

GARGANTUA

by

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### SETTING

A play from a semi-professional theater company during creation and performance.

### TIME

There are two timelines: One is the opening night performance of the play "Gargantua." The second is the rehearsal process leading up to opening night.

### ON STAGING

It may help to keep the two timelines stylistically separate in both design and acting. Scenes in "the play" may be better distinguished with masks, face paint or a heightened acting style.

When "/" (train tracks) appear in a line, the character with the next line of dialogue begins speaking over the other character.

Scene 10, the "Act Two" of the play within the play is intentionally piecemeal. For a through-line the following may help:

Gargantua makes a deal with Death. He lives outside of Death's domain in the Underworld. He renames himself the Wild King. He blinds his father, and sets him to gathering souls. He drives Kroop mad and keeps him as his fool. Bolduc, when he arrives in the Underworld, rides on the train that the Wild King had built, he is accompanied by a chorus of dead souls, the last of the dead souls from Labrador and Moldova. At the end Death attacks Gargantua's kingdom and wins. Death offers condolences to the fool Bolduc for his unfortunate life.

It is adventurous, fantastical and poorly written, and the scene suffers those consequences.

## SCENE 1

## MEETING

(The stage. Some props scattered about. A few pieces of paper with design sketches on them are tacked to the walls.)

(Bolduc enters with a small puppet. He immediately stops and flails his hand about, as if he had run into a spiders web, which is a good simile, as he has.)

(Bolduc puts the puppet down, and traces the web to the farthest corners of the room with his eyes. Bolduc then goes to stand in the farthest corner of the room, and looks at, what we must assume to be the spider.)

(Elba enters.)

ELBA

(to herself)

Well, who do we want to be today?

BOLDUC

Excuse me?

ELBA

(noticing Bolduc)

Oh! Hello! // Forgive me! I have a speech disorder. I tend to mix trivial questions up with more pertinent ones.

BOLDUC

Yes! Hello... Oh. Okay.

ELBA

I think that one was more for myself. What I meant to say to you was: How are you today?

BOLDUC

Good. Thank you. I'm Bolduc.

ELBA

Elba. From the Learning Committee. Have you seen the // others?

(Chawson enters.)

CHAWSON

Hello!

BOLDUC

Hello.

ELBA

Hello!

CHAWSON

Sorry I'm late.

ELBA

No! // Glad you showed up.

BOLDUC

Watch out for the spider.

CHAWSON

Woah. Spider?

BOLDUC

Yeah.

ELBA

Where?

BOLDUC

Here, here, and there. Kind of everywhere really.

CHAWSON

Oh! // I think I got one of the strands.

(Chawson tries brushing a web off of him.)

ELBA

I thought you said this place was a theater?

(Beat)

I meant to ask // how you found such an innovative space.

CHAWSON

She has a speech disorder. Did she tell you that?

BOLDUC

Yes.

ELBA

Yes. That's why Greta will be handling most of the question asking in our-

CHAWSON

Where is // Greta?

(Greta enters.)

ELBA

Here she is.

GRETA

Here I am!

ELBA

There she is.

GRETA

There I am. Sorry I'm late.

CHAWSON

Spider.

GRETA

Where?

CHAWSON

Everywhere. Infested.

BOLDUC

Not infested! No. It's just one spider. Over there. It's quite impressive really, in one night it crawled from there, to there and there...

(tracing the web with his hand)

And he ends up right in the middle of the space. When you think about the time and planning put into that... It's massive, don't you think?

ELBA

Sisyphean.

(Beat. Bolduc swipes his hand through the middle of the web and balls it up into his hands.)

BOLDUC

Okay then!

GRETA

Okay!

CHAWSON

Okay.

ELBA

Okay!

BOLDUC

Gargantua.

ELBA

Yes, Gargantua!

GRETA

We are extremely excited about two things.

ELBA

Greta is the least organized of the Learning Committee. But she is the best at leading these kinds of discussions.

GRETA

I am the best at leading these kinds of discussions. Two things. One: that you have decided to write a play. Two: that you have decided to write a play about Gargantua.

ELBA

Well spoken.

GRETA

We think theater is very relevant.

ELBA

Very relevant.

CHAWSON

And we are extremely excited about the mytho-political resonances that we saw in your submission.

GRETA

To be exact we saw several.

ELBA

Several.

CHAWSON

Several mytho-political resonances. And so, we just want to make sure that you have a good--just a really solid--solid intellectual footing here.

GRETA

As part of your responsibility to the state for it's generous grant-based contributions.

ELBA

And your responsibility to the artistic community as a whole.

CHAWSON

Which is neither here nor there--

GRETA

But should still be taken into consideration.

CHAWSON

Yes.

GRETA

Yes.

CHAWSON

(Pointing to the puppet.)

Is this one of the puppets you mentioned?

BOLDUC

Yes. // This is our small...

CHAWSON (Continued)

Is it? It is! The man himself. The very center of the epic mytho-political play/spectacle. The namesake.

GRETA

Held in the palm of your hand.

ELBA

How does he work?

CHAWSON

Yes! Is his shadow to be cast on a paper screen? Or will you manipulate him from above the stage with tiny strings?

BOLDUC

No. No. Here let me show you.

(Bolduc manipulates the small puppet by grabbing the back of the neck and the wrist of one arm. He animates the puppet simply, but confidently.)

CHAWSON

That's--!

GRETA

Interesting!

ELBA

Do you know how much we're giving you?

GRETA

Of course he does.

CHAWSON

Of course he does!

BOLDUC

Of course I do.

CHAWSON

This is just a protoype. // Tell me, what was your name?

ELBA

It doesn't look like a protoype // it looks bad.

GRETA

(to CHAWSON)

Bolduc.

BOLDUC

Bolduc.

CHAWSON

Bolduc, Bolduc, I like that. Bolduc.

BOLDUC

Yes.

CHAWSON

It's bold. Now tell me, Bolduc, have you ever thought about digital projections, for use in your work?

BOLDUC

Well, no.

CHAWSON

High definition? 3D mapping?

BOLDUC

No, I hadn't considered // those.

CHAWSON

Well, consider it considered.

GRETA

Not that we can advise you, as it is your project, // but--

BOLDUC

But...

GRETA

You know... Try.

(Pause.)

ELBA

This must be so fascinating to you, as an artist--our reactions.

CHAWSON

Yes but the process it is so strenuous! Both an artist and a craftsman, right? The work! The work is what's important! To create! To be able to look Death in the face and say "Look at all I've done!" Immortality. Right? // That's what drives the artist.

BOLDUC

No. Well, perhaps. The work. The work is what interests me. Of which, there's still a lot to do...

ELBA

What is it with artists and 'work' anyway?

GRETA

Elba.

ELBA

What? Oh! I'm sorry, I meant to say // "aren't you nervous?"

GRETA

Have you heard about Elba's problem?

CHAWSON

He has.

ELBA

What did I say? Oh my goodness, I totally blanked that time! What did I say!? Greta!

GRETA

Elba.

CHAWSON

Chawson.

(Beat)

I felt like we were all saying our names there. // Greta, Elba, Chawson...

GRETA

Well anyways let's get back on track! So... The first question is of course, // just who or what is your Gargantua?

(Greta starts going through her notes.)

CHAWSON

What was your name again?

BOLDUC

Bolduc.

CHAWSON

Bolduc! Yes! Tip of my tounge. Bolduc. Bold duck.

BOLDUC

Yes.

ELBA

That's French, isn't it?

BOLDUC  
Slovakian.

(Pause.)

GRETA  
Well, shit.

CHAWSON  
What?

GRETA  
The papers, I left them outside I think. I put them down when I... Nevermind. I'm sorry. I have to get them. They have all my questions on them. It'll just be a second.

ELBA  
Wait! Wait. I think I might have them.

CHAWSON  
Yes. I might have them too.

(Pause. The three members of the learning committee are face down in their folders/bags. Elba springs up papers in hand.)

ELBA  
Ah! Found them!

CHAWSON  
Damn.

ELBA  
(handing them over)  
Here, Greta.

GRETA  
Thank you. Okay. So, the story begins. Gargantua, by Rabelais. // The first act, we're assuming...

BOLDUC  
Actually... Actually it's no longer by Rabelais. It's by me. I've thought about it. You can't really call what I'm doing "adapting."

(Bolduc begins bleeding from his mouth.)

A pause.)

ELBA

Are you bleeding? I think you're bleeding.

(Beat. Chawson, Greta and Elba stare at him.)

BOLDUC

(Amused)

I think you, um, misspoke again. What were you actually trying to ask me?

CHAWSON

Bolduc?

BOLDUC

Yes?

CHAWSON

Why are you bleeding?

(Blackout.)

## SCENE 2

## WEDDING &amp; BIRTH

(The play.)

ALL

GARGANTUA!

(An eruption! Lights, balloons, streamers! An entire Russian Orthodox wedding falls out of the sky. A wedding parade snakes it's way through the audience. Grandgousier and Gargamelle lead, dressed in simple wedding attire. Gargamelle is visibly pregnant.)

(The Wedding Song is sung by everyone.)

(Moldovan Four climbs on stage with a dictionary.)

## MOLDOVAN FOUR

Conception. Con-cep-tion. Noun.

The fertilization of an egg by a sperm at the beginning of pregnancy.

And/Or: a general understanding of something. See CONCEPT.

And/Or: the process of arriving at an abstract idea or belief or the moment at which such an idea starts to take shape or emerge.

And/Or: the beginnings or origin of something.

See also: beginning, origin, birth, sex, fetus, loss of freedom, marriage in some cases, child-support in others, love, sacrifice, family, and... Banging, shagging, doing it, bumpin', humpin', making the two back beast, slammin' the ham in the bacon, doing Mommy and Daddy hugs on the couch-

(Grandgousier and Gargamelle blush and laugh.)

## MOLDOVAN ONE

Look at her she's fit to burst!

## MOLDOVAN TWO

She's ready to pop!

MOLDOVAN THREE

She's probably tired of people talking about how big she's getting!

GRANDGOUSIER

Friends! Thank you all for coming to our simple little wedding.

GARGAMELLE

It means a lot to us.

GRANDGOUSIER

Has anyone seen the priest? He is very old. We are worried he may have gotten trampled in the parade.

(A bishop's mitre is placed on Tom's head. He immediately becomes old and drunk. He is now the Grand Priest. He is thrust onstage.)

MOLDOVAN ONE

We found him!

MOLDOVAN TWO

He was napping in the cellar!

MOLDOVAN FOUR

With his mouth round the bunghole of a wine barrel!

MOLDOVAN TWO

A true Moldovan, that one!

MOLDOVAN ONE

Filled with the joy of life!

GARGAMELLE

Thank you for officiating this, Your Holiness.

GRAND PRIEST

(scowling)

What is your name?

GARGAMELLE

Gargamelle.

GRAND PRIEST

And yours?

GRANDGOUSIER

Grandgousier.

GRAND PRIEST

And how long have you been courting?

GARGAMELLE

Not long.

(The Grand Priest looks at her  
stomach.)

GRAND PRIEST

Long enough apparently.

(Beat)

Do you have any money?

GRANDGOUSIER

We couldn't afford a church.

GARGAMELLE

We could barely afford someone to officiate.

GRAND PRIEST

Do you love each other?

GRANDGOUSIER

More than the world.

GRAND PRIEST

So you see something deep within each other? And is that something a something that will never wither, age, or depreciate? Do you seek to be the springtime of each other's lives: blossoming, nurturing, and growing with one another no matter what hardship may befall you? Do you promise to make each day rare and beautiful, come what may, to flourish in absurdity like the flowers that grow in the dump?

GRANDGOUSIER

Well...

GRAND PRIEST

Well?

GARGAMELLE

We don't know. But we would like to try.

GRAND PRIEST

Now considering all that we've just discussed, do you still believe that this is the best choice to be making?

GRANDGOUSIER

I do.

GARGAMELLE

I do.

(A pause.)

GRAND PRIEST

You should be fine. Man and wife. Go on... Kiss yourselves...

(They kiss. It can be a long one.)

(A massive cheer, as if a winning goal was just scored in an international football game.)

(The Grand Priest wanders off to find more wine.)

(A white screen is brought out which obscures Gargamelle. She is silhouetted behind it.)

(The rest of the actors, including Grandgousier disperse. Gargamelle moans.)

(While the pregnancy is described, a large ballon is inflated behind Gargamelle to simulate the pregnancy.)

MOLDOVAN ONE

Now she's ready to give birth!

MOLDOVAN TWO

The plot is really moving quickly today, isn't it!

MOLDOVAN THREE

Has she thought of a name?

MOLDOVAN FOUR

Does she know the sex?

MOLDOVAN TWO

Where's the father in all this?

(Gargamelle moans. The balloon is comically big.)

GRANDGOUSIER

I'm right over here.

MOLDOVAN TWO

Aren't you going to help?

(Gargamelle shrieks.)

GRANGOUSIER

I'll let the midwife handle this.

(Gargamelle screams again. She is joined by a male voice. The ballon by now has gotten so big that it starts to separate from her body.)

MOLDOVAN ONE

Look! The pregnancy is starting to separate from her body!

MOLDOVAN FOUR

It's beginning to float up into the sky!

MOLDOVAN THREE

Someone should go catch it!

MOLDOVAN ONE

Someone should see if his or her wife is okay...

(Grandgousier leaps onto stage and goes behind the curtain. In silhouette he takes hold of the balloon and holds it aloft.)

GRANDGOUSIER

It's okay! It's just the balloon.

(He pulls down the curtain.)

See?

(To Gargamelle)

Are you ready?

GARGAMELLE

Yes.

(Grandgousier produces a pin.)

GRANDGOUSIER

What would you like?

GARGAMELLE

A boy.

GRANDGOUSIER

We would like a boy.

(Grandgousier pops the balloon. The lights change. A rumbling grows in the air. All the actors join in this long moan, and at the crescendo, silence.)

(A huge mask floats at the back of the audience. It moves forward towards the stage. A rumbling of music.)

MOLDOVAN ONE

Moldovans are like anyone else

MOLDOVAN TWO

Before they are named, each child

GRANDGOUSIER

Is infinite.

MOLDOVAN THREE

They fill the sky

MOLDOVAN FOUR

With morning light.

MOLDOVAN ONE

They tower

MOLDOVAN TWO

Like stormclouds

MOLDOVAN THREE

Ready to burst

With possibility. MOLDOVAN FOUR

A name GARGAMELLE

Draws a line MOLDOVAN ONE

On the edge of color MOLDOVAN TWO

Says that is that MOLDOVAN THREE

And this is you. GARGAMELLE

(The mask is floating and staring down at Grandgousier and Gargamelle. It moves it's mouth as if imploring it's parents to name it. Grandgousier reaches out to touch the mask.)

GARGANTUA. GRANDGOUSIER  
Your name is Gargantua.

(Blackout.)

## SCENE 3

## HARDSHIPS

(The play.)

(Grandgousier is seated at a table, staring at an empty bottle of wine. Bolduc, a property owner, stands by the table. Gargantua is under the table reading a book.)

## GRANDGOUSIER

It's empty.

## BOLDUC

It's the wine debt. And it's affecting everyone.

## GRANDGOUSIER

I don't understand. I put the mash into the bottle.

## BOLDUC

What is there to understand? Nothing my friend. Just the ugly truth. Between the celebration of the fifteenth year of Moldovan Independence, the bi-annual Moldovan Poetry Convention and the rash of weddings we've been having as of late, we've drunk up all the wine. And now we've started getting sloshed off of wine that hasn't even been created yet. Cellars across Moldova have been turning up empty, grapes have been withering on the vine...

## GRANDGOUSIER

There must be some good news...

## BOLDUC

There is a surplus of raisins.

## GRANDGOUSIER

But if I don't have any wine, I cannot sell any wine. I cannot afford to pay off my debts and I cannot afford to send my son to a good school.

## BOLDUC

(Laughing)

Why on earth would you want to do that? He doesn't

need to be educated! He can be a vintner like his father.

GRANDGOUSIER

It is an occupation I regret choosing as of late.

BOLDUC

Don't fear. It will soon pass. I'm sure.

GRANDGOUSIER

You think so?

BOLDUC

Sure! We Moldovans will simply have to stop drinking...

(Beat. Bolduc bursts out laughing at himself. Gargamelle enters.)

BOLDUC (Continued)

Ha! Stop drinking! I truly missed my calling. I should have been a comic actor in the city. Everyone would have known the name of Bolduc then. 'Are you going to see the new comedy?' one would say, 'It has the great comic actor Bolduc in it!' 'Of course!' would reply the other, 'I loved him in, The Labradorean General.'

(Beat)

Ah well. Perhaps I should try one of these days.

(Beat)

Well my friend, I certainly don't envy your position. It seems your livelihood has been drank right out from underneath you. Such a shame too! Because of the debt, wine is coming at a very high price now...

(He goes to leave.)

By the way, your payment is due in a fortnight. Three hundred francs.

(Bolduc exits.)

GARGAMELLE

Three hundred francs is not too much. We'll certainly find it in time.

GRANDGOUSIER

And what of the month after that? Or the month after that?

GARGAMELLE

Maybe we should move then. Could we go to the capital?

GRANDGOUSIER

And live in a single room apartment with my brother? Trapping pigeons to eat for dinner? Gargantua needs space. He's a growing boy.

GARGAMELLE

He's getting older. I'm sure if we told him that we needed to make changes he'd understand.

GARGANTUA

I'm under the table, mother.

(Gargantua goes to Grandgousier.)

GRANDGOUSIER

Gargantua, look at you! How big you are getting!

GARGANTUA

I was six last night, but I resolved to grow seven years while I slept.

GRANDGOUSIER

And now you are eleven!

GARGAMELLE

Thirteen.

GRANDGOUSIER

What? Yes! Thirteen. Your father has always been poor at arithmetic.

GARGANTUA

I wanted to grow so I could help you and mother with the vineyard.

GRANDGOUSIER

Yes. That is very kind of you. But right now there is no helping the vineyard.

GARGANTUA

Why?

GRANDGOUSIER

That is not for a boy to know. It is very complex. Even I can barely understand it. But look at you!

Thirteen! Why you're almost old enough to...

(Beat)

That's it! That's it!

GARGAMELLE

What's it?

GRANDGOUSIER

Enlist! He can become a soldier!

GARGAMELLE

No!

GRANDGOUSIER

Relax, my love! It's nothing but marching. And since drinking is prohibited in the soldiers' camps they pay them very well to keep them enlisted! Why its at least two hundred francs for signing up! Besides there hasn't been a war in a hundred years.

GARGAMELLE

But what if something should happen? You know the rumors...

GRANDGOUSIER

Murmurs! The gossip of fishwives! Labrador changes it's government and suddenly everyone cries wolf! The Moldovans are a peaceful people, why would they seek to harm us?

(to Gargantua)

Would you like to help your family, my son?

GARGANTUA

Very much.

GRANDGOUSIER

Then we start this morning. Salute!

(Grandgousier and Gargantua salute eachother.)

GRANDGOUSIER (Continued)

That's my boy!

(Blackout.)

## SCENE 4

## CROSSROADS

(The stage.)

(Wendy sits and writes cues into a book. A jar is near her. Tom searches for something offstage. Lem enters.)

LEM

Hey.

WENDY

Hi.

LEM

(walking through web)

Eesh. Ugh. Damn it. We've got to do something about this spider. // You're early. Why are you early?

WENDY

I think we've got that taken care of. Yeah. Early for rehearsal. Not early for all the rest of this stuff.

(Lem sits down, and retrieves a script from her bag. She begins highlighting.)

LEM

Yeah?

WENDY

There's... I have a list.

TOM

(offstage)

...rugged Pyrrhus, he whose sable arms,  
Black as his purpose, did the night resemble... //  
Hath now this dread and black complexion smear'd  
With heraldry more dismal...

LEM

Tom? What is he doing?

WENDY

Looking for the spider. He showed up two hours early with a can of Raid.

LEM

Raid? Who uses Raid anymore?

TOM

(offstage)

There are webs everywhere! This guy is... he's...  
supernatural!

LEM

(to Tom)

You kill him dead, Tom!

WENDY

Does it have to be a he?

LEM

What?

WENDY

It could be a she.

LEM

You know what, Wendy? You're right. It could be.

(to Tom)

You kill her dead, Tom!

TOM

(offstage)

Out, out, thou strumpet, Fortune! All you gods,  
In general synod 'take away her power...

LEM

The spider shouldn't even be in the theater. The  
spider built a stupid web.

(A silence.)

WENDY

What are you highlighting?

LEM

Nothing.

WENDY

That's not the Gargantua script.

LEM

Okay! I know! It's a side for an audition. I'm going

down for an audition tomorrow. For television. A pilot.

WENDY

That's awesome!

LEM

Am I awful?

WENDY

No! Why would that make you awful?

LEM

Well, if I get this—I mean I really think I have a chance at this. It... it shoots in a week.

WENDY

Oh.

LEM

Am I awful?

WENDY

We would just be getting into tech.

(Beat)

But, no. I mean, you have to do what you have to do. I understand.

LEM

Really?

WENDY

You should tell someone.

LEM

I don't want to make a big fuss if I don't make it. You know? And isn't it the same way every time, you get cast in something and then another better project falls in your lap?

WENDY

Yeah. I guess.

LEM

And the money's really good. And my career. And just well I don't think this is going to go anywhere and I would much rather be stuck doing a stupid TV pilot somewhere else than be stuck doing a stupid actor-

director puppet show here, right? I mean, the grass is always greener on the other side, right? Shouldn't I go where the grass is greener?

WENDY

I don't think that's // what that means.

LEM

And who is even going to come see this? I talked with Patric and he's pissed off too. He turned down something in Oregon. Oregon! And then Allen... // Ohmygod. I'm sorry. Your puppets are not stupid.

WENDY

I think Allen--No. Yeah. It's okay. I know you didn't mean that.

LEM

Good. I don't mean it. I'm just--I don't want to have wasted my time.

(Beat)

What's in the jar? Did you start juicing?

WENDY

It's the spider.

LEM

What?

WENDY

The spider. She's already spinning another web.

LEM

Gross.

WENDY

I find it kind of admirable. She's crafty.

(Beat)

We builders have to help eachother out.

(Patric and Bruce enter. Lem hides her audtion sides.)

PATRIC

Hey ladies.

LEM

Early! You're early. Congrats.

PATRIC

Hey Lem.

LEM

That's not my name. I don't know where you guys got that nickname for me, but that is not my name.

BRUCE

Where's Bolduc?

WENDY

It's Tuesday. Tuesday is when he meets with the Learning Committee.

PATRIC

Is anyone off book for the new draft?

(Tom enters, rattling the Raid can.)

LEM

No.

BRUCE

No.

WENDY

No.

TOM

I'm off book. // Oh, and we probably shouldn't use the back room for a while. I went through quite a bit of this stuff.

ALL

(some approximation thereof)

That's good, Tom. Impressive. Good for you.

(Pause.)

TOM

I think I got him though.

PATRIC

Well, let's run lines till he gets here. Where's... ?

(Beat.)

LEM

Bolduc?

PATRIC

No. Not Bolduc. Actor. Um...

(Beat)

Shit.

(Beat)

Actor. Grandgousier.

BRUCE

Allen?

PATRIC

Allen! Yes. Allen.

(An uncomfortable silence settles.)

WENDY

He left.

PATRIC

Left?

LEM

Yeah. Left.

PATRIC

Gone for a run left or quit the show left?

WENDY

He quit the show.

PATRIC

When? // Yesterday?

LEM

Bolduc and he got into a disagreement over Bolduc's vision for the show.

(Bolduc appears. Having silently entered for some of the previous conversation. Chawson follows him.)

BOLDUC

Thank you for putting it so politely, Lem.

(Bolduc produces a ream of paper.)  
 New pages! A scene where we don't need Allen telling us what to do, or what is or is not Rabelais. Don't look so beleaguered, genius is coming, I tell you. Patric! First page. A monologue. Your favorite. Two minutes of your talking uninterrupted by that tedious task of listening or reacting to another character.

(to Chawson)

How's that for an entrance?

(Beat)

Everyone, this is Chawson. Chawson this is everyone. Chawson is our new Grandgousier. He has no formal acting training, and so will be learning from all of you. So I would suggest that you all act harder.

CHAWSON

Hello!

(Everyone greets, or does not greet Chawson. Bruce accidentally hugs him.)

BOLDUC

Alright, Patric.

PATRIC

It's in the third person. // Can I get a minute to look this over?

BOLDUC

Of course it is, Gargantua is talking about himself. Give us a cold read. You're good at those. It's why I cast you.

(Beat)

Is the script clear to everyone?

(Pause.)

TOM

It sounds good to me.

BOLDUC

Thank you, Tom. Okay! Act I, Scene 3. A stage at a crossroads. Actors unpack props.

(Beat)

Elsewhere, Gargantua, the titular character, enters.

(Patric gets up on stage. The actors

move into place. Patric begins reading. At some point the rehearsal begins to resemble the play. Something really comes together, and we are not sure if we are seeing the play, or simply a rehearsal that will forever be remembered as having transcended the show. Which is a pity, because it's not the best scene.)

#### GARGANTUA

Gargantua is off to join the army. He has packed a lunch of a pepper-jelly and cheese sandwich, two apples and a bar of granola. Filled with pride and optimism for his new path in life, he is currently fantasizing about the different buttons and medals he will receive for various acts of heroism and honor. He hopes to get a blue and yellow medal, as that color combination has always given him the greatest satisfaction.

(Beat)

As he walks, a parade of grasshoppers fly before him. A loon wails plaintively on a lake. He passes by a house, stops, and letting his eyes curl upwards on a wending trail of blue chimney smoke, he plainly states: "Moldova. My home."

(Patric/Gargantua exits. Bolduc enters.)

#### BOLDUC

(out of character)

At the crossroads. Bolduc enters.

(in character, to the Musician)

Excuse me, young friend! I am very interested in joining your company of actors. I am Bolduc, a property owner, and I possess an incredible sense of comedic timing—which is a rare trait, unteachable really. In short: I was born for the stage. Do you have something I can read as an audition?

(The Musician pulls a piece of paper from his pocket. He prompts Bolduc to read it.)

BOLDUC (Continued)

(reading)

Tis in vain.  
 Through the desert, thrice dead crawl'd I  
 And 'pon the tender s'guaro suck'd.  
 Donned I this mask of blackend silk:  
 There young and fair Giuseppe died,  
 And vile avenging spider liv'd  
 to see thee gored on rapier's point.  
 Il Tarantulo, say it 'gain  
 shalt with your blood short make it rain!

(Beat)

Ha! Yes. Tragedy. Well, what do you think?

(The Musician shakes his head no.)

BOLDUC (Continued)

What?! What!? Nonsense. You don't know what real  
 talent is. You want to see talent? Watch this.

(to Actor)

You there!

ACTOR

Yes?

BOLDUC

I'll pay you two francs a day for the rest of your  
 life if you leave the stage right now and go count  
 beans in my bean silo.

ACTOR

Two francs?!

(The Actor drops all of his costumes  
 and props and runs off.)

BOLDUC

(to the Musician)

I believe you now have an opening.

(The Musician sighs and shakes Bolduc's  
 hand. Bolduc exits.)

(Two women enter.)

FIRST WOMAN

Terrible, just terrible.

SECOND WOMAN

To think of that awful mess.

FIRST WOMAN

And all for the wine too.

SECOND WOMAN

Desperate times. Desperate, desperate times.

FIRST WOMAN

I feel sorry for the poor boy.

SECOND WOMAN

Sorry?

FIRST WOMAN

Yes! Don't you feel sorry for him?

SECOND WOMAN

Well, it certainly is a terrible set of circumstances. But I have to admit, I can't feel sorry for him.

FIRST WOMAN

And why not? Think of him, smuggling himself across the border to steal wine for his struggling family. Spending three days trapped in the dark inside a piece of farm machinery. Not knowing where he was. Waiting for that faithful knock to signify that he had reached his freedom!

SECOND WOMAN

Yes, but... Not the thresher. Certainly he could have picked a better piece of equipment than that.

FIRST WOMAN

But no one would suspect the thresher!

SECOND WOMAN

Well yes, but that's because the thresher happens to be the most lethal piece of farming equipment that you could crawl inside.

FIRST WOMAN

I guess you're right. I have no compassion for him.

SECOND WOMAN

And I have no compassion for him either.

FIRST WOMAN

What a wretched little boy.

SECOND WOMAN

The world is a better place without him.

FIRST WOMAN

(Noticing the actors.)

Oh! A play! I didn't know there was a play here today.

SECOND WOMAN

There always is. The government subsidizes it.

FIRST WOMAN

Oh, I doubt that.

(to the Musician)

Are you subsidized?

(The Musician cups his ear.)

SECOND WOMAN

Are you subsidized?

(The Musician shrugs. He does not understand.)

SECOND WOMAN (Continued)

By the government. Does the government give you any money?

(The Musician shakes his head no. They certainly do not get any money from the government.)

SECOND WOMAN (Continued)

Oh.

(Beat)

Well you must not be very good then.

(Silence. The women leave. Gargantua enters. Bolduc emerges and wanders the stage.)

BOLDUC

O, Ugolina! Sweet jasmine of the Sonora! Slay'd?  
Stay, heart, wreck no more upon yon coral'd lip!  
Uh...

(He produces a vial.)

Poison! I see hath been thy timely end.  
 O damnable Roderigo! O sweet Ugolina!  
 I, like a fly in machinations trapped...  
 I, like a fly in machinations trapped...  
 Agave cactus...  
 Must become

(Dropping this character)

Damn it all.

(A silence.)

BOLDUC

Enter Chawson as a Labradorean Professor!

(Chawson stands up and becomes the professor. Perhaps there is a shift of light. He is off book, and the scene feels further along than it should be. Chawson speaks into the air.)

PROFESSOR

Attia? Attia!

BOLDUC

With accent.

CHAWSON

Yes.

(Chawson plays the professor with what can only be described as a "large" accent.)

PROFESSOR

Where are you you damnable little girl?

(to the Musician)

Oh. Hello. Have you seen a young lady pass by?

(to Gargantua)

Have you seen a woman of about your age pass by these parts?

GARGANTUA

No. I haven't. Are you from Labrador?

PROFESSOR

A Lab? No! I am Moldovan. Though I live in Labrador most of the year. I am a tutor, teaching the very

foolish and headstrong daughter of a visiting Labradorian dignitary. Ha! Leave it to me to have lost her. Are you sure you haven't seen her? She would have been very beautiful. Beautiful enough for a young boy like you to fall instantly in love with her.

GARGANTUA

I would have remembered if I saw anyone that beautiful.

PROFESSOR

Alas, alas. Well she hopefully will turn up. She usually does. She enjoys hiding more than she enjoys her lessons on world politics.

(to Bolduc)

I promise you I am a Moldovan. The Labs are simply better employers. Their country is doing very well under the new government...

GARGANTUA

What is the weather like in Labrador?

PROFESSOR

Pleasant. Mediterranean.

GARGANTUA

Do they have an army?

PROFESSOR

The strongest in the world. And the most well paid too.

GARGANTUA

Do they have any wine?

PROFESSOR

A young boy should not think of such things! It is a shame that all Moldovans are such drunkards. The Labradorians, now they know how to raise children! Wine! Ha! What is the capital of the Sahara?

GARGANTUA

I don't know.

PROFESSOR

What is the wingspan of an immature pterodactyl?

GARGANTUA

I really don't know. How old—

PROFESSOR

And you are asking for wine! Ha. Good luck.

(The professor exits.)

BOLDUC

Ha! What a traitor!

(to Chawson)

No offense.

CHAWSON

Oh, none taken!

BOLDUC

Ah, the stage. The stage!

(to Gargantua)

Who are you?

GARGANTUA

My name is Gargantua.

BOLDUC

That sounds like a very important name, the name of someone who will do great things! Are you here to watch me perform?

GARGANTUA

No. I'm—

BOLDUC

Then you are irrelevant.

(Bolduc goes behind the stage. A rock hits Gargantua on the head.)

GARGANTUA

Ouch!

(Another rock. Gargantua ducks this time. Attia enters. Gargantua does a remarkably good job of falling instantly in love with her. Perhaps the musician sees this and plays a little romantic tune.)

ATTIA  
 You ducked.

GARGANTUA  
 I... I did.

ATTIA  
 Quack.

GARGANTUA  
 What?

ATTIA  
 If you're going to duck, you have to talk like a duck.  
 So quack.

GARGANTUA  
 I...

ATTIA  
 My tutor says I'm very strong willed. I bet I'm older  
 than you. You look like you're very young.

GARGANTUA  
 I'm seventeen. I was thirteen this morning.

ATTIA  
 I am seventy-six.

GARGANTUA  
 No you're not.

ATTIA  
 I'm twenty-one.

GARGANTUA  
 (with a beat)  
 No you're not.

ATTIA  
 Good job! I'm fifty-three.  
 (Beat)  
 I'm thirty-two.  
 (Beat)  
 I'm nine.  
 (Beat)  
 I never learned. I don't believe in limiting oneself  
 with numbers.

(This is true. A silence settles  
between them, they stare and smile.)

GARGANTUA

Quack.

ATTIA

I'm Attia.

GARGANTUA

I'm Gargantua.

ATTIA

That's a very funny name for a duck.

(The Professor re-enters.)

PROFESSOR

Attia! There you are! What do you think you are doing,  
Attia? We are due to travel back to Labrador tonight!  
I could have been in deep trouble if I couldn't find  
you! Come, don't talk to these people. Are you ready?

ATTIA

(to Gargantua)

I have important things to do now, duck.

PROFESSOR

Are you ready?

ATTIA

I am ready.

(The professor points his hand  
offstage. Attia looks back at Gargantua  
and sticks her tongue out at him and  
walks offstage. Gargantua sticks his  
tounge out at her and keeps it out  
while he watches her leave.)

(The Musician exits.)

(Gargantua starts to exit in the  
opposite direction of where Attia  
exited.)

(He stops.)

(He looks back.)

(Blackout. Glass breaks.)

PATRIC

(offstage)

Hold!

(The lights come back on. The stage is empty.)

BOLDUC

Hold!

ALL

(offstage)

Holding!

PATRIC

(offstage)

Who left a jar backstage?

(Blackout.)

## SCENE 5

## RUBRICK

(The stage. Bruce is center. He huddles and rocks back and forth. Patric stands on an opposite part of the stage, they both read from scripts. Bolduc watches and directs.)

## BRUCE

My name is Bolduc. I am a property owner.

## PATRIC

Bolduc?

## BOLDUC

A little louder, remember, the wind is whipping.

## BRUCE

Yes, my name is Bolduc. I am a property owner.

(Beat)

My name is Bolduc. I am a property owner.

## BOLDUC

Good, Bruce!

## BRUCE

My name is Bolduc. I am a property owner. I possess an incredible sense of comedic timing—which is a rare trait, unteachable really.

## PATRIC

Is that so? Well you'll fit in just fine then.

## BRUCE

What do you mean?

## PATRIC

The Wild King loves actors.

## BRUCE

The Wild King? // And what sort of a man is this Wild King?

## BOLDUC

Kill that line. That sounds awful. // 'The Wild King?'

BRUCE  
I'm sorry.

BOLDUC  
Writing. Not acting. // You're fine.

BRUCE  
Oh, okay.

BOLDUC  
Okay.

(Pause.)

PATRIC (Continued)  
Did I miss a cue?

BRUCE  
I... I'm not sure.

BOLDUC  
Just give him that line again. // Without that first part.

BRUCE  
The Wild King? Oh. Yes.  
(Beat)  
And what sort of man is this Wild King?

PATRIC  
We're over the high pass. You'll see for yourself soon.

(Pause. They put down their scripts.)

BRUCE  
And all this is on a train?

BOLDUC  
Yes.

PATRIC  
This replaces Act II, Scene 1?

BOLDUC  
Yes! Right?

BRUCE

It's good!

BOLDUC

Thank you, Bruce.

BRUCE

And you're still playing... // Bolduc?

BOLDUC

Yes. That's the way I've written it.

BRUCE

That must be confusing.

BOLDUC

Sometimes it is.

PATRIC

Last time we read this, it was Gargantua on the train and not Bolduc.

BRUCE

Who is the Wild King again?

BOLDUC

You are.

BRUCE

I am?!

BOLDUC

Wait. No. Patric is. Gargantua-Wild King, is the paralel. Gargantua-Wild King. Grandgousier-Blindfolded Man. Attia-Death.

PATRIC

And Bolduc-Bolduc.

BOLDUC

Yes. And me-me.

BRUCE

Well that's good. Ha! I was worried, for a second I thought I had to be off book // for a lot more.

BOLDUC

That's okay. // No one is off book. Except Tom.

PATRIC

When can we see the rest of Act II?

(Pause.)

BOLDUC

Well, thank you. I needed to hear that. You should go. The Learning Committee should be here soon. Big talk today.

(Patric goes to pack up his things.)

BRUCE

Hey, um...

BOLDUC

Yes?

BRUCE

Just so that you know. And, I don't know if you do know. I wanted to... I'm not sure how to properly tell you this. I just. I wanted to express my support.

BOLDUC

Your support.

BRUCE

For you, and this. And even though there's so much... amongst the cast // and so much...

BOLDUC

So much...

BRUCE

I'm really excited. It is just an honor. I am learning so much by watching you. Really, I am. And no matter what happens...

(Beat)

Act two is brilliant.

BOLDUC

Thank you. // You can leave.

BRUCE

Yeah. I... Oh! The committee. Okay. I...

(Bruce hugs Bolduc.)

BOLDUC

Thanks. Can you set up four chairs for me?

BRUCE

What?

BOLDUC

Four chairs.

(Pause. Bruce begins to set up chairs.)

BOLDUC (Continued)

(to Patric)

Act II is coming. I just have to run it by the Learning Committee. They're screening things now. So I just have to... It's great. You're going to love it.

PATRIC

When I joined this project, you told me I was going to play Gargantua in a play called Gargantua--

BOLDUC

Yes it is. It's still Gargantua. You're in it. It's huge. It's epic. It's... Gargantua.

PATRIC

I will play the Wild King. I will play Gargantua. I will play any part you give me, and I will play it well, but I need to see--

(Chawson enters. Patric and Bolduc stop and look at him.)

CHAWSON

Hello!

(Beat)

Am I interrupting?

BOLDUC

No. No. Come in.

(to Patric)

Trust me.

(Patric exits.)

CHAWSON

Bolduc! How goes the war?

BOLDUC

We haven't staged that yet.

CHAWSON

Metaphorically.

BOLDUC

Oh. Fine.

CHAWSON

Well good! You've got something, you know that? A drive. You're a real ball-gripper, you get things done no matter how difficult the odds are. Yeah?

BOLDUC

What's going on?

CHAWSON

Everyone's got their difficulties. JFK had the Bay of Pigs, Pompey had that huge loss at sea, General Lee had the whole Civil War. But you pull through, right Bruce?

BRUCE

Of course!

(Chawson hands a piece of paper to Bolduc.)

BOLDUC

What's this?

CHAWSON

A rubrick.

(Beat)

You're gonna be just fine.

(Bolduc covers his mouth and exits.)

(Elba and Greta enter.)

ELBA

Hello!

BRUCE

Hello!

Hi.

CHAWSON

And you are?

GRETA

Bruce.

BRUCE

Has Bolduc cut and run?

ELBA

Elba.

GRETA

What? // I meant to say, who are you?

ELBA

Bruce, have you... // I guess it's not even funny anymore.

CHAWSON

Don't.

GRETA

Who are you?

ELBA

(Beat.)

I'm Bruce.

BRUCE

In the play.

ELBA

Oh! I'm in the chorus.

BRUCE

And that's a very important part to play, Bruce.

GRETA

It is. I don't know how you all manage to say those lines!

ELBA

(Bolduc enters.)

CHAWSON

Are you joining us, Bruce?

BRUCE

No.

CHAWSON

Thank you for setting up the chairs.

BRUCE

Nice meeting all of you.

(Bruce exits.)

GRETA

(to Elba)

You know, I bet that's not even a real disorder.

ELBA

It is. I have documents. A medical document. Greta.  
Grip it. // Get a grip.

BOLDUC

Hello, Greta. Elba.

GRETA

Bolduc.

ELBA

Bolduc.

CHAWSON

Goose.

(Beat)

Levity.

GRETA

We are considering withdrawing funding for your show.

ELBA

Based on a number of parameters.

GRETA

Outlined in the rubrick that Chawson has given to you.

CHAWSON

The play is great.

ELBA

But as of draft seventeen, has met only four of the requirements of the rubrick.

CHAWSON

A play. The title. Diversity of gender. And, family friendly.

GRETA

The terms stipulated in the contract distinctly state that you are required to meet at least ten.

CHAWSON

Artistic merit. // Diversity of race. Faithful adaptation of...

BOLDUC

Artistic merit? You can't not // say that this doesn't artistic merit. You can't say that.

CHAWSON

Double negative.

GRETA

Art is something that has already happened that everyone can agree upon. What you are doing isn't art it's "sharing thoughts."

ELBA

Yes, but where are the puppets? You promised us puppets. // All I see are actors.

BOLDUC

There are puppets! We have puppets in the... Well // no, I guess that's an actor now. It's... You've got to understand, they're very difficult to work with.

ELBA

I don't see any puppets. I see a big mask. I don't see any puppets.

CHAWSON

Actors or puppets?

BOLDUC

Puppets--well, yes. No. Both.

(Bolduc bleeds from the mouth.)

ELBA

Are you bleeding again? You're bleeding again. You should get that looked at.

BOLDUC

I need that money. I haven't paid anyone, I've already got contracts signed with the cast, I need to pay for the space. We've already gone through two months of rehearsal.

CHAWSON

But the space is yours. // You're a property owner.

BOLDUC

It's not. I don't own anything. I rent.

CHAWSON

Oh.

(Beat)

Ah. Play Bolduc, not real Bolduc. There's a difference.

BOLDUC

There's a difference.

ELBA

Well it's not like you need to worry about that anyway.

GRETA

The Foundation owns the name of the play // and rights to all works conceived with it's assistance.

BOLDUC

The name? You can't own the name!

GRETA

We don't own the name. The Foundation has a partnership with the Rabelais estate, // who owns the name.

BOLDUC

Estate?!

ELBA

Everyone's doing it nowadays. There's one for Lorca, Moliere, Ben Johnson...

CHAWSON

You just find an author in the Creative Commons and file some paperwork.

GRETA

So the ownership--

BOLDUC

My play isn't Rabelais, it's derivative!

ELBA

Exactly.

GRETA

Exactly.

CHAWSON

Exactly.

(Pause.)

GRETA

The Foundation wants to continue to work with you. We want to continue to work with you.

ELBA

But the direction you're going...

GRETA

Will require either our direct involvement--

ELBA

Or pulling the promised funding and seizing the rights to the play, "Gargantua."

BOLDUC

Direct involvement?

GRETA

We'll let you think it over. You can look over our...

(looking for something)

Damnit. Where is it? I know I had it. I'm sorry, // I must have left...

ELBA

(holding a manila envelope)

Was it this? You had left this in the car.

GRETA

Yes!

(handing them to Bolduc)

You can take tonight to review the paperwork.

ELBA

Fingers crossed!

(Beat)

Sorry.

(Greta and Elba leave. Bolduc opens the folder.)

CHAWSON

See! Not so bad.

BOLDUC

I... These are headshots.

(He pulls out a headshot of Elba.)

CHAWSON

Yes! Well... Don't even pay attention to that. It might have been a mix up. Greta mixes things up all the time.

(Beat)

Or, you know... Consider. Think. Visualize.

BOLDUC

Wait. I don't understand. Were they lying this whole time?

(Beat)

Is this a set up? Do they want to be in it? Is my play good?

CHAWSON

You tell me. You're the one who plays with reality. Real? Not real? Truth. Lies. It's...

(Chawson waves his hands around nebulously. He smiles, shrugs, waves-off the headshots, smiles, shrugs again makes a "gripped-by-the-balls" gesture and exits.)

(Blackout.)

## SCENE 6

## BOOT CAMP

(The play.)

(Brooding, prideful music. Ominous figures are backlit against the far wall. Guns, swords, shields.)

## LAB SOLDIERS

(A war cry)

AHHHH!

(A faction of Labradorian soldiers crashes into the wall of backlit figures and begins chopping them with the sides of their hands. The figures crumple. It is a massacre.)

(Lights up on Kroop, a Labradorean Sargeant.)

## KROOP

LABRADOREANS! ATTEN-SHUN!

(Lights up on the melee. The faction along the wall is revealed to be dummies. The Lab Soldiers snap to attention. Gargantua is among them.)

KROOP (Continued)

LEFT FACE.

(They turn in perfect unison.)

KROOP (Continued)

PRESENT ARMS.

(They present their hands in vicious chopping positions.)

KROOP (Continued)

CONCEAL ARMS.

(The soldiers hide their hands. Some whistle a carefree tune. Others look remarkably inconspicuous.)

KROOP (Continued)

DRESS MARCH.

(The soldiers march rapidly in place. With precision the line begins to rotate on it's middle, clockwise. They execute a few other maneuvers.)

KROOP (Continued)

WHAT ARE YOUR NAMES?

LAB SOLDIERS

WE HAVE NO NAMES. WE SERVE OUR COUNTRY.

KROOP

WHERE ARE YOUR FAMILIES?

LAB SOLDIERS

WE HAVE NO FAMILIES. WE HAVE OUR COUNTRY.

KROOP

WHAT IS YOUR COUNTRY?

LAB SOLDIERS

LABRADOR.

KROOP

AND WHAT ARE OUR WORDS?

LAB SOLDIERS

LOYALTY. FRATERNITY. VICTORY.

KROOP

I SAID WHAT ARE OUR WORDS?

LAB SOLDIERS

LOYALTY. FRATERNITY. VICTORY.

KROOP

I STAND UP NEXT TO THE MOUNTAIN.

LAB SOLDIERS

(displaying hands)

I CHOP IT DOWN WITH THE EDGE OF MY HAND.

KROOP

At ease.

(They stand at ease. The lights shift. Grandgousier enters another part of the space.)

GRANDGOUSIER

When the money started coming by mail, we rejoiced. Our son was making his way in the world. Though we never wanted him to be more than a simple vintner we believed that he was now destined for a much more interesting life. He never wrote much. He was never one for words. When he told us he had fallen in love, we begged him to have the wedding at home. It had been years since we had seen him. He told us that would be impossible. Relations had soured between Moldova and Labrador and secret preparations were being made for war. We understood, and we wished him luck and told him to return home as soon as possible. The letters were always postmarked as being from Labrador. We thought it was a mistake.

(Lights shift. Grandgousier exits.)

(A balcony. A stirring anthem is heard in the distance. Attia enters.)

ATTIA

Gargantua, listen! Can you hear it?

(Gargantua is still frozen in the line with the other soldiers. We see this as if through a dream. Gargantua stares straight ahead.)

GARGANTUA

Come back inside, Attia.

ATTIA

No, Gargantua, listen! It's our song! Our Party's song!

GARGANTUA

Coming from the royal hall?

ATTIA

Coming from all over! It's being played on speakers  
across the city!

GARGANTUA

Then we have won the election.

ATTIA

Look! People are pouring out into the streets!

(to the streets)

Labradoreans! Labradoreans! Loyalty! Fraternity!  
Victory for Labrador!

GARGANTUA

Come back inside. The bed is warm.

ATTIA

The air is warm! This is a beautiful night for our  
country Gargantua.

(A silence.)

ATTIA

I love you.

GARGANTUA

I know.

ATTIA

Are you sad?

GARGANTUA

No.

ATTIA

There's no need to be sad now. Our party will fix the  
wine debt. Everyone will be able to drink again.  
Labrador will unite all of the people of our region as  
one. Moldova and Labrador will become as we are, two  
moving as one.

GARGANTUA

We are preparing for war.

ATTIA

Occupation. Not war. Moldova's wine debt is  
destabilizing the region.

GARGANTUA

On base they're calling it war.

ATTIA

Do you love me?

GARGANTUA

I do. My love for you is so strong it strains every fiber of my being. It wears me down like an old shirt. I trip over myself every time I whisper your name.

ATTIA

I love you, too. And tonight a great weight has been lifted from our shoulders. No longer will Labrador be a victim of events. We hold the pen to write our own destiny. I am so proud of you. My family is proud of you. Labrador is proud of you.

GARGANTUA

Yes. But what about...

ATTIA

(pointing to the street)

Look! They're waving at us! We've won! Loyalty, Fraternity, Victory!

(Gargantua joins.)

GARGANTUA & ATTIA

Loyalty! Fraternity! Victory!

(The lights shift back to the soldiers.  
Attia exits.)

KROOP

AGAIN!

LAB SOLDIERS

LOYALTY. FRATERNITY. VICTORY.

KROOP

AGAIN!

LAB SOLDIERS

LOYALTY. FRATERNITY. VICTORY.

KROOP

AGAIN!

LAB SOLDIERS  
LOYALTY. FRATERNITY. VICTORY.

KROOP  
AT EASE.

(They stand at ease.)

KROOP (Continued)  
Private Gargantua.

GARGANTUA  
Sergeant Kroop, sir.

KROOP  
Where were you born, Private?

GARGANTUA  
Moldova, sir. To a modest family of-

KROOP  
Moldova. Is that right?

GARGANTUA  
SIR, YES, SIR.

KROOP  
I KNEW THAT WAS BLOODY RIGHT, PRIVATE. I READ YOUR  
BLOODY SHEET.

(Beat)  
Are you aware of what country this is, Private?

(The other soldiers snicker.)

GARGANTUA  
Sir, yes, sir.

KROOP  
Well, what country is it?

GARGANTUA  
Sir, Labrador, sir.

KROOP  
Is that so! Well, tell me then, Private, what is a  
Moldovan doing in the ranks of the Labradorean army?

GARGANTUA

I... I FELL IN LOVE WITH A LAB, SIR.

(More snickering.)

KROOP

Well isn't that precious! I don't care whose lap your licking, a taste for good Labradorean pussy doesn't make you a Labradorean. Why if that were true, we wouldn't need a goddamn war to get your goddamn country straightened out!

(Beat)

Are you a spy, Private Gargantua?

GARGANTUA

SIR, NO, SIR. I AM A DUTIFUL CITIZEN OF LABRADOR, SIR.

KROOP

Well I'm not sure that you are. But thankfully I can test for this. ATTEN-SHUN!

(The soldiers and Gargantua stand at attention.)

KROOP

A GOOD LAB LOVES THE TASTE OF WHAT?

SOLDIERS

(without Gargantua)

BOOT BLACK, SIR.

KROOP

COMPLETE SENTENCE.

SOLDIERS

(with Gargantua)

A GOOD LAB LOVES THE TASTE OF BOOT BLACK, SIR.

KROOP

And are you a good Lab, Private?

GARGANTUA

SIR, YES, SIR.

(Kroop extends his boot. Attia enters.)

KROOP

Then prove it.

(The scene freezes. Gargantua looks at Attia. She kisses him. Gargantua kneels and places his tongue to Kroop's boot. The soldiers cheer.)

(Blackout.)

## SCENE 7

## FINAL DRESS

(The stage. The cast is assembled. Most are in costume. Bolduc and Patric are center. Patric on stage. There is a stack of paper in a box next to them. Bolduc is already bleeding from the mouth, and visibly tired.)

BOLDUC

It's crucial.

PATRIC

It's nine forty-five! We open tomorrow! No more changes! We haven't even blocked act two! I can't believe we still have to fucking block act two! Some of us haven't even read it yet! Greta? Elba? Come on. Does no one else see this?

GRETA

It would be very difficult // at this point to change what we...

BOLDUC

(to Patric)

You're missing the point.

PATRIC

No. There are no points missed. I would have taken these changes three days ago. I would have taken them yesterday, but I will not have them casually sprung on me in the middle of the final dress!

BOLDUC

You said you wanted more lines! This has more lines!

PATRIC

I want to give you a good show, Bolduc! I cannot give you a good show if you keep changing the show that I am in!

ELBA

We shouldn't do act two.

PATRIC

There! Someone with some sense!

ELBA

Lem doesn't even have her death costume.

LEM

It's true, I don't.

BOLDUC

Wendy is working on it right now. // Maybe if you were here during--

PATRIC

Let's not get started about Wendy.

BOLDUC

If you don't like my vision, then there's the door! No one is holding you here! We can find someone else! Your choice!

PATRIC

You know what? I would. I would really like to, but this show is filled with nice people, that somehow believe that this will work. Nice people that you have bullied into performing in your allegorical little dream-world.

BRUCE

That's enough!

PATRIC

Oh, fuck you, Bruce!

BOLDUC

Just read it.

PATRIC

Fuck you too!

(Beat)

That was unprofessional. I would like to apologize to the cast for my behavior. I fucking--

(Beat)

I'm going to take a minute.

(Patric exits.)

BOLDUC

Take five everybody.

ALL

Thank you, five.

(The cast exits.)

TOM

I have a question, but maybe now's not the best time.

(Beat)

I have some beers in the truck if you want to, uh...  
talk about anything.

(Beat)

I'd still do act two. If we don't do the revisions,  
I'd be off book for it. We can just wing it. It'd be a  
shitshow, but...

(Pause. Wendy enters with a tape  
recorder. Tom exits.)

WENDY

There's someone who wants to see you.

BOLDUC

No. I am not going to answer another one of Elba's  
goddamn questions.

WENDY

No. Someone else.

(Wendy steps aside and Lem jumps out in  
her Death's costume: all in white, with  
a white mask. It looks great.)

LEM

Boo!

WENDY

Ta-da!

BOLDUC

Is that?

WENDY

Yes. Death.

BOLDUC

It's...

WENDY

Non-traditional. I did some research. This is what the Czech's traditionally believe death looks like. They call it, Smrt. Or Smrt. I don't know how to pronounce it. It doesn't have any vowels.

BOLDUC

(to Death/Lem)

Look at all I've done...

LEM

(taking mask off)

What?

BOLDUC

Nothing. Thanks, Lem.

LEM

You're the best Wendy.

(Lem exits.)

WENDY

So there a lot of anger going on? The cast seems upset.

BOLDUC

Is there such thing as a necessary amount of anger?

WENDY

I've got a receipt for you. For all these.

BOLDUC

Wendy, we're already over budget. I can't pay you for that.

WENDY

Oh. I. That's fine. I can // pay for it.

BOLDUC

No. No. Here let me.

(goes to his wallet, empty)

Shit. I can...

WENDY

I'll pay for it. I want to.

(Beat)

Here, let me hug you?

(They hug.)

BOLDUC

Thank you. Thank you for everything.

(Bolduc hesitates before letting go.  
Bolduc tries to kiss Wendy, but fails.)

WENDY

Bolduc.

BOLDUC

I...

WENDY

It's okay. It's fine. I just... No.

BOLDUC

I'm sorry. I didn't even want to. I'm just confused.

WENDY

Yeah, you are. You shouldn't do that. There's a lot of work to do. You're scared and tired. Everyone is. It's going to be a long night and I am going to help you through it. But, not in that way.

(Beat)

And your mouth is bleeding. Bolduc, your mouth is bleeding. That's not good.

(Pause. Patric and Tom enter.)

BOLDUC

Any other news?

WENDY

Happy dress rehearsal.

BOLDUC

Happy dress rehearsal.

WENDY

Oh and...

(handing the tape recorder)

For the king's monolouge.

BOLDUC

Which king?

WENDY

The Moldovan King. The one you added last Thursday.

(Wendy exits.)

PATRIC

(to Tom)

Hey, I mean it too. Your Kroop was good tonight.

TOM

It'll be better in front of an audience.

(A pause. Patric and Bolduc stare at eachother. The rest of the cast enters, except for Wendy.)

BOLDUC

Patric?

PATRIC

Yes?

BOLDUC

I'm sorry.

(Pause.)

GRETA

We do act two.

BOLDUC

(reaching for the stack of revisions)

Ha! Perfect // it's going to be a long night but...

GRETA

Without revisions. The one we're off book for.

BOLDUC

But act two isn't finished. // No. No. The revisions finish it.

PATRIC

That was your choice. No. No revisions. Bolduc? It is

going to be a long night.

(Silence.)

BOLDUC

Lights, Nat.

(The stage goes dark. The lights  
shift.)

Thank you, Nat.

(Beat)

Where... Where were we?

LEM

Your Moldovan King.

BOLDUC

Right.

(Bolduc presses the record button.)

BOLDUC

My fellow Moldovans...

(Blackout.)

## ACT I

## SCENE 8

## WAR

(The play.)

(Darkness. A red light on the horizon. Distant flashes, heat lightning or artillery. As before, a line of figures on the back wall. As if through a radio, we hear the Moldovan King give his address:)

## MOLDOVAN KING

My fellow Moldovans,  
 On this, the sixth day of November, a day which will forever be synonymous with infamy, treachery and all acts of unkindness, our darkest day, a day with a darkness that will out black the other darkneses to the last. I... Where was I? Out dark the darkness... Ah, there we go. With the surprise attack on the city of Moldovsgrab by the treacherous peoples of Labrador and the chop-bombing of Moldovsburg, I, the King of Moldova formally declare: War.  
 May God have mercy on us all.

(The lights dwindle with the sound of a cartoon bomb drop.)

(A thunderous explosion. Labradors emerge from everywhere. The line of figures along the back wall becomes the rag-tag Moldovan army. The two fight.)

(Noise. Bombs whistle, machine guns crack, explosions and flashes everywhere. The music is cacophonous. If possible clips from war films are heard.)

(The battle is a massacre. The Labradoreans chop the Moldovans down again and again. It can be silly.)

(It begins to rain. Perhaps the rain can be people carrying spray bottles.)

(One Moldovan wanders through the carnage. Trying to re-attach a chopped off arm. Gargantua enters in Labradorean uniform and chops the Moldovan down.)

(Kroop leads the charge. Only Labradoreans are left standing.)

KROOP

I STAND UP NEXT TO THE MOUNTAIN.

LAB SOLDIERS

I CHOP IT DOWN WITH THE EDGE OF MY HAND.

KROOP

ONWARD! LOYALTY. FRATERNITY...

LAB SOLDIERS

VICTORY!

(Gargantua remains.)

GARGANTUA

I know this road. This bridge. Those hills. Though it all looks unfamiliar now.

(Beat)

Soon it will be home again. Soon, Moldova.

KROOP

To the ridge! Then westward to the palace!

GARGANTUA

Sir!

KROOP

Yes, Private?

GARGANTUA

I know this place, sir. There's a road that winds through the valley and a small village. The palace is not far from there.

KROOP

Are you contradicting me, Private?

GARGANTUA

We'd make better time along the path than through the woods. The men can ask the villagers for supplies to assist with the liberation.

(Kroop stares him down. It rains.)

KROOP

If you try and pull anything, I will chop you open from head to toe.

(Beat)

You heard the man! We take the road! Resupply as you see fit.

LAB SOLDIERS

LOYALTY! FRATERNITY!

ALL

VICTORY!

(They charge off. The war noises become distant.)

(The scene shifts.)

(Grandgousier and Gargamelle crouch beneath a window. Grandgousier peers out of it cautiously.)

GARGAMELLE

Be careful Grandgousier.

GRANDGOUSIER

Don't worry my love. The lights of battle are moving north. It looks like they will pass us. We are safe.

GARGAMELLE

What about Gargantua?

GRANDGOUSIER

What about him? The Labradoreans attacked us without warning. If he wasn't deployed already he is probably safe, or en-route to the fighting.

GARGAMELLE

We never wanted war.

GRANDGOUSIER

War is not a thing that you can choose, Gargamelle.

GARGAMELLE

I pray that Gargantua is safe. I pray that he sees us again. I pray that he comes home.

(There is a frantic knock on the door.)

GRANDGOUSIER

Shh!

(Pause. The knock comes again.)

GRANDGOUSIER (Continued)

It's too frantic to be a soldier.

GARGAMELLE

Please, Grandgousier, no!

GRANDGOUSER

It may be Gargantua.

(Beat.)

BOLDUC

Hello? Grandgousier? It's me your landlord, Bolduc! Please let me in. You can consider all of your debts forgiven. I will sell you this house at the lowest of prices. Please. I can hear someone in there. Please. I am hurt. Let me in.

(Silence. Grandgousier goes to move to the door. Gargamelle grabs him.)

BOLDUC (Continued)

Please. I don't want to die.

(Grandgousier breaks from Gargamelle and lets Bolduc in.)

BOLDUC (Continued)

Oh thank God! They're following me! They're following me! They chopped me in the shoulder and they're following me! Hide me!

GRANDGOUSIER

What? Who? Who is following you?

BOLDUC

The Labs! They killed the other actors and set fire to our caravan! I only just escaped. Please, please hide me!

GRANDGOUSIER

Why have you done this?

GARGAMELLE

You have killed us.

BOLDUC

No! No! I'm sure it will be fine! Just hide me! Is that boot black? I'll use it to disguise myself.

(He begins to cover his face with black grease.)

BOLDUC (Continued)

Oh ho-ho! This is good! I could be in one of those old Vaudeville routines!

(beat)

Behold! It is I, Othello!

GRANDGOUSIER

They will track you here.

BOLDUC

Which is why I need to be hidden!

GARGAMELLE

They will kill us all now.

BOLDUC

I didn't know what else to do! I...

(Bolduc's mouth begins to bleed.)

ELBA

(whispered)

Bolduc.

(Elba motions towards her mouth. Bolduc realizes he is bleeding. Covers his mouth.)

(A noise is heard outside.)

GRANDGOUSIER

Gargamelle, the back closet. Hide now.

(Gargamelle exits.)

BOLDUC

I'll go with her.

GRANDGOUSIER

You stay.

(Bolduc stays. The noises grow louder.  
Kroop and two Lab Soldiers enter.)

KROOP

Search the farmhouse. Kill any Moldovan who resists.

(Kroop exits. The two soldiers burst  
down the door. Gargantua enters.)

(The soldiers see Bolduc and  
Grandgousier who have their hands up in  
surrender. The soldiers raise their  
chopping hands.)

GARGANTUA

No! Not this house. This house is...

(Gargantua sees his father. His father  
sees him. The world breaks a little.)

GRANDGOUSIER

Gargantua?

SOLDIER ONE

He knows your name.

SOLDIER TWO

How does he know your name?

GRANDGOUSIER

Gargantua?

GARGANTUA

He is...

(A scream. Gargamelle charges one of  
the soldiers with a frying pan. The

soldier chops her dead.)

(Grandgousier and Gargantua scream.  
Grandgousier lunges for the other  
soldier but is chopped dead as well.)

(Bolduc decides to play dead.)

(Before the silence settles, Kroop  
strides in. The soldiers, including  
Gargantua snap to attention.)

KROOP

Good work boys! We'll make short work of these damn  
Moldovans! Let's take a snap for the album, eh? Go on!  
Get over there! Put your feet up on that lion and  
lioness. Ha ha! And Gargantua, you put your feet up on  
that fat one.

(Kroop produces a camera and positions  
them on top of the bodies.)

KROOP

Now everybody say: No more wine debt!

LAB SOLDIERS

No more wine debt!

(A flash. Darkness. A growing sound of  
pain and horror.)

(Lights up on the two soldiers still  
posing. Everyone else has exited.)

SOLDIER ONE

What we are about to tell you is absolutely true.

SOLDIER TWO

So please believe that we are not exaggerating-

SOLDIER ONE

Or even using poetic license-

SOLDIER TWO

When we say that Gargantua felt a kind of despair,

SOLDIER ONE

never before felt in history until that moment.

SOLDIER TWO

Historians now mark events as existing in the time before

SOLDIER ONE

and the time after his grief. For instance, the war

SOLDIER TWO

that the Labradorians had been winning against the Moldovans,

SOLDIER ONE

is marked as being, BG, or Before Grief, whereas the war

SOLDIERS TWO

that the Labradors quickly lost, is AG, Anno Greivous. The Year of His Grief.

SOLDIER ONE

Though it wasn't a year. More like six minutes.

SOLDIER TWO

Six minutes of the most intense grief ever recorded in the history of the universe.

SOLDIER ONE

Though technically the only recording of it is this grainy photograph.

SOLDIER TWO

The photo Sergeant Kroop took.

SOLDIER ONE

(procuring a photo)

This one.

SOLDIER TWO

You see those? Those are his calves.

SOLDIER ONE

Now anyone who has ever been sad can tell you that you get bigger...

SOLDIER TWO

That the sadness wells up inside of you.

SOLDIER ONE

It's what makes the stars in the universe expand, what makes tires go flat.

SOLDIER TWO

The sadder you get,

SOLDIER ONE

The bigger you get.

SOLDIER TWO

Gargantua

SOLDIER ONE

got

SOLDIER TWO

the

SOLDIER ONE

biggest.

(Blackout.)

## SCENE 9

## GRIEF

(The stage.)

(Darkness. A growing roar.)

(A village is revealed. It is Gargantua's village, but tiny. Flashes of mortar fire and heat lightning in the background. A huge figure rises up. It is Gargantua, who is now a man of enormous size. He roars.)

(A song: "The Doom that Came to Moldova" is performed.)

(The village is surrounded by plastic army men. Gargantua stomps them, or picks up some in his mouth and spits them out. A million tiny screams erupt. Gargantua eats them all. Weeping.)

(He smashes houses. He tears at the landscape. He bites mountains in half. He picks up the grass and eats that too. He whacks at the moon. It skitters across the floor.)

(Fire rages across a map of Moldova and Labrador, a foot grinds the ashes into the floor.)

(Actors run about the audience screaming in falsetto and waving their arms. Bolduc is among them. He is bleeding from the mouth again.)

(Gargantua's eyes inflate like huge balloons, his hands grow freakishly large. Finally his heart grows so large that it bursts from his chest. Blood drowns everything.)

(Gargantua, who is onstage singing,

drops to his knees. The soldiers speak  
over the final bars of the song.)

SOLDIER ONE

As he grew, his heart did too.

SOLDIER TWO

Wet, sad and heavy; it split

SOLDIER ONE

like an overfilled grocery bag.

SOLDIER TWO

Après moi, le deluge indeed

SOLDIER ONE

That French king knew nothing.

SOLDIER TWO

When doom came to Labrador and Moldova

(Bolduc coughs.)

SOLDIER ONE

It was in a wall of her son's blood,

(Bolduc staggers for a second and puts  
his hand to his head. He coughs again.)

SOLDIER TWO

Ten stories tall, stretching from this horizon

SOLDIER ONE

to that one. In a word: inescapable.

BOLDUC

Ugh.

SOLDIER TWO

Which is true, because nobody did.

(Bolduc collapses. Darkness. The sound  
of waves crashing and buffeting.)

GRETA

(whispered)

Where is he?

BRUCE

(whispered)

Get up. Get up.

(The lights rise. Gargantua alone,  
center.)

GARGANTUA

The smothered path  
far from complete, a dream  
forced into midday light.

All is calling, you answer  
even in stillness. A train whistle solders  
white sky to the earth.

(Death appears, dressed in all white  
and wearing a white mask. On the edge  
of the light, we can see Bolduc  
collapsed with Greta and Bruce trying  
to get him to sit up. Death has to step  
over Bolduc's legs.)

(Death and Gargantua continue the  
scene. Approaching each other slowly.)

GARGANTUA (Continued)

Terrified of the beyond  
I am preparing to love it.  
Bridled fool that I am;  
I attempt to take the reigns.

(Death and Gargantua touch.)

(Darkness.)

GRETA

Bolduc.

BRUCE

Oh shit.

(There is a lot of motion in the dark.)

(Blackout.)

## SCENE 10

## ACT TWO

(The play. A shifting, rickety boxcar hurtling along it's tracks. Crammed with the souls of the dead. There is an empty space where Bolduc should be. The lights rise and then with prompting from a chorus member, they go down again. Darkness for a moment. They start again. The space is still empty.)

(There is a long and uncomfortable pause. The Dead Souls reluctantly begin their lines.)

DEAD SOUL ONE

It's important to understand that we are the last.

DEAD SOUL TWO

The dregs. The least interesting souls.

DEAD SOUL THREE

It is also important to understand time.

DEAD SOUL FOUR

Time flows very differently here.

DEAD SOUL TWO

Which is convenient for the playwright.

DEAD SOUL THREE

I think I was a Moldovan, but I smell like a Lab.

DEAD SOUL FOUR

He does.

DEAD SOUL TWO

(to Three)

You do.

DEAD SOUL ONE

I believe I was a Lab, but my guts feel like a Moldovans.

DEAD SOUL TWO

I don't believe I was either.

DEAD SOUL FOUR

But you can't really be sure.

(Silence.)

BLINDFOLDED MAN

Bolduc?

(Beat)

Bolduc?

(Silence)

DEAD SOUL ONE

He is coming.

DEAD SOUL TWO

He hears you call.

DEAD SOUL THREE

He // will be here shortly.

(Attia enters, wearing a costume thrown together in complete darkness in two minutes that is meant to represent Bolduc. She tries to hide a script.)

ATTIA

(from the script)

This is all a dream, a terrible, terrible dream.

BLINDFOLDED MAN

Death?

DEAD SOUL TWO

(Whispered)

Bolduc!

LEM

Grandgousier?

BLINDFOLDED MAN

Who?

LEM

Grandgousier? Grandgousier, is that you?

BLINDFOLDED MAN

Rest easy brother. It's a wild ride. We'll cross over the high pass in a few minutes.

LEM

Grandgousier, it's me Bolduc! Your-

BLINDFOLDED MAN

Who? Who are you calling me?

LEM

You...

(Beat)

My apologies, you look like a... An old acquaintance of mine.

BLINDFOLDED MAN

That right? Wild! Wild.

(The train begins to slow.)

LEM

Have you made this trip before?

BLINDFOLDED MAN

Countless times.

LEM

You're blind.

BLINDFOLDED MAN

And you've changed genders...

(Dead Soul Three points to something.)

DEAD SOUL THREE

Mammoths!

(A strange music and sound accompanies what we assume to be the mammoths. Perhaps we see them. Perhaps we simply hear their tremendous breath, and feel the earth quake like the beating of a heart.)

DEAD SOUL ONE

(correcting Three)

Mastadons.

DEAD SOUL TWO

Aurochs, and musk oxen.

LEM

But-

DEAD SOUL FOUR

Don't you remember them?

(The mammoth sound lingers for a moment  
and then passes. The train pulls itself  
over the top of the ridge and begins to  
pick up again.)

BLINDFOLDED MAN

They say there used to be a path  
Then there was a boat

Had to stand in line for days  
Rub the face off a coin  
Still be standing in the same spot

Then someone put the railroad in  
Got a kings ransom  
Got famous too

A little land, a little title

Old whatshisname-  
Remember?

No matter.

He's dead.

(The train is at full speed.)

DEAD SOUL FOUR

Do we keep going?

LEM

(to the wind)

My name is Bolduc. // I am a property owner.

DEAD SOUL FOUR

I guess we do.

DEAD SOUL TWO  
 With her?

DEAD SOUL THREE  
 Who else?

BLINDFOLDED MAN  
 Bolduc, you say?

ATTIA  
 Yes, my name is Bolduc. I am a property owner.

DEAD SOUL ONE  
 This is embarrassing.

DEAD SOUL TWO  
 Leave. // Go.

DEAD SOUL ONE  
 We can't.

ATTIA  
 My name is Bolduc. I am a property owner.  
 (Beat)  
 My name is Bolduc. I am a property owner. I possess an  
 incredible sense of comedic timing—which is a rare  
 trait, unteachable really.

BLINDFOLDED MAN  
 Is that so? Well you'll fit in just fine then.

LEM  
 What do you mean?

BLINDFOLDED MAN  
 The Wild King loves actors.

LEM  
 And what sort of a man is this Wild King?

BLINDFOLDED MAN  
 We're over the high pass. You'll see for yourself  
 soon.

(Bolduc emerges from backstage. He is  
 pale and looks delirious.)

DEAD SOUL THREE

Bolduc!

LEM

Yes? Oh!

(Lem rushes forward and grabs Bolduc and brings him onstage.)

LEM

Speak.

BOLDUC

My name is Bolduc. I am // a property owner...

DEAD SOUL TWO

We've done that.

LEM

(prompting Bolduc)

Answer me this one thing // for I believe....

BOLDUC

Answer me this one thing, for I believe it to be true.  
Am I dead?

BLINDFOLDED MAN

Only to the living, brother. Only to the living...

(They go through a brief tunnel. The Dead Souls have vanished.)

BLINDFOLDED MAN (Continued)

You know what they say... "It's all downhill from here!"

(Another tunnel. Darkness. The Blindfolded Man laughs. When they exit the tunnel. The Blindfolded Man has disappeared as well. Lem is holding Bolduc.)

(Darkness. Void. Thunderous sound.)

(Lights back up. A warmer, interior light. No one enters. After a moment. They go down.)

(Shuffling is heard.)

WENDY

(stage whisper)

Cue seventy-six.

(The lights go up on Bolduc who is being assisted by Lem and Wendy. On the edge of this we see Chawson/Blindfolded Man's feet.)

BLINDFOLDED MAN

The Wild King lurks...

WENDY

Shit. Cue seventy-six point five!

(The lights disappear on them and go up on the Blindfolded Man. At his feet the Mad Fool sits with a bag over his head.)

BLINDFOLDED MAN

The Wild King lurks  
By Death's crowded gate  
All the poor souls  
That by Acheron wait

Death takes a boat  
We take the train  
How many souls  
Do we each stand to gain?

Over the mountains  
And through the woods  
Death takes it's toll  
And we take his goods

(The Blindfolded Man rips the bag off of the head of Mad Fool who has a fake bleeding mouth and dark circles under his eyes.)

MAD FOOL

(babbling madly)

The play! Show us your play within a play within a play!

(The lights go out. Drums, a death march.)

GRETA

(offstage, shouting)

Bolduc performs his play for the Wild King at his castle in the Underworld!

(Lights back up on Bolduc, being assisted by Lem. Wendy has disappeared. Bolduc bleeds from the mouth. The Wild King sits on his throne in shadow.)

WILD KING

Speak!

LEM

(whispering)

Come on. One more scene. You can do it.

WILD KING

Speak! Who comes before the Wild King?

BOLDUC

It is...

(Beat)

It is I, Bolduc, a property owner. I possess an incredible sense of comedic timing--unteachable really. Which is a rare trait. I...

WILD KING

An actor? Perform!

BOLDUC

It is I Bolduc...

LEM

Your majesty, he is a weary...

(to Bolduc)

Come on. Finish it.

(The Wild King jumps forward into the light.)

WILD KING

What is your name?

LEM

I am...

(Lem realizes she can't say Attia.)

WILD KING

(improvising)

You remind me of a face from my past! But as the Wild King I know your true name, which is Lem! I would call you Attia, but that would bring a catharsis fit only for the end of the play!

(Beat)

You! Property owner! I command you, act. Act or I will chop you down with the edge of my hand.

MAD FOOL

He will! He will! I used to be his General! Play or chop! Play or chop!

(Bolduc rises. Bruce emerges with Lem's Death costume.)

BOLDUC

O!

BRUCE

(whisper)

Lem! Your costume!

(Bolduc seizes Lem as Ugolina.)

BOLDUC

...Ugolina! Sweet jasmine of the Sonora! Slay'd? Stay, heart, wreck no more upon yon coral'd lip!

(Lem plays along with Bolduc. Bruce has an idea and disappears.)

BOLDUC (Continued)

Poison! I see hath been thy timely end.  
O damnable Roderigo! O sweet Ugolina!  
I, like a fly in machinations trapped...  
I, like a fly in machinations trapped...  
Agave cactus...  
Must become

(Beat)

That fat and cunning spider of the sand

Who with silent creeping, and venom'd fang  
 Makes all men tremble at his dark command  
 Giuseppe, die! And foul Roderigo hang!  
 Il Tarantulo lives and on this doth henge  
 'Neath mask disguised, till I may be revenged!

(Bolduc locks eyes with the Wild King  
 for a moment.)

BOLDUC

GARGANTUA!!

(Bolduc flies forward and attacks the  
 Wild King. Lem and Tom try and restrain  
 Bolduc.)

GRETA

(offstage, shouting)

The armies of Death approach! Death seeks to make the  
 Wild King kneel!

WILD KING

Come! Come! Death is near! Actor Bolduc come with me!  
 Moldovans! Labradoreans! To the wall! All dead souls,  
 follow your mad King! Lem enters as Death!

(Bolduc looks at Lem. Death appears.)

MAD FOOL

(pointing)

DEATH IS HERE!

(The cast looks and gasps, not sure of  
 who Death is. Bolduc shrieks and pushes  
 back from Patric and Lem, flailing. He  
 stumbles down, and cowers.)

LEM

Bolduc!

PATRIC

Hold! Hold!

WENDY

Hold!

ALL

Hold!

(Death removes their mask or hood. It is Bruce in Lem's costume. Everyone rushes in.)

(Bolduc pulls a strand of web off of himself. He looks up at Lem, lost and vacant.)

BOLDUC

What am I doing?

LEM

A play Bolduc. You're in a play.

BOLDUC

What have I done?

LEM

A play?

(Beat)

I don't know. No one knows.

GRETA

Here. Come here, Bolduc.

BRUCE

Should we call an ambulance?

CHAWSON

Let's exit. Let's do an exit first.

(Greta and Lem help Bolduc up. Bruce walks to Bolduc kneels before him.)

BRUCE

I am the dame who rules the world:  
May it not displease you, // come  
And I shall give you rest.

BOLDUC

...come  
And I shall give you rest.

BRUCE

(standing up)

Act II, Scene 4.

## GRETA

Skip that. Skip all of it. Just get him off the stage.

(The lights dim. Bruce puts on his mask again. A slow drumbeat begins.)

(Bruce holds the hand of Lem, who holds Bolduc up with Greta. The cast gets in line behind them. They perform a short danse macabre while exiting. Some do not dance, others do. Bolduc stumbles once.)

(All exit. Wendy is last.)

(Blackout.)

(End of play.)