

**The Last One or
I want you to panic**
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A list of characters

DIRECTOR¹

PETRA

BRAŇO²

FIRST

SECOND

GIRL

MAN

VOICE

WOMAN

CLEANERS³

DANCERS⁴

¹ Transl. note: as in stage director

² Transl. note: Slovak male name

³ Transl. note: male characters

⁴ Transl. note: female characters

Notes on the text and its staging:

Dear colleagues,

This score is intended for a variable number of performers / actors / dancers. It serves as a jigsaw puzzle that I pass on to stage director or choreographer with the good intention of composing it according to their creative mind. I myself have an idea as to the final the shape, and I'd love to consult with you, but I want to invite you to use this material as a stepping stone, not as shackles. Nonetheless, there are a few important points I insist on: a foreign language is used several times in the text – these passages must sound as they are written;⁵ if you are concerned about intelligibility, perhaps one of the extras on the stage may act as an interpreter who will only serve to translate the passage; an even better stage solution might be to use a recording from Google Translate. I imagine wandering through the text as a sudden leap into deep water, until one gradually emerges on the coast, where everything is suddenly clear. Similarly to the text, we are currently overwhelmed with a lot of superfluous information – clickbaits that draw our attention away from real, fundamental issues that we only come to notice too late.

Note on the space:

The final piece should be presented and/or performed in a large space. I imagine a large warehouse – perhaps an abandoned, neglected sugar refinery or other venue where one can sense the dent of time. In the middle of the space I envisage a stage; its size will depend on the number of performers / extras you choose. In terms of style, the stage must be in high contrast to the venue. So, if a grant allows you to rent a neglected warehouse, the stage should be a splendid “cabaret-style peephole.” Cleaners are working in the venue from the beginning. They are part of the space and will never engage in the story. I recommend that you invite the dancers to play those roles, they should be physically fit and able to focus adequately to handle the process. Their movement must be in slow motion – every stroke of the broom, movement around the space ... When you arrange them in space responsibly, they can give an interesting impression of a moving horizon; so consider both their number and positioning.

And now, let's look at the piece.

⁵ Transl. note: When English is used in the original, the line is identified throughout the play with transl. notes in footnotes, as those lines would not be apparent in the English translation. All other non-Slovak languages used in the original text are retained as in the original.

Scene Zero

Spectators enter the story directly. Gradually, cleaners enter the large space where the dent of time is apparent. The cleaners are dressed in a yellow uniform that resembles protection gear against radiation. Each has a refuse bag and tools to collect all kinds of litter. Their action lasts throughout the performance. They do not respond to the story, nor they comment on it. The two worlds we see never interact.

Music. Choose a very simple motif, fine synthesisers or strings.

The number of performers that you have opted for gradually enter the space. Their costumes are fit for the episode in which they feature, though I recommend you don't resist stylisation even in a specific description of the costume. The cast move around the space differently, some can copy the trajectory of the cleaners.

THIS IS THE WAY THE WORLD ENDS

THIS IS THE WAY THE WORLD ENDS

THIS IS THE WAY THE WORLD ENDS

NOT WITH A BANG

BUT A WHIMPER⁶

Curtain up. The stage is set as a Baroque dining room. Food is all-abundant. A neon sign flashes above the stage: HAPPY END OF THE WORLD. The performers move, one-by-one, towards the stage and start eating. One of the characters, dressed as a waiter, grotesquely pulls out a large triangle and strikes off our story. Or a journey. As you wish.

⁶ Transl. note: In the original text, this line is in English.

I

I imagine an older gentleman, ideally a major actor who inspires public respect. He is dressed in a grey, elegant suit that doesn't appear neglected or particularly looked after. He is barefoot.

DIRECTOR I had a première. I still had premières then. It was an average production, but I kept my regular ritual – a cigarette. I left the theatre, it was one of the first days of Autumn. Neither warm nor cold. Just the way I like it. My suit was a bit tight – I gained weight over the Summer. I walked towards the Philharmonic Hall and ignored my vibrating telephone. I knew the choreographer was trying to get hold of me.

I nod my head to greet members of the audience. They are very respectful, the première kinds. A première spectator is the most ungrateful spectator. He feels embarrassed to tell you that he didn't like the production. At the same time he finds it awkward to praise you, because everyone certainly congratulates you, and he wants to be someone special in your life. So he just gives you a silly smile and says how interesting it was. I've heard it a thousand times. Questions whether I am content with it, what I am going to do next. Few people understand the director's state after the première. There is no point in explaining. By the Philharmonic Hall, there is a park overlooking the National Theatre. I always laugh to myself that, in front of our national theatre, there is a fountain embodying one of the most famed gay romances of all time. Zeus and Ganymede. I sit on the bench I've sat on so many times. I usually read Kundera there.

It seems like a good place to read Kundera. The place is intellectual enough and, at the same time, it smells of a special type of bohème. Not the destructive bohème, typical for taking drugs and drinking, but that with whom you lean back comfortably and look at a girl standing opposite and watch her tiny breasts float under the flowered dress she bought somewhere in the second-hand shop. This is my routine. The lauded stage director is out to light a cigarette after the first première of his production.

I tend to stay here for 15–20 minutes, usually waiting for the third phone call from the dramaturge who is chasing me to go and give this and that interview for such and such TV channel. Then I put on my jovial mask. The mask under which I pretend to know what I'm talking about. I usually

look upwards. Just like my late tutor. His eyes were closed as he was explaining. It was pure poetry. He took a deep breath, closed his eyes; it was as if he were travelling in time. As if he really met all those people, saw all the productions, experienced all the industrial actions and revolutions. When I look back at those conversations, I feel ridiculous. Ever so important you are. So universally rounded. I remember the production of *Electra*, which I directed being stuck on the phone while watching the World Hockey Championship. The reviews were favourable. The critics sought the concept where my unprofessionalism laid. It's nice to have this status. You throw them anything and they turn it into a gem. (*phone vibrates*) Second call, I still have time. I light the second cigarette and breathe the relentless promise of Winter. And then he came. He zoomed by, just like that. Like nothing. He was about 18 years old, maybe less. He was on that ... what it's called ... a skateboard? Though it was probably powered by electricity or whatever the devil. I couldn't figure out what it was called. He came as *deus ex machina*. I get up, noticing the cigarette I smoke is halfway finished. I am looking towards the young man for a while. He stops at a supermarket by the theatre. I set off after him. His figure is acquiring shape. He is young, handsome. If I were ten years younger, I'd probably be after him. He is smoking and making phone calls. How responsible.

I stop. He looks at me, we smile at each other. He has swarthy skin, I suspect a tattoo on his neck. Crude moustache. My nephew calls it "pornstache". I never understood that style. What's he wearing? Is that shorts? Or ... what is it? He puts away his phone. He smiles at me. Do I need anything, he asks. No, I answer. Sorry, what's that thing called – the one you're riding. I can't figure it out. Hoo- what? Hooverboard. So that's what it's called. Who am I? Just an old prick, I reply.

Are you a student? I ask. Not anymore. And what did you study? Semiotics. That's impressive. Why? I don't know what semiotics means, and I figured people might answer the same. It is true. What's your name? He smiled. What would you like it to be? In my world, your name would be Richard. Why Richard? That was the man I loved. Are you homosexual? I prefer queer. And you? I'm just about to see my girlfriend. Oh. I'm sorry, I didn't mean to act like a weirdo. Not at all. Do you want to ride it? For God's sake, I would break my leg. Perhaps.

But isn't it worth it? I think not. (*phone vibrates*) Third vibration. I shake his hand. Can I call you Richard? Only if I can call you Martha. I laugh. Cheap and old, though functional joke. My name is Peter. Now you've ruined it. And he left. In all that I saw a lot of things; most of all the fact that

I'm dying. I never realised my mortality as intensely as I did when the young man called Peter passed by on the ... what was it? No matter. This world is no longer mine. I light the third cigarette. I check the message from the choreographer: "Where are you, you prick? XY is waiting for you!" Time to fulfil your duties. God, are you there? I think I'm dying. I am standing in front of the theatre and looking at a poster. If our world remembers me for anything, it will be for being good at promo. It's good that I'm dying.

It's right.

I hear the fourth vibration. I walk towards the pontoon and hear seagulls. Can I call you Richard? My name is Peter.

I put my hand in the pocket and retrieve my last cigarette. I light it. I know smoking is stupid, but I love the first drag. (*inhales, exhales*) My dear, dear stage director. I sit on the edge of the bridge and put my headphones on. I'm turning on the flight mode. This world is no longer for me. Is that really so? Is it just black? Nothing else? Is that crap about the light at the end of the tunnel a delusion? Do I actually want to know? Another vibration. I realise that I haven't confirmed the flight mode and people can still reach me. Are you OK? Reads the text message. They're probably worried about me. Perhaps I should go back. Do I have to, though? I take off the jacket that is the tightest piece of my whole suit. Sudden freedom. Under the jacket, I'm wearing a T-shirt which I thought was quite inappropriate. Suddenly it doesn't matter. It doesn't matter. I'm sitting on the edge of the bridge and I'm throwing my prom jacket into the river. I take off my shoes and wait for the sound of them splashing into the river. My name is Peter. Why aren't you called something else?

This world is no longer yours. When I was little, I often thought that the people and situations that happened to me were the situations that were adapted to my personality and context. Whole world. Mom, Dad, Brother, my first lover ... Like you're an actor or an actress playing the role she is learning on the go during the performance.

Action drama. That's what I would call it if I were a scientist. Phone again. Why are you calling me? We won't see each other anyway. I'm throwing the phone from the bridge. Isn't it just like me? That's what David Bowie sang, isn't it? I've got nothing left to lose. People keep walking by me. They suspect what I want to do, but none stops me. They know this world is not for me. I laugh and go back to the theatre.

Where have you been? They ask. I am lying that there was a friend from Greece who ran away on a bus to the Vienna–Schwechat airport. Where’s your jacket? I gave it to him. The first woman with a camera arrives. Maestro, may I ask you a few questions? But of course. It’s me again. I’m talking about everything that the production is not. I quote philosophers, I make up names, and they bite the bait. Why don’t you pick up the phone? I’m playing the etude of searching for the phone and claim that I left it in the jacket I gave to the friend. I’m draining the “première” drinks, one after the other. The fourth one goes down as easy as lemonade. The wine is fine and warms one up. I’m taking my sixth glass, even though I know I’ll get a headache. People are gradually leaving the reception, just me and my two colleagues remain. Well? Happy? I’m lying about how I enjoyed working with the choreographer, how special I feel to be with this theatre. It’s all a comedy. Hooverboard. That’s what it’s called. His name is Peter, but I’ll call him Richard. I take my ninth wine and apologise for asking to be alone. I’m leaving the theatre. People are still smoking outside, inviting me for one. The wine I took along ceases to taste. I feel drunk. Maestro. Ridiculous. Another person on a hooverboard zooms by. This is no longer my world. There was an apt replica in one of the plays: “So, what’s the solution? Not to live? No to live anymore? Or to live more and elsewhere?” How about getting lost. Just like that. To dissolve. That, too, would be nice. To disappear. (*The figure in front begins to fade.*) Indeed. Goodbye, Peter – called Richard.

Interlude

Bee Danse Macabre

Director joins the performers on stage. They continue the feast. Music changes into a more familiar classical motif, but I recommend sticking to the minor key.

From the back comes a dancer from the first choir of dancers, dressed in a classical ballet costume – ballet shoes, skirt. If the dancers are willing, they can be topless. The dancer walks diagonally with a pirouette, the moment she dances to the centre of the stage, she drops dead to the ground.

Another dancer appears, copies her route, and drops dead as well.

This action is repeated several times until a cluster of dead dancers is formed in one corner of the stage.

I want you

Petra and Braño are sitting on the bed. If your budget doesn't allow a bed, feel free to help yourselves with the litter on stage. They keep exchanging a joint.

Petra is wearing panties and a loose long-sleeved black T-shirt with the inscription FUCK YOU YOU FUCKING FUCK. Braño is wearing boxer shorts.

Used tissues and condom packaging are scattered between them.

PETRA So, shall we try again?

BRAÑO I need a moment.

PETRA Do we still have time?

BRAÑO Supposedly at midnight.

PETRA You think so?

Braño shrugs his shoulders.

BRAÑO Are you a believer?

Petra laughs.

BRAÑO No?

PETRA It was Christmas, about six years ago, I was waiting for Uber. I always laughed at the names of the drivers. The names of the drivers always made you aware that the migrants were really coming. I was once driven by a guy from Nigeria, called Obiwan. I asked him whether his surname was Kenobi.

BRAÑO What about him?

PETRA I don't think he's seen it.

Petra takes a long drag on the joint.

PETRA Well, back to Christmas, Uber. I'm looking at who is to drive me today. Melchior arrived. Imagine! The day I was trying to work out with my friend where the fuck my "Christmas spirit" and festive mood were, Melchior was to drive me home, all fucked up. I got in. He was this decent older gentleman. I couldn't help myself not to (*stands up as if she wanted to act out the situation*) "Well, where is that Caspar – the ..." I couldn't remember.

BRAÑO Balthasar.

PETRA And then as if I was struck by recognition. What a fucking trick that really was. Just imagine. A married couple, where the wife is convincing her guy that she didn't fuck around and was entered by the "Holy Spirit". You give birth in some shitty barn, where donkeys, cows and BS like that breathe on your neck ... And then all covered with fucking blood, exhausted from childbirth, because the "Holy Spirit" certainly didn't bring her an epidural, a placenta beneath you, and suddenly three gypsies saying: "We have brought myrrh, incense, and gold." (*empty hand gesture*) That was the day I lost my faith.

BRAÑO I'm a fan of religions.

PETRA Fan?

BRAÑO I mean the concept. I am not a believer myself, I rather identify myself as an agnostic, but I like the fact that people believe in some higher power. You know? Yeah, right, it's an excuse in a way. Do you sin? God will forgive you. Are you unwell? You'll be better after death. With the believers, it's like with vegans. You get this militant vegan who will take your plate of stake and slams it against a wall in a restaurant. And then you get a guy who just orders a vegetarian Bun Bo Nam Bo and doesn't go on bitching about your steak. Believers are not evil. These are people who have some hope. But whatever you get and put the word militant in front of it, a trouble is born. Militant feminists, militant vegans, militant Islamists, militant Catholics and so on ...

PETRA How long does it take for sperm to reach the egg?

BRAÑO Probably right away, doesn't it?

PETRA Do you think you made a baby today?

BRAÑO Does it matter?

PETRA I don't know, but it would be nice to die knowing I'm expecting a baby.

BRAŇO Why do you care so much about it?

PETRA So I would die knowing that, as a woman, I have fulfilled my duty to conceive a child. At least that's what they say, isn't it?

BRAŇO I hope you don't believe such rubbish.

PETRA Do you think it's rubbish?

BRAŇO Did I hurt you? Sorry.

PETRA No, no, not at all. I honestly want to know.

BRAŇO Do I think a woman is obliged to have children? I think having a baby today is irresponsible. That's all.

PETRA Irresponsible because?

BRAŇO How can you bring a child into a world that is coming to its end? I can't imagine anything more selfish.

PETRA And do you think it will really happen?

BRAŇO Am I a bad person when I believe that?

Silence.

PETRA Well then?

BRAŇO I think we can.

PETRA Make me a baby.

BRAŇO Are you serious?

Braňo puts his hand in his trousers and starts masturbating.

PETRA I want you to make love to me.

Braňo gets up and starts kissing Petra on her breasts.

PETRA Make love to me as if I were your wife.

He kisses her on the neck.

PETRA Make love to me.

Petra removes her panties, hugs Braño tightly. Braño lays her on the ground. He penetrates her, several pushes. He ejaculates. He lies on her.

He lies next to her. They breathe heavily.

PETRA Do you think those sperm are looking for an egg now?

BRAÑO Maybe.

Silence.

BRAÑO So let's wait for the stork.

Interlude

The second bee Danse Macabre and a bucket list of two unfortunates, simply called First and Second

The first dancer from the second choir appears in another corner of the space and passes diagonally while making pirouettes. As before, as soon as she reaches the stage, she drops dead. And so on, the dancers follow each other again until the second cluster of corpses is formed.

FIRST Heroin.

SECOND Sex on a plane.

FIRST To drain a pint of beer in one go.

A moving laser sight appears on the stage, which is now a fixed part of the space.

SECOND Swimming in the ocean.

FIRST To get married.

SECOND To learn to recycle.

FIRST To buy a house to the mother.

SECOND To marry a son and to marry a daughter.

FIRST To get cunnilingus from a man.

SECOND To jump with a parachute.

FIRST To lick a pussy of a famous actress.

SECOND To pee from the Eiffel Tower.

FIRST To pay a round of drinks for the whole pub.

SECOND To find a cure for cancer.

FIRST Are you a doctor?

From now on, the invisible weapon with the laser sight starts shooting people on stage. After hitting the target, the person hit remains dead on the stage.

If it happens that the laser sight shoots the performer who was to appear in the next scene, the scene continues without him or her. Thus, if it is a dialogue between person A and person B, and person B gets shot, person A continues the dialogue as if “with himself/ herself.”

SECOND No, but my Mum wanted me to have goals.

FIRST Find Jesus.

The dialogue can continue with an acting improvisation of any length.

I want you to

A stop (of a public transport means). I will leave the choice of the transport means to you. At the stop, there is a large advert for a chewing gum. It promises a small package of chewing gum to fall out every 2 minutes. Man aged 30 – 35, brown haired, of a heavier build comes to the stop. He carries a large bag and a suitcase on wheels. He sits down. After a while, Girl arrives, aged about 14 . She is wearing an old leather jacket that looks like from second-hand shop.

It's 29 August 2019, shortly after 3 pm. Girl is immersed in her smartphone, Man looks tired.

2 minutes pass and we hear something dropping in the large advert.

Man looks in that direction. So does Girl. Man seems as to think that he would be embarrassed in front of the girl if he took the chewing gum. Girl decides and resolutely walks towards the chewing gums, takes them and places one in her mouth.

Man smiles defeated. A moment passes.

Girl approaches Man.

GIRL I noticed you wanted them, have some. I'd be happy to share.

MAN (*surprised*) But no, really ...

GIRL I insist!

Man smiles and takes one.

GIRL Where do you come from?

MAN I'm local, I flew in today.

GIRL Where from?

MAN You are curious!

GIRL Sorry.

Man smiles. After a brief moment.

MAN From Iceland.

GIRL Cool! How long have you been there?

MAN Two and a half weeks.

GIRL Just like that or ...?

MAN I haven't been on vacation for ages and Iceland has been such a ... bucket list.

GIRL What does bucket list mean?

MAN Like ... what you must do before you die.

GIRL So?

MAN I don't understand.

GIRL Well, how did you like it there.

MAN It was disarming.

GIRL Yeah, that's what people say. About Iceland, I mean. I'd like to make it there sometime.

MAN Your generation has endless opportunities to travel, I'm sure you will make it.

Silence. Man pulls out a paperback wrapped in a paper cover.

GIRL What are you reading?

MAN In Iceland, I bought a book of speeches by the young Swedish lady. Greta Thunberg.

GIRL Wow, can I have a look?

MAN Sure.

GIRL Why is it in the cover?

MAN This is a trick my teacher taught me. My books often got damaged in my suitcase or bag. The cover protects them.

GIRL That's a pretty cool tip. My books get always beaten right away.

Girl starts reading the book.

MAN Are you a fan?

GIRL I guess so.

MAN Why only guess?

GIRL To be honest, I only found out about her thanks to a friend who is totally nuts about climate change. We once watched videos all night and then the film with DiCaprio.

MAN And what do you think? Is he telling the truth?

GIRL Why would she be lying?

MAN Good point.

GIRL You've got an English phrase up your sleeve for everything, don't you?

Man smiles.

MAN I guess.

GIRL And, do you believe her?

MAN I find it quite neat.

GIRL What do you mean?

MAN You know, when I see her speech, I sadly think about what I did when I was her age. I'm glad the young generation is ... how to put it ... active?

GIRL And what did you do at her age?

MAN I was probably drinking cheap vodka somewhere in the park with my pals.

GIRL Aha.

MAN You know, our generation was often referred to as the lost generation. Born into a special vacuum where we were neither free nor imprisoned. My mother still remembers the secret police, she still has a problem speaking out loud in public. She always baulks and says: "Shush, we can be heard."

GIRL Sorry, but that's an excuse.

MAN I'm not saying the opposite at all.

GIRL Do you have children?

MAN I'm gay.

GIRL So?

MAN I am not a fan of the concept of gay adoption of children.

GIRL Why?

MAN I don't want it to sound like rocking my own nest, many of my friends have adopted a baby. This is purely my personal position. I don't think I'm a good parent.

GIRL You know, I would like to have children.

MAN That is commendable.

Girl puts on a strange expression.

MAN Gosh, I'm sorry, that sounded awful.

GIRL Yeah, it did.

MAN What meant to say, it is great that you want to raise a generation that will continue your legacy. It did sound quite pathetic, but I'm probably just tired.

The sound of the bus or other means of transport of your choice.

GIRL This is my bus. *(or any other means of transport of your choice)*

MAN Have a nice day, it was a pleasure.

GIRL What if I stay?

MAN It's quite late, won't your parents be worried?

GIRL Why do you think I live with my parents?

MAN You look young.

GIRL How old do you think I am?

MAN Not sure, 14?

GIRL I'm 12.

MAN Goodness.

GIRL Don't I look it?

MAN It's not that, I'm just shocked at how mature you come across.

GIRL Someone's got to be an adult here.

The vehicle is leaving.

GIRL Do you know when the next one is due?

MAN I don't know where you're going.

GIRL In 45 minutes.

MAN What if I get on mine and leave you here?

GIRL You won't do that because you're a decent person.

MAN How did I convince you?

GIRL You have Greta Thunberg's book of speeches and you are gay. That's a good start.

AUX ARMES CITOYENS

MAN Perhaps I'm a psychopath who collects the scalps of young girls.

FORMEZ VOS BATAILLONS

GIRL You know better than that.

MARCHONS MARCHONS

MAN And that I'm keen on phrases.

GIRL Which speech do you like?

QU'UN SANG IMPUR

MAN The one where she says: "I want you to panic."

GIRL Why?

ABREUVE NOS SILLONS

MAN If someone asks me to be terrified and scared, it means they are serious.

GIRL So you believe her.

MAN In Iceland, I went on a trip – we climbed a glacier. When we reached the peak, the guide showed us how far it stretched five years ago. It was all melted. Then it turned out that, in 5 years, there won't even be the glacier on which we were standing. That was quite powerful ... I've got a colleague, he's about ten years younger. He once said that, on Friday, he was going to a rally for better future. I have never seen such enthusiasm. That passion. I envied him. His fire. The desire to change things. A belief that grass-root pressure can mean something. When I bought the book, I sat on a rock on the coast; it was cold and I didn't even have a jacket. But I wanted to breathe the sea air. Somehow it's very different, I didn't smell it for ages. Strong aroma of salinity and fish. It deceives the brain, it seemed as if the sea didn't have a liquid consistency at all, as if it were a mash or sand.

GIRL Have you seen the ocean?

MAN I was on the beach. Even though it was August, it was very cold. The tour-bus had a ridiculously short break and we had an exact departure time. When I heard the tumultuous Atlantic from distance, I ran perhaps faster than ever before. Only the sand might have slowed me down. It was damp after heavy rain. I shouted. Partly to give me strength, partly out of amazement. The ocean moved me the same every day. It's impossible to understand. The splendour and respect you suddenly feel. I was ready to throw myself in, take off all my clothes and let myself be swallowed up. The waves were massive, I would surely drown. Yet they were like a thick wall that engulfed everything around. It sounds weird, but it was as if the ocean were screaming. The ocean was screaming. As if it were scolding you. Shooing me away. Why are you here? Why did you come? You have no home with me. Get out of here.

In the meantime, as evidence, it spits out all the waste you threw in. Never before have I realised the helplessness in face of what was to come, as I did then. (*Girl is listening.*) I'm sorry, I'm talking nonsense.

GIRL I don't think so at all.

MAN We walked further along the coast and saw a colony of seals relaxing on a small island near the coast. It was all architecture of nature. Of the Earth. Human hand didn't touch it and it was perfect. It was when I told myself that the Icelanders understood the principle. The principle of how to treat the planet. Not interfering with it, not destroying it, but adapting to it. Not the other way around. At that point I was determined to move there within a year. On my way back to the car, I noticed a skeleton of something that looked like a well. I went closer and looked in. Do you know what was there? Shit. Human shit and rolls of used toilet paper. I know you think I'm being cynical, but I told myself then that I wasn't even sorry anymore.

We deserve everything that falls upon us. We are a disease. The disease of this planet and she is fighting back. Do you know what it looks like when a volcano erupts? Part of the earth seems to be inhaling and the exhale is an eruption. I can't think of a better metaphor for how angry the Earth is at us. It's an organism. It's holding to its life.

I like the passage in the *Watchmen* when Doctor Manhattan flees to Mars and says, "In my opinion, the existence of human life is a highly overrated phenomenon." And he's right. We deserve that.

Interlude

The third bee Danse Macabre and a bucket list of two unfortunates, simply called First and Second

The first dancer from the third part of the choir appears in another corner of the space and passes it diagonally while making pirouettes. As before, as soon as she reaches the stage, she drops dead. And so on, the dancers follow each other again until the third cluster of corpses is formed. The feast on the stage continues.

FIRST To defeat a famous boxer in a match.

SECOND To make a successful film and earn an Oscar for it.

OH SAY CAN YOU SEE

FIRST To embrace my first-born child.

BY THE DAWN'S EARLY LIGHT

SECOND To buy a large plot of land and a glass bungalow on it.

FIRST To breed Tibetan Mastiffs.

SECOND To take my Grandpa for a walk.

FIRST Your Grandpa is no longer alive.

In the meantime, a woman dressed in a historical costume stepped on stage. She looks sick.

SECOND Oh. Indeed.

FIRST To feast on oysters and sparkling wine all evening and run away without paying the bill.

The woman starts coughing, she is obviously very poorly, she collapses. The others ignore it.

SECOND To be someone who matters.

The woman keeps choking, coughing, she is undoing her corset, her wig falls off, perhaps she turns over one or two tables. The others continue in their feast.

FIRST To earn a billion.

SECOND To be someone who cares.

The woman keeps choking, coughing, sputtering, crawling on the ground all the way out.

FIRST To save someone's life.

SECOND To be someone who matters.

FIRST To be someone who cares.

The dialogue can continue with an acting improvisation of any length.

The woman gets to her feet with all her might, but choking overpowers her, she drops dead.

I want you to panic

The laser beam moves from place to place and the weapon continues its work. The characters First, Second, Man, Woman, and Director remain on stage. The food is almost finished. Funeral. The characters on stage are standing. Woman remains seated, nervously clutching her handbag. I imagine her dressed in a pink retro-suit. Do vary the other characters in style.

FIRST Nut allergy.

SECOND Or gluten.

FIRST She wouldn't be coughing like that.

SECOND Should she be buried?

The voice monologue runs from the recording simultaneously with the dialogue.

VOICE You lied to us. You gave us false hope. You told us that the future was something to look forward to. And the saddest thing is that most children are not even aware of the fate that awaits us. We will not understand it until it's too late. And yet we are the lucky ones. Those who will be affected the hardest are already suffering the consequences. But their voices are not heard.

FIRST In a moment.

SECOND In a few minutes.

MAN Are you sure?

FIRST Quite sure. Everything will be over.

The voice monologue runs from the recording simultaneously with the dialogue.

WOMAN What time is it?

DIRECTOR Shouldn't we at least carry her away?

FIRST I read somewhere that the deceased remain conscious 5 minutes after death.

FIRST Does she stink yet?

SECOND Not yet. It doesn't start right away.

FIRST She did have a nice dress though.

SECOND We are all nicely dressed.

WOMAN What time is it?

VOICE You say you hear us and that you understand the urgency. But no matter how sad and angry I am, I do not want to believe that. Because if you really understood the situation and still kept on failing to act, then you would be evil. And that I refuse to believe.

FIRST I read somewhere that, if insects became extinct, humanity would become extinct in 50 years. *(to Director)* You're 50, right?

DIRECTOR I'm probably as old as humanity itself.

SECOND, I guess, she's starting to stink.

VOICE I want you to panic.

FIRST Nonsense.

DIRECTOR Not quite, human body excretes body fluids after death.

WOMAN What time is it?

SECOND Shouldn't someone say something?

FIRST Maybe a song.

SECOND (*sings*) O say can you see, by the dawn's early light, What so proudly we hail'd at the twilight's last gleaming.

FIRST This is not appropriate.

DIRECTOR Perhaps a monologue or a poem.

FIRST We are the hollow men.

VOICE I want you to panic.

SECOND That's Shelley, right?

DIRECTOR Keats.

FIRST You're both wrong. That is Jim Morrison.

VOICE Is my microphone on?

WOMAN And what time is it?

FIRST I think she's really starting to stink.

MAN Shall we put her away?

FIRST What's the point? It's not much longer, after all.

SECOND How do you think it will happen?

Shot. Man falls dead. Others ignore that.

DIRECTOR Simply lights out. Like in the theatre.

SECOND Really, let's put her away, she does stink.

Shot. Director falls dead.

FIRST Now that I think about it, I don't think it was Jim Morrison.

SECOND Shelley!

FIRST "My name is Ozymandias, king of kings:

Look on my works, ye Mighty, and despair!"

Nothing beside remains. Round the decay
Of that colossal wreck, boundless and bare
The lone and level sands stretch far away.

Shot. First falls dead.

SECOND I did say. Shelley.

Silence. Second is alone among the dead. Cleaners finished their work. All litter is gone. Only corpses remain. They come on stage and one of them sets it on fire.

SECOND The stage is on fire.

WOMAN What time is it?

SECOND (*looks at his watch*) Three minutes after midnight.

WOMAN Meaning?

SECOND THIS IS THE WAY THE WORLD ENDS.

The flame catches the dead dancers – bees. It spreads all over the stage.

WOMAN T. S. Eliot.

SECOND Not with a bang but a whimper.

WOMAN Shouldn't we be dead?

Empty shot.

WOMAN Are we dead?

WE ARE THE HOLLOW MEN

SECOND We are the shallow men.

WOMAN So we're going to live on? Ah ...

SECOND We are the shallow men.

Shot. Second drops dead.

WOMAN Oh well, I'll probably go home. I have some cabbage soup leftover at home. I'll have that.

Woman exits the stage. The flame engulfed the entire stage. Woman may trip over a corpse, otherwise her departure should be quite trite.

VOICE I hope my microphone was on. I hope you could all hear me.

The stage is full of corpses, everything is burning. Unbearably long, awkward silence. No lights out.

No curtain call. Just a slow departure.

The End