A cage went in search of a bird…

– Franz Kafka

Translated from the Bosnian by Igor Knežević

Revised and adapted for the American stage by H.B.J. Clifford

Just outside Copenhagen harbour, Denmark, an ancient ship is moored that once served as a refugee camp for exiles from Bosnia and Herzegovina. This play is dedicated to them. All the characters, as well as their actions, are fictional. Everything else is real.
Cast of Characters

HAMLET
OPHELIA
KING CLAUDIUS, King of Denmark, uncle to Hamlet
QUEEN GERTRUDE, Queen of Denmark, mother of Hamlet and wife to Claudius
FIRST PLAYER, who leads the troupe and takes the part of a king
SECOND PLAYER, who takes the part of a queen
BARNARDO
MARCELLUS
FRANCISCO
HORATIO
POLONIUS
GHOST of HAMLET’S FATHER, lately King of Denmark

KASIM
MELIHA, KASIM’s mother
KASIM, KASIM’s uncle, brother to KASIM’s father
CHILD, cousin to KASIM, child of KASIM’s aunt

SELMA
SELMA’s GRANDMA
TARIK, SELMA’s brother
NAMIK, SELMA’s brother

RASEMA
KENAN
ELVIRA, KENAN’s wife
EJUB, KENAN’s father
CHILDREN of KENAN and ELVIRA

RAJKA, the interpreter

MONITORS
POLICEMEN
THE CHINESE
THE BOSNIANS
ACT I

Scene 1

_Elsinore Castle. It is foggy and the sentinels are nervously pacing along the walls._

BARNARDO
What is happening? Why is Francisco upset?

MARCELLUS
We have seen him again!

BARNARDO
But whom, in god’s name?

FRANCISCO
The old king… or rather something that very much resembles him…

BARNARDO
Well, what is it?

MARCELLUS
A ghost, you idiot, the king’s ghost!

BARNARDO
Excuse me, what do you mean by ghost! Have you lost your wits? Where did this ghost come from…

From the fog emerges the armed figure of the king… chaos ensues… the sentinels begin screaming… Here he comes, call Horatio!… You call him, I’m off…

BARNARDO
What is going on here? I’ve never heard, let alone seen a ghost… The end of the world… Run for your lives…

FRANCISCO
But where to, when he follows us everywhere!

MARCELLUS
Hold on, maybe he would like to tell us something… Ghosts often know things. They can foretell calamity. Maybe it senses a misfortune.
BARNARDO
That may be so, but whatever it is, I am not interested. I have enough trouble as it is…

Again there is shouting… Horatio, come and see this… Horatio!

END of Scene 1
Scene 2

A rather old ship, anchored at sea. Three, four men are standing on the deck, Chinese or Vietnamese. They are smoking as they watch people boarding the ship. A multitude of people; women, men, children and elderly climbing aboard with suitcases, boxes, plastic bags. They hesitantly approach the ship deck. They are dropping things and getting in each other’s way. several uniformed policemen are standing by, a score of people with notebooks, checking the identity of every ‘traveller’. One of the latter is especially clumsy, and books are dropping from his suitcase and out of plastic bags. Others are getting irritated and keep pressing him forward.

KENAN

(kicking the scattered items, some ending up in the water)

Get out of my way with those books, can’t you see we are climbing!

AMER

Don’t throw my books…

(he tries to catch the thrown objects)…

I’m climbing too! Wait a moment, what’s the rush?! You can see how narrow the passage is… And you can see how many of us there are, and each of us is carrying something… It’s not my fault the bag broke!

KENAN

–You’re the one who broke, let them all break! It’s all the same to me!

SELMA

What’s your problem! I’ve had enough of this humiliation, this poverty and this state I’ve been brought to. I don’t have to listen to you as well.

KENAN

Who asked you? Are you his lawyer? You think I don’t know where I am and what we’ve come to. I hardly need you to tell me…

ELVIRA

please don’t start another fight! I’ve already had it up to here with your shouting.

KENAN

My shouting! And you’re always taking the side of those who happen to be against me.

Some wife you are!!
RASEMA
Why do you keep twisting things around. No one is against you, but the racket you’re making.

KENAN
Here comes another lawyer. Who asked you, in any case… and what is this, some sort of conspiracy against me?

SELMA
Come on, don’t be paranoid! Can’t you very well see that we’re all in the same boat, and that we’re all on the edge of our nerves, to say the least. But still we’re doing our best to control ourselves – or at least some us are. I would suggest the same to you…

KENAN
Who are you to give me advice?…

OTHER VOICES
who are you…
oi., stop…
足够的 of that…

Almost everyone joins in the fracas. Some children are crying. The Chinese men are still standing on deck smoking, with unaltered facial expressions.

MONITOR
(blowing his whistle)
Quiet! Quiet! I ask you kindly to climb up one by one, without arguing. Some order, order please… you cannot behave like that

His voice fades amid the clamour. The Chinese men smile indifferently at the row which is fast turning into a brawl.

END of Scene 2
Scene 3

A cross-section of the ship reveals the ship’s kitchen on the upper level, and three cabins below, one next to the other. The latter are tiny and the newly arrived ‘guests’ are just settling in. Kenan is in the first cabin along with his wife Elvira, his elderly father Ejub and two little children. Amir is in the neighboring cabin with his mother, uncle and a boy. The third cabin is home to Selma, her grandma and her two brothers.

KENAN (angrily)
What is this? They want to bundle us in here! Here… like animals…

Beats violently on the cabin wall… voices are heard –

Oi, stop that!…

KENAN sits on one of the beds and hold his head in his hands…

KENAN
It’s all a dream! Tell me that I am dreaming!… Here, in this coffin, below water, on the water, on a ship, among strangers.

EJUB
I told you we should have never left Trebinje.

KENAN
You don’t say! I hope you’re joking! What was I supposed to do! To serve them my own head, and heads of my children, on a silver platter? To let my wife be their servant? So… that they could humiliate you, kill you even…

ELVIRA
Don’t start, please! Things are the way they are! It’s terrible! But what can we do? Going back is out of the question, as is leaving. I don’t even know where…

(crying)
Don’t, please, for the children’s sake…

KENAN
It’s for their sake that I came with you in the first place… I should have stayed. I should have picked up a gun… This is pointless. What have we gained… Peace! Cursed peace! A little food and drink! My god we are so stupid. I am so stupid. To have agreed to this! Treatment unworthy of any living things…

beats his fist on the cabin wall once again…
SEVERAL VOICES
Stop that motherfucker!

KENAN, to the wall
What was that about my mother?…

In the interior of another cabin Amer is unpacking his books. His mother Maliha is adjusting a photograph of Banja Luka on the wall next to the cabin entrance. Uncle Kasim is angrily pacing around the room.

KASIM
You could have relieved us of some of these books of yours. We are suffocating as it is in this, this, I don’t even know what to call it…

*KASIM kicks some bags around on the floor.*

KASIM
And on top of everything there is this child. I only don’t know why you ever brought him along.

MELIHA
You know very well why I brought him. He is the son of Mustafa’s sister. Your sister too, in case you’ve forgotten.

AMER
That means nothing to uncle, as you know. Neither his brother nor his sister — much less so her children. He hardly cares that that very brother and sister have been herded off to the (concentration) camp.

KASIM
*(turning on AMER)*
Are you implying I was the one who sent them there?

AMER
I didn’t say that, but since you bring it up, it is rather interesting, isn’t it, that they were picked up while you were left in peace.

KASIM
You impudent bratlittle! Did you hear what he said Meliha?

MELIHA
I hear both of you both, quite frankly! I can only wonder and despair really, what’s gotten into you two. Stop these arguments for god’s sake. I cannot take it any more, do you understand, I just cannot take it…
(crying)

Do I have to think of everything? And this poor child, an orphan…

KASIM

Alright, alright! is heard

KASIM

What’s this mad fellow from Trebinje up to now? Hey there, stop the banging!…

KASIM

Perhaps it would be best if we were all to calm down a little. It looks as if we’ll be here for a while, and who knows when we’ll be able to leave, or even if…

KASIM

What do you mean leave, we’re not in prison…

KASIM

This is a slightly refined version of a prison… You know what I mean Denmark is a jail… oh, it doesn’t matter… This here is a prison that gives you the illusion of freedom. There exists no legal basis for your confinement. All the same you are shut in, legally or otherwise.

MELIHA

(quietly, more to herself than to the others)

Maybe there is another sort of justice in this case, god’s justice, or cosmic…

KASIM

I am not qualified to speak about that. Maybe you are, I don’t know… I only know that everything that is, is a deception. It seems to you that you are free, but you are not. Not in any shape or form. You have no choice but to follow the instructions they give you.

MELIHA

(taking the crying child in her lap)

My God. Don’t scare this wretched child.

(to the child)

Don’t cry honey, everything will be fine…

KASIM

Just bloody fine… How can it be fine. You have nothing of your own, not counting a few rags obtained under humiliating circumstances. You have no legal, or indeed any sort of protection enjoyed by all those fortunates, the citizens of states who practice peace and its incumbent fruits. Naturally, people will say you are protected under some convention or other. But that is all abstraction, theory…
But we ourselves are an abstraction. More so than we can imagine. Not only because of what we have come to now, which seems surreal even to us, but especially because of that which we believed that we were, and could be…

I don’t understand you, what are you trying to say… Hey, stop with the banging…

It’s better that way… That makes it easier for both of us…

He leaves
The interior of the third cabin. It is furnished with two bunk beds, a little table and a tiny closet; there is also a small round window. Selma is bustling about the room, helping her grandma settle down on one of the lower beds. Tarik and Namik are scrambling to climb the higher beds.

TARIK
I’ll take this one!

NAMIK
No you won’t, that’s mine!

TARIK
I’m older!

NAMIK
Selma, look at him, he won’t let me have the bed…

SELMA
Quiet already! Wait until we are all settled in. We have to fit everything we have into these few square metres.

TARIK
Yes, all those things we have…

SELMA
We have what we have, you little rascal, now be quiet and help me out.

GRANDMA
I don’t really like anything here. Let’s get up and leave this place.

SELMA
(irate)
We have nowhere else to go Grandma! They have placed us here and we have to accept it… Please try to understand!

GRANDMA
I’d like to go home now.

SELMA
(more frustrated)
What home! What’s wrong with you? We no longer have a home! Have you forgotten that they kicked us out of our house! Grandma, please, don’t you start causing problems on top of everything. We’re lucky to be alive.

GRANDMA
You know, I am not so sure of that.

SELMA
Not sure of what?

GRANDMA
I am not sure we \textit{are} better off alive.

SELMA
Well I am sure. I want my two brothers to survive, and you too, since mom and dad can’t be here with us. And not only that. I want us to live, to have a future. You, at the very least had your past.

GRANDMA
My dear, what past. This is my third exile. And it’s always the same ones chasing us away, killing our relativesour, robbing… my cup is full. I want my home, my street, flowers, my fig trees…

SELMA
Yes, we all know that Grandma – I would rather be back in Trebinje too. But we can’t. You know we can’t… I only hope that they still need mom and dad for something, so they would spare their lives. Surely they need doctors too. So help me out now. Please, for my sake and that of the children…

\textit{Tari\k is pulling things out from various bags. Namik is helping him.} 
\textit{Grandma sobs quietly.}

SELMA
\textit{(hugging her)}
Grandma, please don’t. I now it’s hard, but we’re all in it together. –We’re all miserable, disappointed, humiliated, scared… desperate, \textit{d e s p e r a t e!}

\textit{Selma breaks down in tears. She sits herself down next to grandma and embraces her.} 
\textit{Tari\k and Namik approach and they cry hugging each other.}

\textit{END of Scene 3}
Scene 4

The ship’s kitchen. There are many people about, mainly women, the same prefects and an interpreter. One of the female prefects is saying something to the interpreter, who shrugs her head and smiles.

RAJKA
(speaks with a Serbian accent)
My name is Rajka, your interpreter… Good day to you all, your hosts welcome you aboard, and they would like me to acquaint you with some of the rules of conduct here.

(murmur)

First, you are requested to respect the regulations of conduct and the house rules. The details of these are available in the brochures that have been left in your cabins. Thus you are not free to walk off the ship whenever you feel like it. You will be supplied on a monthly basis with money for food, and you will be able to purchase it whenever you obtain a permit to leave. Furthermore, please refrain from destroying ship property, and kindly maintain an acceptable level of cleanliness… especially in regards tables, chairs, bathrooms and stoves. Listening to loud music is not allowed, nor is conversing in loud voices. The use of showers is prohibited after eleven o’clock pm… You might have noticed that also resident on this ship are refugees from Vietnam and China here. They will be leaving the ship soon, but until that happens, you are asked not to get into arguments or confrontations. Next, you should draw up a schedule for the use of the kitchen, for, as you can see, we only have three stoves, and there are many more of you… As for the rest, it is all to be found in your brochures, and I strongly recommend that you study them carefully.

RASEMA

So, from now on all we have to do is follow orders and instructions. Very interesting… You know something, we know a little more about order and hygiene than either you or they could tell us about… So please leave aside all this talk of cooking, tables, showers and noise. We are far more interested in what is to become of’s going to our children. They have to go back to school!

OTHER VOICES
That’s right, what will happen with their education

ELVIRA
Of course, why don’t you tell us about that. No one has come here in order to be a passive parasite. We all have children, and what they need most of all is school.
Rajka translates for the prefects, the very same ones who had been introduced as the hosts. They confer among themselves. Some make calls on their mobile phones. After some time.

RAJKA
For now organised schooling is out of the question.

RASEMA
But can’t our kids at the very least go to Danish schools. They’re children… they’ll pick up the language quickly…

The hosts confer again.

RAJKA
At this moment in time that is impossible. The decision about the children’s schooling, as well as that regarding about your status here, must be made by the Danish government, and a solution may even to be reached at the European level. Until that happens, everything will remain as you have just been informed.

SELMA
And how is that? Explain to us! How! Like this, dreadful, and you call that a program! Shame! Shame!

RAJKA
Please do not begin causing problems. The stipulations of your stay here are currently as follows: you all have to remain on board. Without a permit, you are not allowed to leave the ship, for no reason whatsoever.

RASEMA
But who’s going to stop us! Come on then! Speak…

Uproar ensues, people exclaim
What is this, a prison…

some are shouting…

VOICES
Is this the prolongation of our suffering… are they going to kill us as well… Go on, do away with us at once…

Screaming and confusion… The prefects blow their whistles

END of Scene 4
Scene 5

The ship deck. Strolling along and bumping into each other are the Asian and some of the Bosnian men, refugees. They are whispering, exchanging some little bundles and money. Amer is reading.

SELMA
What are you reading?

KASIM
Shakespeare.

SELMA
Something rotten in the state of Denmark, no?

KASIM
(laughing)
Denmark is a prison… but the world is a prison. It hath many prisons, cells, and towers, and Denmark is one of the worst.

SELMA
At least it is for us right now. But you will concede, prince, that there are worse prisons. I have vacated one recently, and so have you, I imagine…

KASIM
(extendng his hand)
I am Kasim, and who might you be, lovely lady?

SELMA
Selma, a wretched refugee who is no longer what she once was. Even that is but a distant memory.

KASIM
So then you also heal your heart’s abrasions with dreams. Pray tell me who is it that you were precious nymph…

SELMA
Literature student from Trebinje. It seems so long ago that I don’t quite know where, how or when. Does that place of my reminiscences exist, did it really contain the life that I remember.
KASIM
That which once was, which we remember, no longer is. Gone are those people, houses, and things. Maybe beings identical in shape to those we knew still traverse the streets of our cities. But those who have remained behind are no longer the same, no longer familiar to us. Their shells remain, but the essence is transformed. They have become shadows. Spectres of peculiar content, a sham of what they once had been. And that which they had been perhaps wasn’t quite what we took it for. Maybe their current state is in fact their reality, and all our former ideas of them had been but an illusion… There not even the air is as it was. Neither the trees nor the flowers. Your and my departure, exile rather, demolished the image of the world we knew and loved. Many lives have perished, much that was dear and familiar. Now, some other people inhabit the places where you also once lived. If they may be called people indeed. Still you knew them, just as I knew my would-be executioners, and until yesterday, even loved them… What a piece of work is man, really!

SELMA
Man is magnificent! What possibilities he has before him, and he still chooses the worst of the lot. For others, that is… but for himself too… What’s your story? What are your memories and wounds?

KASIM
Unsightly, distressing, unreal and painful. I often wonder whether all of it really happened. Was I ever really that which I perceive myself to have been, or have I always been thus, as I am now. And could it all have fit into this single, abject life of mine… did that life truly once know happiness and beauty. I do, however remember those days, but the recent, miserable times are fresher in my memory. And I thought that no such thing could ever happen to me. For the illusion of happiness that Fortune has gifted us has clouded our senses and reason… and Fortune is a harlot.

SELMA
A well-meaning harlot. Harlot from necessity, like all of her kind.

KASIM
Shakespeare would say then Judgment Day is upon us.

SELMA
Perhaps we are its witnesses even as we speak.

KASIM
I doubt it. Although our suffering is great, there are, and have been, greater ones, though we might be ignorant of them, or else choose to ignore them, just as others avert their gaze from our misery. It’s a vicious circle…
SELMA
The circle of suffering… still, we are at its centre right now… or is it only my imagination… After the life that I used to have, that we used to have, we have been reduced to no more than its crumbs, destitution, degradation, pain and sadness… suffering… and what do is it that remains? … Love… do we still have the energy or the will for it… revenge… are we capable of it?

KASIM
We remain alone. Thrust upon one another… with or without love, we have to bear the intensity of revelations previously unknown to us… Thus, perhaps even before love, we require passion and lust… they consume us… And revenge? Revenge is a poison. A sweet one, to be sure, or maybe undesirably desirable…

SELMA
Oh, but I would like to take my revenge. For all that has been taken away from me. For all the pain and suffering of those most dear to me. To revenge myself, yes… only how? To kill, I feel would be beyond me. To hate, that I could manage. But what then with all that hate? It is very unproductive. It consumes and doesn’t nourish if it’s not expressed through.

KASIM
It nourishes wounded souls such as ours. It feeds them artificially. In a way that doesn’t prolong life, but renders it bearable. Especially for those who have been made powerless. Those who are no longer masters of their own lives.

SELMA
I would like it however, if love were to possess the power of healing. If it were able to remedy wounds and dilute the pain? If it were capable of changing a given world-view, to offer something better…

KASIM
I don’t believe in love. I don’t believe in its fruits… but I desire their taste… for I have been starved of all other sustenance…

(he approaches Selma, as if he were about to kiss her)

TARIK
Is this fellow from Banja Luka bothering you?

SELMA
(giving him an angry look)
Don’t be silly – go and find out what your brother’s doing…
TARIK
He is with Grandma, it is not him that I am worried about… you are the problem right now…

SELMA
(angrily)
You little brat! How dare you! Since when am I your problem?

TARIK
since we have been alone, without mom and dad…

SELMA
That’s one more reason to obey me! I am older, don’t forget!

A hubbub ensues on the deck… a fight has broken out between the Chinese and the Bosnians.

BOSNIANS
You slant-eyed rabble! What’s the problem then, where’s the money… where’s the money… do you understand me… swindlers, bloody swindlers! You think you’re going to put one over us! This is not China ayou know! There are no dragons and spells over here… you think those spirits of yours are going to scare us I am not afraid of bigger game than you, you’ll soon see…

CHINESE
No money!
No money…
evil spirits take away…

BOSNIANS
What do you mean, no money? You little bastard! I’ll tan your hide…

they resume fighting A group of Bosnians is standing and quarrelling amongst themselves…
One voice exclaims
Thief, I gave you money so that you could get my brother out of Trebinje… Liar, you gave me nothing… you little shit… you’re all criminals…
fighting… the prefects arrive on the scene and whistles are presently heard.

END of Scene 5
Scene 6

Once again the walls of Elsinore castle. The sentinels are rushing about calling each other’s names.

Ghost beckons HAMLET

HAMLET

It beckons you to go away with it,
As if it some impartment did desire
To you alone.

HORATIO

It waves me still.
Go on; I'll follow thee.

HAMLET

You shall not go, my lord.

MARCELLUS

Hold off your hands.

HAMLET

Be ruled; you shall not go.

HORATIO

My fate cries out,
And makes each petty artery in this body
As hardy as the Nemean lion's nerve.
Still am I call'd. Unhand me, gentlemen.
By heaven, I'll make a ghost of him that lets me!
I say, away! Go on; I'll follow thee.

Exeunt Ghost and HAMLET

HAMLET

Where wilt thou lead me? speak; I'll go no further.

GHOST

I am thy father's spirit,
Doom'd for a certain term to walk the night,
And for the day confined to fast in fires,
Till the foul crimes done in my days of nature
Are burnt and purged away. But that I am forbid
To tell the secrets of my prison-house,
I could a tale unfold whose lightest word
Would harrow up thy soul, freeze thy young blood,
Make thy two eyes, like stars, start from their spheres,
Thy knotted and combined locks to part
And each particular hair to stand on end,
Like quills upon the fretful porpentine:
But this eternal blazon must not be
To ears of flesh and blood. List, list, O, list!
If thou didst ever thy dear father love,
Revenge his foul and most unnatural murder.

HAMLET

To be, or not to be
that is the question:
Whether 'tis nobler in the mind to suffer
The slings and arrows of outrageous fortune,
Or to take arms against a sea of troubles,
And by opposing, end them? To die
to sleep;
No more; and by a sleep to say we end
The heart-ache and the thousand natural shocks
That flesh is heir to, 'tis a consummation
Devoutly to be wish'd. To die, to sleep;
To sleep
perchance to dream
ay, there's the rub;
For in that sleep of death what dreams may come
When we have shuffled off this mortal coil,
Must give us pause
there's the respect
That makes calamity of so long life;
For who would bear the whips and scorns of time,
The slings and arrows of outrageous fortune,
The oppressor's wrong, the proud man's contumely,
The pangs of despised love, the law's delay,
The insolence of office and the spurns
That patient merit of the unworthy takes,
When he himself might his quietus make
With a bare bodkin? who would fardels bear,
To grunt and sweat under a weary life,
But that the dread of something after death,
The undiscover'd country from whose bourn
No traveller returns, puzzles the will
And makes us rather bear those ills we have
Than fly to others that we know not of?
Thus conscience does make cowards of us all;
And thus the native hue of resolution
Is sicklied o'er with the pale cast of thought,
And enterprises of great pith and moment
With this regard their currents turn awry,
And lose the name of action.—Soft you now!

END of Act I
ACT II

Scene 1

The ship’s kitchen. There is smoke everywhere. There is general commotion and noise. Someone is calling out another’s name amid the noise of clattering pots and pans.

RASEMA
Whose pot is this anyway! Get it away from here, it’s in my way…

the lid falls off the pot.

MELIHA
Leave that alone! Can’t you see it’s not done yet!

RASEMA
I don’t care! The kitchen is not only here for your personal use. You can see how many of us are waiting in line to cook something!…

more women join the altercation, their voices mingle with each other, so that only broken off bits of sentences are heard…

WOMEN’S VOICES
what do you want…
I’ve been waiting for over an hour…
none of my business…
who put you in charge here…
so you’re a lady and we’re animals…
well, this is not Banja Luka…
you boor…
you people from Trebinje are worse than the chetniks…
fuck you and your chetniks…

a fight nearly breaks out… the prefects intervene once again.

RAJKA
Enough of this! The hosts want you to know that they will no longer tolerate scenes like this…
RASEMA
Who asked you anything, you _chetnik_ lout! Who are you to threaten us… and who placed you here to translate for us…

more voices are heard
That’s right…

RASEMA
(continues)
And god only knows what it is that you are translating. I bet you’re lying and telling us only what is to our detriment… and what could they do to us anyway? Throw us into the sea… to the sharks… well they don’t have to go that far, there are enough sharks here…

VOICES
That’s right…
She’s right!

_RAJKA confers with the prefects._

RAJKA
We will not stand for this, you will all answer and…

RASEMA
(throwing the pot)
What! Who am I going to answer to! Fuck you and your _chetnik_ mother… to you, to the United Nations… or maybe to your bearded brotherhood. Think again! I am not afraid of anyone! No one, do you understand…

That’s right…
Tell it to her!

_whistles, shouting and swearing…_

_END of Scene 1_
**Scene 2**

*ELVIRA’s cabin. It’s a mess. The floor is strewn with biscuit crackerboxes, chocolate wrappers, empty bags of crisps etc. ELVIRA is watching television and eating cookies fro one of the boxes. RASEMA walks in.*

**RASEMA**
This is becoming unbearable. I am going to go crazy… just the way that they are treating us… But they have to be working with the *chetniks*. Guaranteed! And what made them force us to live with those, those… How rude and impudent those women from Banja Luka are, especially that Mehila…

*ELVIRA (not taking her eyes off the TV screen)*

Ummm…

**RASEMA**
Hey you! stop staring at that screen and gorging… just look at yourself. You’re as fat as a sow… you keep eating that junk and staring at the television… Are you listening to me?

*ELVIRA*  
Ahh, what…

**RASEMA**
But you’ve gone overboard now… I’m going to get angry with you, and then you *will* be completely alone… at least look after these children of yours, if you insist on neglecting yourself…

*ELVIRA (finally turning to RASEMA)*

I am sorry, what did you say?

**RASEMA**
(angrily)

Nothing, only that you too could help out in some way with the school which we have started here for the children. Surely you haven’t forgotten everything that you had been in your previous life!… I am teaching the kids Maths and Physics. You could maybe move that fat ass of yours and teach them Biology and Chemistry.

*ELVIRA (staring at the screen again)*
Oh, I don’t know if I would be able to do that… It’s been a while since I taught… I’ve forgotten much of it… and you know how things change.

**RASEMA**

Everything changes! But not the basics, never. Of course you could teach… We were high school teachers for so many years… don’t you remember…

_Elvira resumes watching television…_

What is it that you are watching anyway?…

_she glances angrily at the screen._

**ELVIRA**

A Mexican series… she is a beautiful servant girl working for wealthy landowners… she is actually the master’s daughter, but she doesn’t know it yet. Neither does the master himself, who fancies her. She has also caught the eye of her brother, who is likewise unaware that she is his sister. While the mistress’s sister, who is in point of fact his mother has taken a liking to him, and besieges him incessantly. She is also ignorant of their true relationship since they took her child away from her when he was little… here, look… she has succeeded, she’s got him into bed…

**RASEMA**

But what are you blabbing about… what is that, a Greek tragedy Oedipus and Jocasta…

**ELVIRA**

_(distractedly)_

No, no, a Mexican soap, only there is incest too… look, that priest is actually a woman who has the hots for that other priest, the half-brother of the master’s daughter, and theye are all immeasurably unhappy, one could just cry…

**RASEMA**

Cry indeed! What is she to you or you to her that you should cry! Look at yourself, the rest of us around you. Now there’s a reason to cry…

**ELVIRA**

I know, I know! But I have no more tears for us. These cheap illusions are all that keeps me going… Bizarre love triangles and incestual complications… cheap stories for cheap emotions…

**RASEMA**

_(very angry, pulls the TV plug out of the socket)_
Fuck you and your incestual bastards… Have you lost your mind… Wake up. take a good look around you… Can you see where and what we are… How dearly we have paid for all this… Do you see our suffering, your children, husband… Do you see me. I am all alone with the children. Ivan has been murdered and who knows where his grave is –

ELVIRA
(desperately)
I see it, I see it… And I envy you! Where do you get the strength for all that. I am struggling not to go mad because of this situation. I see my life, which has in fact turned into an anti-life, so to speak, it has fallen apart. I see an unbearable reality… I cannot bear it. This is the last illusion that I can afford myself, and which I need in order to keep my sanity. I watch these cheap dramas, I listen to the Spanish, which I had never learnt well enough and I think of my Italian, all the hard work and the beautiful moments I had enjoyed while learning it. I only have this, and the food, for KENAN hardly sees me anyway… or he else sees me as no more than a bundle of meat…

RASEMA
You’re the only one to blame for that! How else is he supposed to see you… you sit here in this dark little cabin, you stare at the television, gorge on junk, surrounded by piles of wastepaper… what do you expect…

ELVIRA
I expect a little understanding. I expect my husband to love me, to understand me. I don’t expect to be repulsive to him…
(crying).
Do you know how long it’s been since he kissed me; approached me as a woman, not to mention anything further…

RASEMA
I totally understand you, I am on your side. But don’t expect too much. You can see the situation we’re in. Where we find ourselves. And how could you make love? There are four of you in the cabin. You, Kenan and two children… Thank god they put grandpa in another cabin… How can you make love under those circumstances?

ELVIRA
(sniffling)
Those who are willing always find a way. Just look at the people in the neighbouring cabin…

RASEMA
what?! What neighbouring cabin? But that is Meliha with her husband’s brother, and her son and her sister-in-law’s child…
ELVIRA
I don’t know how, but all I hear is lustful screams…

RASEMA
But who for goodness sake?…

ELVIRA
Meliha and Kasim, I guess, you should hear how passionate they are…

RASEMA
I knew it, that bitch. And with all her airs. Slut. I knew it. And you know what, I believe in the rumours about her involvement, along with Kasim, in her husband’s detention in the camp… Just look at her…

ELVIRA
You don’t know that. You can’t go around accusing the woman just like that…

RASEMA
I can and I will. Her own son is reserved with her. He seems nice enough. He’s been spending a lot of time with our Selma from Trebinje. He’s been avoiding his mother and uncle,…

ELVIRA
Who knows what is going on there. Kasim is a little strange. Neither Kenan nor Ejub seem to like him… But she’s not so bad…

RASEMA
You don’t know the half of it. You don’t run into her every day… What, at best you’ve seen her and talked with her two-three times… I see her every day… She’s a real bitch… Bitch… Just you look at her. Slut… she thinks the world revolves around her… Oh… She’s so high and mighty, and I am a lout… Well no longe I’ll be to it…

END of Scene 2
Scene 3

The next cabin along which is occupied by Meliha and Kasim. They had been making love on one of the lower bunks. The bed in narrow, and the space between the lower and upper bunk is so small that Kasim keeps hitting his head on it.

KASIM
Ouch, fucking bed…

Meliha straightens herself up, lifts up her dress and holds her head in her hands. Kasim tries to push her back down, but she shrugs him off.

MELIHA
Enough, stop it!

KASIM
What for? What’s got into you?

MELIHA
What’s got into me? What do you think?

KASIM
I don’t know, you tell me… It’s not like I raped you or anything… what’s the problem now! You admitted yourself that you were having fun and that you’d never had better sex… (sarcastically)…

…not even with your dear husband…

MELIHA
(gets up nervously)
Stop it, stop it! You know I love Enes. You know everything that happened, you know…

KASIM
That’s right, but do you know! Why did you agree to all this then? I certainly didn’t force you.

MELIHA
Oh, how you twist things around. You didn’t force me, but you wouldn’t let me be. After Enes and Visnja were led off to the camp, you happened to be there to console me… to offer your services…

KASIM
And you accepted it all, why?… What for, if you didn’t desire it

MELIHA
Because I was weak and afraid, lost, I don’t know what… and you, you were there with care and consoling words.

KASIM
(sits on the bed and lights a cigarette)
There was far more than just words of caring there… Don’t you remember the first time I kissed you. You were only too eager for more… Have you forgotten the first time we made love? You enjoyed it as no other woman I have ever been with… You gave yourself and clutched at me as if you were drowning...

MELIHA
That’s right, drowning. You were the straw at which I clutched desperately. That’s precisely it. A lighthouse in the darkness that surrounded me at the time and threatened to devour me… and all I needed was to hold on to something, someone… you were the nearest, and you were offering yourself… My God… I am afraid, afraid...

KASIM
(stroking her back)
But surely it was more than that, come now, be honest with me and with yourself… You enjoyed yourself with me, like with no one before. Those are your words. In the beginning you even demanded a proximity with me such as I hadn’t even thought possible myself.

MELIHA
(eluding his grasp and lighting a cigarette)
You misunderstood everything...

KASIM
What, for example? The fact that you wanted me, and gave yourself like a whore...

MELIHA
(slaps him)
Lout! How you’ve turned things inside out! You don’t think I see what you are driving at! To make me responsible for everything...

KASIM
(grabs hold of her hand)
Never do that again… shameless slut...

MELIHA
Let go of me! Your presence has separated me from my son. You think he doesn’t see what’s going on…

KASIM
Don’t mention that impudent and conceited know-it-all. He never liked me. And he holds me responsible for Enes’s arrest… And now this thing with you. He was glad of the opportunity to hate me even more and blame me for everything. For my brother’s arrest, your depression, his exile and failure… Maybe in his opinion I am also to blame for the aggression on Bosnia…

MELIHA
First of all, don’t insult my son like that. He is the only bright spot in my life. Secondly, he may even be right in regards to you… All this is sick, unhealthy… Don’t you see how people look at us… Can’t you see how Kasim suffers and suspects… And he’s right. Oh, my son how unhappy he must be…

(clutches her head),
I only hope he’ll understand… I hope he finds the love and the faith he has lost… Oh, God willing that he should find at least a slice of happiness and joy in the arms of that beautiful girl from Trebinje… How could I let this happen! How? I have lost my son… the only person who loves me disinterestedly… Let me be, let me be, you disgust me…

KASIM
(swings his arm as if he were about to hit her, and then caresses her face and breasts)
I disgust you… I would hardly say so… No, no, this lovely face doesn’t deserve blows…these gorgeous breasts for which I sighed even before you married my brother, they demand only caresses… Caresses that only I can offer you… your body after which all of Banja Luka pined it needs and seeks my hands… my touches and my tenderness… because it is passionate… fiery… unique…

MELIHA
(moving away, though unconvincingly)
Stop it, stop it please… Ohhh

The stage lights are dimmed accompanied by passionate sighs.

END of Scene 3
Scene 4

The main hall of Elsinore castle. A mass of people are assembled. A band of harlequins is miming and performing acrobatics. The king and queen are seated on the throne holding hands. A few steps below, closer to the audience and centre stage, Hamlet and Ophelia are seated next to each other.

HAMLET

Ha, ha! are you honest?

OPHELIA

My lord?

HAMLET

Are you fair?

OPHELIA

What means your lordship?

HAMLET

That if you be honest and fair, your honesty should admit no discourse to your beauty.

OPHELIA

Could beauty, my lord, have better commerce than with honesty?

HAMLET

Ay, truly; for the power of beauty will sooner transform honesty from what it is to a bawd than the force of honesty can translate beauty into his likeness
this was sometime a paradox, but now the time gives it proof. I did love you once.

OPHELIA

Indeed, my lord, you made me believe so.

HAMLET

You should not have believed me; for virtue cannot so inoculate our old stock but we shall relish of it.
I loved you not.

OPHELIA

I was the more deceived.

HAMLET

Get thee to a nunnery
why wouldst thou be a
breeder of sinners? I am myself indifferent honest;
but yet I could accuse me of such things that it
were better my mother had not borne me
I am very
proud, revengeful, ambitious, with more offences at
my beck than I have thoughts to put them in,
imagination to give them shape, or time to act them
in. What should such fellows as I do crawling
between earth and heaven? We are arrant knaves,
all; believe none of us. Go thy ways to a nunnery.

HAMLET

If thou dost marry, I'll give thee this plague for
thy dowry
be thou as chaste as ice, as pure as
snow, thou shalt not escape calumny. Get thee to a
nunnery, gog
farewell. Or, if thou wilt needs
marry, marry a fool; for wise men know well enough
what monsters you make of them. To a nunnery, go,
and quickly too. Farewell.

OPHELIA

O heavenly powers, restore him!

HAMLET

I have heard of your paintings too, well enough; God has given you one face, and you
make yourselves
another
you jig, you amble, and you lisp, and
nick-name God's creatures, and make your wantonness
your ignorance. Go to, I'll no more on't; it hath
made me mad. I say, we will have no more marriages:
those that are married already, all but one, shall
live; the rest shall keep as they are. To a
nunnery, go.

_Harlequins perform somersaults and cartwheels in the space in front of the throne._

__Exit__

HAMLET

Lady, shall I lie in your lap?

_Lying down at OPHELIA's feet_

OPHELIA

No, my lord.

HAMLET

I mean, my head upon your lap?

OPHELIA

Ay, my lord.

HAMLET

Do you think I meant country matters?

OPHELIA

I think nothing, my lord.

HAMLET

That's a fair thought to lie between maids' legs.

OPHELIA

What is, my lord?

HAMLET

Nothing.

OPHELIA

You are merry, my lord.

HAMLET

Who, I?
OPHELIA

Ay, my lord.

HAMLET

O God, your only jig-maker. What should a man do but be merry? for, look you, how cheerfully my mother looks, and my father died within these two hours.

OPHELIA

Nay, 'tis twice two months, my lord.

HAMLET

So long? Nay then, let the devil wear black, for I'll have a suit of sables. O heavens! die two months ago, and not forgotten yet? Then there's hope a great man's memory may outlive his life half a year but, by'r lady, he must build churches, then; or else shall he suffer not thinking on, with the hobby-horse, whose epitaph is 'For, O, for, O, the hobby-horse is forgot.'

*The actors become louder, and Hamlet gets up from his place to clap.*

HAMLET

Let us hear now what the players have to tell us!

*The first and second player cough and begin reciting melodramatically.*

FIRST PLAYER

Full thirty times hath Phoebus' cart gone round
Neptune's salt wash and Tellus' orbed ground,
And thirty dozen moons with borrow'd sheen
About the world have times twelve thirties been,
Since love our hearts and Hymen did our hands
Unite commutual in most sacred bands.

SECOND PLAYER

So many journeys may the sun and moon
Make us again count o'er ere love be done!
But, woe is me, you are so sick of late,
So far from cheer and from your former state,
That I distrust you. Yet, though I distrust,
Discomfort you, my lord, it nothing must:
For women's fear and love holds quantity;
In neither aught, or in extremity.
Now, what my love is, proof hath made you know;
And as my love is sized, my fear is so:
Where love is great, the littlest doubts are fear;
Where little fears grow great, great love grows there.

FIRST PLAYER

'Faith, I must leave thee, love, and shortly too;
My operant powers their functions leave to do:
And thou shalt live in this fair world behind,
Honour'd, beloved; and haply one as kind
For husband shalt thou--

SECOND PLAYER

O, confound the rest!
Such love must needs be treason in my breast:
In second husband let me be accurst!
None wed the second but who kill'd the first.

HAMLET


SECOND PLAYER

The instances that second marriage move
Are base respects of thrift, but none of love:
A second time I kill my husband dead,
When second husband kisses me in bed.

PLAYER KING

I do believe you think what now you speak;
But what we do determine oft we break.
Purpose is but the slave to memory,
Of violent birth, but poor validity;
Which now, like fruit unripe, sticks on the tree;
But fall, unshaken, when they mellow be.
Most necessary 'tis that we forget
To pay ourselves what to ourselves is debt:
What to ourselves in passion we propose,
The passion ending, doth the purpose lose.
The violence of either grief or joy
Their own enactures with themselves destroy:
Where joy most revels, grief doth most lament;
Grief joys, joy grieves, on slender accident.
This world is not for aye, nor 'tis not strange
That even our loves should with our fortunes change;
For 'tis a question left us yet to prove,
Whether love lead fortune, or else fortune love.
The great man down, you mark his favourite flies;
The poor advanced makes friends of enemies.
And hitherto doth love on fortune tend;
For who not needs shall never lack a friend,
And who in want a hollow friend doth try,
Directly seasons him his enemy.
But, orderly to end where I begun,
Our wills and fates do so contrary run
That our devices still are overthrown;
Our thoughts are ours, their ends none of our own:
So think thou wilt no second husband wed;
But die thy thoughts when thy first lord is dead.

PLAYER QUEEN
Nor earth to me give food, nor heaven light!
Sport and repose lock from me day and night!
To desperation turn my trust and hope!
An anchor's cheer in prison be my scope!
Each opposite that blanks the face of joy
Meet what I would have well and it destroy!
Both here and hence pursue me lasting strife,
If, once a widow, ever I be wife!

A player comes in, takes off his crown, kisses it,
pours poison into the Player King's ear, and exit.

OPHELIA

HAMLET

What, frightened with false fire!

QUEEN GERTRUDE

How fares my lord?
LORD POLONIUS

Give o'er the play.

END of Scene 4
Scene 5

*SELMA and KASIM are sitting on the ship’s deck. They are gazing at the sea...*

SELMA
What do you think, will this shabby boat be the end of us?

KASIM
(absentmindedly)
What?

SELMA
I was asking… never mind. What are you thinking about?

KASIM
About everything. About what I had been, and could still have been. About all that I had done and still wanted to do, about life as it had been and as it still could have been…

SELMA
So, can it still be?

KASIM
Such as we had got to know it and had led it, no. Never again…

SELMA
(nervously)
So what thent can be…

KASIM
How do I know… Come on, let’s end this fortune-telling séance…

SELMA
(merrily)
Let’s. Let’s direct our thoughts back to the happy moments. Let’s imagine the times when we were happiest… and, even though we had never met in our previous lives, let’s pretend we had.

KASIM
How do you mean that?

SELMA
(merrily)
For example, in Trebinje I really had some wonderful summer days. It was warm. My garden was full of flowers. There was even a fig tree. It was so fruitful that we had to invite friends over in order to pluck it all… So let’s imagine that you came over to pick the figs…

KASIM
(closes his eyes)
Hm, wait a moment so I can concentrate… yes, I can see it… Good, come on…

SELMA
(exhilarated)
Hey, mom, mom… look who’s here… Kasim from Banja Luka… Welcome to my White Castle. Sit here in the shade. How was your trip? Are you tired?

KASIM
Everything went well, but these heat waves of yours… How hot it is! It feels as if my head will explode. The air is dancing in front of my eyes, and my gaze is clouded. How can you stand this?

SELMA
just listen to him, the sissy. Well, then, young gentleman, we cool down in the bathroom, or at the seaside… we drink water and eat fruit…

KASIM
Yes, the sea! That is one thing I envy you. To be so close to the sea, but not quite next to it.

SELMA
See, it is nice to live here after all… If you want, after you have rested for a while, we can go straight to the seaside, or let’s go this very evening to Dubrovnik. They will be presenting ‘Hamlet’ at the Summer Games.

KASIM
Wonderful, I am just in the mood for that play.

SELMA
So this evening it is, until then, let’s take walk around town… I’ll show you the most beautiful plane trees in the world…

KASIM
Wait a little… forget the plane trees in this heat. Better if you offer me some of these tasty figs.
SELMA
With pleasure. Only, you will have to pick them yourself.

KASIM
The pleasure’s all mine…

SELMA
Oh, do be careful, the branches are slippery… you could fall.

KASIM
Don’t worry, I am quite the expert. You’ll see when you come to visit me in Banja Luka. In my garden, next to the River Vrbas, there are many fruits. Cherries, plums…

SELMA
I don’t like plums.

KASIM
You don’t have to eat them…

SELMA
Fine… you won’t mind if I leave you on your own for a short while. I have to shower and to decide what I am going to wear tonight.

KASIM
Well, young lady, I hope you won’t leave me for too long among these flowers and scents… the bees could devour me…

SELMA
Don’t worry, I’ll be quick… here I come…

KASIM
You look wonderful…

SELMA
You like it… don’t you think the dress is too low-cut?

KASIM
Not at all. Just as it should be. Enough to tickle the imagination, and give one a sense of what a beautiful and perfect body the owner of that dress must possess.

SELMA
You flatterer… you and your poetical observations…
KASIM
Could I have any other sort when I am in your company, in these incredible surroundings… with the most beautiful of all flowers… mmm, what is that scent…

SELMA
You like it?…

KASIM
Like it? It’s enchanting me… mmm

SELMA
(wriggling)
No… Not here… Kasim… my parents…

KASIM
What about your parents… I only want to kiss you, to inhale the scent of your body… graze your skin…

SELMA
You know what, let’s go to my room. I want to show you my books… records…

KASIM
Great, show me yourself (he comes closer and kisses Selma)

SELMA
Slow down, what’s …

KASIM
(opens his eyes)
Why did you wake me up… to dream, to dream, perchance to sleep… well let’s go to Dubrovnik already. And something else, after the play I want you to come to Banja Luka with me.

SELMA
Agreed, if you will let me drive too. Also that we will stop over in Mostar and Pocitelj on the way.

KASIM
Your wish is my command…

SELMA
So, what did you think of the play… I always want and expect more…

KASIM
I would say much the same thing. I always come to the same conclusion that all the best things are written in the play itself.

SELMA
Still, Ophelia is exceptional. Beautiful, delicate…

KASIM
Such as no one, not even Hamlet really deserves…

SELMA
Be careful so you don’t miss the Mostar exit… Ugh, what a crowd.

KASIM
That’s why I can’t stand Mostar in the Summer. You can’t see the city for the crowds and the heat.

SELMA
then we won’t detain ourselves here. Let’s continue on for Pocitelj.

KASIM
And what else is apart from rocks and a brilliant beauty?

SELMA
My best friend, Maurizia, an Italian painter, and her boyfriend are in the Pocitelj colony – I promised to pay them a visit.

KASIM
Ok then,…

SELMA
So? How do you like my friends?

KASIM
Almost as much as you…

SELMA
Isn’t it nice of them to invite us over to Padua? Are we going to take them up on that?

KASIM
And why not… When would you like to go?

SELMA
In September. It’s not too hot, but still warm enough and beautiful.

KASIM
September it is then… And until then – straight for Banja Luka.

SELMA
Banja Luka, Banja Luka! What’s so great there…

KASIM
quite a few things in fact. The River Vrbas, the greenery… Ferhadija (Mosque)… Kastel…

SELMA
Sounds a lot like Trebinje!

KASIM
Only Banja Luka is even prettier.

SELMA
We shall see about that… Hey, slow down, don’t drive that fast…

KASIM
Here we are, that’s my house… Do you like it?

SELMA
It's beautiful.

KASIM
You see, this fruit-orchard is mine… all the way up to the river… Come and meet my parents…

SELMA
I’m a little scared.

KASIM
Come on, I could be with your parents…

SELMA
That’s different…
KASIM
I don’t understand… Come on

SELMA
What’s the rush… let’s see the river first…

KASIM
Ok, as you wish…

SELMA
Ah… the water is so cold…

KASIM
Be careful of the whirlpools, they might carry you away…

SELMA
Uh, hold on to me!...

_Amer puts both of his arms around her waist and they kiss…_

_END of Scene 5_
Scene 6

*People are gathering in groups on the deck. A storm is brewing, with wind and rain.*

**MELIHA**
Can’t anything be done to stop this ship from rocking?

**RASEMA**
You don’t say! And what do you suggest should be done… Can’t you see it’s a storm…

**ELVIRA**
This is unbearable. We’ll flip over.

**KENAN**
Don’t be silly! Can’t you see that we’re anchored in a harbour?

**KASIM**
But the wind is too strong… It can turn the ship upside down…

*more voices join in it can!*

*no, it can’t…*

**KENAN**
Hold on a minute… Don’t panic… ere, my father will leave the ship and get help.

**KASIM**
Why your father? Why not me?...

**KENAN**
Because I say so! You’re not going to be saving your ass again… Ejub is still fit enough and quite handy. He won’t be bowled over by the wind. The rest of us should stay on board in case something happens…

That’s right!

*...

Quick, find some ropes or something similar.
We have to tie ourselves to something strong…

Look out for the children…

Hurry up Ejub…
the wind rises to a howl, the women scream.

MELIHA
Dear God, will this ship be the end of us?

RASEMA
Stop complaining for once and give us a hand here…

SELMA
Kasim, where are you?

KASIM
I am right here, give me your hand…

SELMA
Right away, let me just see where my brothers are, and Grandma…

KASIM
Don’t worry, they are with the others.

SELMA
Come to me…

KASIM
I am right here…

A crash. The ship begins drifting out towards the open sea… It is being pounded by the waves and the wind…

MELIHA
But we are sailing… Sailing…

END of Scene 6
Scene 7

Daytime. Calm weather. At the place where the ship had been moored only the anchor and a few scattered planks remain. Ejub is standing on the shore with a group of Danes, policemen and prefects.

PREFECT I
Incredible! How is this possible!

PREFECT II
I said we should have checked the moorings…

PREFECT I
But who could have imagined something like this happening…

a group of policemen and coast guardsmen approaches.

– Is there any news?

POLICEMAN I
Nothing! It’s as if they’d vanished into thin air… We’ve sent out two choppers. They went as far as Sweden. Nothing. We’ve also sent three Coast Guard speedboats, and a patrol ship…

Rajka translates for the dumbstruck Ejub.

EJUB
But what are they going to do? Do something! My son is there, my grandchildren… women, children… You have to do something…

RAJKA
Please remain calm.

EJUB
(in desperation)
How can I be calm… How! Oh, God, after all we’ve been through, now this! Everything is stacked against us, everything!

RAJKA
(speaking to the Policeman)
Is there any hope for them?

POLICEMAN
Unfortunately not. We’ve tried everything. The search has lasted for two days already, and there is nothing else we can do…

RAJKA
So are you going to give up?

POLICEMAN
I am afraid we will have to… but please don’t tell the old man. We really don’t have any more time for searching…

EJUB
What are they saying?

RAJKA
They are still waiting for some reports… Why don’t you go and have some tea? I will let you know as soon as there is some news…

EJUB
But what bugger the tea… leave me alone. Can’t you see what has happened… can’t you see… Oh, God… help, help…

RAJKA
He won’t leave.

POLICEMAN
In that case let him stay here on his own. We have to get going.

RAJKA
Will you stay here then?

EJUB
Damn right I will… and so should they… they’re not giving up, are they… but of course, it makes sense, ! they were just waiting for something like this to happen… to rid themselves of unwanted and undesirable visitors.

POLICEMAN
Let’s go then. Nothing else for us to do here…

They all leave. Ejub is left alone on the shore and stares desperately towards the open sea.
END of Scene 7
Scene 8

Silence. Thick fog. The ship can barely be seen, and it's impossible to see whether it's at sea or run aground. The people on the ship are dazed, moving and gazing slowly about.

MELIHA
How cold it is! Is the storm over?

KASIM
I hope so… I can’t hear anything… listen…

MELIHA
What? Silence…

ELVIRA
Is it possible that we’ve hit upon some land?

KENAN
(tossing a pebble overboard)
I can’t hear a sound… we’re not on water…

RASEMA
Nor on land…

SELMA
What happened, where are we?

KASIM
I don’t know. Are you Ok?

SELMA
I am not sure… Oh, God where are others?

KASIM
They’re all here. Don’t worry. I saw your brothers and Grandma. My mother is there too…

SELMA
(feeling her body with her hands)
Are we alive?

KASIM
I don’t know. I really don’t know…

SELMA
What if we’re not, What if…

KASIM
(hugging her)
At least we are together… you, me, and the others… you and I…

SELMA
You think that means something…

KASIM
Nothing has any meaning, except that you are surrounded by those who love you, who are your friends, or in any case not your enemies…

SELMA
And that is all!

KASIM
More doesn’t exist – or at least it is not attainable for us…

SELMA
And what if we are no longer alive… what then?

KASIM
I guess we’ll find out one way or another…

The ghost of Hamlet’s father is barely visible through the fog, strolling on the scaffolding above the ship.

Curtain