



The Eleventh Planet

On the face of it, Peter, Paul, and Magdalene, the three vagrants in *The Eleventh Planet*, are free individuals roaming at will through our world (our city, any city), needing no more than a few “subsidies” from the generous passers-by for survival. They are people of the present, having forgotten their past and given up thinking about the future. But all is not what it seems. In spite of forming a tightly-knit group with a written set of rules, they cannot avoid the pressures and temptations of the world of “bonkers” (decent, hard-working citizens), which they rejected (because it rejected them by locking them up, for various reasons, in a mental hospital). Having escaped from the hospital they have nowhere to go – except back to the despised reality of the the “bonkerish” world, or to a world so far away that it may not exist except in their imagination.

Their steadily growing (although steadfastly denied) wish to return to a more comfortable, “bonkerish” way of life is given full expression when Peter steals (and decides to wear) a brand new suit (ostensibly because he wants to propose marriage to Magdalene). This shatters the unity of their little community – but so does, on the other hand, the utopian vision of “the eleventh planet,” into which they project their desire to be needed, and with whose inhabitants they communicate (separately and secretly) by their stolen cell phones. The voices they hear (and may be the voices of the owners of the stolen phones, or – as it turns out – of the hospital staff trying to locate and recapture them) are so alluring that they cannot resist their appeal. One after another they betray their collective commitments and regress into the sort of people they claim to despise: individuals concerned only with their own happiness.

Deep down they know that their time of freedom is running out, but choose to cling to the utopian idea of the “eleventh planet” as a conscious strategy for survival, which is nevertheless real and effective, never more so than at the end, when, in the revolving light of the police car flashing in through the window, they are busy drawing a spacecraft as a means of dramatic last-minute escape.



What the critics said

“Evald Flisar’s stage plays represent a special chapter in the history of contemporary Slovenian drama – they stand out for many reasons, but above all because of his well-known and easily decipherable view of the world. At the heart of all his plays lies the desire to depict human destinies (mostly of people that could be our friends or relatives), whose common denominator is the awareness of the tragi-comic nature of life. Flisar defines the tragi-comic as “the feeling that we are all going somewhere, although we cannot move” ... The staging of *The Eleventh Planet* has added yet another deeply moving pebble to the mosaic of ‘absolute futility’ of our lives.”

Vesna Jurca Tadel, *Dnevnik*, 2000

“I interpret the new play by Evald Flisar as a theatrical metaphor whose central theme is the status of man in contemporary civilisation. This is a pure theatrical play that explores various models of existence inside one and the same, essentially unchanging human destiny... A witty, playful stage miniature dealing with the eternal human wish to escape the restrictive variants of social life, a tragi-comic play that in an original way and with the well-known touch of the author confronts the audience with reality, hidden behind the metaphorical walls inside us that spread out into the great Institution...”

Jernej Novak, *Sodobnost*, 2000

“*The Eleventh Planet* is a longing for freedom, for the possibility of aligning one’s life with the lives of others, for respectful interpersonal ties. Flisar emphasizes our imprisonment in social norms, our desire to reject the settled order of things, and our inability to do so... Flisar deals with his theme in a way



reminiscent of the works of De Filippo, where action is accompanied by deep inner shocks, so that spontaneous laughter on our lips freezes in bitter acknowledgment of our helplessness...”

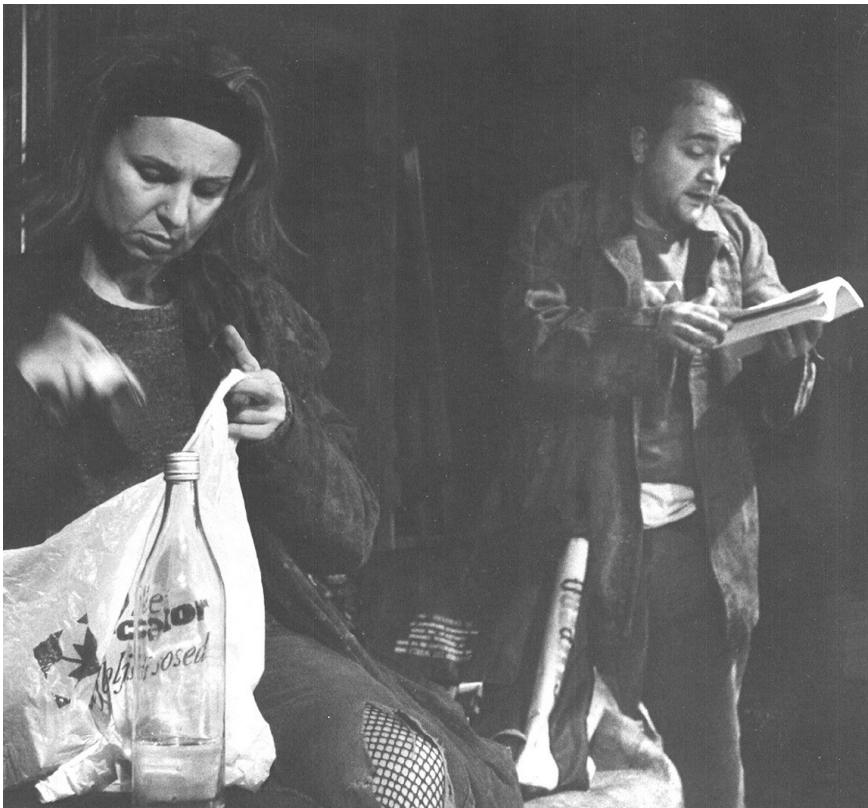
Bogomila Kravos, *Primorske novice*, 2000

“*The Eleventh Planet* is a monument to vagrancy. Of course it’s a tragedy to realize that there is no vagrants’ nirvana, that the great principled rejection of the world (“We have signed a statement that we’re turning our back on hypocrisy and devoting our lives to innocent freedom without demands or expectations.”) can collapse because of an insignificant unprincipled wish. It’s also a tragedy to realize that the vagrants’ commitment has the same basis as the commitment which they rejected (or which rejected them, whereupon they elevated the rejection into a manifesto): unwritten laws, promises, and the breaking of both. However, it is precisely because of the simultaneous revelation of illusion and disillusion that the thematization of the vagrants’ commitment in *The Eleventh Planet* is probably the most convincing presentation of the subject we have ever seen, heard or read...”

Petra Vidali, *Vecer*, 2005

“This play, perhaps crucial for the understanding of Flisar’s dramatic work as a whole, poses a great many questions – and perhaps in this context we could conclude that it pushes all (or most) of his plays into the framework of a common reality. This reality presents human values in a crisis, blind alleys of our modern world which Flisar – perhaps more so than any of his contemporaries – draws with the help of past cultural models: myths and literary symbols. To be more precise: he describes them with quotes from the world literature... I offer this as a reminder that life in Flisar’s plays is formed not only from the substance of our times, but also from the stuff of our common culture, which lives within us as a legitimate part of what we are...”

Joze Horvat, *Sodobnost*, 2003



The Eleventh Planet, Slovenian Chamber Theater, Ljubljana, Slovenia, 2000
Violeta Tomic as Magdalene, Gregor Cusin as Paul
Directed by Ales Novak



THE ELEVENTH PLANET

Nomination for Best Play of the Year Award 2000

Characters

Peter
Paul
Magdalene



The Eleventh Planet was first produced at the Slovenian Chamber Theater, Ljubljana, Slovenia, on February 17, 2000. It was directed by Ales Novak with the following cast:

Peter
Paul
Magdalene

Iztok Jereb
Gregor Cusin
Violeta Tomic





THE ELEVENTH PLANET

Act One

An attic, or a basement (in which case stage directions should be suitably modified). Old chairs, some broken, filthy armchair, large wooden box, an old bicycle and other objects one normally finds in a place like this. Enter Paul and Magdalene. We can hear their conversation as they walk up (or down) the stairs. They're dressed as vagrants and laden with various bags, sacks and other, more unusual containers.

MAGDALENE: How much did she give you, that fatso in front of the church?

PAUL: Which one?

MAGDALENE: The one you told you were collecting for the new pediatric clinic.

PAUL: Pediatric. A few coins, that's all.

MAGDALENE: How much exactly?

PAUL: I don't know because they immediately slipped from my hand and fell through a grate into the sewer.

MAGDALENE: What did it sound like: plink, ploonk, or plonk?

PAUL: Why?

MAGDALENE: By the sound I could tell which coins fell in the sewer. Then I'd know how much she gave you. And then I'd know my share.

PAUL: Magdalene, I swear –

MAGDALENE: Shoosh! Stop swearing on the grave of your granny. She must've turned in it so many times that her coffin is probably down to a handful of splinters. Give me a vagrant's word that you cheated me out of less than a buck.

PAUL: Magdalene...

MAGDALENE: Stop magdalening me, I'm tired of it.



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PAUL: Well, I'm tired of you.

MAGDALENE: I'm tired, tired, tired of it. On top of which I'm tired to death of this healthy living in fresh, breezy air.

PAUL: So am I, if that's any consolation.

MAGDALENE: Less than zero, Paul. *(They drop their bags, sacks and parcels on the floor and look around.)* Looks familiar.

PAUL: So it should. This is the fifth time we're here.

MAGDALENE: I don't remember.

PAUL: Don't you remember the crazy old lady who threw our things out of the window, kicked us down the stairs and shouted after us never to return?

MAGDALENE: Was Peter with us?

PAUL: He ran so fast we couldn't keep up.

MAGDALENE: I don't remember.

PAUL: This is where two months ago Peter and I caught you drying your clothes after a very bad storm. You were standing here as God made you...

MAGDALENE *(shouting)*: In my nightie! I was standing here in my nightie. And no God ever made me, I've been here forever. Born before the big bang. Bang, bang! *(Calms down.)* Did you tell Peter where we are?

PAUL: No.

MAGDALENE: Why not?

PAUL: Because I don't know where he is.

MAGDALENE: What sort of a threesome are we, with only the two of us traipsing around? The strangest two. I've been meaning to ask you: when did they shorten your legs?

PAUL: They didn't. A tree fell on me.

MAGDALENE: And squashed you.

PAUL: Yes, pushed my vertebrae together.

MAGDALENE: Vertebrae are in the spine, Paul. You look as if the lower part of your legs had been surgically removed. Are you sure something didn't go wrong when they cut off your corns?

PAUL: I never had any.

MAGDALENE: It probably was a tree. Your head seems flattened, if I look at your profile.

PAUL: I haven't got an opinion about my profile. So can we please postpone the subject for five years or so, when, with God's help, I might have one?



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(Magdalene sits in the armcahir and sighs.)

MAGDALENE: Isn't it sad?

PAUL: What?

MAGDALENE: This... futility.

PAUL: What futility?

MAGDALENE: This one.

PAUL: We've been padding the streets for five hours! For five solid hours we've been trying to persuade the rat-racing bonkers to share with us the fruits of their labor. So we could buy ourselves a hamburger! And you talk about futility? *(Sits down among his bags.)* Our goal just hasn't materialized. Maybe you meant infertility.

MAGDALENE: No, Paul, fertile I am, if only someone would notice. What I meant was futility. But how could you possibly know what I'm talking about.

PAUL: Ohhhhhrrrr...

MAGDALENE: Don't you want to know what I'm talking about?

PAUL *(yawns)*: No...

MAGDALENE: About that horrible feeling of emptiness in the soul, about that emptiness, Paul, that emptiness, that...

PAUL: Magdalene, please... Not today. Not one of your confessions again, which sooner or later will force me to strangle you.

MAGDALENE: Go ahead. Far better being strangled than not being touched.

PAUL *(settles down with his head on one of his bags)*: I'm hungry.

MAGDALENE: So am I, Paul, so I am. But I need food for the soul...

PAUL: Good night. *(Closes his eyes.)*

MAGDALENE: What a pity Peter isn't here.

PAUL *(instantly propping himself up on an elbow)*: Why?

MAGDALENE: I could dance with him.

PAUL: You can dance with me.

MAGDALENE *(getting to her feet)*: Come on, then.

PAUL: We have no music. Someone has to phone us. We only dance to the sound of the cell phone. That's the rule.

MAGDALENE: Rules are made to be broken.

PAUL: Other people's rules. Not ours. We worked them out together. You, Peter and I. You wrote them down in your diary. *(Sits up.)* Let me have it... Give me the diary, I want to show you.

MAGDALENE: My diary is none of your business.



The Eleventh Planet, Slovenian Chamber Theater, Ljubljana, Slovenia, 2000
Violeta Tomic as Magdalene, Gregor Cusin as Paul
Directed by Ales Novak





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PAUL: It contains the minutes of our meetings! Records of our debates.

Our resolutions. It's an official document, it belongs to all of us.

MAGDALENE: It belongs to me, and that's the end of it.

PAUL: I want to see it.

MAGDALENE: If you think that I'm the official secretary of a God-forsaken group of vagrants, a bigger tree must have fallen on you than I thought.

PAUL. Give me the diary, it's in that bag.

(He gets to his feet and moves towards the bag. He is stopped by the sound of the cell phone. He pulls it from his pocket.)

MAGDALENE: Whose number?

PAUL: Peter's.

(They join hands and dance a merry jig to the tune of the cell phone. They stop when the phone stops ringing.)

PAUL: And now?

MAGDALENE *(pulls a phone from under her overcoat)*: Now he will call me. Ready?

(They join hands again, and wait. As soon as they hear Magdalene's phone they dance another jig, to a different tune.)

PAUL: Won't you answer?

MAGDALENE: Let him worry a little.

PAUL: Suppose something happened to him?

MAGDALENE *(stops dancing, out of breath)*: Nothing ever happens to Peter. He always happens to other people.

(The phone stops. Magdalene puts it away.)

PAUL: That's not nice. Calls should be answered.

MAGDALENE: Why didn't you answer, then?

PAUL: Lately you've become rather unpleasant, you know. Accusing me of cheating you out of your share of the subsidies donated to our cause by socially aware passers-by *(Magdalene turns his back to him.)*, disallowing me access to the diary which is a history of our common efforts to attain a better life...



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(Behind her back, he quickly fishes a book from one of her bags and, as Magdalene turns, ineptly tries to hide it behind his back.)

MAGDALENE: Give me that book and I'll give you the diary.

(Offers him a notebook she has pulled from another bag.)

PAUL *(examining the book in his hands with great interest)*: ...stealing books in libraries which get miserable grants for the purchase of new ones...

MAGDALENE: Peter stole that book. I only stole it from him. Give it to me!

PAUL *(evading Magdalene who tries to snatch the book from his hands)*: The way your wickedness grows by the minute, this is probably a manual for women wanting to become witches –

MAGDALENE *(yelling)*: I don't need a manual! I am a witch! Why do you think they attached electrodes to my temples, those bloody bonkers, among those horrible walls? How do you think I escaped?

PAUL: On a broom?

MAGDALENE: On a broom! And on a broom I'll send you to the blackest hole in the universe if you don't return that book right now!

PAUL *(looking at the book)*: "The Eleventh Planet". That's where you want to send me?

MAGDALENE *(snatches the book from his hands)*: You? You'd scare them to death.

(Se puts book and diary in one of her bags, and ties it with a piece of string.)

PAUL: Aren't you too old for fairytales? There are only nine planets.

MAGDALENE: What about the tenth, which approaches the Earth every 3600 years? Have you never heard of Nubira? Don't you know that everything there's made of gold? Which they haven't got enough? So that every 3600 years they send an expedition to Earth to steal our gold reserves? And rob all the jewellery shops from North to South pole?

PAUL: And what do they lack on the eleventh planet? Brains?

MAGDALENE: On the eleventh planet they periodically run out of the milk of human kindness.



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PAUL: Oh, how terrible.

MAGDALENE: Then they start behaving like bonkers, competing and killing each other.

PAUL: And then they send an expedition to Earth to collect those last drops of the milk of human kindness we still haven't squandered.

MAGDALENE: Yes.

PAUL: How do they do it? By herding the remaining good people together and milking them?

MAGDALENE: You'd like that, wouldn't you? To be milked by an alien. But the whole thing's even more interesting. Every five thousand years they come to Earth and seek out a small group of the kindest and purest people still left in the world. On board their spacecraft they fly them to the eleventh planet, where they're paired off with the most handsome local males and females. To give birth to a new generation.

PAUL (*suddenly interested*): Can I apply?

MAGDALENE: You can't. You're chosen. By them. In the beginning you don't even know who they are and what they want. In the beginning –

(Paul's cell phone rings. He pulls it out and checks the number.)

PAUL: Suppose it's them?

MAGDALENE: No doubt about it.

PAUL: Suppose they telepathically registered my desire to help them, and want to invite me to a preliminary meeting?

MAGDALENE: They probably sent an expedition to Earth for your sake alone.

PAUL (*dreamily*): Do you think they'll let us choose our partners?

MAGDALENE: You'll be offered the most beautiful boys on the planet.

(Paul quickly answers the phone, speaking politely and cautiously.)

PAUL: Yes?... Sorry?... No, I'm not at work... I can travel... At the moment... no, at the moment I'm not in a relationship... May I ask who is speaking?... Well, until I know who I'm talking to ... Hullo?... Hullo?

(He puts the phone in his pocket, absorbed in thoughts.)

MAGDALENE: Who was it?

PAUL: They didn't say.

MAGDALENE: What did they want?



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PAUL: They said that... I don't know... It all sounded rather silly.

MAGDALENE: Have they ever called you before?

PAUL: Not these, no. And these were the first who didn't say they wanted to speak to John.

MAGDALENE: Did they really ask if you can travel?

PAUL: They asked me if I was tied up in any project which would prevent me from going on a long journey. (*Looks at her.*) Lend me that book.

MAGDALENE: Aren't you too old for fairytales?

PAUL: Did they call you as well?

MAGDALENE: Who?

PAUL: The ones that called me.

MAGDALENE: How should I know? Did they say who they were?

PAUL: They said they'd tell me in time.

MAGDALENE: Interesting.

PAUL (*almost hysterically*): What, Magdalene? What? We agreed there would be no secrets among us. That was one of our resolutions. (*Magdalene starts to collect her many bags.*) Where're you going?

MAGDALENE: I've been having these pains in my joints. I'm going to examine the rubbish bins behind the hospital. You find all sorts of things there, from aspirin to capsules for a quick, painless suicide, in case someone gets on your nerves *so much that you can't stand them any more!*

PAUL (*begins to collect his bags*): I'll go with you.

MAGDALENE: Only as far as the first corner.

(They stand, looking at each other.)

PAUL: Don't you like me any more?

MAGDALENE: I don't feel well, I think I'm getting premenstrual cramps. (*Walks to the staircase.*)

PAUL (*following*): You said that three days ago.

MAGDALENE: Some women get menstruation twice a week, didn't you know?

PAUL: Why did we come here anyway?

MAGDALENE: Why are we here, that's the important question. Why *are* we? Why isn't the Earth like the Moon, a few craters, two deserts and a few footmarks left behind by a handful of astronauts?



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Why these six billion bonkers and only a few thousand vagrants?
With only three of them asking themselves stupid questions...

(Their voices fade on the staircase. Blackout.)

(Peter comes up the stairs with a sack over his shoulder. In his right hand he is holding a brand-new suit on a hanger. He looks very pleased with himself. He hangs the suit on a hook in the wall and puts the sack on the floor. He starts to undress. Before pulling off his trousers, he produces a cell phone and types in a number. As he changes from his rags into the new suit, he keeps transferring the phone from one hand to the other so he can keep talking.)

PETER *(into the phone)*: Paul?... You're not going to believe this... I know you never believe anything, but this you won't believe even if you decide that you *are* going to believe a thing or two... The reason you won't believe it is because it exceeds the outer limits of your imagination... No, I didn't become Prime Minister, didn't I tell you I don't care for political titles?... I've become the owner of something... Not a Mercedes, Paul, I've told you many times that I prefer to walk if I can't have my own private jet... Something to wear... Yes, to wear, Paul, to wear, to walk around in... God, how exhausting, trying to explain something to a simpleton... Who is calling you names?... Tell me, and I'll put him on the list of people I have to thrash when I get round to it... No one is allowed to be nasty to you... No one, do you understand?... Where am I?... Why?... You'd like to see what I've become the owner of... I bet you would... Is Magdalene with you?... No?... When did you last see her?... You can't remember... All right, if you don't breathe as much as a word to her I'll tell you where I am... No, Paul, I'm not hiding anything from her... On the contrary... I'm just not ready to... I'm not sufficiently... at ease in this thing I've become the owner of... oh, fuck these zips!... Paul... Paul, are you still there?...

(Paul has come up the stairs and put his cell phone in his pocket. He stands, watching Peter struggling with his trousers, which are ten inches too short. Peter doesn't see him.)

PETER: You think I don't know what you're doing? You imbecile, simpleton, scoundrel, traitor!... You're phoning Magdalene... But there's



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something you forgot, you Olympic champion with a medal for mental decrepitude... You don't know where I am... You go and tell her... (*He turns and sees Paul. It takes some time for him to realize that Paul is actually there.*)... You tell her... and when you find out that I'm not there... that I'm... not... there... (*He puts the phone in the pocket of his new jacket.*)

PAUL: Hello, Peter.

PETER: "Hello, Peter." Are you following me again?

PAUL: No.

PETER: Because if you're again spying on me from behind the corners, we're going to have a replay of the event I'm sure you'd rather forget ... But you must've forgotten it anyway.

PAUL: I haven't. You thrashed me.

PETER (*faking surprise*): Who, me?

PAUL: Thrashed, slapped and kicked. Then, for good measure, you pissed on me. You said you'd strangle me if you ever caught me spying on you again.

PETER: I never said that.

PAUL: You did.

PETER: I did not. Which doesn't mean I wouldn't do it if I felt like it. And I feel like it now... (*Cracks his finger joints.*)

PAUL (*pulls a piece of paper from his pocket, reads*): "You fucked-up little cretin... you president of the World Association of Imbeciles... you, who bring shame on the vagrant community every time you open your mouth..."

PETER: Paul!... Listen... It doesn't matter what I said... What's important is what I'm going to say now... Are we or are we not a group of vagrants which is unique in the world? (*Paul begins to answer.*)... Don't look for words, I know that's an effort for you, just nod... Nod, Paul! (*Paul nods.*)... Unique not only in the world, but in the entire five history of vagrancy... (*Paul nods.*)... Why?... (*Paul begins to answer.*)... I don't want your opinion, Paul, a rhetorical question is always answered by the person putting it, O.K.?... (*Paul nods.*)... Unique because our average intelligence far exceeds the average I.Q. of any vagrant worthy of this name... And would reach the intelligence of the doctors of science if your contribution to our average wouldn't be so catastrophic! (*Paul nods.*)... Still, that isn't the only thing we can be proud of... We're also the only group of vagrants equipped with cell phones.



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PAUL: You stole them.

PETER: Procured is the word.

PAUL: Same thing.

PETER: I don't want to moralize, but the plight of the previous owners of our phones is something we would be stupid to lose any sleep over ... Isn't it enough that we have them? So we can whisper words of support into each other's ears every time we feel thirsty for the milk of human kindness?

(He tries to give Paul a friendly embrace, but Paul pushes him away.)

PAUL: Where did you hear that?

PETER: What?

PAUL: About the milk of human kindness.

PETER: That's a cliché, Paul ... There're thousands of them, do you want me to tell you for each of them where I heard it? *(Peter's cell phone rings. He checks the number.)* "This number is not available at the moment, please try later." *(Replaces phone.)* I thought it was Magdalene, but it's somebody unknown.

PAUL: I keep getting calls, too, and they all want to speak to John, they don't believe me when I say I'm Paul.

PETER *(shouting)*: How many times have I told you that you *should* be John every now and then? *(Calms down, becomes friendly.)* Anyway, it doesn't matter... Paul, are you blind?

PAUL *(stretching out his arm and looking at his thumb)*: I can see my thumb all right.

PETER: Can you see me?

PAUL: No.

PETER: You can't see me?

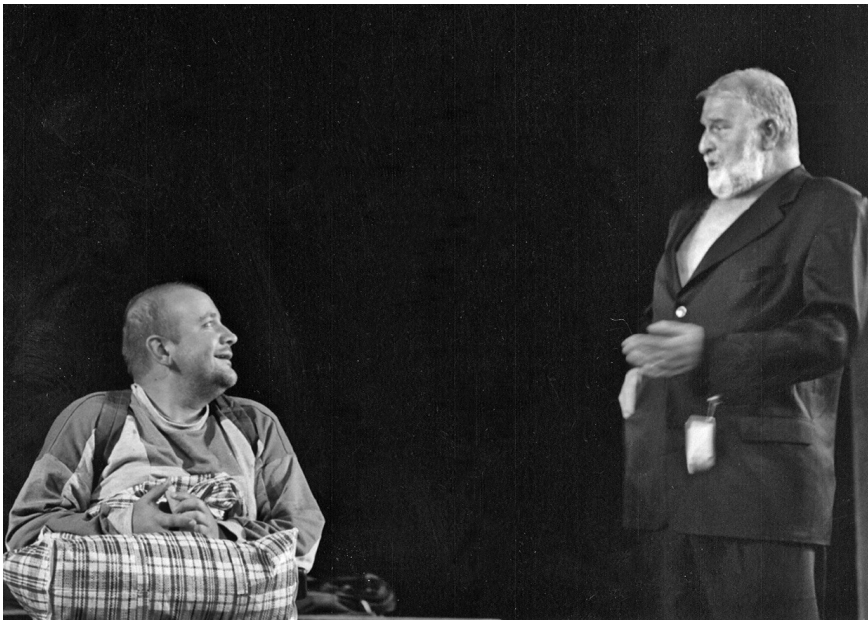
PAUL: I can see someone resembling you. Maybe uncle, cousin, brother...

PETER: Cousin... Brother... *Then who the hell have you been talking to all this time?*

PAUL *(unperturbed)*: I've been talking to you. I see someone who reminds me of you, but can't possibly be you.

PETER: Listen, Paul... I know you have serious problems with your brain parameters, but just now you sound as if you're taking the mickey, and doing so with pleasure that even your stupid expression can't hide. Damn it, Paul, are we friends or not?

PAUL: We are. But I couldn't say that for the one I see.



The Eleventh Planet, Slovenian Chamber Theater, Ljubljana, Slovenia, 2000
Gregor Cusin as Paul, Iztok Jereb as Peter
Directed by Ales Novak



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PETER: Tell me with one word: do you like it or not? (*Assumes the posture of a shop window dummy.*)

PAUL: You mean the color?

PETER: Not only the color, the cut, the whole thing.

PAUL: Where did you get the money?

PETER: Since when do I buy things with money? Even if I had any I wouldn't waste it on silly rags.

PAUL: That's the word I've been looking for. Silly rags.

PETER: Exactly. What you're wearing is silly rags. What I am wearing is an elegant suit. Anybody looking at you will say you're a vagrant, anybody looking at me will say that I'm a gentleman.

PAUL (*pulls a tiny notebook from his bag, opens it, reads*): "Vagrants represent in the history of mankind a true quantum leap. They've realized what man has been longing for since he was thrown out of Paradise: a limitles feeling of freedom..."

PETER: Put that away.

PAUL: "... that's why they should be considered..."

PETER: Paul, put that rubbish away! And tell Magdalene I'll stop stealing notebooks and pens for her if she records every stupid remark of mine.

PAUL (*putting the notebook back in his bag*): So, why did you steal those silly rags?

PETER: Because every man, vagrants included, is entitled to at least once decent suit.

PAUL: Why?

PETER: Why, why?... What a question... (*Exploding.*) For special occasions!... (*Calms down, explains.*)... You never know when your best friend might decide to get married. Or collapse with a heart attack and you'll have to attend his funeral.

PAUL: I thought I was your best friend.

PETER: That's what I'm talking about.

PAUL: Wait a minute... You think I'll get married?

PETER: Heart attack is more likely. Certainly for the one you'll ask to marry you.

PAUL: I don't want you to attend my funeral in this suit. I don't want other vagrants to say: look at the friends he had...

PETER: There're other occasions to wear a suit.

PAUL: For example?



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PETER: For example, someone might organize a world congress of vagrants in Kuala Lumpur. Or Casablanca. Do you think you'll get on a plane like this? When did you last have a bath?

PAUL: Why?

PETER: A strange aroma keeps assaulting my nostrils. Since I can't see any dead cats the only source can be your pampered body.

PAUL: I wash my hands and ears whenever I come across a puddle left behind by the rains.

PETER (*rummaging in his sack*): If there is anything I can't stand it's a vagrant who is too lazy to pinch a bottle of *eau d'cologne* for himself. Come here.

(He produces a can of air-freshener and sprays Paul from head to toe.)

PAUL (*sniffing unhappily at his sleeves*): You're so kind.

PETER: I know. So don't you ever say that I'm not.

PAUL: And because you're so kind to me, I'll be kind to you. I don't like your suit. It's shoddily put together.

PETER: Suddenly you're a fashion designer! Whose father was a tailor, yours or mine?

PAUL: I'm sorry, but this suit looks horrible.

PETER: Shut up.

PAUL: What's even more horrible is to see you in it.

PETER: This suit is merely the first step on my way to new identity.

PAUL: Ooooooh, identity!

PETER: Yes, i-den-ti-ty. Elegant words go with elegant suits.

PAUL: People will laugh at you.

PETER: Let's go out in the street: the first person we meet is going to raise his hat and wish me a good afternoon.

PAUL: Oh yeah? Where're you going to find a man wearing a hat?

PETER: All right, I'll go alone. It's time to put my new image to the test, anyway. Take care of my things. If you touch anything I'll push three pins behind each of your finger nails. *Verstehst?*

(He disappears down the stairs. Paul waits till he's gone, then he pounces on Peter's sack. He pulls out a small cassette player.)

PAUL: *Verstehst, Paul, du Imbecile? Du tragische, ganz verlorene exception among vagrants? If you wouldn't drag down our average*



THE ELEVENTH PLANET

intelligence we could be candidates for the Nobel Prize. Have we not raised vagrancy to the level of art? When did you last have a bath, Paul? When did you nails last see a pair of scissors, Paul? When did you last ...

(He switches on the player. Music: something thrillingly, cheaply melancholic, maybe Moriconne, New Age, similar. Paul slowly draws away from the cassette player. He ends up in the corner, crouching, with hands pressed to his ears. He leaps to the cassette player and switches it off.)

PAUL: I must call Magdalene!... Something's happened to Peter... He must've walked into a lamppost... *(Pulls out his cell phone, types in a number.)*... Magdalene?... Where are you?... You won't believe this... No, I haven't found a leg of pork in a rubbish bin, don't be silly... Magdalene, we're standing on the edge of an abyss... I can't explain, it's just a feeling... Magdalene, am I entitled to feelings?... Am I or am I not entitled to feelings?... No, I'm not panicking, I'm just sounding alarm... Where are you?... *Hairdresser's?*... Don't tell me you've decided to sell your hair... You're having it waved?... All right, I'll start painting my finger nails... No, I won't tell you where I am...

(Magdalene, laden with bags and presssing a phone to her ear, comes up the stairs. Paul stares at her as if seeing a ghost. Slowly puts his phone away.)

PAUL: Didn't you say you had it waved?

MAGDALENE: They wouldn't let me in. *(Drops all her bags on the floor.)*
Tomorrow I'll be back with a solicitor. Demanding a public apology.
And respect for my human rights. Never again will a painted woman slam the door in my face!

PAUL: You seem to be furious.

MAGDALENE: I'm furious because I can't reach the stage where nothing could make me furious any more. I look for inner peace, and when I think I've found it I realize that this horrible world has once again sold me utter restlessness as nirvana... Is there no way out of this?

PAUL: There is. Peter's found it.



Evald Flisar: COLLECTED PLAYS, Volume 1

MAGDALENE: Don't tell me. He tried to steal a book in a public library and was hit on the head by a dislodged encyclopedia of wisdom.

PAUL: No, he stole a new suit.

MAGDALENE: Well, you know what he does... He's a dealer... He steals things to sell them on.

PAUL: He stole the suit to wear it.

MAGDALENE: Sounds completely implausible.

PAUL: When did you last see him?

MAGDALENE: Let me think when I was last abused by a chauvinist, anti-feminist, fascist pig...

PAUL: I saw him five minutes ago. In his new suit he went out to see if anyone would take off his hat to him.

MAGDALENE (*as if remembering something*): What color was the suit?

PAUL: Gray. Brown. Sort of moldy dark. Just a suit. Aren't they all the same?

MAGDALENE: Were the trousers a little too short?

PAUL: No. Certainly not more than ten inches.

MAGDALENE: My God... Downstairs I met a nicely dressed gentleman and asked him for a little non-returnable loan. And you won't believe it, he gave me ten bucks!

PAUL (*rubbing his hands*): Let's have a take-away pizza! I'll have –

MAGDALENE: Don't you understand what I'm trying to tell you? This gentleman was wearing a brand-new suit, and his trousers were ten inches too short!

PAUL: Then he made it... He succeeded!

MAGDALENE: No... Peter might sacrifice a dollar on two to impress a vagrant, but never ten bucks. No, this was a real gentleman.

PAUL: Can't you see what's happening? Peter stole a new suit in order to wear it. To wear it, Magdalene.

MAGDALENE: You're jealous, that's all. You're jealous of a colleague who stole something for himself for a change.

PAUL: That's not important, what matters is that by giving in to vanity he has stolen our future.

MAGDALENE: Did you tell him his trousers were ten inches too short?

PAUL: No.

MAGDALENE: Why not?

PAUL: Because he deserves to be followed by kids and laughed at.

MAGDALENE: Did *you* laugh when you saw him?

PAUL: Should I?



THE ELEVENTH PLANET

MAGDALENE: That would've been a nice friendly gesture. (*Paul rummages inside one of Magdalene's bags.*) What're you doing?

PAUL: Looking for *The Big Book of Symptoms*.

MAGDALENE: Are you ill?

PAUL: Not me, Peter. If a vagrant suddenly wants to wear a gentleman's suit, this must be a symptom of some dangerous contagious disease. Where is he book?

MAGDALENE (*finds the book and hands it to him*): Are you going to look under vagrant, suit or mental debility? (*Paul sits down on the floor and starts crying.*) Paul, not again... When will you stop abusing my inclination to mother you?... You're all the same, whether large as Peter or small as you... Of course I could always say: fuck yourselves, pigs, rapists, impotent dreamers with no guts, cry as long as you want, I'll even stick an onion up your nose to make your tears more genuine! I could always say that, couldn't I?... (*Paul nods.*) Maybe I will one day. But for now... I'd be completely alone in the world without you two... That doesn't suit me, I've been alone too many times... It's true that the price is horribly high, but God surely knows why he wants to punish me by leaving in my care two men who'll never grow up... (*Sits next to Paul and puts her arm around him.*) Shall we look at the book of symptoms? (*She sniffs at him.*) Jesus Mary! What's that?

PAUL: Peter sprayed me with an air-freshener.

MAGDALENE (*moving away a little*): Doesn't quite go with your other odors. (*Opens the book.*) Do you know what I like most about this book? That it's subjectively written. The title itself is unique: "The Healing Power of Illness." This book tells you straight that the body invents illness because it wants to be healthy. In other words: to be healthy, you must fall ill. This simple truth really knocked me sideways. (*Turning the pages.*) Maybe here... (*Reads.*) "Pinpoint the moment when a certain symptom appeared..."

PAUL: Today.

MAGDALENE: "Examine the life situation, thoughts, fantasies, dreams, events and objects constituting the symptom's time-frame." (*Confused.*) Do you understand that, Paul?

PAUL: No. Give it to me. (*Pulls the book from her hands.*)

MAGDALENE (*snatching the book back*): Why ruin your eyes, you have no money for glasses. (*Puts the book in the bag.*)

PAUL: It says, "Examine the life situation..."



The Eleventh Planet, Slovenian Chamber Theater, Ljubljana, Slovenia, 2000
Gregor Cusin as Paul, Violeta Tomic as Magdalene
Directed by Ales Novak



THE ELEVENTH PLANET

MAGDALENE: Well, what is Peter's situation? He is a vagrant.
PAUL: But he's fantasizing about changing his social status.
MAGDALENE: Exactly. About turning into a hard-working, responsible bonker, the kind so liked by mortgage lenders.
PAUL: With a permanent address.
MAGDALENE: Shares and securities.
PAUL: Two cars in the garage.
MAGDALENE: Leg of pork in the fridge.
PAUL: A list of things to do.
MAGDALENE: And right at the top: "Buy one more leg of pork..."
PAUL: Do you see now what we're up against?
MAGDALENE (*after pause*): Yes, perhaps I was a little too hasty.
PAUL: At last!
MAGDALENE: But Paul... Suppose it's all true... And Peter becomes, in spite of his trousers being ten inches too short, a bank manager... He could lend us money!
PAUL: We'd never pay it back.
MAGDALENE: That's what I'm trying to tell you.
PAUL: Magdalene... If Peter is planning a desertion, he must be unhappy with the way of life that we accepted – all three of us, remember? – as the highest form of existence.
MAGDALENE: Existence, or just waiting for death?
PAUL: We're free! We can move around at will.
MAGDALENE: Sure. From attic to attic, from basement to basement, from doorway to doorway. Not because we like that, but because God, in his special concern for the well-being of vagrants, invented rain, snow and cold!
PAUL: Terrible! You've caught the same virus! That's why he gave you ten bucks. To infect you! Where's that money?
MAGDALENE: None of your business.
PAUL: We must get rid of it.
MAGDALENE: I will get rid of it. And I know how. (*Pulls a half-empty bottle from one of her bags.*) Want some brandy?
PAUL: Chocolate.
MAGDALENE: I haven't got any. Why didn't you buy it with the coins which fell in the sewer and said plink, plonk, ploink? (*Drinks. Offers bottle to Paul.*) Take a sip or I'll pour it all over you and set you alight. (*Paul quickly takes a sip.*) You saved me a match, thank you.



Evald Flisar: COLLECTED PLAYS, Volume 1

PAUL: I'm scared.

MAGDALENE: Come on, I didn't mean it.

PAUL: I'm afraid of what's going to become of us if Peter doesn't come to his senses! Listen to this.

(He switches on the cassette player. Same music as before. Paul reacts in the same way, ending up in the corner, hands pressed to his ears. Magdalene switches the cassette player off.)

MAGDALENE: What's the matter with you?

PAUL: This music is not of this world. These are instructions in sound for getting to the eleventh planet. Which is obviously our friend's destination.

MAGDALENE: Give me a break.

PAUL: Why else would he steal a bonker's uniform?

MAGDALENE: All right, this is what we're going to do. We're going to behave – as the philosophers say – strategically. When Peter returns we'll show a positive attitude to his suit. We'll admire it. We'll ask him if he can procure something similar, of the same quality of design and material, for you and me.

PAUL: No thank you ...

MAGDALENE: For *strategic* reasons! To create an atmosphere of trust. So he'll tell us what he's up to.

PAUL: Oh I see...

MAGDALENE: And what's in it for us.

PAUL: You see, again you're trying –

MAGDALENE: Paul!... Who takes care of you?... The state? *(Paul shakes his head.)* Socially security? *(Paul shakes his head.)* The pope? *(Paul shakes his head.)* I take care of you, right? *(Paul nods.)* Then why don't you let me take care of you in such a way that you'll have something from it?

PAUL: Because I never do.

MAGDALENE: Have I ever eaten a leg of pork without giving you a piece?

PAUL: I've never seen you eating a leg of pork.

MAGDALENE: I'll rephrase my question. Do you think I wouldn't offer you a piece if a secret admirer sent me a leg of pork by mail?

PAUL: Most likely you'd leave me the bone.



THE ELEVENTH PLANET

MAGDALENE: I have to write that in my diary. So I'll never forget it.
(Reaches inside one of her bags.) After all I've done for you...

(Peter comes panting up the stairs.)

PETER: You'll never believe this... As soon as I step out in the street a vagrant walks up to me and says... Just a minute, I recorded the conversation, so you won't accuse me again that I invent things...

(He pulls a small voice recorder from his pocket and switches it on. We hear a recorded conversation between him and Magdalene.)

MAGDALENE: "Sir, mister bank manager, may God repay you for all the good things you've done ..."

PETER: "Ho do you know I'm a bank manager?"

MAGDALENE: "What else could such a well-dressed gentleman be, unless he is president of the board of an international corporation based in New York."

PETER: "Not far off, congratulations."

MAGDALENE: "I'm collecting donations for the victims of a civil war in Africa. You know, people without any homes, water, food..."

PETER: "Of course I know. Only too well. Here..." *(Switches recorder off, returns it to pocket.)* And I gave her ten bucks. Just like that. She wasn't bad-looking, either. If she took a bath and put on decent clothes she'd be O.K. for an evening.

PAUL: Why didn't you spray her with an air-freshener?

PETER: I have proved beyond doubt that clothes make a man.

PAUL: Did she remind you of anyone?

PETER: Who?

PAUL: The woman who crawled up your ass and into your pocket to relieve you of money.

PETER: Who should she remind me of?

PAUL: I don't know. A cousin? Former girlfriend?

PETER: No girlfriend of mine was a vagrant, who do you take me for?

MAGDALENE *(to Peter)*: Listen, comrade. Can I still call you Peter, or are you from now on mister Peter?

PETER: Magdalene...

MAGDALENE. Signor Pietro?

PAUL: Herr Petrus?



Evald Flisar: COLLECTED PLAYS, Volume 1

MAGDALENE: Monsieur Pierre?

PETER: Why should anything change among us...

MAGDALENE: I forgive myself for not recognizing you in this ludicrous outfit. But I won't forgive *you* for not recognizing *me*! (*Hands Peter a ten-dollar bill.*) I don't accept charity from vagrants pretending to be bonkers.

PETER (*doesn't know what to do with the note*): But... Magdalene... That wasn't you... This isn't my money... The one I gave the money was...

MAGDALENE: "Okay for an evening if she took a bath and put on some decent clothes." *How could that possibly be me?!*

PETER: Magdalene...

MAGDALENE: You don't even see a woman! You mysoginist! Fascist! Fetishist! All you see is clothes! What excites you most – silk? Cotton? Wool? You probably do rounds of shops and get yourself off while fondling different types of material! That's why you stole the suit. It gives you a hard-on, doesn't it? How terrible, to find out that you're a wanker, not a man ...

(Peter sits down. He takes out the voice recorder, rewinds the tape and listens once more to the recorded conversation.)

PAUL: To which I would add the following –

MAGDALENE (*pulls him away*): Shoosh! Let him be.

PAUL: Can't you see he's down? I can finish him off now.

MAGDALENE: He's finished. Can't you see? How would *you* feel if I told you what I told him?

PAUL: I want to do it myself...

MAGDALENE: Shut up and let him work out an attitude. That's very important. It's the attitude that sets man apart from animals. We should work one out as well.

PAUL: Attitude to what?

MAGDALENE. Peter's suit, you palsy-walsy.

PAUL: Don't call me that, because I'm neither.

MAGDALENE. No, you're an imbecile with badly disguised leanings towards persons of the same sex.

PAUL: My attitude is clear. Peter has to take the suit back where he got it, apologize to me twice, and steal a large leg of pork for you.

MAGDALENE: And hit you on the head with it, also twice, to kick-start at least three percent of your brain.



THE ELEVENTH PLANET

PAUL: My brain has never worked better.

MAGDALENE: Listen, Paul. If Peter wants to wear a suit, let him. If he wants to pretend that he's a gentleman, who cares? Have you forgotten why we ran away? Among other things, to get some fresh air – *(takes a deep breath, winces)* – although next to you that's impossible, when did you last take a bath?

PAUL *(turning away)*: None of your business.

MAGDALENE: No, you're right. After all I don't know myself when I last felt a bar of soap nudging my armpits. But we have to align our attitude with the manifesto we signed. Remember? Freedom for everyone. Because otherwise, Paul, it's over with our philosophy.

PAUL: It was Peter who betrayed our principles. It was he who –

(Peter rises, puts voice recorder back in pocket. Paul cringes, afraid Peter will hit him.)

PETER: I made a mistake...

PAUL *(relieved)*: Thank God for that.

PETER: But only because there were two dummies in the window. I could easily have removed the suit from the other one. I took this one because I didn't like the dummy that was wearing it. It had a silly grin on its face.

PAUL: Did you piss on it?

PETER: But when I passed the shop window a while ago the dummy already had a new suit on it. And in the new window-pane I saw something that really shocked me. This suit looked much more elegant on the dummy than it does on me. I've simply no idea what happened to the trousers.

MAGDALENE: That'll remain one of the great mysteries of this world.

PETER: Do you think so?

MAGDALENE: Are you sure you didn't take the jacket off one dummy and trousers off the other?

PETER: It's true it all happened in a great hurry. But before taking action I took a good look at the suit. I passed the shop window ten times in the week leading up to it.

MAGDALENE: What?! For one whole week you knew what you were going to do? Why didn't you tell us?

PETER: Magdalene... How could I surprise you, then?

MAGDALENE: We didn't ask you to surprise us.



Evald Flisar: COLLECTED PLAYS, Volume 1

PETER: I wanted to relish your disbelief. Your shock. And then, gradually, your realization that I'm really doing no more than trying to pull us out of our misery.

MAGDALENE: Oh, misery... Yes... What misery!... Paul, why don't we laugh at Peter, to make our misery at least bearable?

PAUL: That isn't going to change his mind.

MAGDALENE: But at least it'll let him know that his suit poses no danger for our little vagrant community.

PAUL: Oh I don't know –

MAGDALENE: *Will you laugh with me or won't you?!*

PAUL: Okay. But from the liver, not from the heart.

MAGDALENE: You can laugh through your ass if you want to, just laugh. O.K.? One, two, three...

(Magdalene and Paul start laughing at Peter. At first he is affronted, then resigned, and then, hesitantly, he starts laughing himself. In the end they're laughing with complete abandon. Peter's phone can be heard ringing through laughter. He pulls it from his pocket, they stop laughing. They look at each other. They join hands and perform a little jig. Peter grows serious, gestures to the other two to calm down, answers the phone.)

PETER: Can you say that again?... *(To Paul and Magdalene.)* Shhhhhhh!... Yes... Yes... *(Moves away a little, turning his back to Paul and Magdalene; lowers his voice.)*... I understand your instructions and I'm ready to... Yes... No, nothing will go wrong, it mustn't... The whole thing is too... large... Historical... When will I hear directly from them?... No, I'm not impatient, I'm just very honored to have been chosen... Of course I haven't told anybody... I swear... Hullo?... Hullo? *(Replaces phone, stares, lost in thoughts.)*

MAGDALENE: Interesting conversation?

PETER: Somebody is trying to find out who stole his cell phone... I pretend to be hard of hearing and slightly stupid... To confuse him.

MAGDALENE: And what is that historical thing with which nothing should go wrong?

PAUL: That would interest me, too.

MAGDALENE: Could it have anything to do with some plan of yours to get us all back behind the walls of that wonderful institution from where it took so much ingenuity to escape?





THE ELEVENTH PLANET

PAUL: I knew it... I knew it... (*Sits down and starts crying.*)

PETER: Pure paranoia.

MAGDALENE: Don't ever mention that word! I heard it often enough from those idiots who call themselves doctors. A blind and deaf cat would smell a rat in your doings. We, of course, your so-called friends, will be the last to know. Look what you did to Paul. Go and comfort him.

(*Peter moves towards Paul.*)

PAUL (*retreating*): Away! Away! There's a devil inside you!

PETER (*moves towards Magdalene*): Magdalene...

MAGDALENE (*retreating*): Careful, you might dirty your suit. Perhaps we should get used to some distance. No point in vagrants and gentlemen huddling together for comfort, is there, Paul?

PAUL: We signed an agreement! We signed a statement that we're turning our back on hypocrisy and devoting our lives to freedom without any demands or expectations.

MAGDALENE: Except an occasional leg of pork.

PAUL: Or a piece of chocolate.

MAGDALENE: Or a bottle of brandy. And a few other things.

PETER: And who suggested the words for our manifesto?

PAUL: Magdalene.

PETER: Not true. She only wrote them down in her diary. It was me. It was me who spent a week in the public library, putting the text together from quotes from a least fifty books. "All men are born free..."

PAUL: Oh, clever clever again!

MAGDALENE: Let him finish.

PETER: And who, come to think of it, rescued you from the claws of that vagrant mob in whose company you felt so unhappy? Who brought warmth and meaning into your lives? And gave them the *reason of ether*, if you'll pardon my French –

MAGDALENE: We'll pardon more than that, won't we, Paul? We'll pardon you if you take French leave, which might be the best thing to do, if we're to avoid a mutual slaughter with kitchen knives.

PAUL: Go! It's over! Oh God... (*Starts crying again.*)

MAGDALENE: Really, Monsieur Pierre, it's best if you go. Get a bit of fresh air.



The Eleventh Planet, Slovene National Theater, Maribor, Slovenia, 2005
Bojan Marosevic as Paul, Milos Battelino as Peter
Directed by Matija Logar



THE ELEVENTH PLANET

(Peter collects his things, including old clothes, throws everything in his sack, hoists the sack on his shoulder and walks to the stairs. He turns, his lips quivering.)

PETER: In case you want to know – I'm going to get you a leg of pork.
(He leaves.)

PAUL *(ventures out of his corner, looks at Magdalene)*: What now?

MAGDALENE: Tell me something. Suppose Peter brought another such suit for you, would you wear it?

PAUL: Are you mad?

MAGDALENE: The trousers would probably be too long for you, but we could shorten them and add the cut-off bits to Peter's trousers. Then, instead of two clowns, we would have two reasonable-looking gentlemen. And then we could go to a restaurant. And no one would turn us away.

PAUL: Are you testing me?

MAGDALENE: There're so many things we aren't able to do, Paul.
Living a vagrant's life isn't everything in the world.

PAUL: What else is there?

MAGDALENE: Well, taking a scented bath, for example. Lying in the tub for two solid hours. Secure in the knowledge that only a major earthquake can throw you out of it. And then, a nice man. Who has only just taken a bath himself. Bringing you a soft towel. Rubbing you slowly from head to toe. Every square inch of the skin. With special attention paid to certain parts...

PAUL: I know you haven't got *me* in mind, but do me a favor and tell me that this man isn't Peter. Because if it is Peter –

MAGDALENE *(barking)*: What? If it is him, what?

PAUL: Why are you women so unstable? You're sent swooning by a single pair of professionally pressed trousers. And already you're dreaming of all sorts of bonkers' comforts: silk sheets, freezer full of goodies, faked orgasms... But you never think that the man rubbing your skin with a towel would only do that after he had already rubbed two other women...

MAGDALENE: Listen, palsy-walsy!... You got me so far that I have to tell you something. I know I shouldn't, but you leave me no choice.

PAUL: Go ahead.

MAGDALENE: And if you start crying again, don't think I'll mother you.
We all have a limit to what we can take, and I've reached mine.



Evald Flisar: COLLECTED PLAYS, Volume 1

PAUL: Sure.

MAGDALENE: It's not true you became a vagrant because you "fell in love with the nobility of this way of life." Given half a chance, you'd become an even bigger bonker you were before they kicked you out of their ranks.

PAUL: They didn't.

MAGDALENE: I've read your file, Paul. You fell in love with a golden-haired boy, your pupil. His parents complained, you were dismissed, you became depressed, you ended up in a mental hospital...

(Paul produces a kitchen knife and threatens Magdalene. They stand, looking at each other.)

MAGDALENE: The knife is blunt, Paul. There wouldn't be enough blood. No blood, no fun. Ask Peter to steal a sharper knife for you. And then, if you want, we can repeat this scene.

(Paul puts the knife away, sits down and starts to cry.)

MAGDALENE: I warned you. No mothering.

PAUL *(through tears)*: What about you? You think I don't know what horrible things you did?

MAGDALENE: I was misunderstood.

PAUL: You fed your one-year old toddler with baby carrots which he couldn't digest and passed them out whole. You washed them and fed them to him again. And again.

MAGDALENE: Paul... don't you realize?... I discovered an ideal way of recycling baby food for poor families ...

PAUL: Magdalene, your baby died.

MAGDALENE: Everything dies. Everything we touch with our stiff, frozen fingers. We shouldn't touch anything, that may be the answer. No touching. *(Pause.)* Do you think Peter will ever come back?

PAUL: Why shouldn't he?

MAGDALENE: I was rude to him.

PAUL: Not rude enough, if you ask me.

MAGDALENE: To be fair to him, one telephone call is hardly sufficient evidence that he wants to betray us. He doesn't have anybody, except you and me. Besides, how could he live without someone to terrorize all the time?



THE ELEVENTH PLANET

PAUL: He would stop breathing.

MAGDALENE: Looking at it from all sides, we're still an ideal three-some. Peter does have some good points, you know.

PAUL: Oh really?

MAGDALENE: "Oh really?" Why are you so lukewarm?

PAUL: I'm not, Magdalene. I'm hungry. I haven't eaten for three days.

(Silence.)

MAGDALENE: Would you care for a leg of pork?

PAUL: Pork or lamb?

MAGDALENE: All right, lamb, it's got more antioxidants.

PAUL: With chips or rice?

MAGDALENE: Your choice.

PAUL: Just you and me, without Peter?

MAGDALENE: We'll leave the best piece for him.

PAUL *(gets to his feet, taps his tummy)*: Mmmmmnnnn... Saliva is flowing.

MAGDALENE: Not on the lamb, please, I prefer Worcester sauce. Will you get forks and knives?

PAUL: A feast at last!

(While he rummages in his bags, Magdalene unrolls what looks like a large map. As she spreads it out on the floor we can see a watercolor painting of a large leg of lamb, surrounded by three empty plates, a bowl of chips and a bowl of salad. Paul takes a knife from one bag and a fork from another.)

PAUL: That's all I have.

MAGDALENE: Don't worry, I'll eat with my hands.

PAUL *(sitting down in front of his "plate")*: Which part shall we leave for Peter?

MAGDALENE: The leftovers, Paul. I'm sure he won't mind.

PAUL: That'll be the bone. *(He prepares to "push" the fork into the "lamb.")*

MAGDALENE: Wait!... Have you forgotten our prayer?

PAUL: Of course not.

PAUL, MAGDALENE: "God forgive the bonkers for being what they are. For not having time to have time. For killing their families with expectations. For expecting too much of themselves. For working extra hours to pay off loans for houses that are too big, for cars



The Eleventh Planet, Slovene National Theater, Maribor, Slovenia, 2005
Barbara Jakopic Kraljevic as Magdalene, Bojan Marosevic as Paul
Directed by Matija Logar



THE ELEVENTH PLANET

that are too big, for appetites that are too big. For doing work which makes them unhappy. God forgive the bonkers for thinking it's the end of the world if they have nothing to worry about. God forgive all who don't know that the world doesn't belong to them but to us. Thank you for being so generous, God."

PAUL: Can I start now?

MAGDALENE: Sure. Will you cut a piece for me?

(Paul "cuts" a piece of "lamb" and puts it on Magdalene's "plate." Then he "cuts" a smaller "piece" for himself, puts it in his mouth and "chews" with an expression of bliss. Magdalene "chews" her "piece" without any pleasure.)

PAUL: One of the better ones. Expensive?

MAGDALENE: Don't even ask.

PAUL: Don't like it?

MAGDALENE: Something's missing.

PAUL: Salt? Pepper? Garlic? I know what. Cinnamon.

MAGDALENE: No, Paul. Taste. What's missing is the taste. You finish it.

PAUL: Wait a minute, I can't eat all of this, my stomach will burst. I'll have one more piece, the rest we can leave for Peter. Let him struggle with it. Because to be honest... it's a bit underdone. Almost raw. Can't help it, I suppose. There is lamb, and there's lamb.

(Magdalene's phone rings. Paul's hand freezes holding a fork halfway to his open mouth. Magdalene takes out the phone, turns away and speaks softly.)

MAGDALENE: Yes?... Yes, that's me... Magdalene, yes... Of course I understand... I'm sure you didn't choose me for being stupid... Nothing will go wrong... But I want to talk to them directly... When?... *When, when?*... I'm not impatient, I *am* honored, I haven't told anybody, and I won't, O.K.?... Hullo?...

(She puts the phone away and looks at Paul, who still hasn't moved.)

PAUL (*finally putting the "piece of lamb" in his mouth*): Aunt?

MAGDALENE: No. Uncle.



Evald Flisar: COLLECTED PLAYS, Volume 1

PAUL: I didn't know you had one. Rich?

MAGDALENE: Don't talk with a full mouth, it's not polite.

PAUL: Would your uncle by any chance be the same as Peter's uncle?

MAGDALENE: Why don't you finish your dinner and belch a few times, otherwise I'll throw the lot in the nearest rubbish bin.

(Paul wants to "cut" himself one more "piece," but is stopped by the phone. He puts down knife and fork, takes out the phone, turns away from Magdalene and speaks softly.)

PAUL: Hullo?... Yes, speaking... I understand the instructions generally, but not in detail... I need some clarification... And I want to know when this is going to happen... When are we leaving?... No, there's no one here, I'm alone... I swear... Of course I won't tell anybody... Hullo?... Hullo?

(Puts the phone away and turns to face Magdalene.)

MAGDALENE *(looking at him)*: Uncle?

PAUL *(slowly shaking his head)*: Aunt.

Blackout.



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Act Two

Same as before. Paul is asleep on one of his bags. Peter comes panting up the stairs.

PETER: Where is Magdalene? *(No response.)* Paul, where is Magdalene?... *(Prods Paul with his foot.)* Where has she gone, now that I've robbed the Lexington Avenue butcher?... Paul!

PAUL: To see a doctor.

PETER: Why? She's got *The Big Book of Symptoms*. On top of which she's a hypochondriac, she knows more about diseases than all the doctors put together.

PAUL: The head doctor.

PETER: She's got a headache?

PAUL: No, the doctor who treats hallucinations.

PETER: She ran away from those. Besides, she doesn't have any hallucinations.

PAUL: Then why does she think she's in danger of being abducted by aliens from outer space? Not only her, me as well.

PETER: You? That's a good one.

PAUL: It's you, isn't it? You want to get rid of us. How can you rejoin the bonkers as long as there two people on Earth who can testify that you spent a part of your life living rough? The only way to prevent that is to stick us into a rocket and send us to the eleventh planet.

PETER *(gaping)*: Wait a minute... *(Puts his sack on the floor and rummages inside it.)* When did you steal my book?

PAUL: You're the one who steals, Mr. Peter Magpie.

PETER *(grabs Paul by the throat and lifts him up in the air)*: Where is it?

PAUL: I'll tell you if you give me the leg of pork you stole for Magdalene.

PETER: Anything else?



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PAUL: And if you let me eat all of it without as much as a word to her.

PETER: You've just uttered your last words, because I'm going to squeeze your neck so hard that you'll turn into a toad. *(He begins to strangle Paul.)*

PAUL: Then you certainly won't see your book again.

(Peter keeps strangling Paul half-heartedly, as if unable to make up his mind. Finally he pushes him away. He reaches for Paul's bag and empties the contents on the floor.)

PAUL: I hope you'll put all that back.

PETER *(out of breath)*: Okay, Paul. Leg of pork for the book. But not a word about it to Magdalene.

PAUL: Show it to me. I want to see if it's worth it.

PETER *(unwrapping the pork)*: It's not the largest, I took it because it was hanging right by the door, I didn't want to fight my way through a cordon of housewives ... *(Shows the leg to Paul.)*

PAUL *(reaching out)*: Let me have it.

PETER *(withdrawing the leg)*: First give me the book.

PAUL: You've never been like this. What's mine is yours, you used to say. But since you stuffed your body into bonkers' rags you behave like one of them. *My book, my leg of pork.* You give me this, I give you that. Horrible, what's become of you.

PETER: Paul, it's not the largest leg of pork, but it's held by an experienced hand... Don't forget that additional narrowing of your brain parameters would place you among the super simpletons!

PAUL: You don't realize, do you, that from the moment we met I've been pretending to be a simpleton, so as not to enrage a vagrant who really does have narrowed parameters. And would die if others told him that he wasn't the boss.

PETER: It's obvious who the boss is –

(Magdalene walks up the stairs.)

MAGDALENE: More than obvious. I am the boss, and nice of you to accept that as natural.

(Peter and Paul stare at her. She is wearing a wig, made of long, blond, wavy hair. She is heavily made up. Her nails are polished



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red. As she opens her filthy overcoat she reveals a long evening dress. She is wearing shoes with stiletto heels.)

PETER: Magdalene?

PAUL: Careful. That's not her. She was run over by a bus, this is her ghost.

PETER: Magdalene...

PAUL: I'm not joking, Peter; ghosts return as caricatures of the living.

PETER (*hits him on the head*): Can't you see who is standing before us? The most charming, the most feminine creature you could imagine. Magdalene Goldilocks...

MAGDALENE: I'm glad it was worth the effort.

PAUL: Must've been worth more than that, how did you pay, in kind?

MAGDALENE: I paid, if you really want to know, my dear palsy-walsy, with this. (*Pulls out a credit card and holds it up in the air.*) American Express, will that do?

PAUL: Gold?!

MAGDALENE: You don't get golden hair with an ordinary one.

PAUL: You mean a cheap synthetic wig. Which changes you, and don't take that personally, from a relatively attractive vagrant into an ageing bonker slut.

PETER (*hits him on the head*): You're lucky I don't want to dirty my suit, otherwise I would – (*joins his hands together and cracks his finger joints*) – anyway, I'll think about what I'm going to do to you.

PAUL: Ask her where she got the credit card!

PETER: It's the owner's fault; he should've taken better care of it.

PAUL: You should've taken better care of Magdalene. A credit card is a bonker's ID. Not to mention the wig, shoes, and that dress – I mean, look at her! First you, and now her. (*Sits on the floor and starts to cry.*) Oh, the sooner I leave this Earth, the better.

PETER: Magdalene... What I promised I did. I checked out the best butcher shops in the area and brought you the tastiest smoked leg of pork I could find hanging within reach near the door. (*Starts to unwrap the leg.*)

MAGDALENE (*stopping him with a gesture*): Do you really expect me, dressed as I am for caviare and champagne, to sink my teeth into something as common as a leg of pork?

PETER: It's your favorite. You've been dreaming about one for as long as I know you.

MAGDALENE: I've been dreaming about many things. Now that they've come true the leg of pork has slipped to the bottom of the list.



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PETER: Do you want me to take it back?

MAGDALENE: Why don't you and Paul eat it? Aren't you hungry? Sink your teeth into it like two Neanderthals that you are, while I enjoy the spectacle.

(She produces a gold-plated lighter and with an elegant slow gesture lights a long, thin cigar. Peter and Paul watch her in shocked silence.)

MAGDALENE: Don't tell me you've never seen a woman smoke.

PETER: Not a cigar.

PAUL: I'm speechless.

PETER: Even I am lost for words.

MAGDALENE: Good! That means I can speak for at least five seconds without the fear of being interrupted.

PETER: Go ahead.

MAGDALENE: Don't worry, I won't waste this rare opportunity on women's twaddle. I'll speak about men's things. The Universe. Morals. The meaning of life. And metachemistry –

PETER: Metaphysics.

MAGDALENE: So what? I got bad marks for both. But don't worry, I'll narrow my exposition down to what concerns us, the three of us. Meaning our future.

PAUL: Oh no...

MAGDALENE: Or: does it make any sense for us to carry on like this?

PAUL: I knew it... I knew it...

PETER: Magdalene, shouldn't we rather –

MAGDALENE: As far as I'm concerned the life of a vagrant is miserable. Yes, we *have* raised it to the status of some kind of religion, but only so we could more easily bear hunger, cold and humiliations we're dished out in our contacts with the bonkers.

PETER: Magdalene...

MAGDALENE: Yes, we *have* tried to convince each other that we're exceptional, but secretly every one has been desperate for a chance to escape this aimlessness. And when opportunity failed to present itself, Peter decided to take unilateral action.

PETER: Magdalene...

MAGDALENE: Bravo, Peter! Bravo again. You see, Peter knows that in the world of bonkers it's far more important what impression you make than what you do. That's why he stole their uniform. So he



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could sneak back into their world without running the risk of being turned away at the door. Unfortunately he forgot the most essential part of the uniform. The piece of cloth that makes bonker a bonker in the eyes of other bonkers.

(She pulls a garish tie from under her coat and throws it to Peter, who catches it.)

PETER: Magdalene, you've completely misunderstood my intentions.

MAGDALENE: Have I?

PETER: If you want I'll get out of this suit right now.

MAGDALENE: Thank you, the sight of a naked man, especially a large one like you, has never made much of an impression on me. My natural reflex is to flee, but with these shoes down those stairs, that would be suicide.

PAUL *(gets up and reaches for his bag)*: I'm leaving.

MAGDALENE: Why?

PAUL: Because I can see what's going on.

MAGDALENE: And what would that be?

PAUL: I knew it was going to happen, it's been announcing itself since we met. But I never thought it would take such a pitiful form.

PETER: Paul, now I'm really going to strangle you, with this tie.

MAGDALENE: No! You'll need the tie for something else. Why do you think I stole it for you? Paul, if you leave without telling me what you're talking about I'll turn my back on you.

PAUL: You've already turned your backs on me, both of you, when you decided not to tell me about your plans.

MAGDALENE: Paul –

PETER *(pushing Magdalene aside and grabbing Paul by the throat)*: Hopla! *(Turns him towards Magdalene.)* And now tell Magdalene what she wants to hear. Eins, zwei, drei, vier!

PAUL *(to Magdalene)*: How can you fall in love with such a ruffian? Have you no taste at all? *(To Peter.)* And you, what do you really know about her? Suppose she has sawn to pieces two former husbands? *(Peter pushes Paul away from himself.)* And if you think I'll be your best man –

MAGDALENE: Listen, palsy-walsy, now I really have enough of you.

PAUL: That's why I'm leaving.

MAGDALENE: You have nowhere to go. You'll start crying halfway down the stairs.



The Eleventh Planet, Slovenian Chamber Theater, Ljubljana, Slovenia, 2000
Iztok Jereb as Peter, Gregor Cusin as Paul
Directed by Ales Novak





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PAUL: No I won't.

MAGDALENE: Other vagrants don't like you. You can be as heavy as twenty tons of rancid butter. And as palatable. Only Peter and I are willing to share with you the milk of human kindness, no one else. So stop sulking.

PAUL: But if you become man and wife I cease to exist.

MAGDALENE: Paul!... If I wanted to marry, I would marry both of you! For the sake of peace among us. Besides, it's good to have two, in case one conks ut. I've no doubt you'd both conk out at the same time. Two days after the wedding. In all respects.

PETER: Oh, thank you...

MAGDALENE: Paul, let me explain *why* I'm standing before you dressed up as a lady. A while ago, while wondering where to find a public bathroom from which I wouldn't be driven by a mop-wielding hag, it suddenly struck me that what Peter did was really quite brave.

PAUL: I have no words.

MAGDALENE: They don't like us on the buses! We can't enter restaurants! We can't even go to church without half the congregation quietly slipping away!

PAUL: If you can't beat them, join them, is that it?

MAGDALENE: Oh I'm so tired of your stubbornness! And your debility!

PETER: Why're you wasting your time with him?

MAGDALENE (*exploding*): Why can't a woman once in her lifetime finish saying something without being interrupted by some anti-feminist, profascist, machistic creature equipped with a flaccid pendulum? I'm aching all over from resisting the urge to push both of you down the stairs with a single blow. Honestly. Everything's aching, heart, liver, spleen. And the gall bladder!

PAUL: Read *The Big Book of Symptoms*.

MAGDALENE: You see! You said that in a tone suggesting that only I read that book. While in fact it is you who reads it most of the time.

PETER: Magdalene...

MAGDALENE: Shut up and wait your turn!... Paul, listen...

PAUL: You're right.

MAGDALENE (*brief pause*): What?

PAUL: What I said earlier... was because... I was afraid. I was afraid that your getting married means the beginning of the end for us, and I'll have to live alone.

MAGDALENE: Paul!... You won't.



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PAUL: Of course I will! You'll be visiting posh restaurants and eat off silver plates, and I'll have to wait for your left-overs to be thrown out with the trash before I can pounce on them. Unless they'll serve them to other guests, which is what posh places usually do.

MAGDALENE: Paul...

PAUL: You'll be going to bathrooms with scented toilet paper, and I will crap behind the bushes on the banks of the river.

MAGDALENE: None of that's true! Why are you making me shout at you?

(Peter hits Paul over the head with the leg of pork. Paul collapses and lies still.)

MAGDALENE: Jesus Mary! You've killed him. With a leg of pork.

PETER: It's your fault. If you'd eaten it this wouldn't have happened. You wanted caviar, you got a corpse.

MAGDALENE *(kneeling beside Paul, shaking him)*: Paul, don't die on me, that just wouldn't be fair. I'd never forgive you, do you hear me? I would plant nettles on your grave. Paul! Wake up.

PETER: Let him be. We were meant to stay alone anyway. There is no room for the likes of him. Only married couples are considered for settlement.

MAGDALENE: Paul ...

PETER *(his voice rising to rage)*: Normal, well-meaning, well-behaved, reasonable, kind, and courteous couples!

MAGDALENE *(ignoring Peter)*: Paul, if you do me a favor and die some other time I promise not to shout at you ever again. And I'll never call you palsy-walsy anymore... *(Slaps Paul's cheeks.)* Paul... Paul baby... *(Turning to Peter.)* How could you?

PETER *(shrugs unhappily)*: Bloody leg of pork, I should never have stolen it! *(Throws the leg on the floor.)* I almost knew it was going to bring us bad luck.

MAGDALENE: Well you should've thought about that before! Now you'll go to prison for twenty years, Paul six feet below, and I... I'll go back among those walls. At least I'll have regular meals. *(Leans over Paul.)* Paul, can you hear me, or are you already in hell?

(A cell phone rings. Peter and Magdalene exchange glances. Paul sits up, pulls the phone from his pocket, answers the call.)



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PAUL: Yes, this is he... No no, alone, completely alone... Never more so... I have no relatives... No friends either... No one will miss me... No, I won't miss anyone... I can leave today... The sooner the better... Where?... O.K., I'll be there... But how will I know... I see... You will know me... That's all right... *(He replaces the phone, gets to his feet, picks up his bag, looks at Magdalene.)* You've always been good. *(He sets off.)*

PETER *(gently)*: Paul...

(Paul turns, looks at Peter, then walks to the stairs, disappears. Silence.)

MAGDALENE: Well, you've finally done it.

PETER: Finally, Magdalene, I've ruined everything. And only because of my desire to protect a damsel in distress.

MAGDALENE: Listen, my shining knight with a leg of pork, if after all this you want to suck me empty of the milk of human kindness –

PETER: Magdalene, I've been waiting for that ever since I first met you!

MAGDALENE *(after pause and a deep sigh)*: Don't you feel that lately we've been sort of talking a little past each other?

PETER: On the contrary. More and more we speak the same language. More and more you understand what to me has been clear for some time.

MAGDALENE: And that is?

PETER: When you turned up in this outfit of yours, the queen of vagrants if ever there was one – mmmmmh! – it became clear to me that your answer to my question is “yes.”

MAGDALENE: What question?

PETER: The question I popped by turning up in this suit. *(Magdalene shrugs.)* Magdalene, written all over your dress in crimson ink is one word. And this word in any language means only one thing. Yes, yes, yes.

MAGDALENE: I wish I knew what you're talking about.

PETER: I know that women like to take time in situations like this, but Magdalene!... they're waiting for us!

MAGDALENE: Who?

PETER: At the registry office. I've hired two witnesses, vagrants, true, but I asked them to take a bath and get some decent rags from the charity. We have to hurry, you know what vagrants are like.



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MAGDALENE: I do, Peter. Some are stupid, others unreliable, some are aggressive, others have fixed ideas. It is the last type I'm most afraid of.

PETER: Me too. I strictly avoid vagrants with fixed ideas. I never do business with them.

MAGDALENE: Me neither.

PETER: You can usually tell from a distance if a vagrant has a fixed idea. Then it's better to pass by as if he wasn't there.

MAGDALENE: Or, failing that, confront him with an insolent question.

PETER: Insolent, impertinent, impudent.

MAGDALENE: You want me to go with you to the registry office? I will – if you tell me who's getting married.

PETER: Magdalene... You and I!

MAGDALENE: You and I...

PETER: Who else has a right to get married in this treacherous world?

MAGDALENE: How come I know nothing about it?

PETER: Magdalene... You've had your fun, we must go.

MAGDALENE: When I came back you called me the most feminine, the most charming creature. Why?

PETER (*surprised by her aggressive tone*): Because it's true.

MAGDALENE (*opening her filthy coat*): You find me feminine in this dress?

PETER: I find you... divine!

MAGDALENE (*closes her coat and removes her wig, exposing matted unwashed hair*): And now?

PETER: Magdalene...

MAGDALENE: Still divine?

PETER: Perhaps not the sight, but your soul, shining brightly through your eyes, and your gestures, your words...

MAGDALENE: But not the sight.

PETER: Also. Only a little... less.

MAGDALENE: How much less?

PETER: A little. All right, quite a bit. O.K., I'll say what you want to hear: without the wig and without that dress I find you neither feminine nor divine. Satisfied?

MAGDALENE: Very.

PETER: I only said that to make you happy. I always try to say what you want to hear. (*Magdalene takes off her coat, steps out of her shoes, starts to pull off her dress.*) Magdalene, we can attend to that later, now there is no time.

MAGDALENE: That's why I'm taking everything off. So that shoes, dress, wig and you can rush off to the registry office. Then you can



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go on a honeymoon and live happily ever after. And that'll be end of vagrancy for you. Forever.

PETER: I'd like this kind of life to be over for both of us. I'd like you to go away with me.

MAGDALENE: Where?

PETER: Far. Infinitely far. Everything's ready. Only ...

MAGDALENE: Only what? (*Throws him her dress, he catches it.*)

PETER: I'm afraid you won't believe me.

MAGDALENE (*putting on her old skirt and pullover*): Why not? Because it exceeds the modest limits of what a generous person would call imagination?

PETER: Magdalene... (*Pause.*) I'd like us to blast off into space together.

MAGLADENE (*after pause*): By what means? Sling or catapult?

PETER: Why do you think I've organised the thing at the registry office? They're waiting for us. Put this back on (*He throws her the dress, which lands on the floor.*), and your golden hair, and let's go.

MAGDALENE: Into space.

(*She pulls a bottle of brandy from her bag and takes a swig. Sits down on her bag, determined to stay put.*)

PETER: Can you imagine how many people dream about such an opportunity?

MAGDALENE: At least three.

PETER: Three million, more likely. There must be at least three thousand serious candidates.

MAGDALENE: Doesn't look good for us.

PETER: It does, because they've changed the quota and introduced stricter conditions.

MAGDALENE: How do you know?

PETER: I know because... I have one such experience behind me.

MAGDALENE: You blasted yourself into space and were sent back because you didn't meet the conditions?

PETER: When I was young I wanted to emigrate to Australia. I was told they accepted only married couples. In a hurry I tried to form a few relationships, but nothing worked out, so I'm now without Australian citizenship. But I learned my lesson. I decided that the next such opportunity would not find me unprepared. There's still time, Magdalene.



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MAGDALENE (*with a sigh*): Oh Peter... dear Peter... If I think that in my own way I actually liked you...

PETER (*glowing*): Really?

MAGDALENE: When I was little my parents took me to a circus. Ever since then clowns have been my favorite people. (*Peter, shocked, turns away.*) And today, you won't believe it, today I actually realized that I wouldn't dare travel into space alone. That we could, after all, go together, all three of us. As a charity team. As bearers of the milk of human kindness. For you I stole, sorry, procured a tie so you would make a better impression. Myself, as you saw, I turned into a blonde, in case gentlemen prefer blondes throughout the universe. For Paul I wanted to buy a leather outfit, very camp, you know what I mean, tight trousers and that, and with platform shoes to make him taller. But in the shop they told me that the credit card, which I found lying on the pavement, ran out a year ago. It also has a funny name on it, John something or other.

PETER: Magdalene! ... You know about ... You *know*?

MAGDALENE: About the eleventh planet?

PETER: Was it you who...?

MAGDALENE: Yes, Peter, I stole your book. If you insist on calling that stealing. Because here... (*She pulls a dog-eared notebook from her bag, turns a few pages.*) ... here I find the following rule: "Nothing is mine, everything's ours." (*Puts the notebook back in the bag.*)

PETER: Yes, we... haven't always kept to our rules.

MAGDALENE: Peter, you negotiated with them behind my back!

PETER: On behalf of all three of us, Magdalene!

MAGDALENE: Bullshit! But that's O.K. because... I did the same. And so did Paul.

PETER: He's already been punished. Now it's our turn to be hit on the head with the leg of pork. Then everything should be all right.

MAGDALENE: The person you nearly killed with the leg of pork is now negotiating with them for a flight to the eleventh planet! Saying God knows what terrible things about us. Which means that our milk of human kindness will stay on this Earth.

PETER: Surely you don't think they'll accept him.

MAGDALENE: Why not? Do you know what they want?

PETER: It's all in the book you stole.

MAGDALENE (*rummaging inside her bag*): I read it carefully from beginning to end... (*Pulls out a book.*) No, this is *The Big Book of*



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Symptoms. (Puts the book on the floor and reaches inside the bag for another try.) It's gone!

(Paul walks up the stairs.)

PAUL: Not any more.

(He hands Magdalene the book she's been looking for. He drops the bag on the floor and sits on it. Silence.)

MAGDALENE: Well? *(Paul looks at her.)* Have you forgotten how we greet one another when we haven't seen each other for a while?

PAUL: I don't care for our stupid rituals any more.

MAGDALENE *(shocked)*: Oh... You don't?

PAUL: No, I don't.

MAGDALENE *(after a pause)*: Nice of you to come back, anyway. Isn't it, Peter? Isn't it nice of Paul to come back?

PETER: Are you hungry, Paul? As it happens we have a nice leg of pork.

PAUL: Why don't you hit yourself on the head with it?

MAGDALENE: Maybe you'd prefer some brandy. *(Offers him the bottle.)*
Come on. It might help to untie your tongue.

PAUL *(pushing the bottle away)*: General assembly.

MAGDALENE: What?

PAUL *(rises)*: We must have a general assembly. By the statute it can be demanded by a third of the membership.

MAGDALENE *(looks at Peter)*: That's true.

PETER: Yes, but considering that I'm twice the size of Paul, he represents, by body weight, only twenty percent of the membership.

MAGDALENE *(raising her hand)*: I second the motion of member Paul for a general meeting. That's two-thirds for, any objections by the remaining third?

PETER: Magdalene, this is no time for formalities, they're waiting for us!

MAGDALENE: Paul, present the agenda.

PAUL: Calling to account of member Peter.

PETER: Regarding what?

PAUL: The situation we're in.

PETER: Motion denied. Alternative motion: report by member Paul about secret deals with representatives of alien creatures from space.

MAGDALENE: I second the motion. Paul?



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PAUL: I'm innocent. I went there because they asked me to. I waited in front of the monument in the square, as instructed, but no space-craft landed, and no little green men approached.

PETER: They're invisible. They came, took one look at you and left, saying: if *this* fellow believes we'll take him to the eleventh planet, he must have been hit by two falling trees, not one.

PAUL: They called me. On the phone.

MAGDALENE (*brief pause*): Really?

PAUL: Yeah. They asked me why I was alone.

PETER: Who else should've been there?

PAUL: They said they were negotiating with three. They said it was off until the other two showed up as well.

PETER: No one ever asked *me* to wait in front of the monument.

MAGDALENE: Nor me, either.

PAUL: They said we should work it out among ourselves.

(*Silence.*)

MAGDALENE: Well, let's do it, then. What do you think, Peter? Are we capable of putting our cards on the table?

PETER: I don't know, are you?

MAGDALENE: Peter, you stole the book. You're the one they first got in touch with. You explain what this is about.

PETER: How would I know? Yes, I did steal, I mean procure the book, but I did it for you, for your birthday, which you're bound to have sooner or later. All right, I read parts of it, why not, I like science fiction. But then I saw it was written by real scientists. Still, that doesn't mean anything, they, too, tell mostly tales. But I began to read the book in a different way. Suddenly the eleventh planet became... well, it became... the kind of place where I'd like to be. (*He stares in the air, enraptured.*)

MAGDALENE: Carry on.

PETER: Those poor people, I thought. Poor people, who every five thousand years make such a mess of their lives that they have to send an expedition to Earth, thousands of light years away, to fetch a rejuvenating drop of the milk of human kindness. And then... something moved inside me ...

MAGDALENE: You were overwhelmed by a surge of your noble nature.



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PETER: How did you guess? I said to myself: there is so much goodness inside me that I simply must give some of it to those who haven't got any. I felt really sorry for the inhabitants of the unfortunate planet...

MAGDALENE: Female inhabitants, too, no doubt.

PETER: Of course.

MAGDALENE (*gets to her feet and starts hitting him with the wig*): I knew it! All you think about since you read that book is how you're going to impregnate those females with the milk of your kindness! Don't wave nobility in front of me, buster, because it doesn't reach further than the nearest skirt!

PAUL: You don't know what women wear on that planet, they may wear trousers.

PETER: Thank you, Paul. As for you, Magdalene, you're forgetting that we're expected at the registry office. I repeat: only married couples stand a chance of being flown to the eleventh planet.

PAUL: Why? (*Peter and Magdalene look at him.*) Why do you want to fly to a place thousands of light years away, when you can impregnate each other here? On the eleventh planet you will have to do that with others. Or do you think they'll fly you to the other end of the universe for a honeymoon?

MAGDALENE: You don't know what you're talking about.

PAUL: I do. We're dreaming about leaving this world. When I received their first call I was flattered. Why deny it? And so were you. We would like to leave this world because it's been taken over by bonkers, on account of which we became vagrants. Isn't it time to define what a bonker is?

PETER: We have no time for definitions, petitions and other such metaphysics. The longer we wait, the less chance we have to be taken on board. And if we have to go together –

PAUL: We can't. Not all three of us.

PETER: Why not?

PAUL: Because there is a bonker among us, and bonkers they do not take.

PETER: You know what... Sooner or later I'll have to take your head apart to see which particular screw is missing.

PAUL: What is a bonker? Someone who threatens. Who cheats. Who blackmails. Who promises, but doesn't deliver. Whatever he finds, he keeps. He makes the slightest information part of his capital. Bonker talks about time, but this is time as a distance between two events.



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MAGDALENE: Wait a minute... I've heard that before.

(She reaches inside her bag and pulls out the notebook.)

PAUL: What drives a bonker? Pursuit of goals. Without goals his life has no meaning. That's why he keeps inventing new ones –

MAGDALENE: I've got it! *(Reads from the notebook.)* "...keeps inventing new ones, using his watch to measure the distance that separates him from them."

(Paul brushes past Peter and ends up with a silver-chain pocket watch in his hand.)

PETER *(snatching it back)*: Hey!... that watch has nothing to do with ... I stole it so we wouldn't miss the take-off...

PAUL: His favorite phrases are: "I'm in a hurry..."

MAGDALENE *(reading)*: "I have no time..."

PAUL: "Time is money."

PETER: Nothing to do with me.

PAUL: For a bonker, future is a place. Some exotic land he is going to reach one day.

MAGDALENE: Some exotic, eleventh planet.

PAUL: He's joined the vagrants to embrace the moment and make it his goal.

MAGDALENE: In his manifesto he wrote *(Reads from the notebook.)*, "...stretch out in the grass and look at the clouds".

PAUL: "Don't seek. The goal is where you are."

MAGDALENE: But that's not a language an ex-bonker could understand. So he translates everything back into the bonker language.

PAUL: And when the translation is finished, the manifesto's been turned on its head. Seek, doubt, analyze, measure time.

MAGDALENE: Strike deals behind your friends' backs.

PAUL: Let them down.

MAGDALENE: Take care of number one, and to hell with everyone else.

(They have pushed Peter up against a wall. They move away and sit down. Peter sits down on a chair.)

PETER: What are you trying to do?





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MAGDALENE: I don't know. Do you know, Paul, what we're trying to do?

(Paul shrugs.)

PETER: Besides, didn't they they want all of us? You see, you can't get rid of me.

MAGDALENE: Who's trying to get rid of you? Don't try to steal my paranoia, the only thing that's truly mine.

PAUL: None of us will go.

PETER: But you said that they said –

PAUL: Who? Did they introduce themselves? Not to me. All I ever got was strange questions. Are you alone? Does anyone know you're talking to us? We need your help. You've been singled out for an important task. Can you travel? Will anyone miss you?

PETER: That's what they kept asking me.

MAGDALENE: And me.

PAUL: Did they ever mention the eleventh planet?

(Pause. Peter and Magdalene exchange glances.)

PETER: That's not important.

MAGDALENE: Of course it is! Suppose they're the IRS, trying to recover ten years of unpaid taxes? Or give us reference numbers.

PAUL: Could be even worse.

MAGDALENE: Did you hear that? Paul says it could be even worse. *(To Paul.)* What could be worse than the IRS?

PAUL: It could be the owners of our cell phones, trying to lure us into a trap. And then...

MAGDALENE: Good-bye, ericsson! And then we can only write to each other. Long love letters. Dear Peter, dear Paul, let's meet in two months' time in the attic where we forgot to eat a stolen leg of pork...

(She reaches for the leg, still lying wrapped in newspaper on the floor. Peter's phone rings. They freeze. Peter slowly pulls the phone from his pocket, checks the calling number, carefully puts the phone to his ear.)

PETER: "This number is not available at the moment, please try later."

MAGDALENE: Was it them?

PETER: I don't know. The number's different every time.



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(Magdalene's phone rings. She pulls it from under her coat and checks the number.)

MAGDALENE: 0 666 00 666.

PETER: Mine was 0 777 00 777. *(Reaches out, Magdalene hands him her phone, Peter puts it to his ear.)* "This number is not available at the moment, please try later." *(Returns phone to Magdalene.)* This will confuse them.

(Paul's phone rings. He checks the number. Says nothing.)

MAGDALENE: Well?

PETER: I bet it is 0 888 00 888.

(Paul shakes his head. Magdalene wrests the phone from his hand and checks the number.)

PETER: Well?

MAGDALENE: You won't believe it. *(Hands him the phone.)*

PETER: 11 11 11. Three times eleven? *(Presses "yes" button and answers.)* "This number is not available at the moment, please try later." *(Hands phone to Paul.)*

PAUL *(refuses to take it)*: You keep it. If you hadn't stolen these gadgets we would live happily without a worry under the sun. Now we're dreaming about some mysterious planet on which the bonkers have multiplied to such an extent that only our milk of human kindness can save them.

PETER: Don't you like being important?

PAUL: What about this planet? Why don't we try to renew humanity, if fate has chosen us for a historical task? Why travel to the end of the universe to save a derailed society of creatures completely unknown to us?

MAGDALENE: Peter? Answer the man.

PAUL: We don't even know what they look like. Suppose they resemble large cockroaches?

PETER: It says in the book they're humanoid. *(Reaches for the book, opens it, finds the right passage, reads.)* "A mixture of Australopithecus and Neanderthal. Rather hairy, but less so than apes.



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Every five thousand years they grow such fangs that they cut each other's jugulars from a distance of twenty yards."

MAGDALENE (*pulls the book from his hands*): Where does that say? I missed that.

PAUL: *The Big Book of Symptoms* is an appropriate book for us.

MAGDALENE (*returning the book to Peter*): I'm inclined to agree with that.

PETER: As for me, I'm ashamed to be a member of the club of which the other two members are you.

PAUL: Don't worry, the feeling is mutual.

MAGDALENE: What concerns me, from now on concerns neither of you. I'm off to a nunnery.

PETER (*angrily*): Listen! ... Once in a lifetime we get an opportunity to rise above –

MAGDALENE: Sorry, Peter. If the inhabitants of this planet are anything like it says in the book I'd rather have it off with an orangutan in the Zoo. It's much closer, only twenty minutes on foot.

PETER: Why these low spirits all of a sudden?

MAGDALENE: You go. Paul and I will accompany you to the spacecraft and wave to you until you vanish among the stars. You wanted to go on your own in any case.

PETER: On the contrary. I was the one who insisted that we should all go. That was my condition.

MAGDALENE: Trah lah lah lah.

PAUL: Blah blah blah blah.

PETER: I even stole music for you, so you could get into the spirit of the place. (*Reaches in his bag.*) I know you won't believe this, but the piece is called *The Eleventh Planet*.

(*Finds the cassette, inserts it in the player, presses the button. Paul reacts in the same way as before. He ends up crouching in the corner, with fingers in his ears. Magdalene turns the music off.*)

MAGDALENE: Do they have beaches on this planet?

PETER: Endless, Magdalene. Endless sandy beaches. And palms, and coconuts. And other tropical fruits, falling straight into your mouth. Peeled.

MAGDALENE: Would they have a leg of pork?

PETER: We have one here, but you're not interested.



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MAGDALENE: I would, Peter, don't think I wouldn't. Only with each bite I would feel as if I were hitting Paul on the head. Take this one back and bring me another.

PETER: Do you think it's wrong?

MAGDALENE: What, stealing a leg of pork?

PETER: No, dreaming about leaving this world. About, you know, disappearing from this... from this...

MAGDALENE: I'm sure it isn't.

(Paul types a number into his cell phone. He puts the phone to his ear and listens. He replaces the phone in his pocket. Peter and Magdalene stare at him, waiting.)

PAUL: "The number is not available at the moment, please try later."

PETER: Who did you call?

PAUL: 11 11 11.

PETER: Why?

PAUL: To ask them when we're leaving.

PETER: Now I see that you're not only a simpleton in a category all your own, but the king of simpletons of all time!

PAUL: I agree.

PETER (*astonished*): You agree?

PAUL: Entirely.

PETER: Bullshit. You never agreed when I precisely and without beating about the bush summed up the parameters of your mental ability.

PAUL: Now I do. Completely.

MAGDALENE (*to Peter*): You know what?... I never thought you were such a coward.

PETER: Me?

MAGDALENE: You're attacking a colleague who can't defend himself except by pulling a knife. Which he can't do because the knife is completely blunt. Isn't it time you procured him a better one?

PETER: Of course. I procure cell phones, diaries, pens, books, socks, sausages, even an occasional leg of pork nobody takes a blind bit of notice of. But it doesn't occur to me to get Paul a knife sharp enough to slide effortlessly into my back. How selfish of me. Especially as Paul and I have so much in common.

MAGDALENE: What could you possibly have in common?



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PETER: You, dear Magdalene. The woman who needs no knife to get at our blood, but massages our prostate glands as innocently and by-the-way as if watering geraniums.

(Paul rises and picks up his bag.)

MAGDALENE: Where're you going?

PAUL: Paul, *tragische, ganz verlorene* exception among vagrants of genius, is off anywhere. And when he gets anywhere he will stay anywhere and do anything.

MAGDALENE: You can't just leave, Paul.

PAUL: I'll write. For Christmas.

PETER: No need, thank you.

PAUL *(shrugging)*: Even better.

(Paul leaves.)

MAGDALENE *(after him)*: Paul... If, during your forays into the local trash containers, you happen to come across a reasonably preserved leg of pork, think of me... Paul!... *(But Paul has already left.)* Well, you've done it at last. Just you and me now.

PETER: And we have just enough time... *(Reaches in his pocket.)* ...he stole my watch, scumbag! I'll kill him!

MAGDALENE: You've done that already. You've killed both of us.

PETER *(slowly approaches)*: Magdalene... what are you saying?

MAGDALENE: You've reported me. They're going to take me back.

PETER: No, Magdalene, I didn't. I swear.

MAGDALENE: Oh it doesn't matter.

PETER: I'd never do that. You know I wouldn't. But then ... I, too, will have to return. And Paul. All three of us.

MAGDALENE: I'm so tired. *(She flops on the chair.)*

PETER: Me too, Magdalene. Me, too.

MAGDALENE: Still, we have proved something by running away, haven't we?

PETER: Oh yes. The trouble is I don't know what. And to whom.

MAGDALENE: Remember that young psychiatrist with a shaven head? The one we called John Malkowich? *(Peter nods.)* He gave me that book. *The Healing Power of Illness*. And you know what he said? *(Peter shakes his head.)* He said that when I wasn't sure why all



The Eleventh Planet, Slovene National Theater, Maribor, Slovenia, 2005
Barbara Jakopic Kraljevic as Magdalene, Milos Battelino as Peter
Directed by Matija Logar



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these whys, and why because always hides another because, I should read the story on page eleven. That's what he said. On page eleven. (*Hands the book to Peter.*)

PETER (*finds page eleven, reads*): "In an underground cave there lived an ascetic, meditating. A little mouse ran up and began to gnaw at his sandals. "Get lost," the ascetic shouted, "can't you see I'm trying to achieve unity with God?" "I'm hungry," the mouse replied. "And how can you hope to achieve unity with God, if you can't achieve one with me?"

MAGDALENE: Do you understand this story?

PETER: I think so.

MAGDALENE (*sits down next to Peter*): Tell me. Because I don't. I keep reading, and reading, and reading it, but the more I read it the less I know what it means.

PETER: I understand it in my own way, of course.

MAGDALENE: That's the right way.

PETER: Like this world. And life. Some people say I'm ill, but I like my way of looking at things. I must do, otherwise I wouldn't hang on to it, would I? Who in that building has been put in a straight jacket more often than I? Nobody. That's how it'll remain. I'll never give in.

MAGDALENE: Story, Peter. What does it mean?

PETER: Maybe that... we should first of all love little things in the world. Little, hungry, unhappy things. And only then big, important ones. And I'm trying to live like that. All my life I've been trying. (*Pause.*) There is still time, Magdalene.

MAGDALENE (*gently*): Thank you, Peter. The registry office must be closed by now. But I'm sure there'll be another chance.

PETER: Another chance to run away?

MAGDALENE: That, too. Now that we have experience. But you can do something else for me, if you want to make me happy. You can blast off into space with me and accompany me to the eleventh planet.

PETER: Magdalene... You mean that?

MAGDALENE: Never more.

(*She unrolls the poster with the painting of plates, cutlery and a leg of lamb. She spreads it out on the floor.*)

PETER: Magdalene, the butcher ran after me with a knife in his hand, and you want to...



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MAGDALENE: Isn't it strange? I've dreamed about a leg of pork for so long that now there is one I can't even look at it. *(She turns the poster upside down, with the blank side up. She reaches in her bag and fishes out three color markers.)* The things you stole for me! In fact you are... in your special way... a hero, aren't you? *(She leans over and kisses him on the cheek.)*

PETER: Magdalene...

MAGDALENE: We can't wait any more time. Here... *(Hands him a marker.)*... You draw the planet, with all the beaches you told me about, and I'm going to draw the rocket. On which side would you prefer to sit, left or right?

PETER: You choose.

MAGDALENE: You know what? The rocket will have only one seat. So I'll be forced to sit in your lap. And the planet should have only one beach. And only two people will be allowed to sunbathe there.

PETER: Peter and Magdalene.

(They start drawing.)

MAGDALENE: Suppose we draw one more seat, a tiny, little seat, just in case our palsy-walsy comes back?

PETER: He won't come back.

PAUL *(who's just come up the stairs, approaches from behind)*: He has come back. *(Throws his bag on the floor and produces the kitchen knife.)* I went back to the square to see if anyone had turned up. They could've been delayed, one never knows. But as I rounded the corner I said to myself: screw the eleventh planet. I'll go back and show that guy how the king of simpletons really behaves! I'll go back and stab him with a blunt knife. Like this! *(Makes a stabbing gesture behind Peter's back.)* But at the foot of the stairs I said to myself: listen, Paul, what are you doing? You're going to stab a friend who treats you as if you were a toad, and treats you like that for one reason alone: because he is unhappy and desperately needs trustworthy friends? No, Paul, you're going to put away your blunt kitchen knife *(does so)*, and you'll help the man who hit you over the head with a leg of pork. *(He leans over Peter's shoulder and dangles his watch in front of him. Peter gratefully takes it.)* You'll help him to grow into a mature, responsible person. Such as yourself. *(He looks over their shoulders.)* What are you drawing? Doesn't look like dinner to me.



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MAGDALENE (*hands him a marker*): Why don't you draw your seat yourself? So you won't be able to blame me if it isn't comfortable.

PAUL: I thought the flight had been canceled. (*He joins Peter and Magdalene and starts drawing.*)

MAGDALENE: What about the music? Peter?

PETER: What music?

MAGDALENE: The one you procured for us. *The Eleventh Planet*.

(Peter rises to switch on the cassette player. But the music starts of its own accord. Paul doesn't react. Peter goes down on his knees again. They carry on drawing.)

MAGDALENE: Paul, what are you doing? The seat is bigger than the rocket, where're you going to put it? Unless you want to fly alone, ten miles behind us...

PAUL: No, no. If we decided to go, we go together.

(Peter pulls out his cell phone and types in a number. Hands the phone to Magdalene. She looks at him.)

PETER (*confidentially*): Eleven eleven eleven.

MAGDALENE (*into the phone*): Yes?... We're here... What do you mean who... We... Yes, all three of us... Peter, Paul and Magdalene...

PETER, PAUL: "Only in the Bible seen..."

MAGDALENE: Of course you may collect us... We are, after all, only collection items for you, are we not... Curiosities... The trouble is, you may not find us any more... We're leaving this glorious world... Yes, leaving... We're about to start the engines... (*Suddenly remembers.*)... Oh my God, Paul!... The engines!... Quickly, draw the engines! (*Into the phone.*) Hullo?... (*Hands the phone back to Peter. They carry on drawing.*) They're coming. (*Lights begin to fade.*) Imagine sitting in the rocket and suddenly realising there aren't any engines!

PETER: That wouldn't take us far, would it?

PAUL: Just as well you remembered.

(They laugh. The music rises. They freeze. A flashing blue light is seen outside the window. For a moment they are silhouetted against it.)

(Cut music, blackout.)



The Eleventh Planet, Slovenian Chamber Theater, Ljubljana, Slovenia, 2000
Iztok Jereb as Peter, Violeta Tomic as Magdalene, Gregor Cusin as Paul
Directed by Ales Novak