

Death Would Serve Me

By

Nicole Greene

On June 28 1914 Archduke Franz Ferdinand and his wife Sophie were assassinated by a group of young radicals. One month later World War One would begin.

This the the story of the assassin's years in prison, based on real events.

**Bolded Text** is a direct or slightly modified quote spoken by the historical figure. All of these are a translation and come from "The Road to Sarajevo" by Vladimir Dedijer.

Nicole Greene  
ngreenell@georgefox.edu  
(408)313-3908

### Cast of Characters

<u>Gavrilo Pincip:</u>	19-24
<u>Trifko Grabez:</u>	19-21
<u>Nedeljko Cabrinovic:</u>	19-21
<u>The Defense :</u>	Played by the same actor as Grabez
<u>The Prosecution:</u>	Played by the same actor as Cabrinovic
<u>Danilo Illic:</u>	24
<u>Franz Ferdinand:</u>	Ensemble
<u>Sophie:</u>	Ensemble
<u>Feldbauer:</u>	Ensemble
<u>Guard:</u>	Ensemble
<u>Marija:</u>	Ensemble
<u>Ana:</u>	Ensemble
<u>Hunter:</u>	Ensemble
<u>Doctor:</u>	Ensemble
<u>Voice:</u>	Ensemble

ACT 1

Scene One

*GAVRILO PRINCIP, a passionate, arrogant, small young man with a cough and sits onstage at a table nervously signing a stack of papers. FELDBAUER, his lawyer, leans back in his chair flipping through a file.*

GAVRILO

How much do you think these papers will be worth someday?

FELDBAUER

Why would they be worth anything?

GAVRILO

My signature! This is going to be a very famous trial, you know.

FELDBAUER

Sure. You done with signing?

*GAVRILO tries to smuggle the fountain pen into his pocket.*

GAVRILO

Yes.

*FELDBAUER slams his hand down over GAVRILO's and takes the pen*

FELDBAUER

Absolutely not.

GAVRILO

What harm could I do?

FELDBAUER

You're a prisoner. It's not allowed.

GAVRILO

*handing back pen*

No, I understand. A pen in the right hand is a weapon, just like a revolver.

FELDBAUER

That's the sort of thing you shouldn't be saying. To me, to guards, and definitely not in court. It's not winning you any points. Did you sign everything?

(CONTINUED)

GAVRILO

Yes. At the bottom.

FELDBAUER

You look different than you do in the papers. You've lost some weight, are they mistreating you?

GAVRILO

No, not yet. But the prison as a whole is terribly unpleasant, the damp aggravates my lungs.

FELDBAUER

Don't mistake my legal counsel for sympathy. In a few minutes they're bringing the rest of the men on trial in. There's a lot to go over.

GAVRILO

I'm gonna see them?

FELDBAUER

Yes.

GAVRILO

I've missed them! And you're in charge of their defense too?

FELDBAUER

I'm working with their lawyers.

GAVRILO

Are they good?

FELDBAUER

If I'm going to be honest, Gavrilo, it wouldn't make a difference.

GAVRILO

**Don't pay any attention to my case. Concentrate all your efforts on their defense; try to save their necks and and study their cases more. If you waste your time on me, this will be at the expense of the other three. You could help them, because they are innocent. I am ready to face the worst.**

FELDBAUER

I'll see what I can do.

*They fall into silence. A door swings open and GRABEZ, CABRINOVIC and ILLIC spill in. GRABEZ anchors the more emotional boys to earth, CABRINOVIC in particular is a spitfire who can't shut up. ILLIC is the big brother of the group. GAVRILO jumps up and runs over the boys,*

*pulling them into hugs. They're all laughing and shouting greetings, their chemistry is light and their jokes crackle.*

FELDBAUER

I need you all to sit down.

GAVRILO

I forgot how ugly all you are!

ILLIC

You call us ugly? Hypocrite!

FELDBAUER

If you pay attention-

GAVRILO

At least I'm funny. I've gotten the same plate for the last three meals and Cabrinovic always ruins my appetite with that drivel he scratched on the bottom.

CABRINOVIC

It's satirical!

GAVRILO

It's rubbish!

GRABEZ

Oh, and what about the time he told us Illic here had hung himself?

CABRINOVIC

Oh, Grabez not again. It was an honest mistake!

ILLIC

We're not gonna to let you live that one down.

GRABEZ

We'll be lucky to live anything down.

FELDBAUER

Settle down, settle. We need to go over the process.

*LAUGHING and chatting the boys all sit on the bench. ILLIC pushes GRABEZ onto the ground and GRABEZ pulls ILLIC after him and they begin wrestling. FELDBAUER wrests them apart.*

FELDBAUER

For God's sake! Don't you care what I have to say? You're playing like children but this isn't a game. This is deadly serious.

ILLIC

Come on, boys. Sit up. He's trying to help us.

GAVRILO

**Please understand us, sir. We are seeing each other after such a long time and what you are reading is well known to us. It's all we have to think about in our cells. We know what we have to expect.**

GRABEZ

There isn't a chance in hell any of us will get off, even if your lawyers care.

FELDBAUER

Now, we are here because I need to inform you that you have the legal right to appeal the indictment, which will delay the trial. I need you to sign this paper saying you give up that right.

CABRINOVIC

Hell no! We can delay!

ILLIC

That's fantastic news!

GAVRILO

Would it make any difference?

CABRINOVIC

We should at least try! War goes on and nobody knows what will come tomorrow; maybe Russia will liberate Sarajevo while we wait. We push the trial back, buy another couple of months while our lawyers duel it out.

FELDBAUER

**Do you expect to be acquitted? Even before the war is over, you could be tried, convicted, and hanged fourteen times.** The court wants blood.

ILLIC

We all know what's coming, Cabrinovic, let's not draw it out.

GAVRILO

We aren't ashamed of what we've done.

CABRINOVIC

Fine.

GAVRILO

This is better, less time in our cells no matter what.

FELDBAUER

This isn't a party. You can't wrestle each other and joke in there.

ILLIC

He's right. It's very important that we behave well in the courtroom. No messing around, no shouting.

CABRINOVIC

You want us to play nice *now*?

GRABEZ

They can only execute those over twenty. So the men who helped us across the border, and Illic. So we behave well for them.

ILLIC

I wasn't even with you at the assassination, I ran away! They wouldn't execute me, would they?

GAVRILO

They couldn't!

FELDBAUER

Their heir apparent is dead. You lot killed him, you've made them furious. They're going to seek maximum sentence on all of you... I wouldn't count on much mercy.

ILLIC

All the more reason to not act out. We just tell them how sorry we feel-

GAVRILO

I'm not sorry.

ILLIC

Just so they go easy on us.

GAVRILO

I have to speak my mind openly. One day the public will judge us on our statements, and I want to stand for my people. We were ready to die on the quay, or you were at some point. If our memory remains untarnished maybe we make this mean something.

ILLIC

I'd just rather not be dead.

GAVRILO

They're going to see me dead so I will die well.

FELDBAUER

The papers are ready. Each of you sign that you are surrendering your right to contest the indictment. Then your lawyers are waiting through that door boys, it's time to go meet with them.

*They sign one by one and then exit, except GAVRILO.*

Scene Two

*GAVRILO stands on a dark stage in a pool of light.*

VOICE

Gavrilo Princip, on this day you stand accused for the assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand of Austria and his wife, the Duchess Sophie and conspiracy to commit High Treason against the Austrian-Hungarian Empire and the Royal Hapsburg family. I am ready to pass sentence, do you have anything to say?

GAVRILO

**We have loved the people, I have nothing to say in my defense.**

VOICE

Gavrilo Princip you are sentenced to twenty years of imprisonment and hard labor without parole in the fortress of Theresianstadt. Bailiff, please remove Mr. Princip.

*THE BALIFF takes GAVRILO by the arm and pulls him through the darkness to another pool of light. Strips him and redresses him in a prison uniform. GRABEZ and CABRINOVIC are hustled past into the darkness, ILLIC is dragged past in another direction. GAVRILO is shoved to the ground. THE BALIFF exits. GAVRILO looks around his little cell and the lights smooth out to show Cell #1 in Theresienstadt.*

Scene Three

*It is furnished with a bed, a chair and a small table. There is a window placed high on the wall, with bars across it. GAVRILO stands on his bed, peering out the window. The windows are angled so he is straining to see anything but sky. On the whitewashed wall GAVRILO has scratched a few lines of poetry. The heavy metal door swings open and THE DEFENSE steps in.*

(CONTINUED)

GAVRILO

There's a pile of old newspapers in the mess hall, I've been here five months and not a single new edition has appeared. The oldest is from 1913, doesn't even cover the war. Perhaps there's already peace, perhaps my people have won their freedom. They, the guards, wouldn't tell me if they knew, only pass on rumor and the latest bodycount. I wouldn't even put it above the Austrians to invent some lie about my country, hoping to torment me. Desperate for our eyes to reflect their grief and pain. They want to see us grow faint from guilt and reach with supplicating fingers to kiss the cross and find forgiveness. But I know better. The gas caressing the hills and furrows of Europe leaves behind no more corpses than her corrupt kings and indolent queens. Austria started this when she annexed our lands, tried to rule our people. I regret nothing. I'm not one to kneel.

(beat)

What do you want?

THE DEFENSE

Gavrilo Princip?

GAVRILO

Yes, that's me. What is it?

THE DEFENSE

Would you come down from your bed? I don't like looking up at you.

GAVRILO

Are you a guard?

THE DEFENSE

I'm your lawyer.

GAVRILO

You've shown up a little late to do me any good, I've already been sentenced. I'm not who you're looking for. Go ask a guard for help, they always have a couple in the hallway.

*GAVRILO coughs*

Are you going to leave?

THE DEFENSE

No.

(CONTINUED)

GAVRILO

What do you want with me?

THE DEFENSE

I want you to help me prepare. Your story has holes in it and we've got a lot to go over.

*THE DEFENSE enters the room and sets his briefcase down.*

GAVRILO

I don't know what other information the Hapsburgs think they can get out of me. I confessed to killing the Archduke, is that not enough?

THE DEFENSE

I am not affiliated with the Holy Roman Emperor.

GAVRILO

of course you are. You looking for a statement? I'm not sorry. You write that down in your little notebook, men like you always seem to have little notebooks. I'm not sorry.

THE DEFENSE

Well then get good at pretending. Is there anyone else going to bat for you?

GAVRILO

I already gave my testimony. I am not guilty. I had a right to do what I did.

THE DEFENSE

Seems like we are on the same side, then. What do you have to lose? Besides, don't you get lonely in here?

GAVRILO

*beat*

I guess I can co-operate. For now.

THE DEFENSE

Good! Steps forward are good. We have a lot of ground to cover.

*The PROSECUTION enters.*

THE PROSECUTION

What are you doing here?

THE DEFENSE

Talking to my client, what are you doing here?

(CONTINUED)

THE PROSECUTION

Well I was going to try and get to him first.

THE DEFENSE

Gavrilo, this is the Prosecution.

THE PROSECUTION

Good afternoon, let me get my notepad and we can jump right in.

THE DEFENSE

Fine. Let's start with Sarajevo. It's very important that we establish exactly what happened. I've been looking at the testimonies you and your co-conspirators-

GAVRILO

Friends.

THE DEFENSE

Associates- gave in court in combination with newspaper clippings and witnesses and frankly...well it's hard to believe.

GAVRILO

Things didn't go as expected, no.

THE PROSECUTION

That's an understatement. In fact, this is a completely amateur assassination that somehow ended with a dead archduke.

GAVRILO

I planned the entire operation.

THE PROSECUTION

Poorly.

GAVRILO

What was poorly planned about it?

THE PROSECUTION

There were assassins lining the route, correct?

GAVRILO

Yes. Down the quay, in anticipation of difficulties.

THE PROSECUTION

And of all of you, how many actually got shots off the first time the Archduke passed? One. Only your buddy Cabrinovic.

GAVRILO

He threw a hand grenade, yes. He was not successful because the delay on the grenade was too long.

THE PROSECUTION

The Archduke saw it land on the car and pushed it off.

THE DEFENSE

Then afterward, Cabrinovic took cyanide and jumped into the river Miljacka to ensure his death. This didn't work because the cyanide was expired and the river was only four inches deep. So he was immediately arrested.

THE PROSECUTION

That reads like fiction. How hard can it be to kill yourself? And so naive.

GAVRILO

Cabrinovic is a brave man, he was fully committed to our cause. He never hesitated to do his duty, you could never understand that kind of nobility.

THE PROSECUTION

Which would be almost admirable if he was successful.

GAVRILO

Because he failed he isn't a patriot anymore?

THE PROSECUTION

Just a stupid one. At least the rest of your "assassins" had the good sense to run away or not fire. It's almost like your friends weren't as rabidly committed to this scheme as you. Even Grabez, who didn't try to disappear, let both his opportunities drive past him. Gavrilo was the only one who had any success.

THE DEFENSE

They were all there with intent, treasonous conspiracy was the charge if I'm correct.

GAVRILO

No, he's right. In the end it was all me. I heard the explosion and thought the job was done. So when their car went by it was too late, the crowd was too dense. I couldn't shoot. I didn't have the room.

THE PROSECUTION

Here it says you were too short. All the tall men around you blocked your view.

## GAVRILO

I couldn't see any of my friends so I crossed the street to Moritz Schiller's delicatessen and I sat down to wait. I wasn't sure if they'd come back the same way but I thought maybe I could overhear something. Less than an hour later the motorcade came driving past. And something happened with the archduke's chauffeur. I don't remember what, they said in the trial.

## THE DEFENSE

They changed the route because of Cabrinovic's bomb, but the drivers were Czech and didn't understand the directions given to them in German. So they took a wrong turn and had to stop to back up.

## GAVRILO

Typical Hapsburg arrogance.

*A car and the archduke and the duchess appear onstage during the following lines, as well as a bistro table for Gavriilo. The archduke and duchess unconcernedly look straight ahead.*

The policemen thought more people would turn up to see the Archduke, but it was sparse on the street. Quiet. The sun was blindingly bright, had it's own thrumming, dulling my adrenaline. Like waking for a second from sleep, only to fall back into the same heavy reverie. When the convoy started past a hand closed around my lungs, looking for faces I had memorized in dark rooms from newspaper clippings. The car I was watching for stopped. Right...there. And everything... Sophie leaned over to whisper to her husband who smiled. Five feet away. Only five feet. Do you know how short five feet is? How small the world is? The gun in my jacket insistent and cold, I found it in my hand, found it raising. I'm all thumbs and rushing blood and sweaty palms, didn't even feel. All my planning and my fossilized hate pulled my marionette strings up. Unreal. **And the strangest feeling came over me**, washed through my bones. A horror, or triumph. Maybe both. It was the emotion you feel in dreams, primal and real but untrue, untrue. Only a second passed. Heart beats multiplying fear by rage by determination. I had to act! I was committed, I was in the right. And she was older than I thought, I could see the tiny wrinkles around her eyes from laughing and crying. Now's my chance. There were flowers in her hat.

*SOPHIE turns her head grandly and she makes eye contact with Gavriilo. They lock eyes for 1...2...3. Gavriilo panics, cocks the gun with both hands against his stomach. He looks up again.*

GAVRILO

**And the strangest feeling came over me.**

*He looks away and shoots twice. Lights down on the car. THE DEFENSE takes the gun from Gavriilo's hand, carefully, and places it in his suitcase.*

THE DEFENSE

Gavriilo...

THE PROSECUTION

Five feet? That can't be right.

THE DEFENSE

Tell me about this strange feeling.

GAVRILO

Five feet.

*beat*

THE DEFENSE

Gavriilo?

GAVRILO

It was as if someone else was turning the page.

THE DEFENSE

With that, the world changed. Amazing.

THE PROSECUTION

Gavriilo, are you proud of what you've done?

GAVRILO

You know why pride is condemned so often? You can't trust a man who has pride, that means he's not scared of you, of your rules, of your judgment. I did it for my people. They have been crushed, they have been lied to, the police hunt them, they starve. I will not be ashamed. I will not let weakness push me into handing off the responsibility of the only thing I've ever done. I keep this for myself. You know I tried to join the Black Hand? They didn't want me. I'm too sick and small. I would have been the perfect soldier. This was my chance to serve.

THE DEFENSE

Why the Archduke?

THE PROSECUTION

He wanted to make the biggest impact. And it worked. Little bastard started a war.

(CONTINUED)

GAVRILO

I didn't know it was going to start the war. I chose the Archduke because I wanted revenge. He's the inspector general for the army. The same army that annexed us against our will. So yes, revenge was my motive. Revenge and Love.

THE PROSECUTION

So you say you avenged your people, who will avenge the Archduke?

GAVRILO

None of Austria's victims will miss him.

THE PROSECUTION

What about his children? What about Sophie? If she can reach beyond the grave I'm sure it is with outstretched hands towards your neck.

GAVRILO

I do not regret what I did. I am not ashamed.

THE PROSECUTION

You left those children orphaned.

GAVRILO

The Austrian Empire left my people orphaned.

THE PROSECUTION

You have no guilt? None at all.

THE DEFENSE

He doesn't have to feel guilt. He's not guilty.

THE PROSECUTION

Of course he is. No one that emphatically not guilty is actually not guilty.

GAVRILO

Get him out of here. I'm done.

THE PROSECUTION

What's this?

*THE PROSECUTION notices the writing on the wall.  
He crouches by it, runs fingers over the words.*

GAVRILO

Don't touch that. I told you I'm done.

*THE PROSECUTION leans away.*

THE PROSECUTION

Did you write this?

GAVRILO

Yes.

THE PROSECUTION

You fancy yourself a poet?

THE DEFENSE

"Our ghosts will walk through Vienna  
And roam through the palace, frightening the Lords"

THE PROSECUTION

When did you start?

GAVRILO

When I got here. I don't know how it ends yet, but I've  
got plenty of time to think something up.

THE DEFENSE

How'd you do this much?

GAVRILO

I used to be shackled and there was a sharp edge.

THE PROSECUTION

You know there's construction out in the hallway. They  
all sorts of tools: hammers, knives, chisels.

GAVRILO

Why are you helping me?

THE PROSECUTION

Call it curiosity.

*A knock on the door, and we hear a lock turn.*

GUARD

(offstage)

Hey! Princip we're going to the yard.

PRINCIP

I have to go.

THE DEFENSE

That's fine, we'll be back.

THE PROSECUTION

I've got plenty to go on now. You're making this too  
easy.

*GAVRILO turns and crosses to the cell door, GUARD  
opens it for him. EXITS*

Scene Four

*The Prison yard, perhaps a bench or two. GRABEZ stands, head tilted back, thankful for the sunshine, even though it's winter. CABRINOVIC sits on the bench or the ground with a letter in his hand. Both of them have coughs like GAVRILO and show the obvious wear of prison life.*

CABRINOVIC

Baklava. Or one of those apples stuffed with walnuts. Did your Mama ever make those?

GRABEZ

No.

CABRINOVIC

Me neither, I never had one until I left home. And then burek. That Mama *did* make, full of meat and sometimes cheese, hot and flakey from the oven. So damn good.

GRABEZ

Of all the places you could be, you'd pick a bakery?

CABRINOVIC

You wouldn't?

GRABEZ

I would go anywhere they've never heard of us.

CABRINOVIC

I'm sick of freezing. When we get out of here I'm going somewhere it never snows. Maybe on the Nile, I'll let the sun burn me into a crisp.

GRABEZ

When you get out? You sound like you've already bought tickets.

CABRINOVIC

Twenty Years. I pay my dues and then I get out. Less if our side wins the war.

GRABEZ

You're delusional. Besides, you wouldn't really go to Egypt would you?

CABRINOVIC

I would!

GRABEZ

All I want is to be asleep in a bed. A real bed. With a huge soft mattress and blankets piled a mile high, warm and quiet.

(CONTINUED)

CABRINOVIC

And a girl?

GRABEZ

Of course there's girl. No point if there's no girl.

*GAVRILO is shoved onstage by a GUARD. He stands, blinking in the light. Gavriilo's right arm is giving him trouble.*

CABRINOVIC

Gavriilo! You're finally joining us!

GAVRILO

If the sun's going to let us freeze our asses off she could at least not blind me as well.

CABRINOVIC

No, it's perfect.

GAVRILO

I think it's actually warmer out here than in my cell.

GRABEZ

When it's hot, you say your cell is an oven. Now it's an icebox. What are you going to do when the weather's right?

GAVRILO

That's why I'm thankful to the Hapsburgs! If nothing else we can always complain about them.

CABRINOVIC

You complain about the Hapsburgs no matter the weather.

GAVRILO

There's a lot to complain about!

*CABRINOVIC laughs, which turns into a racking cough. When he's done, he wipes at his mouth with his sleeve*

GRABEZ

You ok?

CABRINOVIC

Fine.

GAVRILO

It's the damp and cold down in the cells. My arm hurts more. And my back.

GRABEZ

We were just talking about what we're going to do when we get out. He's going to go toast in Africa.

CABRINOVIC

A far better dream than a bed. That's all he says he wants. Where will you go?

GAVRILO

Home to the valley.

CABRINOVIC

Home to Mama, huh?

GAVRILO

In a heartbeat. Home. With goats bleating and birds singing in the wind-twisted spruce at the bottom of the valley. When I was little I used to get up early, before the sun rose. As I climbed the lip of the hills I would turn to look home. Look! The yolk of the sun breaks on the mountaintops and oozes into the valley, beautiful spring light, the white flowers inspired by the sudden wind. The boulders I climb, the stream I slide down in the winter. A wisp of smoke appearing from the homes as my friends, family wake and begin their work in the great open fields! Standing there, I can breathe fully. Suck down huge gulps of clean air. Then I would run down the hill towards the house, racing the rising sun, the uneven thumping of my boots hurtle past the neighbors past the goats trees flowers rocks clouds and mountains into my Mama's arms. That's where I would go.

*beat*

Back in time to when I was welcome there.

GRABEZ

If I could go back in time I'd tell little Grabez to stay far away from the Black Hand and both of you.

*Beat. A GUARD walks past, slowly.*

GAVRILO

*(furtively)*

I found a chisel.

GRABEZ

What? How?

GAVRILO

They're doing repairs to the walls near my cell. When it broke a guard must've tossed it to the side. I stole it when nobody was looking and slid it up my sleeve.

(CONTINUED)

CABRINOVIC

The guards here are idiots, it's insulting. Aren't we supposed to be the empire's greatest enemies?

GAVRILO

*pulling out the chisel*  
I have it here.

GRABEZ

Put that away!

CABRINOVIC

Where are you going to hide it?

GAVRILO

First thing is I'll chisel up a floorboard, or in my mattress.

GRABEZ

Then what? Do you have a plan?

GAVRILO

We start on the bars. See how hard it is to get them loose.

GRABEZ

They'll notice if the bars start magically falling off the windows.

CABRINOVIC

Not if we're careful.

GRABEZ

There's no way we can get away with this. None.

GAVRILO

Actually rotting here sounds like a good plan, I take it back. Come on.

GRABEZ

They could make our sentence worse if they catch us.

GAVRILO

Even now you're afraid of them?

GRABEZ

Keep us in the dark, take away our food, our blankets. Keep us for longer, for life!

CABRINOVIC

If you don't want to do it, Trifko, you don't have to.

GAVRILO

In Sarajevo you wouldn't do your part and shoot. Now you want to decay here rather than escape?

GRABEZ

You think I'm a coward, Gavriilo?

GAVRILO

I think you need to stop pretending you have something to lose.

*beat*

GRABEZ

*(surrendering)*

This is a terrible plan.

GAVRILO

Do you have a better one? No. Don't you want to get out Grabez?

GRABEZ

This is going to end badly.

CABRINOVIC

That's the spirit!

GAVRILO

Give me one year and I'll find us a way out.

CABRINOVIC

Don't do anything stupid without us.

GRABEZ

That's right, we can only do stupid things together. It's a tradition at this point.

GAVRILO

Two men came to see me two days ago.

GRABEZ

Have you been making trouble?

GAVRILO

No, two men from the outside.

CABRINOVIC

Reporters?

GAVRILO

I don't think so. One said he was my lawyer.

(CONTINUED)

GRABEZ

Bullshit.

CABRINOVIC

It's a ploy.

GAVRILO

It has to be.

CABRINOVIC

Those two must be fishing for names. That's what they really want.

GRABEZ

Why does no one believe we did it? Pushing, pushing. They blame it on Serbia, blame it on the Black Hand.

GAVRILO

It's an insult.

GRABEZ

They see us as children.

CABRINOVIC

Well it works out better for us! They can go howling at whoever they want, if we're too young to execute we must be too young to be behind it all. And in 20 years when our sentence is up, if we haven't escaped, we leave and no one will think twice. We can play the idiots who got caught up with the wrong crowd all we want.

GRABEZ

Not one of us will ever leave this place, Cabrinovic.

*beat*

CABRINOVIC

*(sullenly)*

Our sentence is only twenty years. That's it.

*beat*

GAVRILO

Who sent you a letter, Nedeljko?

CABRINOVIC

I haven't opened it. I'm saving it for my cell.

GRABEZ

Oh come on!

(CONTINUED)

CABRINOVIC

Someone took all the newspapers so I have nothing to read in there! I'm bored!

GAVRILO

Those papers are all ancient, garbage.

CABRINOVIC

Let me enjoy the fresh air, you jackals! The next 48 hours will drag by with nothing to distract me. If I don't ration my pleasures I'll die of boredom.

GAVRILO

Let's hear it. That's the first letter any of us have gotten. I could kill someone for a book!

GRABEZ

Someone else?

*CABRINOVIC opens the letter, a photograph tumbles onto the ground. He picks it up.*

GAVRILO

Who's it from?

CABRINOVIC

It's from Ana.

GRABEZ

Ana?

GAVRILO

I didn't know you had a girl, Cabrinovic! Was she in Belgrade?

CABRINOVIC

No, she was from home.

GRABEZ

Is it a picture of her?

*GRABEZ picks up the photo as CABRINOVIC reads the letter. Disappointed.*

It's just of you.

GAVRILO

What a waste. When was it done?

CABRINOVIC

I took it in Sarajevo.

GRABEZ

The day of the-

CABRINOVIC

Yes. I had time to kill, so I posed...sent one to my sister, to her. For remembering.

*As CABRINOVIC speaks he rises, changes into his dress clothes, carefully takes the bomb and puts it inside his jacket pocket and poses for a picture. A PHOTOGRAPHER snaps it and hands him the pictures. He then sends it off and changes back into his prison uniform. GRABEZ and GAVRILO watch and listen, may even at one point adjust CABRINOVIC's hair for him.*

I was wearing my new dark grey jacket, stitches perfect even measured buttons winking gleaming fit slim against my body, a man's body. Combed my hair until my scalp tingled under the metal teeth, vanity's never been sexy like me. I looked so good. Sharp. I could feel the eyes of every woman I passed, and it wasn't the clothes. People find power intoxicating and power leaked out of me. I walked like a god. It came from the bomb I had tucked inside my jacket, from my control over it. I knew in two hours, one hour, one minute, one heartbeat I would become like the angel of death to exact vengeance for my people and then martyr myself. Like Zerajics or Milos Obilic I was going to be remembered. Dead, maybe, but with flowers and candles on my grave. What a redeemingly noble death. Death would serve me before I left this miserable planet. And as they mourn me and admire my strength they would find in the mail a photograph and a note. So my Mama would be proud, and Ana in her tiny village would sleep with my picture under her pillow. She would look back and wish she'd been my lover, regret casting me off. She should have given in to a god. Death's allure pulling me closer to the ravine's edge, see the bottom. What is our obsession with oblivion besides lust?

GRABEZ

She sent the picture back.

CABRINOVIC

Well I'm not dead, am I? That's the key to not being rejected, friend. You make sure you're dead first.

GRABEZ

What does the letter say?

CABRINOVIC

What do you think it said? She won't take it.

GAVRILO

Does she know what you did?

GRABEZ

I imagine that's the problem.

GAVRILO

Someday our actions will lead to a free Slav state. Then she'll appreciate what you did. They all will. We won't fade into the past, we will remain on the tongues of Europe for generations to come.

CABRINOVIC

It's your name that will be remembered. Gavrilo Princip killed the Archduke and his wife, started the war, lives on. Nedjelko Cabrinovic threw a bomb too slow and Trifko Grabez chickened out. We are your accomplices, Gavrilo. I'm not the god of a trash heap.

GRABEZ

It's a good picture of you, Cabrinovic.

CABRINOVIC

Can you see the bomb at all? It's in my jacket.

GAVRILO

Not really.

CABRINOVIC

Maybe if she could see the bomb, she would have kept it.

#### Scene Five

*The inside of a carriage, all windows drawn. GAVRILO, GRABEZ AND CABRINOVIC are all shackled together on one bench. Facing them on the other is an Austrian officer named HUNTER.*

CABRINOVIC

Sir? Can I get up and walk around soon? My legs are cramping.

GAVRILO

We haven't stopped in hours.

HUNTER

You think I care?

GAVRILO

Prisoners have certain rights.

(CONTINUED)

HUNTER

Have you heard the news, Princip? Is this why you're being so surly?

GRABEZ

What news?

HUNTER

The news about Serbia and your beloved Bosnia. Strange, I thought one of the guards would have told you right away. We've received news from the front.

GAVRILO

And?

HUNTER

Austria's new offensive is going spectacularly. We are cutting through the countryside. Belgrade will fall within the week. Isn't Belgrade where you boys went to school? Serbian losses are huge. Most of the peasants the army finds surrender without a second thought. The country is drifting apart.

GAVRILO

**Serbia may be invaded but not conquered. We aren't just Serbs, we are part of a greater people. We will have a nation of our own.**

HUNTER

You'll never see that. Even if your dreams come true you will be left and forgotten in Theresienstadt.

GRABEZ

Is that the name of our prison?

HUNTER

Yes. It's a place for war criminals, and not people inclined to be sympathetic to your cause either.

GAVRILO

Then we'll convince them. The truth is infectious.

HUNTER

Oh I doubt you'll get anyone to listen, the whole empire has heard the details of your trial by this point. How does it feel to be the murderer of an pregnant woman with two children? You proud of that?

GAVRILO

**I did not wish to kill a mother. It just happened that I killed her. A bullet does not go precisely where one wishes... They were sitting close to one another. It was the Archduke's mistake, for he wanted to subjugate and destroy the whole of our people.**

HUNTER

You get to make that distinction? Who lives or dies?

GAVRILO

If I don't, who will?

HUNTER

Maybe not a foolish child who can't shoot straight.

GAVRILO

It is YOUR people who spread the misinformation, who fight on the side of tyranny and-

*HUNTER casually stands and backhands GAVRILO.  
HUNTER raps on the side of the coach and it comes to a stop.*

HUNTER

You are nothing and your little group is nothing.

I'm going to go stretch and walk around a little bit. Breathe the fresh air. You boys just sit tight, eh? We're almost there.

*HUNTER exits.*

GAVRILO

Fuck Austria.

### Scene Six

*GAVRILO stands at the window, wiggling at a bar; his cough has worsened even more and the skin around his elbow looks inflamed, his arm is much weaker. THE PROSECUTION paces the floor and THE DEFENSE stands by.*

THE PROSECUTION

How's the escape going?

THE DEFENSE

Try wiggling it the other direction.

GAVRILO

This way?

THE DEFENSE

Yes! And less jerky, grind the plaster down. What you need to do is give yourself room to manouver.

THE PROSECUTION

Whoever kept records for the trial was incredibly unprofessional, everything's out of order.

(CONTINUED)

THE DEFENSE

We're getting nowhere with this, let me have it.

*THE DEFENSE grabs at GAVRILO's arm, GAVRILO exclaims in pain and the chisel clatters to the floor.*

THE PROSECUTION

What did you do?

THE DEFENSE

I just grabbed his arm!

GAVRILO

I'm fine.

THE PROSECUTION

Your arm has been hurting?

GAVRILO

At the elbow, and just a bit.

*GAVRILO begins coughing, the lawyers exchange glances.*

GAVRILO

It's fine.

THE PROSECUTION

Have you told the doctor?

GAVRILO

No, I'm not sick. It's fine. Have you found what you're looking for?

THE PROSECUTION

No, not yet. I'm still deciphering his notes.

GAVRILO

He didn't try very hard. I asked him not to. There was no question how the trial would go for me, not that he cared. I didn't want to waste his time.

THE DEFENSE

You never know, maybe your sentence could have been reduced.

GAVRILO

Oh, please. Feldbauer wasn't that good.

THE PROSECUTION

Well you weren't executed. I'd say that's more than anyone was expecting.

(CONTINUED)

THE DEFENSE

You think if you had a different lawyer your sentence would have been different?

GAVRILO

Lawyer, yes. And judge, court, laws. If there were any real Justice.

THE PROSECUTION

*(sarcastically)*

That sounds like the cry of an innocent man.

GAVRILO

If this had been a court of my people they wouldn't have dared convict me.

THE PROSECUTION

You don't really think that.

GAVRILO

I do.

THE PROSECUTION

They wouldn't convict you for murder?

GAVRILO

Assassination.

THE DEFENSE

Moral tyrannicide.

THE PROSECUTION

Assassination is murder with her party dress on. He killed two people, and not out of self-defense.

GAVRILO

That's not true. I was in danger. My people were in danger. The kmets, the kind of peasants I grew up among, they were starving and enslaved. They are no better than livestock to the Hapsburgs. If someone didn't do something, they'd be watching their cultures, their hope for a future, melt like snow.

THE PROSECUTION

Murder. That doesn't change that you murdered.

THE DEFENSE

History will defend him. The men and women from future generations, they are the true measure of his guilt, the morality of today and the law are merely secondary.

(CONTINUED)

THE PROSECUTION

So now we are discarding morality entirely?

THE DEFENSE

Morality looks different from the Greeks to the British, a thousand years ago and a thousand in the future.

THE PROSECUTION

But not murder. We all know murder is wrong, essentially wrong. Like water flowing uphill. In our guts, even when it seems justified.

GAVRILO

I did what I did for a good reason.

THE DEFENSE

One man's monster is another man's hero.

GAVRILO

Or maybe I'm both the monster and the hero. Who is judging me? The Emperor? You? The people, MY people? Someone a hundred years from now? Until I am completely forgotten from human memory anyone who wishes will rule on my guilt. That judge a century from today: can she know my heart, understand that day in Sarajevo? She will be free to make me an idol or an effigy. When you try to judge me today you have no more power over me than she does. Who is this power that you say can judge me? Who holds me accountable?

THE PROSECUTION

What about the soldiers in the War? They are paying the cost of your guilt.

GAVRILO

I didn't make the decision to go to war. That's Germany, that's Russia.

THE PROSECUTION

No, no. You broke the dam. Just because you didn't hold a man underwater doesn't mean you didn't drown him.

THE DEFENSE

But it's not the same kind of guilt. It's not murder.

THE PROSECUTION

The millions who have already died would say so.

GAVRILO

They should look to the person that killed them, then. Not at me.

(CONTINUED)

THE PROSECUTION

You fired a bullet, and from the blood of the archduke come countless branching veins of hot pumping blood, flooding the muddied trenches of Europe. You tried to control death, you sent Death out. And if you take a minute to feel beyond your defenses and anger, you will feel something disquieted in you.

GAVRILO

I am not responsible for all those people dying.

THE PROSECUTION

You are not responsible, but you are guilty.

Scene Seven

*GAVRILO watches. A dark and low roofed hut. MARIJA sits on a stool looking into a cradle. She rocks it gently. A PRIEST enters.*

MARIJA

Thank you for coming, Father.

THE PRIEST

Of course. I'm so sorry for the delay, I must be getting old. How are you feeling, my dear?

MARIJA

Just tired. Will you baptize him, Father?

THE PRIEST

Of course.

*THE PRIEST leans over the cradle.*

Have you chosen a name?

MARIJA

No.

THE PRIEST

Why not?

MARIJA

It doesn't matter

THE PRIEST

Of course it matters!

MARIJA

I've had six children and only two survived. I know the look of a baby that won't. He's too weak. Just please baptize him first.

(CONTINUED)

THE PRIEST

He's fighting. Look at him struggle for air. Keep praying, he will pull through.

MARIJA

And build my hopes up for nothing?

THE PRIEST

Look at him, look at his bright eyes. Angels are watching over him; can't you feel it? This child is important to God. His guardian angel perches on the side of his cradle, counting his breaths, holding demons at bay. Just like you. This boy is needed here, he won't be taken away before his time.

MARIJA

I'm not that strong in my faith, Father.

THE PRIEST

Name him Gavriilo after the archangel Gabriel. He'll look after his own. Little Gavriilo has a destiny.

*GAVRILO crosses to the cradle. Looks inside.*

ACT 2Scene One

*CABRINOVIC GAVRILO and GRABEZ stand in a line as a guard comes and pats them all down. They are clearly malnourished and their coughs have gotten worse.*

GRABEZ

Do you think it's September yet?

GAVRILO

It's not that late, it's still July. Right?

GUARD

No talking until I'm done.

CABRINOVIC

Remember when Illic took us to the forest and showed us how to fire our pistols?

GRABEZ

How long ago was that?

GUARD

Shut it.

*As he finishes patting them down, they change into winter clothes. ILLIC hands them guns.*

ILLIC

Here we go, boys. One for each of us and an extra. This is the safety, don't point it at anyone after you have it off. They're loaded.

CABRINOVIC

A year. It was last year.

GAVRILO

More than that by now. Almost two.

ILLIC

No one followed you out here right?

GRABEZ

Two years?

GAVRILO

No one followed us!

(CONTINUED)

GRABEZ

We all came different ways.

ILLIC

Good. Now be careful with these, they're worn and we won't be getting more if something goes wrong. What you do is, hold it like this. Then hold it up, make sure you're ready for the kickback, cock it, and pull the trigger. Grabez, you try.

GRABEZ

That tree?

ILLIC

Sure.

GRABEZ

I'd never held a gun before.

*BANG*

CABRINOVIC

Did you hit it?

GRABEZ

How old are these guns anyway?

ILLIC

Where am I supposed to get new guns? Steal them from the police?

CABRINOVIC

You hit this tree over here! So you shot a bystander!

GRABEZ

Oh I'd love to see you do it.

CABRINOVIC

Fine.

*CABRINOVIC jerks his arm up and fires.*

*BANG*

*The kickback throws him for a loop.*

CABRINOVIC

How'd I do?!

ILLIC

You didn't hit anything.

CABRINOVIC

I'll get it. I need practice.

*GAVRILO lifts his gun up.*

ILLIC

See that branch hanging off that oak? I'll bet you shoot it off in one try.

GAVRILO

I don't think so.

ILLIC

Here.

*ILLIC lifts GAVRILO's arms up. Breathes with GAVRILO.*

ILLIC

Deep breath and focus on the branch, right? Then when you're ready...fire.

*BANG! The branch crashes to the ground! ILLIC claps GAVRILO's shoulder. GRABEZ and CABRINOVIC whoop in celebration and GRABEZ slaps CABRINOVIC's back then turns to congratulate GAVRILO. CABRINOVIC coughs wetly, heavingly, into his hand. He leans or sits on something, still coughing.*

GAVRILO

Are you alright?

*CABRINOVIC pulls away his hand away from his mouth and blood drips off it, slowly, onto the ground, onto the perfect white snow. CABRINOVIC seems ashamed and wipes his hand on his pants.*

GAVRILO

Are you alright?

CABRINOVIC

I'm fine.

GRABEZ

You're only two cells down from mine. I can hear you coughing through the night.

CABRINOVIC

It must be another prisoner

GRABEZ

Nedelkjo-

CABRINOVIC

I'm fine! What does it matter? Are you my mother?

ILLIC

Watch out when you use these, boys. We've got to be ready to use these under stressful circumstances and we don't want any mistakes. We don't have many bullets, and we can't get them replaced.

GAVRILO

Thank you for getting them, Illic.

ILLIC

Just don't mention any of this to anyone, right?

*ILLIC gathers the winter clothes and guns from the boys. ILLIC exits*

GRABEZ

When did you find out? About the tuberculosis?

CABRINOVIC

It's only been a few years. I usually never get sick so when a cold lingered I went to a doctor. I was fine for a while and then I started seeing blood.

GRABEZ

And then that's it.

GAVRILO

I think it's in my bones. I heard that can happen. The infection can get into your joints and eat away at it like it eats away at your lungs. My arm is always sore these days, not just in the cold.

GRABEZ

I hate this place.

CABRINOVIC

I'm going to die here. I can feel it. I'm going to die. Locked in the darkness, in death for days. It's like drowning, and every time I come out here it's like a single stolen breath before I'm pushed back under.

GAVRILO

If we could get you out we could take you somewhere with better air.

GRABEZ

Maybe I can trade with a guard for something, get you more time in the yard!

CABRINOVIC

There's no point.

GAVRILO

There are people from my village that lived for decades with the consumption.

CABRINOVIC

I won't. Not in here. Not with...knowing. About out there, about the people dying out there.

GRABEZ

Are you talking about the war?

CABRINOVIC

That's the sickness I really have. Every man out there that dies because of what we did is another minute shaved off my clock.

GAVRILO

You can't blame everything out there on yourself.

CABRINOVIC

Why not? Why wouldn't I? It is our fault, it IS.

GRABEZ

You didn't kill the archduke, Princip did.

CABRINOVIC

I can't think straight any more. I dream about them every night.

*SOPHIE and FRANZ FERDINAND enter, blood pouring from her stomach, his neck.*

CABRINOVIC

His children. Little Sophie and Maximilian. In the trial I apologized for killing their father, begged them to forgive me. And they did. They wrote to me to tell me that I'm forgiven. I hadn't bothered feeling bad about it, I tried to forget. I tried to be indignant be a martyr but they wrote to me. They misspelled words and blotched the ink and said they absolved me. I'm amazed you don't see it, hear it. Constant. His last words. Hers.

SOPHIE

**For God's sake, what has happened to you?!**

CABRINOVIC

His.

FRANZ FERDINAND

**Sophie! Sophie! Don't die! Stay alive for our children!**

CABRINOVIC

The children.

FRANZ FERDINAND

Sophie! Stay Alive!

CABRINOVIC

We hear that you were sorry for killing our Father and Mother and so we forgive you.

SOPHIE

What has happened?!

FRANZ FERDINAND

Don't die!

CABRINOVIC

Our Mother.

SOPHIE

For God's sake!

CABRINOVIC

Our Father.

FRANZ FERDINAND

Our Children!

CABRINOVIC

We forgive you.

FRANZ FERDINAND

Sophie!

SOPHIE

Oh God!

FRANZ FERDINAND

Sophie!

CABRINOVIC

None of your pamphlets or words can pass over my guilt now. The dried blood under my fingernails can't be picked out.

GAVRILO

I will break us out. I will. And I will take us somewhere you can heal, your soul and your body. I will not let you die here, none of us will. I would rather die of a bullet in my back. I would rather die like Illic.

(CONTINUED)

CABRINOVIC

Once guilt is forgiven it is real, concrete. Once  
guilt is forgiven the guilt is bound to you.

Scene Two

*CABRINOVIC and ANA lean against a wall, kissing.  
He slides a hand around her waist, over her  
ass, up her skirt. She leans away giggling,  
adjusts her dress.*

ANA

What is wrong with you? Someone will see you!

CABRINOVIC

Don't you want to?

ANA

Nedeljko. Of course I do.

CABRINOVIC

What, don't you love me?

ANA

We barely know eachother!

CABRINOVIC

If you were never going to see me again would you say  
you loved me?

ANA

That is a strange question.

CABRINOVIC

Well?

ANA

I don't know.

CABRINOVIC

Maybe I am going to die.

ANA

Are you sick?

*She anxiously checks his forehead for a fever.*

CABRINOVIC

Anyone could die at any time. That's the curse of being  
alive. We're all at death's door. So, let's assume I  
will die tomorrow. Now, do you love me? I love you.

*She kisses him, then pulls away and he begins to  
unbutton her dress.*

Scene Three

*THE DEFENSE sits on GAVRILO's bed, reading a newspaper. GAVRILO enters, the first lesion has appeared on his neck.*

GAVRILO

You came back! I didn't think I was going to see you again.

THE DEFENSE

Because of what my colleague said?

GAVRILO

Well I still don't know why you're here... and it seemed final.

THE DEFENSE

Well not for now at least. I don't think you're a lost cause. What's that on your neck?

GAVRILO

It's nothing.

THE DEFENSE

It looks inflamed, you should get that looked at.

GAVRILO

If I had to act again, I would have done the same thing. I'm not changing my tune now. Were you waiting long?

THE DEFENSE

No, it's just been a few minutes. You have to wait weeks in between each of our visits, I can hold out for an hour.

GAVRILO

It's more like months.

THE DEFENSE

Mmm. I've just been getting caught up on the news.

GAVRILO

They usually don't let papers in.

*GAVRILO fervently takes the paper and looks at the front page.*

THE DEFENSE

I have my channels.

(CONTINUED)

GAVRILO

I'll read this tomorrow, when the light's better.

THE DEFENSE

You asked for books but this is the best I can do under the circumstances.

GAVRILO

Thank you. But why do you care?

THE DEFENSE

In the transcripts at your trial there was something about you selling everything you had at one point, but you just couldn't sell your books. If I was starving and homeless I might consider getting rid of some old books.

GAVRILO

They were more than old books. Back in the village, I was powerless, my people pushed down. Starving freezing burning rotting. It was one room huts with dirt floors and crushing darkness. But then I left, and I began to read in earnest. All the memories and thoughts I had stored up poured out and I found that they could be turned to tools.

THE DEFENSE

You can always get more books.

GAVRILO

No, no. Books that really mean something, really move you. They become your lovers. Under your hands, their pages, their spines are creased in a thousand familiar ways. Their voices are balm over new wounds, awaken old wounds you shouldn't be forgetting. Page 56, exactly where I remember, something to keep me upright for another day.

THE DEFENSE

And they won't let you have any books in here?

GAVRILO

Why should they? I wouldn't trust me. I dream of books now, just the smell sometimes. Losing my books is like losing my religion.

THE DEFENSE

Your books are where all this comes from. So we are one short fire, one leaky ceiling away from a completely different world. A world without this war.

GAVRILO

It all comes back to the war, doesn't it? Someone else would have started it if I didn't.

THE DEFENSE

But they didn't.

GAVRILO

What does this have to with my defense?

THE DEFENSE

I think it's important I understand the character of my client.

GAVRILO

No, no. That's not it. This is something else.

THE DEFENSE

I'm trying to understand your motivation.

GAVRILO

Oh! You want to see what's inside. You want to peel me open and see the clockwork.

THE DEFENSE

It's not like that.

GAVRILO

This is like the psychologist at last trial all over again. You think you can figure me out. Men like you want to observe men who do great deeds. Not great as in good but great as in large as in unavoidable as in unforgettable like me.

THE DEFENSE

Isn't it natural to wonder? You are an anomaly.

GAVRILO

You'll tear me apart, sort me pound by pound but you won't find what you're looking for. The first doctor didn't, the second didn't. You want a why. You want the *right* why. Oh, this is where atheism comes in handy. I know better than to look for something that isn't there. Doesn't it seem impossible, strange, that something so big can come from someone so small? That the world can revolve under such an unassuming fulcrum? But there's no answer to that, no one thing that makes me more capable or more likely.

THE DEFENSE

So you don't think you're unique?

(CONTINUED)

GAVRILO

Only because I acted where others didn't.

THE DEFENSE

That's no small thing. Throughout time there have been many assassinations. Professional, idealistic, selfish. So many have been performed by madmen, fringe groups. But yours is different by virtue of its pedestrianism. I have known so many angry young people who in the darkness of their bedrooms and under the flicker of streetlamps who have had the same conviction, the same burning youthful rage at the badness they now see that they were once too young to understand. They have wished with every wrathful inch to do what you did. To not feel impotent, to be more than an angry voice. And they didn't do it, or they tried and failed, or they became the face in the mob. But you, you are unique. You are a pimply gangly young man who can barely string together a few lines of poetry but by God you have left your tracks across history books. There are kings who would sell their lives and souls, have sold their lives and souls, to obtain the sort of eternal life that comes with infamy.

GAVRILO

Eternal life? There's no such thing. I should know. I'm the one facing death.

*beat*

Who are you actually?

THE DEFENSE

I'm your defense-

GAVRILO

But for what? It's been months of you coming and visiting to scold me and I still don't understand why.

THE DEFENSE

Soon you'll need to defend yourself, I'm trying to prepare you for that.

GAVRILO

What about me makes you think there is something to defend?

THE DEFENSE

There is something redeemable in what you did. You deserve to be saved.

GAVRILO

From what?

*beat*

THE DEFENSE

It's natural to be afraid of death, Gavriilo. There's nothing wrong with it.

GAVRILO

So you're half lawyer half mortician. You think you're preparing me for the grave. You know, we all had cyanide. In Sarajevo, when I shot the Archduke. I even took it. And at the trial I thought they would just find a way around the law and hang me anyway. Even then I was ready. I was counting on dying. But now Death's coming to visit me a third time and I can't even look at her face without a deep and sickening panic. I've left my tracks across history but it ends on the street corner in Sarajevo. If I had died there someone would know. Someone would remember me dying. In here I am forgotten.

THE DEFENSE

Is that why you did it? For the infamy?

GAVRILO

I just wanted to be a hero.

THE DEFENSE

That's all!? What about love? Revenge?

GAVRILO

I want to be hero for my people, I did it for them. To bring hell down on her enemies, to show her how mighty I am. But still it isn't enough. Death erases it all. Cabrinovic...he's going to die. He's dying. And Grabez, he's dying. And me, I'm dying. We all cough constantly day and night. They look like skeletons. They look like they're already dead. This isn't who we are, our youth our passion was supposed to be frozen in time. Not like this.

THE DEFENSE

No, no. You delivered death, you've killed. You haven't earned the right to be afraid of death. You did it for yourself. I thought I was defending the soul of a martyr. But you are so, so small. Face death with the same defiance and brutal disregard as when you killed him. People who sell their souls don't get to fear for them.

*GAVRILO takes his chisel to the window and viciously chips at it.*

(CONTINUED)

## THE DEFENSE

That's a false hope, Gavriilo. You think Cabrinovic and Grabez are sick? They came to this prison healthy, strong. You've always been weak. Those bars aren't coming out. You aren't escaping. And it's nothing more than you deserve.

*THE DEFENSE exits.*

Scene Four

*GRABEZ sits outside on a bench. GRABEZ's cough has reached terrifying proportions. GAVRILO enters, excited. His neck lesion has been bandaged and he has more on his hands. He can barely use his right arm.*

GAVRILO

There you are, I have very important news.

GRABEZ

What is it?

GAVRILO

I think I've found my way out. My chisel, I think I've almost got one of the bars over the windows loose. I mean, it's taken me so long, but now I've gotten the hang of it, you see? I've been filled with a new determination to get this done. Maybe we get shot in the process, maybe it takes time. But the important thing is to keep motivated. The important thing is to not lose sight of our goals. My goal is to be a free man before I die, so for now it's one flake one crumb of cement at a time. And patience is finally paying off and I've got a bar loose. I can taste it, Grabez, I can taste the wind on my skin.

GRABEZ

What after that?

GAVRILO

Sorry?

GRABEZ

You get this bar loose, then what?

GAVRILO

I think I get my entire window open, then maybe fashion the chisel into a kind of lockpick then-

GRABEZ

Nevermind. I'll let you work it out.

(CONTINUED)

GAVRILO

Once we get out I think we could try to make it to the Russian lines. They'll be friendly to us, maybe give us a hero's welcome!

GRABEZ

A fine plan.

GAVRILO

Cabrinovic would like that, right? To be welcomed with fanfare. Where is he? They should have brought out his cellblock by now.

GRABEZ

I heard them come last night, he's been coughing nonstop, keeping everyone awake. They took him away, to the prison hospital. I tried to call out, but he must not have heard me.

GAVRILO

They took him away? Why?

GRABEZ

Have you been looking at the same boy as me? He's nothing but bones. He looks like he's already a corpse. They think he's got not much time left.

GAVRILO

When is he coming back? Soon?

GRABEZ

Gavrilo, I'm just surprised he's still alive. If he is. For all we know he's gone.

GAVRILO

I didn't get to talk to him, to say anything. I wanted to say something to him! I have to tell him-

GRABEZ

What? What could you say?

*beat*

We knew this was coming.

GAVRILO

He deserves some comfort. Some sort of softer exit.

GRABEZ

Some days I look at you and I just...I just want to break you. I want to break you down into dust and watch it fly away. I want to kill you. Deserves some comfort? He deserves more than that. He deserves to not be dead in the ground. If you hadn't wanted to assassinate the

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

GRABEZ (cont'd)

archduke, if you hadn't pushed and pushed and pushed- I tried! I told you, Illic told you. We didn't want to do it. We felt uneasy, felt guilty in advance. But you wouldn't stop, wouldn't forgive or think. Know what you are? You're a fire. You are so bright and so beautiful but all you do is consume and destroy and break things down until they are dry death. I could have backed out, could have run, told the police. But fire is so fascinating. You took advantage of us. And behind you there's nothing but scorched fields. Illic, The Archduke, Sophie. And now Cabrinovic. He's dead! Can't you feel it? Don't you smell the air? He's another boy dead in the trenches, another unmarked grave. Another ton of guilt for us to take to our tombs. That boy, he was so pure. So dumb. He was a believer, you know? He would have followed you to the moon and this, this is how you are repaying him. Repaying me. Weren't we friends, Gavriilo? Weren't we angry young men with no money once? Because today I am a hundred years old, I can't remember a life outside this place. My friend is dead, I am dying. Yes I am dying. And you stand here with that look on your face.

GAVRIILO

You blame me?

GRABEZ

Yes! Every day. Every day I damn you, damn the Austrians, damn the whole planet. If you had let up, had moved on, whatever. I could be alive.

GAVRIILO

You would still have tuberculosis.

GRABEZ

I could be with Cabrinovic in a cafe, poor and powerless. I could go have sex again. I could see an ocean or taste real food or laugh or cry. Look at me, there's nothing left to me. I can't save my friends, I can't save myself. I can't do anything but scream and scream until the coughing catches me.

GAVRIILO

Grabez, we changed history. We are boulders in the river of time, nothing close of meaningless, nothing close to powerless.

GRABEZ

Not all of us wanted to be like this. I don't live off of ideals like you, Gavriilo. I can't keep myself alive out of indignation and rebellion. So I won't.

(CONTINUED)

GAVRILO

You're not gonna die.

GRABEZ

Better reconcile yourself to the fact that I am, Gavriilo. For all intents and purposes, I am dead. Today I'm going to have a terrible coughing attack and ask to be transferred to the military hospital where they're keeping Cabrinovic. I have to know. I have to know when he's dead.

GAVRILO

What about me?

GRABEZ

You'll know. You'll feel it. Besides, you'll be close behind.

GAVRILO

I'll be alone.

GRABEZ

I don't care.

GAVRILO

Trifko, please. Please no. Please don't leave me alone. Not here, please.

GRABEZ

I've made up my mind.

GAVRILO

But I'm so close! The window is almost there, one last effort, one real effort, and we'll be out. Trust me.

*GRABEZ exits*

GAVRILO

Wait! Wait! Forgive me! You have to- please!

*GAVRILO begins to follow GRABEZ off, stops turns back and paces by bench. He spins and punches the wall with his bad arm. The pain is white hot and he eventually falls to his knees and pleads softly, eyes closed, quiet coughs interrupting. A GUARD enters and GAVRILO stands and exits to his cell. He stands there, quivering with rage. He fishes the chisel out and goes to the poem. He struggles visibly, makes one mark then scribbles it out. Goes to the window and hacks at the bars viciously.*

Scene Five

*ILLIC is sitting next to a tomb, bundled up. The tomb is surrounded by flowers, letters, candles. A shrine. This is the night before the assassination.*

ILLIC

Gavrilo? Come sit with me.

GAVRILO

He's wrong. I will get out.

ILLIC

You're gonna make me sit alone in a graveyard?

GAVRILO

You're not really here Illic.

ILLIC

Of course not, I'm dead. Calm down and come sit with me.

GAVRILO

This is the night before the assassination. This is Zerajic's grave.

ILLIC

That's right. What's kept you? We said we'd meet at ten, it's almost eleven. I saved you some wine.

*GAVRILO sits, drinks from the bottle, grimaces.*

GAVRILO

How can you like this?

ILLIC

It's all the same when you're drunk.

GAVRILO

I wouldn't know.

ILLIC

Have you never been drunk before?

GAVRILO

I didn't want to, is all. I like to keep a clear mind. We dull our sense of justice and fervor by indulging. There's more important things out there.

ILLIC

Oh, Gavrilo. We are too young to die.

(CONTINUED)

GAVRILO

We're doing the right thing, Illic.

ILLIC

Have you even been in love?

GAVRILO

I knew a girl once... I met her in school and I always thought I'd marry her, you know? She was just so kind and she had the softest voice. One time I walked her home from school...I haven't seen her in years but I just wish I had kissed her, just once.

ILLIC

Oh, Gavriilo-

GAVRILO

It's fine, Illic. Really. I just want to sit here with you.

ILLIC

You don't have to do it tomorrow, Gavriilo. You know that. We can put it off, find another target. Live some more life.

GAVRILO

We are at Zerajic's tomb! He didn't kill the man he was trying for. Not even close. But here we are, here hundreds of men and women like us come for inspiration. His one big act inspired dozens of little ones, inspire us tomorrow. By the end of tomorrow we will be heroes just like him.

ILLIC

I don't think I can do it, Gavriilo.

GAVRILO

It's just nerves. You'll wake up tomorrow and be fine. I promise. You're stronger than all of us.

ILLIC

Here, you finish the bottle.

*ILLIC leans back against the grave.*  
Would you look at those stars?

Scene Six

*GAVRILO is sitting on his bed, curled around himself, unravels some bandages on his chest to reveal some tubercules. His cough is much worse and his right arm is useless. The GUARD enters with a plate that he puts on the ground and Gavriilo hastily puts his shirt on.*

(CONTINUED)

GAVRILO

It breakfast already?

GUARD

No, dinner.

GAVRILO

What is it today? A beautiful roast or maybe a delicate tart?

GUARD

I'll be back in an hour.

GAVRILO

Wait! Sir. I'm sorry.

GUARD

What is it?

GAVRILO

My friends, Trifko Grabez and Ndjelko Cabrinovic. They're two other prisoners here, in another block. They're in the military hospital, have been for more than 3 months and I haven't heard a word not a word from them.

GUARD

I don't work in the hospital.

GAVRILO

Do you know anyone who does?

GUARD

Eat up.

GAVRILO

But, please! Could you ask? I just need to know when they're coming back.

GUARD

Why're they in the hospital?

GAVRILO

Their coughing got so bad.

GUARD

People who go to the hospital for tuberculosis don't come back, Princip.

GAVRILO

Just ask. Please.

(CONTINUED)

GUARD

Why should I?

GAVRILO

Isn't being locked in here punishment enough?

GUARD

You got anything for me?

GAVRILO

What could I have, I'm a prisoner!

*The GUARD starts to leave.*

GAVRILO

Wait! Wait! I know how! What is it you want?

GUARD

Smokes are good.

GAVRILO

My lawyers, the men who come to visit me. They get get stuff in, I've seen them smoke in here. They could get you cigarettes, next time they come I'll ask I'll-

GUARD

What lawyers are those?

GAVRILO

My lawyers! They're always here. One's this tall, and the other's this tall. They've been coming every few weeks for two years. They haven't been by in a few months, but still.

GUARD

Do you mean the warden?

GAVRILO

No! No. They're my lawyers.

GUARD

Prisoner, you haven't had a visitor since you were admitted.

GAVRILO

That's nonsense of course I have.

GUARD

You saying I'm stupid? That I wouldn't notice a pack of lawyers on my block? Or that my buddy on the other shift wouldn't sign them in?

(CONTINUED)

GAVRILO

There must be some mistake.

GUARD

You don't even have visitors rights, Princip.

GAVRILO

That's impossible. I saw them with my very eyes.

GUARD

If that's what you say.

GAVRILO

What are you insinuating?

GUARD

I think maybe I should call the doctor.

GAVRILO

No! I'm fine. I must be misremembering a dream. In here day and night blends together. Don't even know what meal it is. You know. I'll be fine. Now will you find out about my friends for me?

GUARD

Can you get those smokes or not?

GAVRILO

I'll get them. I will. Please.

GUARD

I'll see what I can do. But I'd put down good money they're dead. Long dead.

*GUARD exits.*

*Long beat. Painful beat. The beat that accompanies something irreparable. The illusion of narrative leaves Gavrilo impoverished and deeply afraid.*

GAVRILO

It's not death that takes me after all, it's insanity.

*beat*

Grabez? Cabrinovic. You haven't left me alone here. That's too cruel. Too cruel. That would be too much to bear.

*A coughing fit overtakes him for a second. GAVRILO, his arms obviously incredibly weak and in pain, manouevs his chair in front of the window. Removes his sheet from the bed, tries to form some kind of makeshift noose on the bars of his window.*

(CONTINUED)

*He tests the weight. Puts it around his neck, kicks the chair away. The iron bar, the one he's been chiselling away at for so long, snaps out of the window and GAVRILO falls to the ground and instinctively tries to catch himself with his bad arm. As it hits the ground he screams and THE GUARD rushes in.*

GUARD

What the hell, Princip? I need help in here!

*The GUARD kneels by GAVRILO.*

GAVRILO

Don't leave me here!

Scene Seven

*GAVRILO sits on the bed, the bar in the window has been replaced. A DOCTOR sits in the chair, rebandaging the stump of his newly amputated arm. GAVRILO's cough is racking him and he is increasingly bandaged or covered in lesions. The GUARD leans against the wall.*

GUARD

I've seen things cut off before, you know. Being on a farm and all. My brother got a real nasty gash from a log, right down to the bone. He had to have his leg off. Didn't help him much, he still died.

DOCTOR

Well Gavriilo was lucky. It was worth the risk, essentially the tuberculosis was rotting the flesh. In theory, this has purged a good deal of the sickness.

GUARD

Buy him some time.

DOCTOR

I think the chance for infection is passed and you're in the clear. It's a good thing you hurt it trying an escape or we wouldn't have noticed how bad it had gotten! Have you been cleaning it daily?

GUARD

He does, I check. Morning and evening.

DOCTOR

That's good! And how are you feeling? How's the pain?

GAVRILO

No better.

DOCTOR

Hmm. Well be sure you're not picking at the wound.  
That'll make it heal much more slowly.

GAVRILO

Yes sir.

DOCTOR

How's your cough been?

GUARD

I've heard worse. And he doesn't cough up too much  
blood.

DOCTOR

That's a hopeful sign. Well is there anything else,  
Gavrilo? If not, I have more visits to make today.

GAVRILO

No.

DOCTOR

Well then, I'll see you next week.

*The DOCTOR exits.*

GUARD

Does the doc know about you trying to off yourself?

GAVRILO

No, are you gonna tell him?

GUARD

I should tell someone. I could get into trouble if I  
don't and you wind up dead.

GAVRILO

No one cares what happens to me.

GUARD

A whole bunch of Austrians want you dead.

GAVRILO

Comforting.

*THE DEFENSE and THE PROSECUTION enter, silent.  
GAVRILO stands and stares then sits and ignores  
them.*

(CONTINUED)

GUARD

Hey, you ok?

GAVRILO

I'm fine. I'd like to be alone.

GUARD

You're not gonna do anything stupid right?

GAVRILO

One arm, remember? I'm just going to take a nap, I'm tired.

GUARD

I'm not going far.

*The GUARD exits.*

GAVRILO

I said I want to be alone.

*GAVRILO goes to put his coat back on, forgets about his arm for a moment. Beat.*

I've got bad news for you, boys. I know the truth now. No more playing with my head. No more messing with me. Sorry to ruin your fun.

THE PROSECUTION

Our fun?

GAVRILO

I know you aren't real. And what's more, you don't care.

THE DEFENSE

Gavrilo-

GAVRILO

I mean, if it wasn't enough to hear from my guards that I don't even have visitation rights it certainly was settled the night I cried out for comfort and none came. Or the night before they cut off my arm, didn't take long mercifully; most of the flesh had died by that point anyway. It makes me think maybe there is a God. No empty universe could be so cruel. I was alone. Even if you think I am the worst kind of scum, I needed you. It's been almost a year. A year since I've seen either of your miserable, imagined faces. A year without my friends, without hope. I should have guessed. I should have known better to trust. I dreamed up such terrible, terrible lawyers.

(CONTINUED)

THE DEFENSE

I'm sorry.

THE PROSECUTION

We just wanted to find the truth.

GAVRILO

What truth!? God, the facts have been laid out for you in black and white since the beginning. I never lied.

THE PROSECUTION

It just didn't feel right that no one would be punished for all this. The war. When something this tragic happens we all want to be able to trace it back to a starting point. So we came to you to blame you, judge you. But we have found that you're innocent. You don't have to feel guilty anymore.

GAVRILO

I am proud of the sacrifices I made.

THE DEFENSE

Then why are we here? Why have we been circling each other for years? You put yourself on trial because behind the bravado there is a boy overwhelmed by his guilt and terrified of being forgiven.

GAVRILO

You can't just throw words like forgiveness around.

THE PROSECUTION

You are haunted by us and haunted by regrets. The thought of Sophie's eyes as you shoot a slug of lead into her womb? The young soldiers dying in the fields?

GAVRILO

That was an accident. It was. In service of a greater good.

THE PROSECUTION

There's blood on your hands but not the blood of millions. Not even you can lay claim to that.

*THE PROSECUTION forces GAVRILO to his knees in supplication. GAVRILO weakly rests his head against the PROSECUTION's arm.*

GAVRILO

You know what I've done- I killed the archduke. I do not repent of that, I swear I still... But what's more, Sophie is dead. His children have no father. The war- the war- how many are dead? What's the body count today? How many millions? I can't even understand that

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

GAVRILO (cont'd)

number. I don't understand what a million looks like when tallied in gore. The gore of my people.

THE PROSECUTION

It is so much harder to accept that there is no reason, no will behind this, just the cruelty of accident. Make this sacrifice worthwhile. Repent.

THE DEFENSE

Forgive and forget, Gavriilo. Let it go.

GAVRILO

You want to see me sink into the inferno screaming for mercy. Or to submit to your chastizing meekly and follow you to heaven's ranks. But I've already been damned! If I go to hell I go to hell smiling and triumphant. I refuse to bow to the story of repentance!

*GAVRILO wretches his neck around and sinks his teeth into THE PROSECUTION's hand.*

THE PROSECUTION

Damn you!

GAVRILO

I will die with my great work intact, I will not taint what I did for my people. What is it your God says? Your right hand offends you? Cut it off. My right arm, my shooting arm, has driven a great rift of darkness into my heart and my body rejects it. The disease in my bones will destroy me and the world will return to its equilibrium. It's my great reward for my one great act.

THE DEFENSE

I take into account your good intentions, your love. I do not damn you!

GAVRILO

*Well then I damn me!* I do not have the strength in my body or mind to forgive myself.

THE PROSECUTION

Even though forgiveness is there for the taking? You just have to ask for it.

GAVRILO

They're dead because of me. That's all the guards talk about: how badly the war goes for the Serbs, how many have been sent to the camps. The infection in my blood is nothing next to the pervasive contagion of guilt. Have you seen my arm? Would you like to? In each individual inch this disease rots me. They could just

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

GAVRILO (cont'd)

saw off limb after limb, start after my organs, my neck, finally just scoop my brain out. If I forgive myself I must recant the price I paid. I owe my people a better legacy. Even my poem... all I've got is two lines. I wanted to leave behind more but I'll never get a chance to finish it now with my arm.

THE PROSECUTION

Teach yourself to write with your left.

GAVRILO

With the month I have left to live?

THE PROSECUTION

If you have words you'll find a way to put them down.

*GAVRILO lifts his left hand to trace the letters.*

GAVRILO

**"Our ghosts will walk through Vienna  
And roam through the palace, frightening the Lords"**

*beat*

Does anything come after that or that all there is to say of me?

THE PROSECUTION

Don't leave it unfinished.

GAVRILO

Will finishing it make anything better?

THE PROSECUTION

All people die. And you never really know who they are until you see how they go about it.

*THE DEFENSE sits on the bed with GAVRILO.*

THE DEFENSE

Gavrilo, forgive yourself.

*GAVRILO shakes his head.*

THE PROSECUTION

There's nothing more than that we can do for you.

GAVRILO

There is. I don't want to die alone. Don't let me die alone.

THE PROSECUTION

We can do that.

GAVRILO

Swear to me.

THE DEFENSE

I swear.

GAVRILO

I don't want to die.

THE DEFENSE

I know.

GAVRILO

*quiet, childlike*  
Will it hurt?

THE DEFENSE

Very badly, for a while. Then not any more.

*GAVRILO breaks down into quiet sobs.*

Scene Eight

*ILLIC sits on the other side of a stone wall, the night before Illic is to be executed.*

ILLIC

*whispering*  
Gavrilo? It's Illic!

*taps on the wall hesitantly.*  
Gavrilo are you awake?

GAVRILO

Yes, Illic. I'm awake.

ILLIC

Your voice sounds funny are you ok?

GAVRILO

*wiping away tears*  
Was there something you wanted to say?

ILLIC

I just wanted to know if you were awake.

(CONTINUED)

GAVRILO

You should get rest.

ILLIC

If you were me would you be able to sleep?

GAVRILO

No.

*beat*

Are you sure they're gonna do it tomorrow?

ILLIC

They might just be moving me to a new holding cell.  
Away from all of you. But I know somethings happening.

GAVRILO

I bet that's it then! They're just moving you.

ILLIC

I hope not. I hope they mean to hang me tomorrow.

GAVRILO

Illic, don't think like that.

ILLIC

Is there any other way this can end? I'm the only one  
of us over twenty, the only one they can execute.  
There's no way they'll let me go. They have to kill  
someone. The crown demands blood.

GAVRILO

They're all cowards.

ILLIC

I wonder what it's like to die

GAVRILO

I hear that hanging isn't so bad. It's over quick.

ILLIC

Who says that? People who've been hanged?

GAVRILO

Oh.

ILLIC

But in general. Do you think there's anything over  
there?

GAVRILO

I don't believe in all that, Illic.

(CONTINUED)

ILLIC

You think there's nothing at all? There's something. I just can't imagine that I could end like that, so quick. There must be something.

GAVRILO

They just want us to think that so we will behave.

ILLIC

I've heard all your words, Gavriilo. But I don't want to hear them tonight. I can't make it through tonight without hope. Hope in anything.

*Silence for a few long moments*

I got a plate you'd scratched at dinner. You wrote a poem on the bottom, I have it here.

**Time goes slowly and  
There is nothing new.  
Today everything is like yesterday,  
And tomorrow will bring the same.  
But I will always remember  
The words of the fallen falcon Zerajic:**

**"He who wants to live, has to die. He who is ready to die, will live forever."**

*beat*  
Gavriilo?

GAVRILO

I'm here.

ILLIC

I don't think I can do it. I don't think I can walk quietly with them, like I'm not scared. Like I'm not a wild animal inside racing racing racing. I can't look at the gallows, at the ropes, at the men who die before me i can't. I can't. If I look into another person's eyes right now I will scream and scream never stop.

GAVRILO

Illic, please.

ILLIC

I'm scared. I'm scared. I don't want to die tomorrow. I don't want to die in a month. I don't want to die ever I want to live and live and live and live and live and live. I want to turn to stone so I don't have to die. I can't do it, Gavriilo. Not with dignity. I can't be a martyr, I can only be afraid.

(CONTINUED)

GAVRILO

For your own sake you have to do it like a man. Illic, it matters how we die. It matters how many steps we take towards the grave. It's the last impression we leave on the earth, the last chance to leave on a note of strength. Illic you will not die like a coward tomorrow, you will die with grace and dignity, without shame. Without fear. You will die like it matters that you were alive.

ILLIC

Has it mattered? I'm dying for an assassination I didn't even commit. I've done nothing, know nothing-

GAVRILO

Of course you mattered.

*beat*

ILLIC

Wait with me until morning, Gavriilo.

*They sit there in silence, falling asleep together.*

Scene Nine

*GAVRILO is asleep. He looks terrible, barely has the strength to sit up throughout the scene. The GUARD enters.*

GUARD

Princip? Princip?

*The GUARD crosses to GAVRILO and shakes him by the shoulder, cautiously.*

GAVRILO

Yes?

GUARD

I thought you might be dead.

GAVRILO

What? No, I'm fine.

GUARD

The doctor is in the other wing visiting prisoners today. I know it's not your day to see him but I can get him if you want.

(CONTINUED)

GAVRILO  
Why?

GUARD  
I thought you were dead, Gavriilo.

GAVRILO  
I look that bad?

*GAVRILO begins coughing into his hand. Bright red blood.*

GUARD  
Yes. Are you supposed to bleed like that?

GAVRILO  
I'm fine, don't bother anyone.

GUARD  
Here, take my handkerchief.

GAVRILO  
Thank You.

*The GUARD helps him into bed.*

GUARD  
You're sure you're fine?

GAVRILO  
I don't want to see him today, there's nothing new he can tell me. And he has cold hands.

GUARD  
Okay. I'll be down the hall if you need anything.

*The GUARD exits. GAVRILO begins to cough again, violently. The blood fills his handkerchief. The cough turns into choking, he can't breathe. Gavriilo drops the handkerchief to the ground.*

GAVRILO  
Water-

*The attack escalates as GAVRILO FIGHTS for air. THE PROSECUTION and THE DEFENSE rush onstage, help him sit up.*

THE PROSECUTION  
Gavriilo? I need you to breathe.

THE DEFENSE

Cough it out. Cough it all out.

*THE PROSECUTION rubs slow circles on GAVRILO'S back until the attack subsides, then lays him back against pillows, their suit jackets, the wall. Something.*

GAVRILO

Oh my God my stomach.

THE DEFENSE

What is it?

GAVRILO

I don't know. Oh sh-

*A stab of blinding pain in his abdomen makes him gasp and triggers another coughing fit.*

THE PROSECUTION

Don't talk just catch your breath.

*The fit slowly subsides.*

THE DEFENSE

That's much better.

GAVRILO

What are you doing here?

THE DEFENSE

Just a friendly visit.

THE PROSECUTION

We were in the neighborhood.

GAVRILO

You aren't real, there isn't a neighborhood for you to be in. You can go, I don't need company.

THE PROSECUTION

You don't want company at all? After a year without another visitor.

GAVRILO

Not today, thank you. Not today! I'm very busy.

THE PROSECUTION

That's a lie.

(CONTINUED)

GAVRILO

Fine! Then I don't want to talk to you.

THE DEFENSE

This would be our last chance.

GAVRILO

I've run out my clock, then? Showed that hack doctor at least, he said I wouldn't make it through this winter. God, why did you have to come so soon?

THE PROSECUTION

Death is always too soon, even after a wait as long as yours.

THE DEFENSE

We promised we would be here, at the end.

*GAVRILO sighs then hacks violently. THE DEFENSE wipes the blood away from GAVRILO's mouth.*

GAVRILO

There's one benefit to dying now. I don't have to live through another summer. The whole jail is like an oven. Sweat slick nights and dry throats. And all through June all anyone is thinking of is Sarajevo. You can see it in their eyes. It's all I can think about. No, I'm glad I'm dying in spring. The earth feels closer to death and birth now than any other time.

THE PROSECUTION

Are you comfortable?

GAVRILO

Honestly more than I have in years. It smells like rotten meat in here, the guards should clean more often.

THE DEFENSE

I think that's you, friend.

GAVRILO

Grabez you're an ass.

*GRABEZ chuckles*

GAVRILO

Those guards are even scared of me when I am one armed and dying. At least 5 at all times around my room you know.

CABRINOVIC

And they should be afraid! You're the great enemy of the Hapsburgs!

GRABEZ

He doesn't need his head inflated more than it already is. Think you could stand up?

GAVRILO

On my own? I haven't in months.

GRABEZ

Try.

*GAVRILO sits up in bed, shakily. He rubs his legs, amazed at the lack of pain. He stands, as if he's expecting to topple over so CABRINOVIC takes him by the arm. Which also isn't in pain to Gavriilo's amazement. GAVRILO takes one step, a second. Soon is pacing around the room. Knee bends, hops, spins. We've never seen him move this easily, without pain.*

CABRINOVIC

You look crazy.

GAVRILO

Maybe I am! I'll show you crazy!

*GAVRILO shouts and clambers onto the bed, bouncing on the mattress noisily like a child.*

GAVRILO

What is this? What happened to me?

*GAVRILO stops*

GAVRILO

This isn't real.

GRABEZ

It's as real as matters. Come here. Let's get your bandages off.

*GRABEZ and CABRINOVIC begin to unwind their friend's bandages. Underneath, the blood and pus stage makeup comes off with a wipe of gentle cloth.*

GAVRILO

I haven't been outside in over a year. Is it still beautiful? Does the spring still stink of mud and flowers? A warm day with soft breezes and the sun

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

GAVRILO (cont'd)

setting behind trees and perfuming the air with scorched grass. God, I feel like a new man. I have a thousand more tyrants to topple!

*GAVRILO's arm is back. Whole, strong. GAVRILO looks at it carefully, takes stock of each knuckle. It's beautiful as a eulogy can be.*

GAVRILO

So I'm dead, then.

GRABEZ

Your time is up.

GAVRILO

What now?

CABRINOVIC

Now it's time to go. Are you ready?

GAVRILO

I'm leaving the world worse off than I entered it.

GRABEZ

What do you want to do about it now? Time smooths the ragged edges of pain, and as summer arrives the sun will rise over fields of grass and grain like you remember from your childhood. Rain will come, things will grow. All manner of things will reach equilibrium again. This is what I told you a year ago, this is what I tell you today. Forgive yourself.

CABRINOVIC

Come with us.

GAVRILO

I'm not ready.

CABRINOVIC

You are the only man I know who would think he could postpone the reaper.

GRABEZ

There's nothing here for you, Gavriilo. You need to go.

GAVRILO

I haven't been forgiven yet. I can wait.

*GRABEZ AND CABRINOVIC exit. GAVRILO stands alone in the quiet cell. He touches the pile of bandages, memorizes what it is to feel, to smell, to see. Light streams through the window, luminous*

(CONTINUED)

*rainbow brilliance dappling like on a river or through tree leaves, like an egg yolk sunrise breaking over the mountains. With a dreamlike vigour and strength we have never seen in him he crosses to his bed, takes out the chisel from under his pillow. GAVRILO kneels by his poem, unfinished, dead. Words stream through his renewed perfect limbs, through his shining eyes, and out his strong, sure hands. As GAVRILO writes, all lights but the window fade out, and that light increases to blinding intensity. The only sound is the scratching of his chisel against the wall.*

*END*