe you. But you have to understand he is open to new ideas and wants changes in his life, but that is because he is still young, not because he is foolish. Don't forget this. And anyway, in my opinion Gelo is too young and inexperienced to get married.

LIZY – So when do you think he will be experienced and old enough?

FADRIUS – When he realizes one shouldn't hurry into marriage.

LIZY – So you're against us getting married?

FADRIUS – I'm against the speed of this matter.

LIZY – Mr. Fadrius! You can judge me, but I have made my decision! I'm going after him. If his journey is as dangerous as you say, I want to be with him. Tell me where he went? I know he needs me. I'll try to help him. You see I love him very much, more than life itself! I can't just sit here and wait, not knowing what is going on with him, where is he?! At this very moment he

might urgently need my help, my support, and my love...

FADRIUS – (*Sighing*) I cannot forbid you to go. And even if I try, you will act on your own account. So do, as you know. But remember what I told you. Help him to succeed with his mission and fulfill his dream, only then can you make him happy. Because his vocation is his destiny!

Music plays. Blackout. Curtains.

* * * * *

Scene Two.

Somewhere in the mountains, inside the cave of Hermit. Gelo lies wounded. He sleeps, though moans and repeats Lizy's name. Hermit is cooking something on a hearth. In the center of the stage there is table and chairs. Gelo regains his consciousness and looks around the cave with bewilderment. Hermit notices this.

HERMIT – Ah, I see you're awake? In a minute I'll give you something to eat.

GELO – Where am I? What happened to me? Who are you? How did I get here?

HERMIT – You've just woken up and you are interrogating me already.

GELO – Sorry, but I don't remember anything. The last thing

I remember is the landslide in the mountains. I was walking along the mountain path, and then all of a sudden rock started falling down...

HERMIT – And from this landslide I rescued you. You were very badly hurt, but luckily, you're still alive. You could have died.

GELO – How long have I been here?

HERMIT – I found you in the morning collecting wood, three days ago.

GELO – Three whole days! I lost three days!

HERMIT – You could have lost your life. Be happy that I found you.

GELO – Thank you very much! You saved my life. But I'm in a hurry. I have a very important matter. And I have wasted so much time!

Gelo tries to get up quickly but grimaces with pain. And with difficulty walks to the table to sit down.

HERMIT – Maybe you should eat first, and regain your strength? And then you can hurry to your worthless matters.

GELO – Why do you say that? You don't even know why and where I am going.

HERMIT – And I don't particularly want to know. And I don't want to know you either.

GELO – Then why did you save me?

HERMIT – To leave someone in the mountains to die is a sin.

GELO – It seems that you are not very hospitable.

HERMIT – Yes, I don't like guests. No matter how much you feed them they always end up drunk. And try to get under your skin or throw all their problems at you. That's why I left people and came to live here.

GELO – Don't you get lonely by yourself? If you don't have no one to talk with, won't you become dull?

HERMIT – Nothing of the sort. Whenever I want to hear something intelligent, I just talk to myself. It saves me from other people's stupidity and idiocy.

GELO – And do you consider stupidity contagious?

HERMIT – No, but the boundaries of stupidity of one man overlaps those who are around him.

GELO – Do you really think the world only consist of stupid people?!

HERMIT – There are many who are just half-stupid, they are even worse. You never know when to deal with them or when to avoid them. And anyway, when a person is stupid, he will remain stupid forever.

GELO – Why?

HERMIT – Because stupidity is not like a woman, it won't leave you for another man.

GELO – You have a very dark view of humanity. They don't always act distortedly on purpose, a lot of the time they just make mistakes.

HERMIT – I agree, its human nature to make mistakes, and they use this quality to their advantage.

GELO – Why do you hate people so much?

HERMIT – But I don't, I'm just indifferent to them. That's just the essential condition of my loneliness.

GELO – But have you always felt that?

HERMIT – Some time ago when I lived in a valley among people. I had a friend; our friendship was the most wonderful thing in the world. I was ready to give him my whole world, myself unconditionally, because a real friendship has no egotism and no boundaries. But my world wasn't interesting enough for him. And I was only needed like an object, which you use and then put on the shelf for the next time. And so, he used me and my friendship, only when he needed it. And then he betrayed me. Threw me away and forgot about me like I was a used handkerchief. I couldn't stand this betrayal. I was young, and apart from his friendship I didn't have anything at all...I decided to die. All my emotions, thoughts, and desires had to disappear. And dissolve in loneliness. And so, I went into the mountains. Since then, I have settled down here. At the end of the day my loneliness is my punishment and burden for me being young and gullible. But my loneliness is also my way to peace in mind and happiness.

GELO – Has your soul really become that stale and gloomy? Just because of your friend's betrayal, you have turned your back on the rest of the world?!

HERMIT – What do you know about my soul, a soul of a lonely man!!! It is covered in wounds like a body of a smallpox sufferer. The soul of a lonely man is unable to create something magnificent, to fly and be joyful! It can only moan and sorrowfully watch the world go by. It doesn't contain love or hatred. The wound of a lonely soul hurts and itches. This itch changes into emptiness and indifference. You want to peel the scab off, but you're afraid, what if it becomes even worse. Any human contact is like a gulp of liquid in a desert, but you never know whether it is water or poison. And because of this you want to drown into an immeasurable sadness...and you're surrounded by anguish and emptiness ... But I don't want to change anything! And I will not!

GELO – And with this heartache you hide yourself here from life and people?

HERMIT – Sometimes I come across people. I go down into the valley to the fair. I wonder among the loud and variegated crowd, peer at their faces and their eyes. Trying to understand what they are thinking and feeling about and why they are hustling and bustling...

GELO – To get lost in a crowd doesn't mean you are a part of them!

HERMIT – I think you're right, that's why I seldom do it.

GELO – And how do you feel when you are doing it?

HERMIT – Lonely, but in a crowd. It is a strange feeling; all around you is commotion, conversations, other people's lives.

I'm at center of it all, but it feels I'm on the outside looking in, at people and myself. I walk around and I don't know who I am, where I am and why I am here. I'm alive but don't have a life...

GELO – It seems you're bogged down in your memories. They drag you like a quagmire. Shake it off! One cannot pity himself all life and condemn others.

HERMIT – What's it to you?!

GELO – I'm trying to understand you because you saved my life.

HERMIT – It's not my fault; I didn't do it on purpose...

GELO – Listen! To live in the past isn't a life but an illusion. Real life is in the present and in dreams about the future.

HERMIT – You're wrong. A person's memories are his treasure, his fortune, and his assets. One can't throw away life experiences out the window, even if they are sad and sorrowful.

GELO – Why throw it away? Stop living in the past, have a look around.

HERMIT – Where?! At the filth of the world? At the people's staleness and meanness?

GELO – I agree not all people are kind and nice. It's hard to live in an imperfect world. But it's even harder to live alone. Why have you doomed yourself to a life of suffering and anguish?

HERMIT – I'm tired of lies and hypocrisy.

GELO – Maybe that's because you never learnt to love.

HERMIT – But I'm capable of friendship. Don't you think sincere friendship is equal to love?

GELO – I don't know. But in my opinion love is superior to virtue and sin, humiliation and retribution, mercy, and compassion. Genuine love is the ability to forgive.

HERMIT – No, I don't need friendship or love anymore. It's burdensome, which means it is dangerous for health. Of course, no one has yet to die of love...and I don't want to be the first one.

GELO – Nonsense! You could still meet and fall in love with a woman who wouldn't betray your feelings.

HERMIT – I doubt it. The only love which won't betray you is the love for yourself. With this love you can live all your life and keep your faith.

GELO – Aren't you even interested in a woman's beauty?

HERMIT – Women are complicated creatures. When I lived in the valley, I almost went crazy trying to understand them. But I guess I tried too hard. That's why when I think of women, I don't tremble with love but instead I get a nervous twitch.

GELO – Looks like you were unlucky. You never met a girl like my Lizy.

HERMIT – You kept talking about her when you were unconscious. What's so special about her?

GELO – My Lizy is so beautiful, naïve, and innocent. Sometimes I think she is a saint.

HERMIT – It seems dangerous, having a saint for a wife. They usually turn their husbands into martyrs. Are you ready for that?

GELO – For Lizy I am ready to do anything! You wouldn't

imagine what a pleasure it is to hug and kiss my fiancé!

HERMIT – Maybe it's even better to kiss another man's fiancé?! Have you tried it?

GELO – I don't need others! I only love Lizy. Whenever I look at the moon, I remember Lizy. When the wind sings in the sky, I hear Lizy's voice. Whenever I smell wildflowers, I can smell Lizy too. Lizy is everything wonderful and beautiful about this world. Lizy is like a mighty river and yet tender like a brook. Lizy is like the warmth of the sun's rays and the freshness of the summer's rain. Lizy is like the brightness of the day and the calmness of the night. And she loves only me. When she's near me I am ready to carry out the most unthinkable things and the most unimaginable heroic act. Whenever we're apart I always remember that she is out there waiting for me, and we will be together soon. And because of that my heart is filled with warmth and pleasure. What could be more wonderful!

HERMIT – If so, why have you left your Lizy, and instead rushing somewhere risking your life?

GELO – This is my duty, my vocation and destiny. The matter is that I'm a future Wizard.

HERMIT – Like I haven't got enough to deal with! Ah, that's why you're so strange.

GELO – No, at the moment I'm only an apprentice. But I hope to become not just a Wizard but a truly great one.

HERMIT – But of course! Young people are always trying to get themselves in the history books. If travelling, it has to be

to the end of the world. And if jumping then to reach the moon.

GELO – You don't understand. It's not about vanity or pride, believe me. I want to become a great Wizard, because my greatest wish is to make all people happy. To an ordinary Wizard this is impossible.

HERMIT – So you want to make people happy. To give something to someone means that you have to take something away from someone else. Who will you take happiness from, so that you could give it away?

GELO – Nobody.

HERMIT – It doesn't work like that.

GELO – My teacher Fadrius sent me on a long journey to get the MIRACLE. With The help of this MIRACLE, it is possible to make any wishes come true.

HERMIT – Now I get it. Your kind is a dying breed.

GELO – What do you mean?

HERMIT – You are a romantic idealist, a dying breed.

GELO – I'm not dying. I just have a slight headache. Apart from that I'm alright.

HERMIT – That's just what you think. In truth you're incurable. You want to make all people in the world happy by putting yourself at risk! To those people who gave each other anguish instead of joy. To those people whom treachery and lies come easier than truth and sincerity, to those people who won't even want to thank you. You're ill!

GELO – It's not true. In every one of us there is kindness.

The problems and burdens of life make us angry. But if you make everyone happy, then the lies, treachery wickedness will disappear. If all the people learn to love each other than the world would become a better place.

HERMIT – You're definitely ill.

GELO – You are the ill one, not me! But the only thing that will save you is not solitude but the return to people. You saved my life. And that means you saved my and Lizy's love. I'm very grateful to you... If you become my friend, your soul will experience the same emotions.

HERMIT – What do you need me for? You already have Lizy!

GELO – It's totally different. Love and friendship are like two sisters. But it's not the same. I cannot give you my love, but I can offer you my sincere friendship. Don't refuse it. Be my best friend.

HERMIT – But do you know how to be a real friend?

GELO – I don't know... I never had any real friends. But I think you could teach me, since you seem to know what it is. I will try very hard. The most important thing about friendship, as in love is what you feel in your soul. And I only feel compassion. You're a good person. I want to offer you the warmth of my heart. I want my joy and happiness to become yours, and your sadness and grief to become mine. I want you to be happy with me... is that not friendship?

HERMIT – You're asking what friendship is. Friendship is when you have someone to share your grief and joy. For that you

have close relatives and neighbors... Friendship is when you have someone to share your dreams, or just be silent with. And it's not a burden. Friendship is a connection of souls and the ability to share emotions despite distance. A friend can support you or disagree with you, but in all sincerity and honesty. Friendship is not allowed to be sly or to be hypocritical. Friendship is always unselfish and not garish. It's not dressed up in bright finery of thoughtless carousing. Friendship is like an everyday job, not loud or noticeable. But it's always a celebration. Even in dire straits it is a medicine for the boundless disappointment in life. It is a safe bay for a shattered soul, wrecked in a storm of life. And at the same time, it is a source of motivation to move ahead in hard times. A sincere friendship, like a genuine love is made in heaven. Only there such a great and elevated feeling could come about, its fills up life not only with meaning, but humanitarianism, because a sense of meaning and purpose also exists in scoundrels. But sincere and genuine friendship is a quality of an honest and kind person. Not everyone in life is destined to have real friends. But everybody could try and be a good friend. You just have to want it though. And remain an honest human being under any circumstances... Even though it is very hard to do so... Perhaps genuine friendship is real happiness and a great miracle itself!

GELO – If you understand all of this, then why don't you return to people, and open up your soul once again...

HERMIT – What for? So, they could spit in it again! I don't

trust anyone.

GELO – Just try!

HERMIT – I tried so many times and all I received was disappointment! Everyone wants to rummage through your soul.

GELO – But if you don't search, you will never find anything. It's the same with love if you never try, you will never fall in love.

HERMIT – But rejection is very hard to take!

GELO – But the joy of acceptance is so wonderful.

HERMIT – Leave me alone! ...

GELO – Imagine the heart of your friend or even a loved one beating in unison with yours! For the sake of that kind of love, won't it be worth the suffering and rejection, because suffering can cleanse your soul.

HERMIT – No! Because suffering makes you depressed.

GELO – You get depressed because you have no faith. If you have faith, then it elevates you and makes you stronger. Believe in love and friendship! Believe in people!

HERMIT – I'm afraid! ...

GELO – Please believe me; I swear I won't betray you...

HERMIT – But you will leave? ...

GELO – So what? You said yourself that a friend is not a possession or a commodity which is kept in a closet. Friendship is not based on distance.

HERMIT – If you go, I will be sad and miss you...

GELO – You could move to the town where I live. Lizy and I could live next to you and be neighbours. I know she would be

happy.

HERMIT – Thank you Gelo, I will think about it...

GELO – And I will wait, definitely come!

HERMIT – And now you will go?

GELO – Sorry, but I have to hurry. I feel better now. Your herbs helped me.

HERMIT – Maybe you could stay a little longer? ... (*with despair*) I understand...

GELO – I'm sorry to leave you.

HERMIT – And I'm sorry to see you leave.

GELO – But we will surely meet again. I know it. After all I'm a Wizard. Till we meet again!

HERMIT – Goodbye ... (*Gelo leaves, and Hermit watches him.*) Till we meet again.... friend.

There is a sound of a gong. Hermit walks up to the hourglass and turns it over.

Music plays. Blackout.

In a cave lies Lizy, exhausted by the long journey. Hermit appears. He shakes off the snow and rain off his clothes. He discovers Lizy sleeping. He walks around her in astonishment trying to understand how she got there. Lizy wakes up and looks at Hermit with fear.

LIZY – Please forgive me... I didn't mean to intrude. The weather is so awful out there... And I'm very tired... But don't worry I haven't done anything bad to your cave. I will leave now.

HERMIT – Don't worry about it. Don't hurry. Strange, how did you get here?

LIZY – Don't think bad about me, I'm a decent girl. I'm looking for my fiancé.

HERMIT – Stranger still, the last woman I saw here in the mountains was never married.

LIZY – How do you know that?

HERMIT – Because of her face and figure! With a face and figure like hers there is no way that she could be married. Even with a big dowry.

LIZY – (*Upset, almost crying*) I just got lost, and didn't know where to go.

HERMIT – Calm down. In a second, I will make something to eat.

LIZY – Thank you, but do not bother... maybe I could help you with something?

HERMIT – Just relax. Instead tell me why your fiancé dumped you?

LIZY – He didn't dump me! He went on a very important and difficult mission. But I waited for a few days and then decided to follow him. I want to help him with his task... We love each other very much. That's why I'm a very happy person.

HERMIT – Just don't say that to every person you meet.

LIZY – Why?

HERMIT – Because people usually take other's failure with a higher regard than their own success. But what leaves an even worse taste in their mouth is other people's happiness.

LIZY – But I want to share my joy with the whole world. Especially since my darling confessed that he loved me.

HERMIT – But don't you know that men's confessions of love are only valid when they are being said, after that they are history.

LIZY – I don't understand.

HERMIT – How should I put this...? You see if a man tells you that he loves you, it doesn't mean that you're the only one.

LIZY – I still don't understand you. I know that he loves only me. And I love only him. You probably say this because you live here alone. And you don't have any friends or loved ones.

HERMIT – No. A few days ago I found a new friend. I trust him. And he is very dear to me.

LIZY – Then you should understand me. My darling is the cleverest man!

HERMIT – My friend is clever too.

LIZY – He is very kind!

HERMIT – Mine too.

LIZY – My fiancé and is honest and brave.

HERMIT – And my friend too.

LIZY – He has a very strong character.

HERMIT – Mine has too.

LIZY – I like his sincere smile very much.

HERMIT – I like it too.

LIZY – And his soul is pure and enlightened...

HERMIT – ...Like a ray of light in darkness!

LIZY – My darlings name is Gelo...

HERMIT – ...My friend too!

LIZY – So he's been here?!

HERMIT – Then you must be Lizy?!

LIZY – Tell me, tell me. How is he?

HERMIT – Everything is fine! He was covered with rocks from a landslide...

LIZY – A-a-a! (*Falls back in her chair half-unconsciously*)

HERMIT – (*Rushes to her*) But he's not dead! Not dead! Don't worry... I rescued him and healed him. He turned out to be a nice guy. We became friends.

LIZY – You scared me so much.

HERMIT – You scared me even more. I don't know how to do mouth to mouth resuscitation... especially to young girls. And Gelo could get upset with me if something would happen to you. He really does love you so much.

LIZY – So now you're friends with him?

HERMIT – Yes. And he invited me to come and live in the town, so that I could live nearby.

LIZY – It's very good. I'm glad you two are friends now.

HERMIT – You know everything is turning out very strange. I saved him from landslide, and he saved me from myself. I hid

for a few years from the world and the people in it. He helped me to understand a simple thing. In truth I was hiding from myself, but you can't hide from yourself! You walk away from people, you can walk away from problems, but you cannot walk away from yourself. I believed in what he said. And that's how he became my new friend...

LIZY – It's so good you saved him. But he still has so many obstacles in front of him. I need to help him. He desperately wants to get the MIRACLE.

HERMIT – I'm not sure whether he can get this MIRACLE. But he already has given me a miracle. Peace in my soul – this is a genuine miracle! And he makes me truly happy. Because a real friendship is a miracle!

LIZY – Will you show me where Gelo went?

HERMIT – Not only will I show, but I will guide you through the mountains, so that you won't get lost. Since you're very dear to me! You are my friend's fiancé! But just be careful, in the forest where you will have to go there lives a frightening Cannibal. And I forgot to tell Gelo about him. I hope he will deal with him like a Wizard.

Music plays. Blackout. Curtains.

* * * * *

Scene Three.

Somewhere in the forest there is a dwelling where Cannibal lives. Cannibal sits at the table and bluntly looks at his empty plate. There is a knock at the door. In walks Gelo. Cannibal looks astounded, and then sizes him up.

GELO – Peace to your home good man. The night has caught up with me; I saw a light in your window and decided to check it out. Can I stay a night here?

CANNIBAL – ... A-a ... of course! Come in my friend. You will be my supper... I mean! ... well, my guest!

GELO – Thank you. But I don't want supper.

CANNIBAL – But I do.

GELO – I can give you some bread, here take some.

CANNIBAL – (*Imitates a spit*) How disgusting! I would like some meat, lots of it. Don't you know who I am?

GELO – No, I don't.

CANNIBAL – (*Shocked*) Oh my god! Travelers are now simply walking into my house instead of running away with horror. And even offer me bread! For heaven's sake, I'm a cannibal! I don't eat wheat!

GELO – Ahh! You're afraid of putting on weight?

CANNIBAL – (*Moaning*) I told you, I'm a cannibal! Haven't you seen cannibals before?

GELO – No, I haven't.

CANNIBAL – And you're supposed to be educated, what are

they teaching people these days? Where did someone thick like you come from?

GELO - I'm from town.

CANNIBAL - How amusing. It seems to me that the people there are very uneducated and uncultured, unlike here in the forest.

GELO - We do have education in our town, but there are no cannibals. Just don't get upset...

CANNIBAL - Never mind, I'm used to it by now... In the past it was very different. Love is to blame for everything.

GELO - Love? How can love to be blamed for anything?

CANNIBAL - In the past I was masculine and courageous. The whole population was afraid of me.

GELO - And then what happened?

CANNIBAL - My whole world was turned upside down. I got married.

GELO - So what?

CANNIBAL - She was beautiful, and with beauty comes sacrifices. And I became that sacrifice. At first everything was fine. I could watch her for hours, just eating her with my eyes. And one night I couldn't control myself and ate her...including sandals... And now I'm suffering.

GELO - (*Looking at him with amazement*) Yes... what a morbid story. But what's love got to do with it?

CANNIBAL - Well? If I didn't love her so much, I would have controlled myself, and wouldn't suffer so much now. And

now if you bring a woman near me, my hair stands on end... And nothing more!

GELO – And I still don't understand what love has to do with anything you have just mentioned?

CANNIBAL – Nobody understands me! I'm so unhappy. You have to understand me! You see three days ago I was going to eat the passing Blacksmith, and he instead of helping me, he stuck a hammer in my mouth broke two teeth and then ran away. Here has a look. (*Opens his mouth and shows him his teeth*)

GELO – (*Moves away from him*) Ok, ok, I can see.

CANNIBAL – It hurt so much. Do you believe me?!

GELO – I believe, believe.

CANNIBAL – Now every time I decide to eat someone, I make sure that they do not have any metal objects on them. By the way do you have any metal objects on you?

GELO – No.

CANNIBAL – That's very good! That's wonderful! My life is very hard. Just imagine sometimes there is nobody on the road for a whole week. One could die from starvation. And if there is someone by chance, once they learn who I am they try to escape. Nobody understands me! You won't run away, will you?

GELO – No I won't.

CANNIBAL – But why?

GELO – What for?

CANNIBAL – (*Joyfully*) That's good! Wonderful! Why?! (*Vigilant*) Maybe you're ill? Maybe you're poisonous?

GELO – No I'm absolutely healthy. But surely, you're not going to eat me?

CANNIBAL – (*Elusive*) How should I put it... You see I haven't eaten anybody for a few days now... You have to understand me! I don't mean you any malice. Moreover, I sympathize with you. But my life is so miserable. And anyway, it's not my fault. I was spoiled rotten when I was young. I was allowed to do everything. That's why I can't resist anything. Like right now (*walks around Gelo*) I like you so much. You're so tempting.

GELO – Listen to me; if you want to eat me, then I'm against it!

CANNIBAL – (*Upset*) Here we go again! You all think about yourselves, egoists.

GELO – No. I'm actually thinking about people. My teacher, Fadrius the Wizard sent me to get the MIRACLE, to make all people happy, including you. I want to be honest, just, and righteous towards everyone...

CANNIBAL – (*Interested and amazed*) You're very strange. You're young but yet you want to live your life righteously and sinless. Usually, these sorts of ideals come to people when they are either poor or getting old. Don't you have good health or any wealth to live a normal life?

GELO – What's money have to do with anything, especially health? In my opinion a normal life consists of helping people out. I will be a Wizard. And my main aim is to make all people

happy. But just yet I don't know how to do this, but I will definitely find out.

CANNIBAL – It is easy to make someone else happy, but it is difficult to remain happy yourself.

GELO – How come?

CANNIBAL – That's just human nature... And anyway, if you want to be happy you have to have a full belly, and to get this you need to be cunning, clever ... and have lots of food!

GELO – It's hard to talk with you. Look at yourself; you have destroyed everything human in yourself and the dense forest around you. What do you look like?

CANNIBAL – Of course I'm not good-looking; I would like to improve my appearance. But I don't know how to do this. You said you are a Wizard, maybe you could help me?

GELO – No. I don't do dismembering.

CANNIBAL – It's easy to criticize, everybody can do it. But when trying to find some help – there is no one. There are plenty of people, but where are the good ones?

GELO – What do you mean?

CANNIBAL – It's simple. People are like mushrooms. There are plenty of mushrooms in a forest, and you have to be careful which one to pick. Some people are like poisonous mushrooms, and you can only eat them once.

GELO – And then what?

CANNIBAL – And then you won't be able to eat anything! You'll get poisoned and die, very poisonous. I don't like this sort.

GELO – (*Laughing*) So you're telling me all the people around here are poisonous?

CANNIBAL – Not everyone but a lot of them. The world is changing, and not in a positive way. People have become angry, hateful, and greedy among other bad things. And all of this is poison of the soul, and eventually it fills up to the brim. Sometimes one person has so much; you're scared to touch him, because it could burst and spill all over you, so bad that you can't wash it away. And you could even get infected.

GELO – But why should you be scared of this?

CANNIBAL – Because I'm very sensitive, easily get hurt and upset. Sometimes you just want to hide your head in the sand from all the troubles in the world...

GELO – And what is stopping you?

CANNIBAL – Uh-huh! Then my backside will be vulnerable. And that's even more dangerous. That's why I'm suffering. Of course, if I was rich my life would be easy.

GELO – So who's standing in your way? Work harder and you'll get rich.

CANNIBAL – Are you kidding me?! People work hard so that they can have enough to eat, but if you want to get rich you need to do something else.

GELO – Like what?

CANNIBAL – Well, for example the skill to steal. From time to time, I go to the highway with my axe, where merchants travel with goods and sometimes you can get very lucky. But it's never

enough.

GELO – So you're also a thief! You rob people on the highway at nighttime?!

CANNIBAL – What? do you expect me to do it in broad daylight at a market?!

GELO – Any stealing is bad!

CANNIBAL – If I don't steal, someone else will. Why should I give up my right to get rich? And anyway, I don't steal; it's just compensation for what life has thrown at me.

GELO - All your thoughts are so one dimensional.

CANNIBAL – That's good. There's no space in my head for anything else.

GELO – Well, well!

CANNIBAL – Well, you're judging me of robbing people at the highway; of course, it would be easier to steal from the treasury, less trouble, but a much greater profit. I too would like to become a civil servant or minister.

GELO – Have you gone mad?

CANNIBAL – Is it possible to be a minister, without being mad?

GELO – Listen, I want to share some advice with you.

CANNIBAL - For sure! It's a known well fact that when people don't want to share their food or money, they usually give advice instead.

GELO – No, truthfully, I really want to help you, let me try to cure you from cannibalism. Although I'm not a real Wizard yet, I

do know some spells. They can cure people from many different diseases, maybe they can help you.

CANNIBAL – What?! Do you expect me to become an ordinary man?!

GEOLO – Is that a bad thing?

CANNIBAL – Are you having a laugh! If I lived like ordinary man, I would die not seeing old age. Nowadays cannibalism is not a sickness, it's my nature. It's the way of surviving in this cruel and cynical world. If I don't eat somebody, then someone will eat me. I'll cease to be myself. You're offering me to betray myself! It's bad enough when others betray you. Nowadays it happens everywhere. But it's even worse when you betray yourself. You look like a decent young man! How can you suggest such a thing to a poor, lonely Cannibal? You should be ashamed?!

GEOLO – But I want to help you. I just want to help all the people in the world...

CANNIBAL – If you really want to make all people happy, then make me happy too. For the sake of it I would even let you go to get this **MIRACLE**. (*Sadly, looks to the side*) And stay hungry for yet another day! ...

GEOLO – But what do you need to be happy?

CANNIBAL – (*Excitedly*) It's very simple. Make sure I have plenty to eat every day, plenty of young and fresh humans.

GEOLO – (*Bewildered*) But then all those innocent people will be unhappy!

CANNIBAL – So what? Why should my head hurt because

of others? Since their heads don't hurt because of me!

GELO – No you don't understand anything. I have to make everybody happy.

CANNIBAL – That means you're a liar. It is impossible to make everybody happy! How can a man be happy knowing that his next-door neighbour is richer than him? How can a man be joyful knowing that his friend's wife is better than his own? What feelings must a woman experience knowing that her rival has more expensive jewelry and a more extravagant outfit than her?

GELO – You're talking about envy. But there are other feelings like kindness, generosity, and unselfishness ...

CANNIBAL – I'm talking about, that there will never be enough gold and wealth for everyone in the world. And there will always be those who get less than others. I'm talking about, that not everyone will have beautiful and kind wives. I'm talking about, the demands and requests of women which are endless, but the ability of men to satisfy those demands and requests are limited. I'm talking about, that in life one's happiness is often built upon another's unhappiness. I'm talking about, that only one of us can be happy. Either I will be happy, if I eat you or you will be happy if I remain hungry!

Cannibal tries to attack Gelo. Gelo jumps out the way and is quick enough to execute a magic spell.

GELO – Shumbo, Tumbo, Bumbo! Freeze!

Cannibal stops and freezes. Gelo breathes a sigh of relief and looks with sympathy at Cannibal.

GELO – I'm sorry I had to cast a spell on you. I didn't want to, you brought it upon yourself... But you're probably right about something. Perhaps you cannot make everybody happy. On my journey I will think about this. But now I have to go and search for the MIRACLE ...

CANNIBAL – (*Anguishly moans*) M-M-M-M ...

GELO – Don't worry, the spell won't last forever. The spell will wear off when you encounter human kindness. Until then have a think about your unrighteous thoughts and wrong doings. Farewell.

There is a sound of a gong.

Music plays. Blackout.

Cannibals room is the same as it was when Gelo left. Cannibal remains in his position.

Lizy comes in. Walks over to the hourglass and turns it upside down. Some time has passed since Gelo left. She looks around the room and stumbles upon a frozen Cannibal. She touches him with curiosity, and he comes to life. Lizy, who is scared, jumps back.

CANNIBAL – B-r-r-r-r! How awful it is to be under a spell.

LIZY – Excuse me, but I didn't mean you any harm.

CANNIBAL – You didn't harm me. By touching me you have broken the spell. I've been standing here for a few days, like a stone. All because of my kind and trusting nature.

LIZY – Who upset you?

CANNIBAL – That's putting it lightly! I've been insulted to the core of my soul. There is so much hypocrisy and lies in the world, even I can't deceive people anymore. Nobody trusts each other anymore. You probably want to deceive me too?

LIZY – Of course not! I never think that way about people.

CANNIBAL – Yeah, I don't like thinking too much either. One shouldn't allow himself to be introspective for too long, because one could lose himself in a labyrinth of thoughts... And if you track back, you'll find that you have lost something valuable, because we are surrounded by thieves and scoundrels. (*Walks around Lizy and looks at her strangely*) Nowadays it is hard to live for an honest man, like me.

LIZY – Why are you looking at me as if I was naked?!

CANNIBAL – Because I'm hungry!

LIZY – I have some leftovers in my knapsack. (*Offering it*) Please have some.

CANNIBAL – What's this filth you're offering me? And so little of it! If this is food, then I'm a fool!

LIZY – It's food! Of course, it's food.

CANNIBAL – Hmm! Let's not argue.

LIZY – Why are you looking at me so strangely again?

CANNIBAL – You're such a lovely and mouth-watering girl, so wonderful, you smell so delicious. You must have drunk some rum whilst snacking on onion and garlic?

LIZY – What are you talking about! I don't drink at all; I only had some stale bread. I spent all day walking in the forest, and I was very afraid. I was told that this forest is very scary because cannibals live here.

CANNIBAL – Why should you be scared of us?!

LIZY – So you're a real cannibal?!

CANNIBAL – How should I put it... truthfully or as I usually do?

LIZY – Of course truthfully!

CANNIBAL – In that case I'm keeping quiet. As if I didn't hear the question. It would be better if you told me why you are here in the forest alone?

LIZY – I'm searching for my fiancé. He went on long and dangerous journey, and I followed him so that I could help him, because we love each other very much. Innocently and sincerely.

CANNIBAL – Have you got a big dowry for innocent and sincere love?

LIZY – No. I haven't got a dowry. Family happiness doesn't consist of one's wealth!

CANNIBAL – Possibly. But in family life it is better to suffer in an extravagant palace with gluttony than suffer in a small hut from starvation. If your fiancé has forgotten about you and left,

you that means everything is all right with him. Don't worry about him.

LIZY – He hasn't forgotten me. He's a young Wizard to be, and he went to look for the MIRACLE.

CANNIBAL – Ahh! So, your fiancé is the same cheat whom I offered my home to. And in return he cast a spell on me and left me hungry. I'm so mad at him that I'm ready to go find him in your uneducated town. But only when he has found this MIRACLE. What does he need it for? He doesn't know how to handle it properly anyway. And I could.

LIZY – So Gelo was here?! Tell me where did he go?

CANNIBAL – Where, Where? Why should I know? Probably to the island.

LIZY – Then I have to hurry. Thank you for the hospitality. I shall go.

CANNIBAL – Where are you going?! You want to leave me hungry? No way!

LIZY – I'd liked to make you something nice to eat, but I have to go. I will do it next time. (*Quickly gathers her things*)

CANNIBAL – I'm getting bored! At first, I was a little hungry. By talking with you I've become really hungry. And now I want to wolf you down!

LIZY – How...how do you mean?!

CANNIBAL – That's how! I will eat you in a rough and perverted way!

LIZY – (*Frightened*) Oh! Don't!

CANNIBAL – Don't what?!

LIZY – You know ... rough and perverted...

CANNIBAL – Don't be afraid, I will do it quickly and it will only hurt a little. At first, I will you eat your right leg, followed by your left one. Then I will gnaw at your little arms. And after that I will finish of the rest.

LIZY – Don't eat me! I'm against it! ... You're such an interesting man...And such a fascinating talker. Just by talking to you I feel very clever! Please don't eat me!

CANNIBAL – Let's not argue. Arguing on an empty stomach gives you a very bad complexion. And anyway, I'm so sensitive, tender, and helpless! That's why you shouldn't even bother to try and save yourself!

LIZY – But you can't eat me!

CANNIBAL – Remember – you can eat anybody! It's just not always good for your health.

LIZY – You have to understand, I need to catch up with Gelo and help him to find the MIRACLE!

CANNIBAL – You're still worrying about that! No need. He's young and healthy enough to find another young girl who will want to help him. You will be easily replaced. Ha Ha Ha!

LIZY – Not true! He will never swap me for anyone. I'm the only one he needs!

CANNIBAL – Naïve silly girl, only I need you, because I'm hungry. So just stay here and wait for me. I will lock the door just in case.

LIZY – What horror!

CANNIBAL – Wonderful, the weather is perfect today. In this kind of weather, you always feel like strangling or robbing someone. That's why I will go to the highway and stretch myself a bit. And in the morning, I will eat you.

LIZY – I can't and won't die!

CANNIBAL – Such nonsense, try to relax. And by the way you might want to clean the house, wash my clothes, and think over the meaning of life and the essence of existence. And you can tell me about it later...if you have time. Don't miss me!

Cannibal goes out. Lizy sits with her head in her hands for a while not knowing what to do. Then decisively stands up and walk around the room.

LIZY – I can't sit here doing nothing. I have no right for that. I have to help Gelo. I need to find a way to escape. Cannibal said that Gelo went to the Island. So, I have to be there by any means necessary... There must be at least one way out of this house. It looks like one of these boards has rotted. If I try hard enough maybe I could break it and get to the outside. I need to do this... It's my obligation to help Gelo... Dear Gelo, I love you so much...

Tries to break a board in a corner of a stage. At last, she succeeds and gets out of the hut.

I'm free! I'm coming to you Gelo! ...

Music plays. Blackout. Curtains.

* * * * *

Scene Four.

Riverbank. Here lives The Fisherman and his family. He walks on stage. He walks up to the stage and turns over the hourglass. After that he carefully untangles his nets. After some time, a refreshed Gelo walks on stage. The Fisherman notices him and gives him a warm smile.

FISHERMAN – I'm glad to see you had a good rest.

GELO – Thank you for your hospitality. I haven't slept like that in a long while. I've been travelling for more than a week, and I was quite tired. But now I'm ready to go on my way.

FISHERMAN – Maybe before you leave you could tell me why and where you are going?

GELO – I'm an apprentice of a Wizard, and I'm looking for the MIRACLE. The aim of my journey is to find it and make all the people in the world happy. I want to dedicate my life to it.

FISHERMAN – (*Interested*) Is that so! What a noble task. But do you know what happiness is?

GELO – (*Hesitate and answers non-confidently*) I used to think I knew what it meant. But after an encounter in the forest, I now have some doubts. First of all, happiness for me is to fulfil my duty by helping people. And second of all it is love.

FISHERMAN – I can agree on the last one. Without love a person can't be happy. But about your duty, I think you are trying to hard.

GELO – Why?

FISHERMAN – Take for example me and my family. I'm happy because I have my wife and my children. And I don't need anything more. You can only be happy when you live in harmony with yourself and the environment. And for that you need to learn to accept this world with joy. You need to learn to be happy with the clean bright sky and the summer rain. Stop fussing about meaningless and worthless matters. If you want to be happy, just be happy. Learn to be happy with life and help out those who are close to you. And happiness will find you.

GELO – Is it that simple? And nothing more?

FISHERMAN – I'm always happy because I can do what I want, and I don't want anything I cannot achieve!

GELO – But what should one do if his desires are out of his reach.

FISHERMAN – You don't need to achieve all your desires to be happy, even if it is possible to accomplish it. There are some wishes which are best left alone, which should be put to the back of your mind. That's exactly the way I try to live. And anyway,

the infinity of our desires will never squeeze into the limitations of our possibilities.

GELO – To be modest and discreet about your needs is a very good quality. But you and your family still need food, clothes and many other things without which life would be very hard and unbearable.

FISHERMAN – I have everything I need. And if problems do arise then I try to solve them instead of moaning and whimpering about it. Many people often try to justify their innocence by putting blame on others, when really; they should be looking deep within their souls. The most horrible filth is not around us but in our souls. Purify your soul and you will find happiness. Genuine happiness is not about the material things which surround you, but about the amount of kindness in your soul.

GELO – (*With irony*) That's means your present and past life is an example of purity and kindness?

FISHERMAN – Of course not, but why should one dwell about the past. I have no regrets about the past because all things happen for a reason!

GELO – What did you say?

FISHERMAN – I have no regrets about the past because all things happen for a reason ... I wouldn't swap my happiness for all the treasures in the world. In my world, I give happiness to those who are close to me: my family, my children, and my relatives.

GELO – But this sort of happiness is very volatile and doesn't last for long, and it passes by.

FISHERMAN – Possibly. But it's concrete. And happiness can't be abstract. It always should be concrete. And I'm its creator. I don't have to ask anybody for it. And I don't have to pay anyone for it.

GELO – Are you happy with your life?

FISHERMAN – Oh yeah! Life is dismal and monotonous only because we make it so. When we are young, in our dreams we can all fly and have wishes would come true. But with years we betray ourselves and the purity of our childhood. We descend into a world of problems. We forget that celebrations are in our souls and hearts and not on the streets and squares.

GELO – So I see you're a philosopher!

FISHERMAN – No, I'm an ordinary man. I have long forgotten what it means to be ashamed, it spoils and suppresses your soul, because it is a moral error, which is born from self-discontent and the realization of your guilt, but I have nothing to be ashamed of, because I have no power, wealth, or fame. I am free from this burden.

GELO – But freedom of thought is not the same as freedom of action. Certainly, you can think of anything you like, but you can't do whatever you want. Your freedom is limited by your island and your family.

FISHERMAN – But that is great. I and my family live away from all the politics, newspapers, and superficial charity. Here,

nobody is amused by our failures, and we have nothing to do with their failures either. In that world away from our island and our happiness is the rage of people's passion...

I could have been a politician since it's not so difficult. You just have to bend your principles or forget about them altogether. But at the same you shouldn't be a highflyer because you could get lost, disappear from public attention and you will be forgotten. You have to constantly tell people that you can solve their problems. Only a small percentage of people will know that you are deceiving them, once again. But what do I need this for when I have my happiness?

I could have made a fortune, but for that I would have to learn how to con people and how to bribe officials. And then to stay adrift you have to descend into a life of luxury. And everybody will flatter and praise you to your face, whilst hate and envy you behind your back. And once you start to lend money to your friends you will lose everything. Besides money has a stable quality: to evaporate, when most needed, no matter the amount you have. Why do I need this? Because the availability of money doesn't compensate for lack of brain, and the availability of the brain doesn't compensate for lack of soul.

I could try and be a prominent scientist. Study hard and long, dedicate my life to read a thousand books. And even make some discoveries... but what for? So that, by the end of my life I could understand all the mistakes of my knowledge!

I could become a human rights activist, and possibly at first,

I would win over the admiration and respect of the population. But my popularity and attraction would only last until I start criticizing the people's faults. As soon as I start telling people the truth to their faces, they will call me rude and bad-mannered. I doubt that I would feel happier than I am now.

Of course, your conscience could remain pure, but for that you should stop using it altogether...

So, whatever you say, there is no way of me being happier than I am now. I have everything I need! And I have a wife to share it with me!

GELO – Yeah, I can't deny it, you're lucky to have her. Wonderful woman.

FISHERMAN – I have no one to thank for our encounter. This inevitability happened by coincidence. But I'm glad it turned out that way. Our mutual understand is so strong that even when we are silent, we know what the other one is thinking. Some people reckon that the best wives are those who have less intelligence than their husbands. My wife is clever enough not to show her superiority. We get on with each other very well. Of course, when my wife has nothing to say it doesn't mean she is silent. One should learn how to listen to women properly, since they talk more and a lot faster than we men can take in.

I know that my wife is always right, regardless of whether she is right or wrong. You have to understand that the most unfair thing that could happen to a woman is: her losing an argument to a man. Why should I breed unnecessary injustice? She always

forgives me even when I am not wrong. I love her so much that I do all my chores around the house...just for her. My wife is the ideal woman. She predicts all my desires.

GELO – And she fulfils them all?

FISHERMAN – No. Unlike other women she doesn't stop me to fulfil them. When you are young you dream of an extraordinary wife, but that dream disappears when you find out about her desires. So, you have to look at family happiness in a simpler way, and don't let dreams distract you. Often what women want, men can't afford, that's why we try to live not for ourselves, but for the children.

GELO – Is life really that serene and wonderful here?

FISHERMAN – Of course not, grief and difficulties can make you either better or worse. It all depends on how you deal with them.

GELO – Real life should be in motion, but her life is stagnant.

FISHERMAN – (*Upset*) There are different types of motion. You could have motion in thought; you could shove with your elbows pushing others or wave your hands helplessly...

GELO – Don't be offended. I'm happy if you have found your happiness. But I have an obligation to my teacher Fadrius, my Queen, to the people who are waiting for the MIRACLE. And I have to hurry to get it.

FISHERMAN – You hurry too much. One should learn to take their time, contemplate and reflect upon oneself. Wisdom is within tranquility not commotion.

GELO – How can I live peacefully when there are so many people living in strife? I am a future Wizard, and I have to change their life for the better as soon as possible.

FISHERMAN – Stop. Don't hurry to change the world. You should first try to understand it. Try and be one with it in harmony and agreement. Maybe then you can understand a simple truth.

GELO – What truth? Tell me!

FISHERMAN – You can't make people happy. You can't force people to be happy. They have to find their own happiness. One can only appreciate true happiness if they have earned it for themselves with hard work. Everything you get for free disappears quickly without a trace, like water in sand. It's stupid. And you can't spread stupidity everywhere you without thinking about the consequences, because people could use it to their own advantage.

GELO – I don't want to argue with you. Just please help me to cross the river. I have to go.

FISHERMAN – Gelo, you're a good man. That is great, but you're still young... alright, let's go, I will help you to cross the river.

Gelo and the Fisherman go off stage.

Music plays. Blackout.

The same bank of the river. The Fisherman appears. He walks

up to the hourglass and turns it over. Some time has passed since Gelo left. Fisherman sorts out his nets. Onstage appears Lizy. She cautiously walks up to the Fisherman. He is surprised when he sees her but smiles warmly at her.

LIZY – Hello. My name is Lizy. I am looking for my fiancé Gelo. Has he passed through here?

FISHERMAN – Hello Lizy. Yes, he was here. I helped him to cross the river.

LIZY – (*Sad, almost in tears*) What a pity, I'm late again. I just can't catch up with him.

FISHERMAN – Don't despair, have some rest. Let me finish what I'm doing here, and I will help you to cross the river. If you hurry you will definitely catch up with your fiancé. Meanwhile tell me about yourself.

LIZY – Why about me? Let's talk about something nice and pleasant, for example Gelo. He's so wonderful. I love him so much. And he could die. Gelo went on this dangerous journey, which he might never return from, and only because he wants to help people so much. He has a very high goal in life. He's so clever; you couldn't even imagine how clever he is. Sometimes I get scared for him! So clever. Also, he has very kind heart. And he is sweet and brave.

FISHERMAN – You talk about him as if this was his eulogy. Just you wait he still might survive.

LIZY – (*Distressed*). You don't know Gelo. He always goes

where it is dangerous and complicated. He is always drawn into all sorts of troubles!

FISHERMAN – Your Gelo, is a man who has wings. And people with wings can't crawl on their belly. Life will always be hard for him.

LIZY – (*Sad*). I have come to understand this. Why couldn't they have sent someone else, to get this MIRACLE? Who needs it anyway?!

FISHERMAN – (*With a smirk*) If Gelo completes his heroic act then there will be a lot of people who will insist to share his glory with him.

LIZY – Who cares about glory! The only important thing for me is that Gelo is alive. I'm so scared for him!

FISHERMAN – Often people are more scared of their imagination than real life. And all these fears live and breed in their souls, don't let them sleep at night by stirring their minds. Answer me, what are you more afraid of: Gelo finding the MIRACLE or not?

LIZY – (*Thinks about it very carefully*) I'm not really sure ... If he does find the MIRACLE, then he will become a great Wizard and won't have time for me at all. He will work even harder, try to solve the world's problems by himself. He will battle with people's tragedies and troubles... But if he doesn't get the MIRACLE then he will remain unhappy for the rest of his life, he could even die because of it, because his sense of duty and vocation is more important than life itself. I don't even know

what is better.

FISHERMAN – You are like all other women – very contradictive, even when choosing jewelers. (*Drained*) Think about it – if silence is golden, then why do women seldom use it?

LIZY – (*Bashful*) Do you mean I am talking to much?

FISHERMAN – No, it's not about that. You want to help Gelo?

LIZY – Of course!

FISHERMAN – Then you should stop thinking about what you want and start thinking about what your loved one needs!

LIZY – Fadrius, the court Wizard said the same thing.

FISHERMAN – Strange, that means that those who are in power still have some sense. That's good. Your Gelo, is still very young and inexperienced. I didn't have enough time to explain to him what genuine happiness all is about. I'm afraid that when he finds this MIRACLE, he won't know how to use it properly. That's why I probably should go into town. When he comes back, I can give him my advice. I don't believe in these cunning courtiers. They will trick him. It would be a great pity if all your hard work and depravations went to waste. And now let's go. I will get you to the other side of the river.

Fisherman and Lizy walk off stage.

Music plays. Blackout. Curtains.

* * * * *

Act Two

Scene Five.

Castle of Vedalia – owner of ‘Store of Temptations’. Vedalia sits in front of a big, beautiful mirror, and thoughtfully looks at herself. She is old and crooked. The mirror is a position so that the audience can’t see the reflection. Gelo walks in. She transforms into a younger self when she hears him coming.

VEDALIA – Oh, my young friend! I’m glad to see you looking fresh again. Did my servants clean and feed you?

GELO – I’m very grateful to you, madam. Now I’m ready to go.

VEDALIA – Don’t hurry. Your journey is very difficult. The place where you are going to, you will need lots of strength.

GELO – (*Surprised*) How do you know who I am and where I am going? We haven’t even been properly introduced yet.

VEDALIA – You’re – Gelo, Wizard’s apprentice. And you are travelling to get the MIRACLE. (*She laughs with self-satisfaction*) Let me introduce myself. I own the ‘Store of Temptations’. I also practice magic. So, you could say that we are kindred spirits.

GELO – So you’re a Sorceress?

VEDALIA – (*Unhappy*) I don't like this word. Just call me Vedalia. Everybody calls me that.

GELO – What is the 'Store of Temptations'?

VEDALIA – Well, it is a very enchanting place where people can acquire happiness.

GELO – (*Surprised and interested*) Is that so?! I dream of making the whole world happy too, that's why I am hurrying to find the MIRACLE. Will you help me? Do you know where it is?

VEDALIA – To make a person happy it is not necessary to get the MIRACLE. It is easier to take something away from them, and then give it back to them. And they will immediately understand that they were happy before but just didn't realize it.

GELO – No, you didn't understand me. I want to make everybody happy and forever. I want people to stop suffering from poverty and illnesses, so that all malice and envy will be replaced with love and sincerity. I want to stop all the wars and injustice, so that peace and beauty would rule the world. My intentions are pure and kind...

VEDALIA – (*Laughs*) And very naive! Dear Gelo, people do not care about good intentions, they only care about what they will get. So, it's not important what motivates your actions, the important thing is what people get out of them. If it benefits them, then you are safe. But if it is unpleasant and useless then you should run as fast as you can. Nobody cares about good intentions. Your actions will be declared evil; you will be condemned and maybe even killed, so that you wouldn't disturb

their life. That's why I give people what they want and ask for, and they are satisfied and happy by that. And in return I take a part of their soul. Since nothing is free in life. Just take a look at my splendid collection.

(Vedalia leads him to the mirror and with a movement of her hand shows him the pictures of life)

This is a high-ranking official, who serves in a neighbouring province. He sleeps very well, that's why his work hours fly by. He doesn't give a damn about the affairs in his department. The only thing that interests him is his own well-being. His happiness is money and personal safety. And for that he is willing to risk everything.

Here is a Judge of a county which lies near the river. He is so stupid that he still doesn't know the difference between his right boot and his left one. But that doesn't get in the way of him judging other people. His happiness consists of him stuffing himself with delicious food. I sometimes feel that he thinks with his belly, that is the only part of his body that works well.

And here is a famous general. A very brave man. With any danger in site, he is courageously ready to jump behind some bushes. And oh, so loving! He would chase after any bit of skirt. I had to supply him with a harem of girls, to satisfy his sexual appetite.

Here is a minister – who suffers from bad nerves and is also power-hungry. Take power away from him and he would die in hysteria. And he doesn't even hesitate to rule others, without

knowing how to rule himself, his feelings, and his desires! But I give him the possibility to rule. Or take a look at the Prime minister of the neighbouring kingdom. I like him very much.

GELO – What do you like about him?

VEDALIA – He is very cunning and always comes on-top out of any bad situation. And he always has the best laugh because he laughs last.

GELO – Maybe he laughs last because he is slow?

VEDALIA – Hmm... I didn't think about that.

GELO – But all the things you give people are awful: gluttony, lust, and greed...

VEDALIA – You shouldn't judge everyone by your own standards. The world has normal people too. Maybe it is awful to look at it, but it's so delightful to indulge in these sins. Try it and you will love it.

GELO – I don't want to! I have my own weaknesses and defects. But I am trying to rid myself of them.

VEDALIA – What for?! Without them life is pale, boring, and pointless.

GELO – I don't want to fall into a life of debauchery.

VEDALIA – My dear young friend! Debauchery is something you want to be a part of, but can't, the rest is pleasure. Have you never thought that the more sins a person commits, the more pleasure he gets from life? People are a product of sin. Each person is sinful in essence and origin. That's why the sins we commit all the time are the only natural form of existence

in this world. To resist sinning means you're violating your true self. Why should we deprive ourselves? Deprivation, which is directed at oneself, goes against human nature. That's why the battle with your own sins is even a bigger sin. Those who go in this direction aren't really purifying themselves. They are denying themselves from all human traits, which were imprinted in them since birth. They destroy themselves – within themselves. They turn themselves from a living flower to a twisted old branch, stone, and sand.

Look at those so-called holy hermits and those who go to extreme measures to remain sinless. What do they look like? Like a sparkling ray of sunlight or dark rotten piece of dry earth? What are they made up of: joy and light of life or faded exhaustion, waiting to reach their graves? Every one of them looks like a madman. For the illusory sake of reaching a Heavenly place, they reject what God has already bestowed on them. Life with all its joy and sadness, with all its virtuousness and vices is God's gift. And if you reject one of these elements of life then you are rejecting the whole of God's gift. Any flower wanting to grow and be fragrant needs not only water but manure and fertilizer. It is the same with people: for a fulfilling life they need not only virtue and goodness but temptation of sin and sensuality of vice. Otherwise, life loses its color and variety. It becomes bland and turns into a lifeless existence... So, if one wants to experience virtue and holiness one should experience vice and sin. Just have a go, and you will enjoy the boundless

happiness of life. Those who try a forbidden fruit won't be able to stop eating it. The desires of people are endless! And you can't fulfill them all. Believe you me, I know! People just want more and more, and so I keep raising my price. And little by little I take their whole soul, and, in the end, they have to bring someone else, and convince them to join into the temptation. This sort of payment also suits me. And anyway, it is more comforting to sink into sin with company. And because of this I am never in shortage of customers. They are like links in a chain, one pulls the other. And until this world stops, I will always be needed and have a job. You can't fully satisfy passions and temptations because genuine passion and temptation have no boundaries!

GELO – But I don't need this. I know what I want from life!

VEDALIA – Wow! That is a bold statement, either you don't want much or you don't know enough about life.

GELO – If I take your route, my conscience will suffer and be tormented, because I would have betrayed my duty and vacation.

VEDALIA – Dear Gelo, it is never too late to repent. But it is more difficult to commit sin when you are older. Years will go by, and you will want to commit sins, but it will be too late. You'll only be able to repent. So don't lose time in vain! Use everything what life and youth granted you to do. Duty, honor, vacation – this was all invented by people, it's like a nightmare of the mind. As if there was nothing else to think about! You should live your life easily and do what you want. And then even death won't seem like a tragedy, because in reality death is the

freedom from responsibility of the world.

GELO – And do you really believe that these people are really happy?!

VEDALIA – Of course! For all these years I am tired of fulfilling all their insatiable desires. And they still don't have enough... Every day is just – work, work, work! Continuous work, and no personal life.

GELO – Why don't you have a rest?

VEDALIA – I don't have anyone to rest with! Maybe you will agree to rest with me... fulfil my life with new sensations.

GELO – No, I can't take a rest, I need to hurry...

VEDALIA – (*Tries to flirt with Gelo*) Don't hurry. You have plenty of time...

GELO – No I can't! I have a fiancé.

VEDALIA – What a shame! I'm like every other woman; I sometimes want to indulge myself... So that someone would take advantage of me! And use me, use me, use me! ...

GELO – Don't get upset. When I will find the MIRACLE I will definitely make you happy.

VEDALIA – How tempting! It's been so long since anyone has made me happy. I have even forgot how real men would do it...

GELO – (*Bashfully*) No it's not what I meant.

VEDALIA – What other meaning of happiness could you offer a woman?! And don't be shy, that's life. And it is very well-known that life is passed on from one person to another by sexual

intercourse.

GELO – But for real happiness apart from the pleasure of sex there must be love between man and woman. Without love life loses its meaning.

VEDALIA – Then why have you abandoned your love, and going to the edge of the world?

GELO – It's completely different, my vacation is to become a great Wizard. When I find the MIRACLE and complete my duty, then I will definitely marry Lizy, because she is the most beautiful, sweet and dearest girl.

VEDALIA – (*Laughs*) Ha-Ha! You're so naive! Take my advice, men usually find the most beautiful, sweet, and attractive girls only after they have had a long, tedious and monotonous years of marriage.

GELO – How come?

VEDALIA – Because that's when they get wiser.

GELO – It's not true! I know my Lizy is the best one! I just know this!

VEDALIA – People who think they know everything get on my nerves.

GELO – Why?

VEDALIA – Because I know more than anyone else!

GELO – Then who can appreciate it?

VEDALIA – Nobody, so that's why I'm suffering. I'm so priceless and nobody can value me... but anyway I can see this is a pointless argument. You are young, naïve and in love. It is good

for accruing the MIRACLE. (*Ambiguously*) But I'll take care of the rest later. I will show you the path to the MIRACLE. Go and get ready. The journey will be hard.

GELO – Thank you very much. And please don't get upset. I'm sure you that you will celebrate happiness in your life. (*Walks off stage*)

Vedalia looks at him with thoughtfulness. When he is gone, she starts talking to herself.

VEDALIA – Of course my dear boy, I will celebrate, if you will get the MIRACLE so that I could use it. I could never get it myself. For that you need a pure soul, like the one you have. And the same naïve thoughts that you have, that's why I will help you. But to use the power of the MIRACLE, you have to be wise like me. Believe you me I could use it in the proper way, unlike you... To get what you want, you should use all means necessary, especially if they are handed to you on a plate. Ha-Ha.

Vedalia turns back into an old woman. Sits down in front of a mirror and looks herself once again. Lizy walks on stage.

LIZY – Hello granny. Excuse me please; I'm looking for my fiancé. Has he been here?

Vedalia is startled and jumps up because she is both surprised

and offended at being called a granny. And once again becomes young. And then looks at Lizy evaluating her. They both look at each other carefully.

VEDALIA – What kind of granny am I? I'm just a mature woman.

LIZY – Of course, I didn't mean to upset you. For your age you are preserved very well. Obviously, you keep yourself in a dark, dry, and cool place.

VEDALIA – Who are you and how did you get here?

LIZY – I am Lizy. And my fiancé is called Gelo. Have you met him?

VEDALIA – (*Her expression changes*) Ah is that so! Come in dear. So that means your Gelo's fiancé?

LIZY – You know him?! Has he been here? When? Where did he go?

VEDALIA – Wait a minute! Stop asking all these questions. Tell me a little bit about yourself first.

LIZY – Well I already told you that my name is Lizy. I am trying to catch up with Gelo so that I can help him to get the MIRACLE. I have been following his path for a few weeks now, but I'm always late. I am ready to give up everything for him! Even my life...

VEDALIA – Why sacrifice yourself, especially for a man? What can a modern woman find in a modern man... apart from money?!

LIZY – Love!

VEDALIA – Nonsense! Love was invented by poor men who couldn't afford to keep their women. You have to understand that all men are the same; the only difference between them is the size of their... wallets. At first, they seduce us with sweet and passionate words. They promise us a star from the sky or to sacrifice their life for just one kiss. Then they attack us with unbelievable tenderness and gentleness or with strength and boldness. And when they have seized us, they drink us like a glass of clean spring water. And we end up drained and unwanted. And they search for passion and youth elsewhere, again. And on top of this they reproach us and say that we have become old and lifeless by giving ourselves to them completely. My dear, I know men! You can't trust them, especially those who are obsessed with work and duty. They only notice us when they are wooing us. And as soon as they reach their goal, they act as if they are possessed and can forget about us for months on end. You could put on the most extravagant dresses and unusual jewellery and it wouldn't make a difference, he will look at you as if you were thin air. Imagine for a moment this horrible feeling when your man doesn't notice you!

LIZY – (*Sad*) I know...

VEDALIA – You see! It is worse than any torture. It would even be better if he cursed at you or was jealous. Let him even cheat, but not that. A woman can be anything: she can be loved or unloved, beautiful, or unattractive, kind or bitchy, but she can't

be empty! ... And these kinds of men, even in bed, do not love you but fulfil their duty. As if they didn't care if they were with you or with your girlfriend...

LIZY – That's going to far! I and Gelo will always stay faithful to each other. He will never cheat on me.

VEDALIA – Nonsense, Lizy! Only dead men can be faithful forever.

LIZY – (*Proudly and daring*) I wouldn't let anyone seduce my Gelo!

VEDALIA – (*Sneers*) You're so self-confident.

LIZY – I'm not self-confident. He loves me and I know my value.

VEDALIA – My dear, if you know your value never reveal it to a man, and especially your girlfriends. Instead tell me honestly, woman to woman, how did you manage to convince Gelo that he loves you?

LIZY – I didn't convince him. He really loves me, and I love him. And we want to get married. As soon as he becomes a Wizard we will marry.

VEDALIA – This is understandable! For a woman marriage is very important. If you marry a prince, you will be a princess. Marry a fool and you will be a fool yourself. It is easier for a man. But I understand you! (*coquettishly*) We women are so weak and defenseless that it is impossible to be saved from us.

LIZY – You seem to speak very strangely. I don't understand you. It would be better if you told me where Gelo is? I need to

hurry.

VEDALIA – Don't worry you don't have to hurry. I'll give him back to you.

LIZY – He's here?!!!

VEDALIA – Yes, he is. But you have to promise me one thing.

LIZY – For Gelo, I will do anything!

VEDALIA – *(In a formidable voice)* You have to take an oath, when Gelo reaches the MIRACLE; you have to do everything in your power to help him get it. Whatever the price! If you break this oath you will die.

LIZY – I promise that I will do everything in my power to help Gelo get the MIRACLE. I know his happiness depends on it. If he achieves this, then his dreams will come true. His life depends on it...

VEDALIA – Do you swear?!

LIZY – I swear!

The gong sounds three times. An alarmed Gelo walks on stage.

GELO – What is going on? *(Notices Lizy and looks at her puzzled)* Lizy?! What are you doing here?!

LIZY – Gelo!!! *(Excitedly jumps to hug him)* Dear Gelo! I've missed you so much.

GELO – I missed you too! But how did you get here?

LIZY – The week after you left, I decided to go after you.

GELO – Lizy! How could you! It's so dangerous. Anything could have happened to you.

LIZY – I'm alright and everything is fine.

GELO – But why, why did you do it?

LIZY – Because I wanted to help you so much.

GELO – Silly...I don't need any help.

LIZY – Because I was sick with worry.

GELO – Nonsense! A proper wife should be patient.

LIZY – (*Sadly*) Because I love you very much...

GELO – ... I love you too...

VEDALIA – Gelo, you shouldn't scold her for what she has done. Nobody knows their own destiny. But everything important and significant which happens in people's lives doesn't just happen by chance. As a Sorceress I sense that without Lizy you wouldn't be able to get the **MIRACLE**, that's why it would be better if you continued the journey together. I will give you a magic thread, with it you won't get lost.

GELO – Thank you! So, let's get on our way then! Come on, Lizy.

LIZY – With you I'll go anywhere, even to the end of the world...

VEDALIA – But remember Lizy, you took an oath! And if you break it then both you and Gelo will be doomed.

GELO – What oath?!

VEDALIA – Oh, it's nothing. It's just woman's talk, isn't it Lizy?

LIZY – Yes, It’s just woman’s talk.

GELO – (*suspiciously*) Ok then, we have to hurry.

Hand in hand Gelo and Lizy walk off stage. Vedralia watches them with a heavy stare. Gradually her back is hunched, and she turns back into an old woman.

Music plays. Blackout. Curtains.

* * * * *

Scene Six.

Nighttime, the moon, and stars are shining. Gelo and Lizy sit by a fire. Only one half of the stage is lit.

LIZY – Gelo, have a look at the stars...aren't they beautiful tonight. You could just drown in them.

GELO – Lizy! How can you gawk at the sky when we haven’t even eaten yet! Quickly make us something to eat.

LIZY – Of course, my love. I’ll do it straight away. But still, the stars are so wonderful! Just think they existed before us. And they will shine forever. Even when we are gone... and our children will be able to admire them as well. They will dream, love, and remember us...

GELO – If you do not feed me right now, we won’t have any

children.

LIZY – (*laughs*) So men can only have children when they've had something to eat?

GELO – No! It's just men who are undernourished can get weak and infertile!

LIZY – Oh! I'll do it right away. (Sets up the kettle on the fire) Gelo, what if we are attacked by robbers? What would you do? We don't have any weapons to protect ourselves.

GELO – I don't know Lizy. I can't fight. I don't have the right to die. I really need to reach my goal.

LIZY – (*Thoughtfully*) Alright, I will fight them. I will try to protect you... even though I don't know how... but I will try!

GELO – Lizy, why are you talking such nonsense? While you cook, I'll go and collect some wood for the night.

He stands up and slowly walks to the dark side of the stage with a spotlight following him.

GELO – (*Suddenly screams*) Lizy! Lizy!

LIZY – (*Alarmed she jumps up and picks up a big stick*) What happened?!

GELO – Look, I think we have found it... this is the place Vedalia and Fadrius were talking about.

The dark side of the stage is lights up; there lies a twinkling object.

GELO – (*Very excited and thrilled*) It's the MIRACLE! I have finally found it! I have achieved what I've always wanted! Now I will bring it home and everybody will be astounded. I knew I could do it. I believed I would succeed. This belief stayed with me throughout the journey. I really wanted to find the MIRACLE and become a Great Wizard. I believed in the righteousness of my choice, my way, and my dreams. Nothing could get in my way. Nobody could persuade me that my goal was wrong. The only thing that worried me was that someone else would get there first and leave me behind with nothing. This treacherous thought sometimes spoiled my mood; it crept from the depth of my consciousness like a sharp cold blade and thrust itself into my mind and imagination. But I chased it away. I protected myself from this gross injustice, telling myself it would never happen. Because only I am ready to sacrifice everything in this life for the sake of my dream. I so badly want to become a Great Wizard and to make the whole world happy. My goal is noble. I want to be helpful to the world. I'm not doing it for myself. The people need this. That's why I need the MIRACLE more than others, because if someone else were to have it, it would be just unfair. The world should contain not only Great Truth, but Great Justice as well. The world is not perfect. And bad things happen in it sometimes. Justice doesn't always prevail. But not this time, not now, because right now we are talking about a great purpose – the purpose of all my life. And I feel everything should fall into

place. With every cell in my body and every corner of my soul I felt I would succeed. And now when I return to the city, I will be able to shout loudly “Look I’ve done it”!

LIZY – Gelo, my dearest Gelo! I’m so happy for you. You can’t even imagine how happy I am. I have tears of joy for you.

GELO – That’s the last thing I need right now! Instead move out the way and don’t get in my way.

Walks up to the twinkling MIRACLE. When Gelo is about to touch it, there is a loud voice of the Keeper of Miracle.

VOICE OF KEEPER – Stop Gelo! You haven’t accomplished all the conditions of possessing the MIRACLE. Your soul is still very young and inexperienced. It floats in the dimension of dreams. You still haven’t learned the difference between confidence and arrogance, love and narcissism, self-sacrifice, and vanity. But your thoughts are pure. And because of this you can get the MIRACLE. But there is a price for everything. That’s why you have to sacrifice the most precious, sacred and true thing in your life.

GELO – What?! What should I sacrifice?

V.O.K. – You must sacrifice you love. You have to let go of Lizy. Don’t worry about her. Everything will be alright with her. But you will never see each other again, under any circumstances.

LIZY – Oh! How horrible.

GELO – No, I can’t. I love her.

V.O.K. – Then you won't be able to obtain the MIRACLE. The realization of your dream requires the highest price. You have to choose what is more important to you: duty and vacation or love.

LIZY – It's cruel! You can't!

GELO – Wait. I'm ready to give up everything except Lizy.

V.O.K. – Gelo, you can't haggle here. Take it or leave it!

Gelo is confused and upset. He sits down. Lizy sits down next to him and starts sniffing.

GELO – I don't know what to do...

LIZY – Gelo, my darling! I feel as if I'm going to die right now.

GELO – Me too. I can't leave without the MIRACLE. And without you I cannot...

LIZY – It must be fate. Obviously, we are doomed, and are not destined to be together.

GELO – Why are you talking like this? I haven't even made my decision yet.

LIZY – No, the decision has already been made. It was decided when I went after you to help you achieve your goal. It was decided when Fadrius explained to me how I should act if I really loved you. And this decision was secured by my oath to Vedalia.

GELO – What oath? Why don't I know anything about this

oath?

LIZY – I took an oath so that I would do everything in my power to help you obtain the MIRACLE. I didn't know it would turn out like this. Now the only way I will stay alive if you take the MIRACLE. And I have to stay alive; otherwise, I will break the oath and will die...

GELO – How could you do this!

LIZY – Don't be angry with me please. For the sake of your dreams, I was ready to do anything.

GELO – You women are so egotistical after all. You didn't even ask my opinion.

LIZY – Dear, Gelo. I'm devastated too...

GELO – Well, the decision has been made. There is nothing I can do but accept this. (*Stands up and walks up to the MIRACLE*) Keeper of the MIRACLE! I am ready to pay your price.

V.O.K. – Don't worry about Lizy. She will live a good life, but very far away from you. You will never come across one another again. And remember the MIRACLE can only grant you one wish. Any but only one, don't make a mistake! You can go home now. Your way back will be quick and easy. The MIRACLE will protect you from all obstacles. I wish you luck, young Wizard.

GELO – Thank you... Lizy, it's time to say goodbye. I don't even know what to say... On the one hand I feel happy because I have achieved my goal, but on the other hand I feel as if I have died...

LIZY – Don't be upset Gelo. Everything will be all right with

you. You will become a Great Wizard. You will be able to help people, and you will be happy because of it. And I will be happy to know that you are happy, love is the ability to make people you love happy.

GELO – I will always remember you.

LIZY – Thank you.

GELO – What for?

LIZY – Thank you, for being you!

GELO – Lizy! My beloved, Lizy... (Hugs and kisses her)

LIZY – Gelo! My darling, my dear, my beloved...

Lizy turns away and starts to cry. Gelo walks to the MIRACLE and takes it. There is a sound of a Gong.

Music plays. Blackout. Curtains.

* * * * *

Scene Seven.

The hall of the Queen's palace. A mixture between a study of a sorcerer and a palaces hall. Fadrius sits at the table and looks through some papers. Hermit walks on stage. He looks around with interest and addresses Fadrius.

HERMIT – Good afternoon, Great Wizard Fadrius.

FADRIUS – *(Taken a back and displeased)* Good afternoon.

HERMIT – I was told, that you could tell me where Gelo is?

FADRIUS – It was in vain. I'm waiting for his return myself.

But he hasn't come back yet.

HERMIT – Shame... I was in such a hurry to get here...

FADRIUS – Why do you need him?

HERMIT – Well, the thing is him and me became friends when he was travelling to get the MIRACLE. I saved him from a landslide. And he saved me from solitude. Also, he invited me to live in the town next to him. And so here I am, since we are friends now.

FADRIUS – If you are friend, that is good. I'm glad to see his friends. I hope he will be here soon.

A panting Cannibal appears. Looks around and addresses himself to Fadrius and Hermit.

CANNIBAL – Hey old man, am I in the right place?

FADRIUS – I don't know young man, it depends on what your destination is.

CANNIBAL – I'm looking for that young brat, Gelo. Where is he?

FADRIUS – He isn't here yet; we're still waiting for him. Are you his friend as well?

CANNIBAL – Well... not exactly. Actually, he owes me something.

FADRIUS – What exactly if it's not a secret?

CANNIBAL – And who exactly are you, old man?

FADRIUS – I'm his teacher, The Court's Wizard – Fadrius.

CANNIBAL – (*Alerted*) Ah...another Wizard. It's best to stay away from your sort...

FADRIUS – Why is that?

CANNIBAL – **WHY!** Because I opened my heart to him, let him in my house and made him feel at home, looked after him... And he paid me back with ingratitude.

HERMIT – It can't be! Gelo couldn't have acted that way. He's, my friend!

CANNIBAL – How unlucky for you. You wouldn't wish a friend like that to your worst enemy! For my kindness he put a spell on me: he froze me for a few of days...

HERMIT – I don't believe it. You were probably trying to harm him. He couldn't have acted that way without a reason.

CANNIBAL – (*Dissatisfied and irritated*) I didn't do anything bad! I was just very hungry. And he is so young and appetizing. I simply couldn't control my hunger. It is easier to control a woman than my stomach. It's only a myth that we cannibals are lazy and spoiled. In truth our digestive system is always asking and waiting for some work. Like now...

Cannibal looks attentively at Hermit. Hermit is stunned and takes a few steps back.

FADRIUS – So you're a cannibal?!

CANNIBAL – Why are you so surprised? In essence all people are cannibals. But only some of them are honest and do it in a physical way, like me. And others pretend and lie, and eat one another: financially, mentally, and spiritually, hiding behind their big and fancy words. And nobody knows which is worse!

FADRIUS – Then it is understandable why Gelo put a spell on you. He just didn't want to be eaten by you. And now you have come to eat him?

HERMIT – What horror! We should call the guards.

CANNIBAL – There is no need to call the guards. I won't eat your beloved Gelo. He owes me: he promised to make me happy. And one should keep one's promises. And here I am to collect my portion of happiness.

FADRIUS – Oh I see. Unluckily for you, Gelo hasn't come back yet. You can go home now...

CANNIBAL – No way! If I go away, he'll come back with the MIRACLE, and you will share it without me. I better wait.

Cannibal sits down as an act of protest. Fadrius frowns.

FADRIUS – I'm asking you nicely, will you please leave!

CANNIBAL – (*Cautiously looks at the Wizard*) It's not fair! Gelo promised to make me happy, and you want to steal my happiness.

FADRIUS – If you won't leave now, I will have to cast some

spells on you. For example, I can turn you into a toad. Do you want to be turned into a toad?

CANNIBAL – (*Jumps up frightfully*) Stop your silly tricks. I too have my human rights. There's no need for high-handedness or bullying. Just because you are a Wizard, it doesn't mean you can do whatever you like! I'll sue you! I will appeal to the international community. I'll set human rights organizations against you! And the press will support me. You think just because you are surrounded by powerful people you can do whatever you want to honest citizens!...

The Fisherman walks on stage. He sees an angry Fadrius and addresses him cautiously.

FISHERMAN – How do you do, Sir? Could you please tell me where I could find Gelo?

FADRIUS – (*Cross*) And who are you? What do you need?

FISHERMAN – I'm simply a fisherman. We met each other when he stayed at my house... I don't actually need anything. It's just we didn't have much time to talk, and I didn't explain to him what happiness is. And now I have come to help him handle the MIRACLE properly and prevent him from making any mistakes.

CANNIBAL – I see! You've come to snatch my happiness from me. Lovely!

FISHERMAN – Not at all! I'm not going to snatch anything from anybody. I'm happy without the MIRACLE. I have a

wonderful family: wife and children...

CANNIBAL – Why in the hell did you come here then?

FISHERMAN – I want to help Gelo...

FADRIUS – I think your desire to help is noble but unnecessary. I as his teacher can help him to handle the **MIRACLE** properly.

FISHERMAN – But you are a courtier. And it is well known courtiers and bureaucrats know little about what makes ordinary people truly happy. Your knowledge about happiness is limited by the palace's walls, dreams of power, glory, and wealth.

FADRIUS – One shouldn't make such hasty assumptions.

CANNIBAL – Hey, wait a minute, who's happiness is you talking about? Mine or yours?

FADRIUS – You better be quiet. Just remember what I said about the toad.

CANNIBAL – You're such a rude and unrefined little old man! Even though you're a Wizard.

HERMIT – I think the more helpers Gelo has the better. So, it's good that the Fisherman came to town. His advice might help Gelo.

CANNIBAL – I don't like the fact that so many people will manage my **MIRACLE**.

Vedalia suddenly appears on stage. Everyone looks at her in amazement.

VEDALIA – Hello, dear men. Can you tell me what you are arguing about with such enthusiasm in absence of ladies? You must be gossiping.

FISHERMAN – Hello. Are men capable of gossiping? I always thought gossiping is a women’s domain.

VEDALIA – That’s an old-fashioned view. Nowadays only men can truly gossip. But they call it ‘meetings’ and ‘negotiations’. And they do it in such a serious manner as if they were solving world problems.

FADRIUS – That’s an interesting observation. Who are you if I may ask?

VEDALIA – The owner of ‘Store of Temptations’, I think you, Fadrius have heard of me.

FADRIUS – Unfortunately, I have.

VEDALIA – Oh, Fadrius! Shame on you, you could have lied to a lady and told her, you were pleased to meet her. We are colleagues after all.

CANNIBAL – I don’t understand, sweetheart, what is your business here?

VEDALIA – (Looks at Cannibal and evaluates him) The same reason you are here.

CANNIBAL – What is going on here! Another contender for my happiness?! Great!

VEDALIA – (*Laughs*) Don’t you know?! People are quicker to unite around a free trough or to take away food from the weak.

CANNIBAL – Are you hinting that today my portion will be

taken away?

VEDALIA – Well, nobody can call you weak. But that's not the point. The point is the portion is not yours! It was me who helped Gelo to get the MIRACLE. All my life I have been making other people happy. That's why only I can make Gelo's dream come true. And only I can truly distribute the MIRACLE.

CANNIBAL – What about me?!

VEDALIA – And you my dear have a rest!

FISHERMAN – Wait a minute. Are you really sure, you know what true happiness is?

VEDALIA – Ha! You're so naive. Who knows better than me? I have been around for over three hundred-years. All of you are spring chickens compared to me.

HERMIT – Three-hundred years?!

FISHERMAN – It cannot be!

CANNIBAL – And you still haven't gone sour or grown mouldy!

VEDALIA – You can ask the Wizard.

FADRIUS – It is the morbid truth.

VEDALIA – (*With coquettish reproach to Fadrius*) You have given me a compliment, colleague.

FADRIUS – Don't call me your colleague. You and I have different magic, ideals and goals.

VEDALIA – All right, all right don't get so big headed.

A pompous Queen walks on stage. Without paying any attention

to anyone she addresses Fadrius.

QUEEN – Fadrius, I have just been given a report by the guards of the city gate that Gelo has returned. As soon as he gets to the palace, bring him to me. I would like to use the **MIRACLE**, which he brings to me.

CANNIBAL – But that's impossible! Yet another contender for my happiness! What right do you have to claim my **MIRACLE**?

QUEEN – *(Suddenly she notices everyone who is in the hall)* Why are all these strangers here? What are they doing here Fadrius?

FISHERMAN – We are waiting for Gelo...

CANNIBAL – To fulfill his promise...

VEDALIA – And bring me my **MIRACLE** ...

CANNIBAL – No, mine!

Without anyone noticing him Gelo appears on stage. He watches everyone with astonishment, while listening to their conversation.

QUEEN – Are you all mad? Gelo is my subject. He has to obey my will and orders, that's why the **MIRACLE** is mine! Tell them, Fadrius.

FADRIUS – Calm down everybody! It was my idea to send Gelo after the **MIRACLE**. It was his ritual of testing for the

initiation into Wizardry. So, I will decide how to use the power of the MIRACLE.

QUEEN – Is that so, Fadrius?!

FADRIUS – Of course with the consideration of your wishes my Queen. That was our agreement.

QUEEN – All right then.

CANNIBAL – I don't agree! Let's do it fairly; toss a coin or throw some dice. The one who gets lucky will have the right to use the MIRACLE.

VEDALIA – (*Addresses the Cannibal*) Darling, come to me and I will make you happy without any luck, you will have more happiness than you need!

CANNIBAL – Don't! I'll manage on my own.

QUEEN – No coin tosses! What nonsense! I'm the Queen here...

VEDALIA – For now!

QUEEN – What do you mean, for now?

VEDALIA – With brains like a pigeon you won't stay in power for long.

QUEEN – How dare you?!

VEDALIA – Of course I dare. In all my life I have seen so many kings and queens! You're not even interesting enough for my collection of historic mummies!

FISHERMAN – Don't argue, ladies!

QUEEN – Fadrius! I order you to turn her into a flying bat! No into a rat! Yes, a rat.

FADRIUS – I'm afraid I cannot fulfill your order Your Majesty.

QUEEN – Is this a rebellion?! Conspiracy?

FADRIUS – (*With sad detachment*) It's not that, Your Majesty, it's because this woman is a Sorceress. Our magical powers are more or less equal. So, we couldn't destroy one another.

VEDALIA – (*Triumphantly*) You see my dear! So, you better keep quiet. Or you could become a rat yourself.

QUEEN – Me – a rat! What right do you have? I'll tear your tongue out myself! I'll scratch your eyes out!

VEDALIA – Oh, I'm so scared!

The women walk away from each other. The Queen is in a state of helpless anger. And Vedalia is in a state of wicked triumph.

FISHERMAN – Don't quarrel, Ladies. You are both so noble!

CANNIBAL – (*Joyfully*) Don't get in their way let them fight; let them bite one another's throats. It's fun, and we will have fewer contenders for the MIRACLE.

HERMIT – A lot of things have changed since I've been isolated. And unfortunately, not for the best.

CANNIBAL – You should have stayed at home in the mountains. Why didn't you just stay there?

HERMIT – My friend Gelo invited me! But you wouldn't

understand that.

FISHERMAN – One shouldn't be judgmental. Arguments even happen within families. You just have to learn not to take it too seriously. You shouldn't get too emotional about it.

Gelo decisively walks out of the shadows into the center of attention. He is holding something in his hands.

FADRIUS – Welcome back Gelo. Did you accomplish your test?

FISHERMAN – You're just in time. A little while longer and there would have been fight!

CANNIBAL – Where is the MIRACLE?

QUEEN – Can I make my wishes now?

HERMIT – It's good that you are safe! Where is Lizy?

GELO – *(Sadly looking at Hermit)* Her and I parted forever. I had to sacrifice our love for the sake of the MIRACLE. That was the price for my lifelong dream.

VEDALIA – Well-done boy! I believed in you.

HERMIT – *(Horrorified)* So that means, you betrayed Lizy?!

GELO – Why betrayed? It just turned out that way...

HERMIT – What do you mean, "Turned out that way"? You sold your love so that you could be a Wizard! How can you make all the people in the world happy, when you couldn't even make your only loved one happy!

FISHERMAN – Don't get upset, Gelo. In each relationship

there is always one partner who is wrong. Believe you me, for a happy family love is important but not necessary. You can build a family on mutual respect and sympathy, or attachment.

QUEEN – From my experience I know, there is nothing good in marriage at all.

VEDALIA – The strongest families are those who are based on marriage of convenience. I can find you a quiet decent girl with a good dowry. And she will be good in bed too. Which is more important than so called “love”.

GELO – All of you leave me alone! I don't need anybody apart from Lizy! I understood this when I was coming back. I understood my mistake. I shouldn't have left her there. I will never forgive myself for my stupidity and...weakness. All the wealth and treasures of all the kingdoms in the world are not worth Lizy's smile! Can you comprehend what it feels like to lose the love of your life?! You're all so clever and self-assured, so persistent with your advice, and your knowledge of life. Can you feel what it's like to dream of love, experience it and then reject it?! How and with what can you value and measure the horror and suffering of sacrificing the happiness of love? I pity you, even though you are so righteous and prudent. Because those who are unable to experience deep feelings, aren't really living at all... they just exist as prisoners of rational illusions. They are unable of great feats, discoveries, and deeds. Their hearts lack fire, and their souls lack the freedom of flight. You want me to become like them?! But I don't want to. I'm alive!

QUEEN – Fadrius, what is he talking about? And he is supposed to be the courts future Wizard? You didn't teach him about life very well!

FADRIUS – It is impossible to teach one, how to live. Each person learns life by his or her's own experiences. In such hard matters you can only help someone through the trials and tribulations, which every one of us experiences in life.

HERMIT – I feel sorry for you, Gelo. All people make mistakes. The most important thing is to identify your mistake and correct it in time. You're a Wizard. In your hands you have the MIRACLE. You can make any wish come true. But you will never be able to recreate a new genuine feeling of love. Pure and true love is only born once. And the rest are passion and lust...

GELO – You're right my friend. Now I know the meaning of life: create kindness with love! But how can I do this when I left my love so far away... at the other side of the world, when I lost her by choosing duty and vocation. At first, I thought I had no other option. It turned out that Lizy should stay, and I would have to take the MIRACLE and follow my destiny. That was just a voice of reasoning. But my feelings were saying the opposite. And I didn't hear them. Even if it looks like there aren't any choices...there always are. I should have acted differently! And my great wish now is to correct my mistake and be with Lizy again. Only now do I realize what she means to me now that I've lost her. That's why I have decided to use the MIRACLE to get her back.

VEDALIA – You’ve gone crazy! The **MIRACLE** will let you have only one wish.

FISHERMAN – I didn’t expect that.

QUEEN – You have no right! Fadrius tell him!

FADRIUS – Unfortunately my Queen, he has. He is the only one who has total power of the **MIRACLE**. We can only ask and persuade him. But the decision is his...

CANNIBAL – You wizards do everything so differently: everyone does what he wants. Where is your respect for your elders and those around you? You don’t care about the less fortunate people like me. You should be ashamed, Gelo! For the sake of your worthless love, you are willing to sacrifice helping us. You broke your promise, which you gave me in the forest.

VEDALIA – Come to your senses, Gelo. You are rejecting everything: power, strength, and magnitude, and for the sake of what? A silly young girl. It is not only egotistical but it’s stupid!

GELLO – Between power and emotions – I choose emotions. Between magnitude and sincerity – I choose sincerity. Between strength and love – I choose love.

QUEEN – I don’t need subjects who forget about their Queen, and only think about themselves. I order that you and Lizy be banished from my kingdom.

GELLO – (*Sarcastic*) I think Lizy and me will survive without you. But if Lizy and I lose each other then I doubt we will. (*Addresses Hermit*) I’m sorry I invited you here...

HERMIT – Nonsense! Let’s go and travel together. Just don’t

listen to them. I like your decision. Now hurry up and return Lizy.

GELO – (*Raises the MIRACLE high in the air*) Miracle, I wish that Lizy was once again with me, right here, right now!

The gong sounds. Everybody is dumb-founded and looks at Gelo.

Suddenly Lizy walks on stage. She looks around with confusion. Gelo runs towards her.

GELO – Lizy! I missed you so much.

LIZY – Gelo! We are together again. How did you manage it?

GELO – I just corrected my mistake. Let's get out of here. There is nothing here for us anymore. I will tell you everything on our journey.

Lizy and Gelo, hand in hand happily walk out. Everybody looks their way.

FADRIUS – (*Sighs deeply*) Pity. Great Pity. He was a promising pupil. He could have been a Great Wizard, and all in vain! He didn't pass 'The Testing of a Wizard'!

HERMIT – But he passed the test to be a Real Person. And that is a lot harder and more important.

Music plays. Curtains.

* * * * *

You can write a review about this play.
E-mail the author: Gedar15@yandex.ru