

To Hold An Apple

Excerpts from the script
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Translations by Ada Gafter-O'Higgins

Scene: A rather barren room. Trunks of varying sizes. An apple. A notebook. A pen. Sonia aged around 25, and Alina, a bit younger.

N.B. This brief opening exchange may alternatively be delivered in Italian/French very quickly. Many key words (i.e. Teatro, Realismo, Brecht,) the English speaking audience will recognize. An Italian/French alternative to the opening dialogue follows in ().

SONIA

That's not theater, darling, it's life. Realism. And realism shouldn't exist on stage. It has no art. But if that's what you want, then choose life. Life is the only theater worth going to today, huh?

(Quelo non e teatro, cara, e vita. Realismo. E il realismo non dovrebbe esistere sulla scena. Li non c'e arte. E la nostra era ne ha. Se e quello che vuoi, allora prendi la vita. La vita e il solo teatro che vale la pena oggi, Eh?)

ALINA

And it's damned good.
(Et elle est putain de bonne.)

SONIA

It gets rusty. And it's mediocre seventy-five percent of the time.
(E arruginito. E mediocre 75 percento del tempo.)

ALINA

You don't have to talk about this. I've talked it over with myself, for years.
(T'as pas besoin de parler de ca. J'en ai parle il ya un temps-pendant des annees-avec moi-meme)

SONIA

And you've come to the wrong conclusion.

(E sei arrivato a la conclusione sbagliata.)

ALINA

I've come to the conclusion that if I reach any conclusion at all, it's wrong- I don't want a conclusion- what good would it do me?

(Je suis arrivee a la conclusion que si je comprends, c'est la mauvaise conclusion. Je ne veux pas de conclusion! Ca me servirais a quoi?)

SONIA

That's your problem! You've given up being curious! You think it's alright to stare bleary-eyed at a mystery, THE THEATER, the theater! My God! My awe-striking bewitchment, my mystery! But you forget that as actors we must remain curious, we must dictate some curiosity, especially today. Even artificial curiosity is better than none.

(E quello il problema, ai rinunciato alla curiosita, pensi che va bene fissare un misterio con gli occhi annebbiati, IL TEATRO, il teatro! Mio Dio! Il mio incanto colpevole, il mio misterio! Ma tu ti dimentichi che come attori dobbiamo rimanere curiosi, dobbiamo dettare la curiosita, soprattutto oggi-giorno. Pure la curiosita artificiale e meglio che nessuna.)

ALINA

Would you have me, perhaps, engage the question of what "the audience" is, what it represents?

(MORE)

ALINA (CONT'D)

What it was to Brecht, to
Stanislavsky! O Brechteslavsky, I
don't give a damn!

(Il se peut que tu
voudrais me retenir
avec la question de
ce qu'est le public?
Ce que ca representait
pour Brecht, pour
Stanislavski! O
Brechteslavski, je
m'en fou!)

SONIA

Idiot! You're impossible!
(Imbecile, sei
impossibile!)

ALINA

Idiot? What a complement, that's
exactly what I want to be! You should
be ashamed, to utter the word,
"theater," you who think there's
time in life to *make* theater and to
understand it- shit!

(Tu m'as traite
d'imbecile, quel
compliment, c'est
EXACTEMENT ce que je
veux etre! Tu devrais
avoir honte de
prononcer ce mot,
THEATRE, toi qui
pense qu'il y a du
temps dans la vie
pour FAIRE du theatre
et pour le COMPRENDRE.
Putain!)

SONIA

Enough.

ALINA

Enough.

SONIA

Let's work.

ALINA

Will the audience be coming, tonight?

SONIA

Yes...

Sonia rummages through a trunk, tosses Alina a maid's apron and hair-net. Alina takes on the character of Madame Bremond, the painter's elderly housekeeper.

ALINA AS MME BREMOND

O, Pardonnez moi, Monsieur...

SONIA

It's true what my father predicted would become of me...my father the oracle: "*Bohemians live and die in misery.*" He worked for me, my father, for this misery my father: up at dawn...a banker...a prophet.

(beat)

Today, Madame Bremond, is my mother's funeral. Today, it is, today!

(beat)

What's the time?

No way to tell, there's no clock, we don't have a clock, have we, Madame Bremond?

ALINA

Oui monsieur, we have one, in the other room...

SONIA

Don't tell me the time! I am working.

(Paints.)

Tomorrow is Sunday, and as usual, I'll attend my vespers.

ALINA

But Monsieur, your mother's-

SONIA

(furious)

Travailler sans le souci de personne et devenir fort!

Alina takes off her apron and hair net, dropping the character of Madame Bremond.

ALINA

Paul Cézanne.

Dropping the character of Cézanne.

SONIA

Right. And you?

Alina scrambles about collecting a costume: Puts on a mustache, trousers, hat. Becomes a man: sensitive to a fault, physically so frail that he inspires compassion.

Secretly ill.

ALINA

(Low)

*Rose, oh reiner Widerspruch, Lust,
Niemandes Schlaf zu sein unter soviel
Lidern.*

SONIA

Poet!

ALINA

Ja...My teacher was a sculptor. He sculpted bodies that could listen like faces, lift up like arms. And hands, he loved to sculpt hands... hands "that rise, irritated and in wrath; hands whose five bristling fingers seem to bark like the five jaws of a dog in Hell. Hands that walk, sleeping hands, and hands that are awakening; criminal hands, tainted with hereditary disease; and hands that are tired and will do no more, and have lain down in some corner like sick animals that know no one can help them..."

SONIA

Rainer Maria Rilke?

ALINA

Richtig. Indeed.