

Lidia Amejko

FARRAGO

(Translated by Dorota Glowacka)

CHARACTERS:

HIS EXCELLENCY, a character essentially invisible, appearing here as Voice (in other circumstances also as bread and wine)

PETER, a majordomo

FARRAGO, a famous actor

A place without any particular features. Semi-darkness lit up by lightning, their bluish glimmer reminiscent of the glow from a TV.

PETER (entering): Your Excellency!

HIS EXCELLENCY: Shhh! Not now, Peter!

PETER: But... Your Excellency!

HIS EXCELLENCY: Don't interrupt me! Can't you see I'm watching?

A bolt of lightning pierces the sky.

PETER: Your Excellency will only ruin your eyes...

HIS EXCELLENCY (*mumbling contentedly*): Hussite wars, my favourite!

More lightning. War cries and a clear sound of a drum burst in through a crack in the sky.

HIS EXCELLENCY (*happy as a child*): Here, look for yourself, Peter! See that drum, the one in the front? It is leading them! Hey, how they beat on it, boom, boom, boom, can you hear?

PETER (*dismayed*): Your Excellency!

HIS EXCELLENCY: And do you know what kind of drum this is? Eh? You don't! You don't because you didn't see! But I'll tell you: this isn't an ordinary drum, not at all! This is (*with pride*) my Žižka! He ordered them to stretch his skin onto a drum after his death, and here he is! Hetman is still inciting his people to battle! (*delighted*) Well done! You know, Peter, I like the Czechs. I even think sometimes that I like them more than the others. Could we make them a chosen nation?

PETER: I'd like to remind Your Excellency that you have already chosen...

HIS EXCELLENCY: Me? Oh, yes! So I can't do it again?

PETER : Unfortunately not!

HIS EXCELLENCY: Pity!

PETER: If I may say something, Your Excellency, you shouldn't be watching so much of this: blood, violence, atrocity...

HIS EXCELLENCY (*offended*): You were a preacher for far too long, Peter. I'm not a child, and I'll watch whatever I want!

Thunder.

PETER: Naturally, naturally.

HIS EXCELLENCY (*as if explaining himself*): But see, Peter, it's such a pretty war! Just look at these beautiful bonfires, right here, on the hills!

PETER: Those are pyres, Your Excellency. They are burning rebels at the stake!

HIS EXCELLENCY: It may well be... but, you know, it seems like they are doing it just for me and me alone! Just look how they crane their necks, as if they knew I was watching!!

Lightning.

PETER (*clearing his throat*): With your permission, I just wanted to say that Farrago is waiting.

HIS EXCELLENCY: Did he have an appointment?

PETER: No, Your Excellency, it was an accident. His car fell off a bridge into a river.

HIS EXCELLENCY (*snorts indignantly*): This isn't the first time! Are you sure it's him?

PETER: It's him, Your Excellency, large as life!

HIS EXCELLENCY: I don't know, Peter. (*disgusted*) You know, someone like him, maybe we should send him down right away?

PETER (*resolutely*): No, Your Excellency! There has to be some justice in that... I mean, this world!

HIS EXCELLENCY (*upset*): Well, but Farrago...

PETER: Your Excellency should remember that, in a way, he is also a part of you.

HIS EXCELLENCY: That's right, that's right... Let him in.

(His Excellency stops the thunder and lightning; everything falls silent.

PETER (*announcing ceremoniously*): Victor Farrago!

Farrago staggers in, more drunk than alive.

FARRAGO (*mumbling*): Officer, for God's sake, two beers, please! Two beers for the road won't hurt! (*to Peter, threateningly*) And you, grandpa, paws off, is that clear? I am... Farrago! (*he falls asleep, standing*)

HIS EXCELLENCY: He needs to sober up, Peter.

FARRAGO (*waking up*): What time is it, gentlemen? I'm gonna shoot in a minute. I was just driving to the location when... Jesus! Do I need to pay? Dear Sir, why don't you call the producer, he holds the purse strings. And he'll pay out! (*chuckling*). There's no movie without me!

PETER (*drawing his words ominously*): Oh, yes, you will certainly have to pay, Mr. Farrago! You will have to pay!

FARRAGO: Alrighty, grandpa, you win! You want it now, you can have it now, no need to get steamed up. (*searching his pockets*) Do you take cheques? No? (*he takes some change from his pocket*). This isn't much, but you know what? Take the watch! Here, take it, the boss can't see, it's good - a Rolex! I'll get a new one. Only take me to the studio, grandpa, right away, or the director will have a fit. The director! (*chuckles*) To hell with him, he can have a fit. Did you see, my dear friend, what I made for him last time? *The Night Miller!* You didn't see it? Very well! It's night, an empty factory, and I am processing after hours... the female rugby team! The knives are spinning, cutting, drilling, the victims are slowly approaching...

PETER (*shocked*): That's enough! Thank goodness I don't have to listen to these horrors! (*solemnly*) Victor Farrago! In a minute, you will appear before... His Excellency. You

will account to him for everything you have done.

FARRAGO (*interrupts him*): Wait a minute, grandpa! Why involve His Ex... His Ex... His Ex... His Ex... (*he hiccups*).

PETER: ...cellency?

FARRAGO: Exactly! (*confidentially*) We can take care of it ourselves, can't we? Tell me what you want! Go ahead, don't be shy!! I am Farrago, after all!

PETER (*with dignity*): I can see that you don't understand. This is an exceptional situation. His Excellency rarely sees anyone in person.

FARRAGO (*agitated*): Wait a minute, grandpa! What exactly did I do? After all, it was my car that fell in the river, wasn't it? A Jaguar, damn it! Well, I'll get a new one!

PETER: Victor Farrago! Are you ready?

FARRAGO (*nonchalantly*): O.K.! Get me that Excellency, just hurry up, I'm in a rush!

PETER (*mumbles*): More haste less speed, the devil takes the foremost!

Farrago makes himself comfortable in an armchair, pulls out a crumpled cigarette pack, extracts one and puts it in the corner of his mouth. He speaks assertively.

FARRAGO: Eh, you, grandpa! I need a smoke! Do you have a light?

A hissing sound of lightning can be heard.

PETER: Good heavens! I mean, Your Excellency!

FARRAGO (*lifting his hand*): Thanks, Your Excellency!

His Excellency remains invisible. His voice is loud, but it is coming from nowhere in particular.

HIS EXCELLENCY: First, I'd like to have a look at you, Victor Farrago.

FARRAGO (*looks around*): Me too... But I guess that lighter of yours blinded me. You can call me Vic!

HIS EXCELLENCY: I am... who I am. As to my name, it depends! You like to make up names! You like to make things up.... Me... I have never made anything up. Things appeared. I looked at them. They were complete and full, they were good. They didn't need anything, not even a name. But returning to the matter at hand...

FARRAGO: Exactly, Your Excellency, keep it short, I don't have time.

HIS EXCELLENCY: „I don't have time"! Well said! It's true, you don't have time! Now we can chat forever and ever.

FARRAGO (*nervously*): Do you think they ditched me?

HIS EXCELLENCY: Something like that.

FARRAGO: Don't try to scare me, Excellency! I signed a contract! If something happens, they're still on the hook!

HIS EXCELLENCY: Your contract has expired.

Farrago tries to get up, but an invisible force is holding him down in the armchair.

FARRAGO (*astonished*): What is it?

HIS EXCELLENCY: I just wanted to look at you. After all, you... you are not like the others that were here before you! Wait!

Lightening X-rays Farrago.

FARRAGO: Stop it! I can't see anything!

HIS EXCELLENCY: Amazing!

PETER: Not a trace, Your Excellency! Nothing stuck to him! My God... I mean, it's strange that it... came off like that!

FARRAGO: Wait a minute! What's going on? What came off?

HIS EXCELLENCY: You see, Farrago, body and soul are connected by, well, a special bond, and it's not that easy to separate them afterwards. The soul permeates the body...

PETER: And the body can stink it up so bad, like an old barrel of herrings!

HIS EXCELLENCY (*continuing*): ... just like the body permeates the soul!

PETER (*excitedly*): Remember that tailor from Salonika, Your Excellency? Did his soul reek of his body or what! To the very top! All the good deeds were streaked with fat, and his conscience, pardon my language, was so bloated with gas that we thought it was twice the normal size. They had their hands full in the purgatory!

HIS EXCELLENCY (*rebukes him*): Peter! I'll tell you, Farrago, when body and soul join together as allies to do evil, then, ooh! It's most difficult to pull them apart! But in you the one and the other are separate already! It seems that if you ever did anything evil... perhaps even (*hesitantly*) something good, it's as if you had not even been there! Hmm...
Peter walks up to Farrago and sniffs cautiously

HIS EXCELLENCY: Can you smell anything, Peter?

Peter comes closer to Farrago again.

PETER: He smells nice, Your Excellency!

HIS EXCELLENCY: What do you think it could be?

Peter sticks his nose in Farrago's armpit.

PETER: I have no idea, Your Excellency!

FARRAGO (*grabbing Peter's nose*): Tell His Excellency it's „Eternity.” „Eternity” by Calvin Klein! And you, if you ever touch me again, grandpa, I'll shove your head up your ass! Is that clear?

Peter massages his throbbing nose. His Excellency clears his throat, trying to cover up his amusement.

HIS EXCELLENCY: We are ready to proceed. You may begin, Peter!

PETER (*speaks with dignity, through a stuffed nose*): Victor Farrago! You are accused of numerous murders, using weapons such as ... (*he pauses, embarrassed*) With Your Excellency's permission, I will not list the weapons because...

EXCELLENCY: Because what?

PETER: Because there is... everything on this list!

HIS EXCELLENCY (*curious*): You say, everything? But you can't do it with... everything!

PETER: But he did it, Your Excellency! With everything!

HIS EXCELLENCY: I don't believe you! Read at least some of it.

PETER: Here you are! (*clears his throat*) An astrolabe, a nail, an axe, a metaphor, a knuckle duster, taxes, Your Excellency...

HIS EXCELLENCY: Enough! Move on to the next item.

PETER: Victor Farrago! You are accused of the following: gutting, slashing, soiling, taunting, butchering, banging, splitting, guzzling, screwing, fighting, biting, ripping, ranting and panting! Meddling, messing, whacking, screwing, and on top of it, Your Excellency, as he admitted himself, processing the female rugby team, after hours! (*he lifts his eyes in*

utter disgust)

Long silence.

PETER (*tearfully*): Your Excellency!

HIS EXCELLENCY: What is it?

PETER: Your Excellency! He is... sleeping!

HIS EXCELLENCY: What do you mean, Peter? It's impossible!

Farrago is snoring loudly, sprawled in his armchair.

HIS EXCELLENCY: Well, yes, he really is asleep.

PETER (*infuriated, bursts out*): Your Excellency! It can't go on! This is ridiculous, Your Excellency! Something must be done immediately!

HIS EXCELLENCY (*helplessly*): But what can I do?

PETER: It'd be best just to tell him. Straight out! Without beating around the bush!

HIS EXCELLENCY: All right, all right!

Lightening, thunder more powerful than before, it is really scary.

FARRAGO (*wakes up*): Are we starting to shoot? I'm coming! Give me the script. And get me some coffee, grandpa!

HIS EXCELLENCY (*in a loud voice*): Listen to me, Man. Lo, you are dead! You have found yourself in a place where you will account for your deeds in front of...

FARRAGO (*interrupting him, matter-of-factly*): And where is the camera? And the script? Is there a script?

PETER: You see, Your Excellency? You just can't do it with him the usual way. Only a miracle, Your Excellency, only a miracle will do!

HIS EXCELLENCY: A miracle only in extreme circumstances, Peter! You know it's against my nature. We'll try the usual.

Lightning shakes Farrago for a little while. Severely burnt and electrocuted, Farrago moans with pain.

FARRAGO (*close to tears*): What's your problem, Excellency? I told you, hands off! You may be directing this whorehouse, but you ain't God!

HIS EXCELLENCY (*stunned*): You were right, Peter! Only a miracle! (*he searches his thoughts*) A miracle, a miracle, one moment...

PETER: I know, Your Excellency, let's do it like this... (*he closes his eyes and speaks with vengeful satisfaction*). First we'll drop sparrow excrement in his eyes so he goes blind and hang him upside down from a sycamore tree, so Asmodeus can stick a bee nest in his a... I mean, in a place between his hips like it's a hollow in a tree. Then let's thrust him into a fiery furnace, just like Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego! And when he's crisp... then Your Excellency can let him go without any bodily damage!

HIS EXCELLENCY (*with repugnance*): I am but God, Peter, please do not forget that.

PETER (*humbly*): Let your will be done, Your Excellency.

FARRAGO (*coming to*): Coffee, grandpa! And a bottle of soda water!

HIS EXCELLENCY (*irritated*): Exactly, grandpa, coffee! Give him coffee - I can still afford that miracle!

Peter brings in a tray with coffee and water. Farrago gulps three cups of coffee and the water. Next, he stretches, pats his cheeks, does some callisthenics, combs his hair with

his fingers, and here he is: irresistibly charming, with a radiant smile on his face, an actor ready for work.

PETER (*stares at him, dumbfounded*): This... this is a miracle, Your Excellency! I wouldn't have believed it had I not... with my own eyes...

HIS EXCELLENCY: Make me some of that, that... coffee!

FARRAGO (*in a gentle, sonorous voice, perfect elocution*): I understand, Your Excellency, that you are expecting something from me, but, forgive me, I don't quite comprehend. Perhaps you could explain the situation somewhat – I'd be truly grateful!

HIS EXCELLENCY (*mumbling*): I wouldn't have believed it had I not... with my own eyes... (*clears his throat*). All right, since you are already here...

FARRAGO (*interrupts him*): And where exactly am I?

HIS EXCELLENCY (*continuing*): ... since you are already here...
Enters Peter, carrying a tray with a cup of coffee

PETER: Coffee for Your Excellency!
The cup is floating in the air.

EXCELLENCY: Leave us alone, Peter!

Peter, surprised, exits. The cup tilts. His Excellency purrs with delight.

HIS EXCELLENCY: Divine aroma! So, since you are already here...

The cup turns somersaults in the air, which describes His Excellency's confusion.

HIS EXCELLENCY (*almost a whisper*): Listen, Farrago! I have a problem. I didn't want Peter to hear. He is so... principled! But you... you are different! I can tell you, you will understand! It's the matter of... evil!

The cup dances over the head of Farrago, who tries his best to avoid being splashed.

FARRAGO: Hmm...

The coffee gave His Excellency a boost, his blood circulates faster and so does the cup.

HIS EXCELLENCY: Don't think that I am particularly interested in evil, no! No more than in any other thing I comprise. But, you know, lately, something new has appeared!

FARRAGO (*doubtfully*): Lately?

HIS EXCELLENCY: Yes! It's some new kind of evil, which isn't me any more! It duplicates itself, in its own image and likeness, it multiplies its twin hordes, and I am looking at it, and I do not understand at all! It grows in me, Farrago, grows and robs me of my reality. Sometimes I think it is more perfect than I am, that it has more life than... (*he starts coughing, just like any sick man*).

Peter, concerned, comes running.

PETER: Do not talk so much, Your Excellency! It isn't good for you! (*to himself*) Didn't say a word for centuries and now look at him! Can't stop talking!

Farrago inspects his teeth in a pocket mirror. His Excellency recovers.

HIS EXCELLENCY (*feebly*): Where were we, Peter?

PETER: We were saying that we should send him to hell for once and for all!

HIS EXCELLENCY: Well, but first we have to give him a hearing...

PETER: Who cares! A hearing! If we were to listen to every single one, your lifetime and mine wouldn't be enough, Your Excellency!

HIS EXCELLENCY (*hesitating*): But, you know, I don't think that would be right.

PETER (*impatient*): But his life is an indefensible case, can't you see that, Your Excellency? The Sabbath is almost here, and his sentence was decided a long time ago! And certainly nothing that could change him is going to happen now!

FARRAGO (*charming*): I am terribly sorry to interrupt your chat, but, to be honest, I am in a hurry to get to work.

PETER (*indignant*): He is in a hurry to get to work! He hasn't had enough of crime and villainy!

FARRAGO (*still charming, doesn't pay attention to Peter*): And about that unfortunate incident with the car, could we perhaps make an appointment at another time?

PETER: There is no other time! Here you come only once!

FARRAGO (*almost seductively*): I hope you can make an exception for me, gentlemen! My profession is extremely exhausting, both physically and mentally!

PETER (*triumphantly*): See, Your Excellency? He is admitting it!

FARRAGO: Yet, the fact that I can bring people at least a little entertainment and joy is enough payment for me! (*his eyes fill with tears*)

Peter is speechless, his chin drops.

FARRAGO (*moved*): It's not about me, gentlemen, but about all these people for whom I sacrifice my blood and flesh, into whose dreary lives I bring moments of consolation! Think about them, your mothers, sisters, brothers, who arrive in throngs to meet with me! Who sit in darkness, silent and focused, gazing into the light beaming in front of them - „lux in tenebris.” Who submit their will, their feelings and their thoughts to me, and I, unlike you, Your Excellency, visible but absent, lead them into my kingdom - the kingdom of reversible events! Into the world of absurd certainty - what else is hope, gentlemen, if not a belief in an illogical course of events, that a slain one will rise and start running away, that the one who has been wronged and humiliated will smile through her tears in the arms of her repentant torturer! That the irrevocable does not exist, and the cruelty of the words „the end” and „never again” disappears with the making of the next episode!

HIS EXCELLENCY: Hmm! I had no idea that...

Peter is trying to cover Farrago so His Excellency won't be able to see him. Upset, he yells, waves his hands.

PETER: Do not listen to him, Your Excellency! He is a common fraud, he is trying to confuse us because he wants to distract us. But you won't be so lucky, Farrago! No way! You will pay for everything!

FARRAGO: That is, for what?

PETER: For what? He is asking for what? If only for the female rugby team processed after hours...

Farrago bursts out laughing, but he stops after a while and his face registers immense astonishment.

FARRAGO: No way! Are you serious? Who are you, anyway? A religious sect? New Age? Health food? Don't you have a TV? Then what do you do here all day?

HIS EXCELLENCY: What is he talking about, Peter? What TV?

PETER: I swear to God, I have no idea, Your Excellency!

FARRAGO: I am asking, what do you watch here?

HIS EXCELLENCY: I see! I watch fragments of time.

FARRAGO: *Fragments of Time?* I don't know that one. Is it a new show?

PETER: His Excellency likes to watch the wars that were waged in his name.

FARRAGO: You mean, war movies. So, everything is clear now, isn't it, gentlemen? A movie is a movie! I am willing to pay for drunken driving but I am not responsible for *The Night Miller!* I am an actor! It's my job to create reality...

HIS EXCELLENCY (*surprised*): He creates reality! Did you hear that, Peter?

FARRAGO: ... make-believe reality.

HIS EXCELLENCY: Peter, what does „make-believe” mean? Have I ever done anything „make-believe”?

PETER: How am I supposed to know? When Your Excellency created the world, nobody was looking over your shoulder!

HIS EXCELLENCY: Explain to us, Farrago, what it means to create a „make-believe” reality. It's very interesting!

FARRAGO: Make-believe? (*muses*) If something is „make-believe,” it means that it really is not.

HIS EXCELLENCY: Are you trying to say that you created something that does not exist?

FARRAGO: Yes! That is, no! Well, for example, I shoot but I don't kill anyone.

HIS EXCELLENCY: Anyone can miss, Farrago! I know something about that! A man shoots, God carries the bullets. But, that doesn't exonerate you. If you wanted to kill...

FARRAGO: But I didn't want to kill anyone!

HIS EXCELLENCY: Then why did you shoot in the first place?

FARRAGO: The director told me to.

PETER (*to himself*): someone told him to... the worst line of defence!

HIS EXCELLENCY: So someone, whom you call director, told you to shoot a man. And you agreed to do that. Why? Did he threaten you?

FARRAGO: Threaten me? It's my job and that's it! That's what they pay me for!

PETER (*dismayed*): Did you hear, Your Excellency? He did it for money, just like Judas! Disgusting! Those who were here before him at least had a noble idea, but him! For money! He killed a man for money!

FARRAGO: But, god dammit, I didn't kill anyone!

HIS EXCELLENCY: But you were shooting!

FARRAGO: It doesn't matter that I was shooting. I was shooting so as to not kill anyone.

HIS EXCELLENCY: Then why were shooting if you didn't mean to kill anyone? What if you hit someone by accident? Anyone can miss...

FARRAGO (*moaning*): I only wanted to say that to „make-believe” means to pretend that you are doing something, although you are not really... doing it!

HIS EXCELLENCY: Do you understand anything he's saying, Peter?

PETER: Not at all, Your Excellency!

FARRAGO: Let's take a simple action. This, for example... (*he gets up from the armchair and starts walking toward Peter*)

PETER (*watching him closely*): And now, are you really walking or are you just pretending? *Farrago stops in front of Peter. He overpowers him with a quick blow, twists his arm*

and starts choking him.

FARRAGO (*in a hoarse, angry voice*): Cough up the keys, grandpa! I gotta go back right away, get it? If I break the contract and the lawyers go after my ass, I'll be in shit!

HIS EXCELLENCY (*clapping his hands in delight*): Excellent, bravo! Now I get it! You are pretending to do it, although you are not really... doing it!

PETER (*wheezing*): Help! Help, Your Excellency!

Farrago pats him down and takes the keys that are strapped to Peter's belt.

FARRAGO: None of your „Excellency” stuff is gonna help you now! Come on, old man, where's the exit?

His Excellency is clapping his hands.

PETER: Your Excellency, he's going to kill me!

FARRAGO: Shut your mouth and move it!

Peter is immovable, like a rock. Farrago twists his hand a little harder.

PETER: Help me, oh, Lord!

FARRAGO: You're hard as a rock. But you don't know me yet! (*he starts choking Peter with his shoulder*)

PETER (*in despair*): Lord, why have you forsaken me?

Suddenly, the lights go down, there is thunder, it becomes really scary. Peter and Farrago freeze in terror. A lightening bolt pierces the sky, Farrago falls to the ground, unconscious.

PETER (*now free, massaging his hand*): Your Excellency wasn't in a hurry...

HIS EXCELLENCY (*with sadness*): That wasn't fair! How do you know these words? Did you hear... when He spoke them?

PETER: Those who were standing by could hear them.

HIS EXCELLENCY: And you repeated his words...

PETER: What matters is that it worked... this time!

HIS EXCELLENCY: You used something that wasn't yours to use! You summoned a time and place that were not here before you spoke these words! (*shaken*) Peter, you were pre-tending!

PETER (*terrified*): I...

HIS EXCELLENCY: You were pretending to be someone you are not, to move me, to make me feel guilty, to...

PETER: To make Your Excellency do what should have been done a long time ago!

HIS EXCELLENCY (*irritated*): Stop it, Peter!

PETER: No, I won't stop! No! Because we all thought it was a great wickedness on your part!

It wouldn't have cost you much to smite the executioners with lightning back then!

HIS EXCELLENCY (*in pain*): It wasn't part of the plan!

PETER: The plan! The plan! But to this day you can't forgive yourself, Your Excellency! And I will tell you to your face (*he looks around since, truly, it is hard to face His Excellency*) - you didn't save me a minute ago but... him! And that means that you were yourself pre-tending!

There falls a heavy silence. Suddenly, Farrago gets up from the ground like Phoenix from the ashes, with a crooked, uncertain smile.

FARRAGO: O.K., put'er, grandpa! Let's make up! That wasn't for real.

PETER: (*stepping back*): But it hurt...

HIS EXCELLENCY (*pensively*): It hurt!

FARRAGO: This is the trick, gentlemen, you do make-believe, but it hurts like hell!

PETER (*massaging his hand*): Your Excellency! Make-believe or not, I don't care! But I know one thing: if it hurts, somebody has to pay! (*he looks at Farrago threateningly*).

FARRAGO: One moment, grandpa! Don't be so principled! I am an actor! I act! And when I act, it isn't me but the character I am playing!

PETER (*sarcastically*): Oh! That means that there are two of you?

FARRAGO: No, just one! I am one, in two persons!

PETER: Do you hear, Your Excellency? He is one in two persons! Why not in three persons, eh, Farrago?

FARRAGO (*tired*): All right, grandpa, so be it, in three persons. I am an actor!!! I can play Macbeth and the entire Manson family, but I'm not gonna do the time for them! No, this is some kind of paranoia!

PETER: And I am a simple fisherman from Bethsaida, but I know how to count the fish I catch in my net. Here, we account for the souls... So, tell me, my dear Farrago, how are you related to that other one, you know, the one you play? Does he look like you, his face, his figure?

FARRAGO: Of course he does, after all...

PETER: And what about his hands, also like yours?

FARRAGO: Just like mine!

PETER: And here, inside, the heart, is it his or yours?

FARRAGO: What do you mean „whose heart“? It's mine!

PETER: And now tell me this: if you are hurt, whose blood is going to flow, yours or his? And sweat - his or yours? And... if you died suddenly, will he bend over you and cry, or will he die as well?

FARRAGO: To hell with your questions!

PETER (*cajoling*): Just tell me one more thing... what about the soul? Are there two or one? If one, how do you share it between you? Equally? Or maybe you give three quarters of it to him and leave one quarter to yourself, eh? Or maybe differently still, maybe... maybe you give him all of the soul because it's simpler, because it isn't easy to divide a soul!

FARRAGO: Cut it out, grandpa! Just say what you mean.

PETER: I mean that an imitation of a crime is also a crime! And the better the copy, the more criminal it is, because you can't tell the difference and neither can the spectator! You haven't thought about that, have you, Farrago? You haven't thought about that one and only spectator who watches and sees everything? And that he can't tell the difference between your „make-believe“ and „for real“? Has this mad thought ever crossed your mind: „What if all this pretending of mine really did count?“

FARRAGO: No! No! Leave me alone, you damn old fool!

PETER: I don't care about the number of characters you play because the soul in them is always one and the same! I am only a simple fisherman from Bethsaida, but when a fish gets caught in my net, I always know how to count it, even if it swore it was the five daughters

of Zelophehad!

HIS EXCELLENCY: Leave him alone, Peter!

PETER: No, Your Excellency! He is mine! *I am the one who counts souls here! (His voice sounds like a horn of Jericho)* Victor Farrago! Now do you plead guilty? Do you take responsibility for all those you have created? For their actions, their thoughts and words?

HIS EXCELLENCY: Leave him alone! Leave him alone, Peter!

PETER: Your Excellency, I...

HIS EXCELLENCY: You don't understand anything, Peter!

Farrago squints his eyes, as if trying to remember something.

FARRAGO: You don't understand anything. You can't possibly imagine what's happening with me when I stand there, all alone. There's emptiness around and darkness hovers over the rows of seats. I... How do I know I exist if there is no wall that would return my breath? ... Jeeesus! How long have I been here? Has it already been evening and morning? The first day? Second? Third? ... Suddenly the lights come on and they separate the stage from the audience. A warm, blinding space - thank you, Lord, for having created space! If only it were not for the silence...

HIS EXCELLENCY: The silence of the first days was driving me insane!

FARRAGO: All of a sudden, I recall the words that brought me here. The words that were in the beginning, before everything started, because in the beginning there are always words. That is, the text. The director has the text and the words are in me, I am filled with them up to my larynx...

HIS EXCELLENCY: There was nothing in me except words...

Peter looks at Farrago in amazement and terror.

PETER (*with a warning*): Your Excellency! Do not listen to him, Your Excellency!

HIS EXCELLENCY: You don't understand anything, Peter!

FARRAGO: I thought: he consists of words only, so I will give him body, my body, sweating, trembling, covered with make-up like clay.

HIS EXCELLENCY: I thought: he is rough and formless, like a burnt clay pot. I will give him the words I carry inside of me, they will make him into a man, in my image and likeness, I will give him myself, I will give myself to him in those words that I have within me...

FARRAGO: I will submit my body to his words...

HIS EXCELLENCY: I will possess his breath, his thoughts, his feelings...

FARRAGO: ... and he will speak in my voice!

HIS EXCELLENCY: I will live inside of him...

FARRAGO: ...and he will grow into me, until I become him and he becomes me.

PETER (*beaming*): Did you hear, Your Excellency? Did you hear? He admitted it! Finally! Gosh, Your Excellency squeezed it out of him, I could di.... (*clears his throat*). Victor Farrago! The trial is over! We find you guilty of all the crimes cited because not only is the one who committed the crime a criminal but also he who created the criminal, and who cannot separate himself from him, neither in mind nor in spirit! Victor Farrago! Do you plead guilty?

HIS EXCELLENCY: Yes, Peter, I do!

THE ENDING

The same setting as before. Farrago's gone. Enters Peter.

PETER (*clears his throat*): Excuse me, Your Excellency! Your Excellency?

HIS EXCELLENCY (*deep in thought*): Mmm.... Hmm...

PETER: Your Excellency is just sitting like that! Perhaps you'd like to watch something? The crusades or the Hundred Years War - wasn't that a beautiful war!

HIS EXCELLENCY: No, I don't feel like it! And besides... I am no longer sure, if... it really happened. Peter?

PETER: Yes, Your Excellency?

HIS EXCELLENCY: Did I give them too little?

PETER: Oh, no, not at all, Your Excellency! I'd even say - too much! You could have spared them scorpions, lumbago and free will!

HIS EXCELLENCY: Then why do they still need to „make-believe“?

PETER: Man is just like that! Your Excellency gives him unheard of treasures, and he only grimaces, shrugs his shoulders, and then twists a whip out of shit for himself, just to crack it! I don't know much about it, but I'll tell you one thing: when you were creating the world, everything was in its place, as it should be! A beast, a rock, a plant, even man! And then Your Excellency had a whim to let man name everything! And why did you need him to do your work? Couldn't you toil for another day or two and finish the world the right way? And man, that cunning thing, why, yes, he gave names to everything, but noticed right away that they don't stick to things very well and it's easy to peel them off; that words are attracted to words - birds of a feather... - and they don't pay attention to things! At first he was rather careful with them, just kneaded or stretched them a little, that's all. Then he dared to do more - switched places here and there just to see if, when you call a rose a cabbage, it still smells the same. Sometimes he coupled words, linked them together, spoiled one with another! And he thought himself to be omnipotent doing that, like the Creator himself or better! He started fixing up your work and then discovered he can do even more! No wonder, he doesn't see the world for the word!

HIS EXCELLENCY: Do you think that's why?

PETER: Certainly! Here, the newspapers just arrived. How many words, Your Excellency! Nothing but words! They write about... Would you like to hear?

HIS EXCELLENCY: Go ahead, read it!

PETER: „A famous actor, Victor Farrago, who was in an accident last week...” and by the way, Your Excellency, why did you let him go as if nothing had happened? I have a deficit now: was there a death? There was! And no soul!

HIS EXCELLENCY: Keep reading!

PETER: ...suddenly regained consciousness in Lord's Grace Hospital. His life is no longer in danger, but the doctors talk about some serious changes in the actor's psyche. Our full-time „bad guy,” the emperor of silver screen crime, the unforgettable Night Miller, just broke his contract to play the main character in the movie *Hitlin*. Just to remind you, this is the long awaited film about a mutant monster, created as a result of combining the genes of Hitler and Stalin. It does not mean, however, that the famous actor is quitting

the film industry! As he said in an interview with this newspaper: „From now on, I will be more careful how I choose my roles.” We have learned, unofficially, that soon Farrago will begin preparations for his role as... Saint Francis of Assisi!