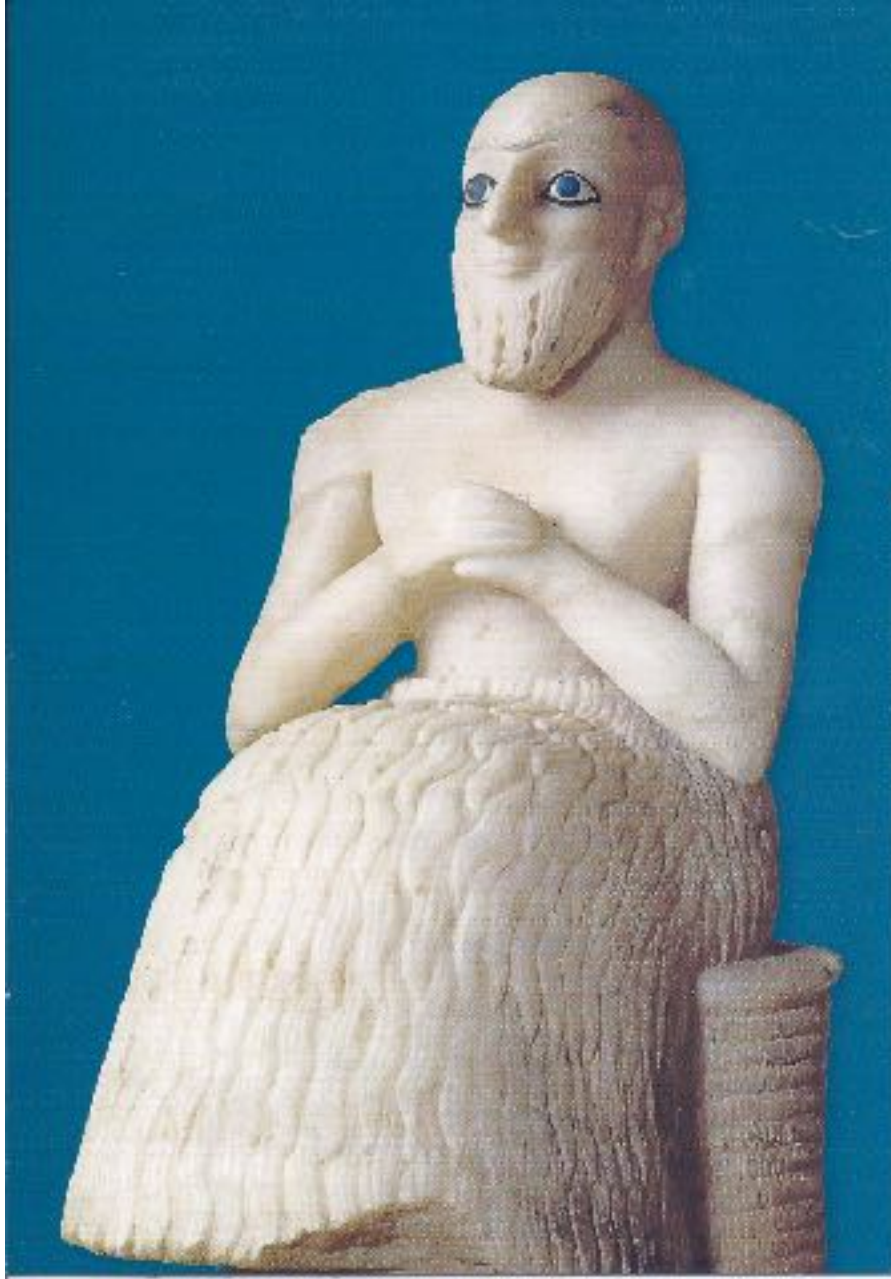


SMALL WORLD

a play



by
SEAN HARDIE

Milltown
Skeoghvosteen
County Kilkenny
R95 C9T3
seanhardie@icloud.com

CAST

MAX – *as old as practical, from 50's on*

He's unshaven, wears an ancient velvet dressing gown or somesuch maybe with fur trimmings, plus a few bits of well-worn royal regalia, slippers

PAULI, *his son – EARLY 20'S.*

Business suit, shirt but no tie, very David Cameron

THE ACTION TAKES PLACE IN THE FRONT ROOM OF THEIR SHARED FLAT. AN OLD ARMCHAIR, A TABLE AND TWO UPRIGHT CHAIRS, A WALKING STICK, BOOKCASE, MEMORABILIA EVERYWHERE. GENEALOGICAL CHART AND VARIOUS ROYAL PICTURES ON THE WALL. A RETURN HIDES THE EXIT TO THE KITCHEN AND HALL.

The time is the present

DARKNESS. WE HEAR A BRASS BAND, THEN
A CROWD SHOUTING, THEN GUNFIRE.
LIGHTS FADE UP SLOWLY TO REVEAL MAX
SEATED ASLEEP IN THE ARMCHAIR WITH A
RUG OVER HIS KNEES. HE'S ASLEEP.
PAULI IS SEATED AT THE TABLE. HE HAS
A NOTEBOOK AND PEN. MAX SNORES FOR A
WHILE. PAULI COUGHS. NO RESPONSE.
PAULI COUGHS LOUDER. NO RESPONSE.
PAULI COUGHS VERY LOUDLY. GUNFIRE
CROWD ETC FADE BUT CONTINUES UNDER

PAULI: Ahem. (PAUSE) Ahem. Ahem.

MAX WAKES UP, CONFUSED

MAX: What's going on? What happened?

PAULI: You fell asleep, your Highness.

MAX: (ALARMED) Who are you? What are you doing here?
Help ! Help!

PAULI GETS UP, TAKES HIM A GLASS OF
WATER

Go away! Don't touch me!

PAULI: It's OK.

MAX: What's OK? What's that music? What's the
noise? Quick! Bolt the door! Police!

HE GRABS A BOTTLE OF PILLS, TAKES A
HANDFUL

MAX: No, not the police, not the police. They're
the last people we should call. Where am I?

PAULI: You dozed off. You were telling me about the
coup.

MAX SWALLOWS THEM, BLINKS, CALMS
DOWN

MAX: Was I? Why

PAULI: Your memoirs. You were dictating you memoirs.

MAX: Who are you?

PAULI: I'm Pauli. Crown Prince Pauli. I'm your son.

MAX: Oh yes, of course.

HE STUDIES THE PILL BOTTLE
MYOPICALLY

What are these?

PAULI: Arsenic. Twice a day after meals.

MAX TAKES PILLS

MAX : Don't joke. I have ulcers.

PAULI: Ulcers- plural? I thought it was just the one.
How many?

MAX: Seven.

PAULI: Seven. I thought Doctor McLennan said -

MAX: Dr Maclennan? Quack. What does he know. He
thinks my melanoma is a cleg bite.

HE DEMONSTRATES

He thinks my zita virus is a common cold. He
can't find anything wrong with my chest.

HE THUMPS HIS CHEST, COUGHS AND
COUGHS

We're wasting valuable time. Where was I?

PAULI: The morning of the coup. You were in the
nursery in the Summer Palace, the Lord
Chamberlain was supervising-

MAX: - the spinach test, that's right, he was
invigilating Nurse Pritchard-

PAULI: Pritchard?

MAX: Pritchard. P-R-I-T-C-H-A-R-D.

PAULI WRITES IT DOWN

She was the probationary nursery nurse. I was
in a high chair in a white sailor suit with a
lace collar. He was testing her. She had to
feed me from a tureen of puree'd spinach
without spilling a drop on the lace. Using a
runcible spoon . Miss Pritchard was Welsh.

Royal governesses were always Welsh. And very ugly. Even uglier than my mother. Where was I..

PAULI: The coup. Your mother.

MAX: I was in my high chair-

PAULI: Aged?

MAX: Eight? Or maybe six. Mother was in her boudoir when she heard the din. She looked out the window, saw the rebels advancing down the street, ran outside, threw her fox fur in the canal, borrowed a black beret and a red bandana and handed out roses to the tank crews. Appeared for the prosecution at your grandfather's trial. She'd have sold me too but Uncle Vlad was too quick for her. Hid us in a trunk and gave a pair of porcelain poodles to a border guard to let the three of us through. Said they were Dresden but they were fakes of course.

PAULI: Us?

MAX: Me and your mother. Only she wasn't your mother then, she was still in nappies.

PAULI SUDDENLY LOOKS UP

PAULI: What was she doing there?

MAX: She was his daughter, of course.

PAULI: Hold on - mum was Great Uncle Vlad's daughter?

MAX: Of course. Didn't you know?

PAULI: No.

MAX: I should probably have told you. It never seemed the right moment.

PAULI: So ... So... You mean to tell me that -

MAX: Your mother and I were first cousins. Absolutely. Twice over, in fact, because *her* mother was my grandfather's half-sister's niece . So that makes her your first cousin once removed.

PAULI: Hold on - you mean to say mother is my first cousin-

MAX: - and your second cousin *three* times removed, and I would be your third cousin once and twice removed as well being your father. I think that's right.

PAULI: It's a miracle we don't all have two heads and webbed feet.

MAX: Your great aunt Carlotta did. Webbed feet, that is. And three nipples.

PAULI'S MOBILE RINGS

Leave it.

PAULI: But -

MAX: Leave it.

PAULI LOOKS AT HIS WATCH

PAULI: Jesus. I have to go. I'm late.

MAX: (WITH PASSION) Food. Get some food.

PAULI Hasta la vista

PAULI EXITS.

MAX: (CONTEMPTUOUS) Hasta la vista indeed.

MAX WAITS A MOMENT, THEN GETS UP, WANDERS ROUND THE ROOM, INSPECTS MEDICINE BOTTLES, POURS HIMSELF A WHISKY

(Sings, improvised or to the tune of 'My Bonnie Lies Over The Ocean') You can travel this whole wild world over/visit India Peru and Siam/Alaska France Spain and Moldova/Hong Kong Fiji Togo and Guam/

FADE TO BLACKOUT . UNDER THE BLACKOUT MAX SINGS ON

LIGHTS UP ON INTERIOR FLAT, NIGHT . MAX, IN PYJAMAS, IS UP AND ABOUT, RUMMAGING AROUND, SNACKS, DOES A LITTLE JIG

(SINGS AS ABOVE, IMROVISES TUNE) But there's nowhere you'll spy that will dazzle your eye/ nothing you'll smell that will smell half as well/ nothing so fair as can hope to compare/

as my own special homeland - that never-more
roam land/ beloved, bewitching Octavia/

THE PHONE RINGS, HE PAUSES, PICKS IT
UP.

MAX:: (FALSETTO, POSH) Royal Palace. Who's calling?
(PAUSE) And who do you wish to speak to?
(PAUSE) Hold on, I'll put you through to the
Lord Chamberlain's office.

HE COVERS THE RECEIVER, COUNTS TO
FIVE. MEANWHILE HE CONTINUES AROUND
THE ROOM FOR ANYTHING TO NICK, - ETC
- OPENS A DRAWER, LOOKS BEHIND
BOOKS; FINDS LOOSE COINS, A PEN, A
CHOCOLATE BAR ETC. POCKETS THEM.

(BASSO PROFUNDO, FOREIGN) Lord Chamberlain's
office. (PAUSE) No, I'm afraid not, hold on,
I'll transfer you to his appointments
secretary.

ANOTHER PAUSE, COUNTS TO FIVE

(VERY CAMP) Halo, Simon speaking, can I have
your name? (PAUSE) Can you spell that? (PAUSE)
Thank you, Rosemary. So how can I help you?
(PAUSE) No, I'm afraid the crown prince is out
of the country. (PAUSE) Bhutan, I think. Or
possibly Belgium.

HE CONTINUES SEARCHING, EXTRACTS AN
ENVELOPE FROM THE BOOKCASE, TAKES
OUT A WAD OF NOTES, COUNTS THEM,
SLIPS THE ENVELOPE UNDER A CUSHION.

Can I take a message?...of course. I'll tell
him you called. Thank you, Ragwort, thank you.

HE HANGS UP, PICKS UP A NOTEBOOK,
READS OUT LOUD, DECLAIMING AS IF TO
A CROWD

MAX: My fellow Octavians. It's good to be back. And
to such a welcome. Thank you thank you. Let
this be a new beginning- for you, for me, for
our country. I love you. I love you. All of
you !(HE STOPS,)My fellow Octavians. My
fellow Octavians. My fellow Octavians.
Friends, Octavians, Countrymen, lend me...(HE
MAKES A NOTE

WE HEAR A KEY TURNING,—MANY BOLTS
AND LOCKS, A DOOR OPENING.

PAULI: (OFF, TO PHONE) Oscar I'd love to but I
can't,....no, no. I'm flattered, I'm honoured
but no.... I absolutely promised the
archbishop I'd ...

MAX HURRIEDLY SITS DOWN IN THE
ARMCHAIR, PULLS A RUG OVER HIS
KNEES, FEIGNS SLEEP, SNORES HEAVILY.
PAULI ENTERS, CARRYING TWO CARRIER
BAGS. HE'S TALKING ON HIS MOBILE.

PAULI:: (TO PHONE).... that's very generous but I
really really can't .Are you still on for
brunch? Why not. Ciao.

MAX EMERGES FROM UNDER THE BLANKET,
YAWNING OSTENTATIOUSLY.

MAX: (CROSS) What time is it?

PAULI REDIALS

PAULI: Eleven thirty.

MAX: You're late.

PAULI: It overran. (TO PHONE, SEXY) Hi darling....how
was the shoot? ..are you serious?

AS HE TALKS HE UNPACKS THE FOOD.

MAX: What overran?

PAULI: (TO PHONE) Colin Firth? That's
brilliant....umm, hold on let me think.. Shit,
I can't... Tuesday? ... fine . Arreviderci,
Mmmm(kiss)

HE FINISHES THE CALL.

TO MAX-

The meeting. Mumbai came in with another
offer.

MAX: Why can't you get a job with normal hours?

PAULI: Global business never sleeps.

MAX: You could be a football manager, they only
work Saturdays . Or a vicar, they just do

Sunday mornings. I'm starving. What did you get?

HE GRABS AT THE BAGS, LOOKS INSIDE

PAULI: Green lentil and goji berry quiche.

MAX: (RESIGNEDLY) With brown rice.

PAULI: With brown rice.

MAX: No meat.

PAULI: Doctor's orders, remember? Gojis are high in essential proteins.

MAX: I want blood. You never bring anything with blood in it.

PAULI EXITS TO KITCHEN. MAX
OSTENTATIOUSLY USES HIS WALKING
FRAME TO SHUFFLE TO THE TABLE

Some woman called.

PAULI (OFF): Did she leave her name?

MAX: A flower of some kind. Petunia? Daisy? Lupin? Never may a flower. Princess Lupin. Queen Begonia. Countess Rain Daisy. I can't see it .I told her you were in Australia.

PAULI ENTERS WITH PLATES ETC THEY SIT. MAX
TUCKS IN HIS NAPKIN. PAULI IS PUNCHING NUMBERS
INTO HIS MOBILE

PAULI: (TO PHONE) Peter it's Pauli ringing at twenty five to twelve. Could you give me a call in the morning? Citibank are nibbling. Cheers. (TO MAX) Sorry. A lot going on. How was your day?

MAX: Frantic. Tried for a shit, soaked my dentures, tried again, lost my glasses, stared at the wall. Tell me about Rosemary.

PAULI:: Rosemary, Rosemary...no, I can't think of a Rosemary.

MAX: Where did you meet her?

PAULI: I didn't, I've never heard of her.

MAX: Then how come she rings you up? Elbows off the table. She left a message.

HE COUGHS, THEY BOTH CLOSE THEIR EYES

Lord God in Heaven all powerful all controlling who for reasons we don't always understand determines our fates and devises our circumstances we give humble thanks for this -

HE POKES AT HIS PLATE SUSPICIOUSLY

What did you say it was?

PAULI: Green lentil and goji berry quiche

MAX: For this green lentil and goji berry quiche. Amen.

PAULI: What was the message?

MAX: Ummm. Err...I was to tell you...hold on, hold on. She said..she said...no, sorry, it's gone. Probably not important. Straighten your collar.

MAX STARTS EATING

It's cold.

PAULI: It's meant to be cold.

MAX: Yesterday's was cold too. And the day before.

PAULI: It preserves the vitamins.

PAULI IS MAKING NOTES WHILE MAX KEEPS EATING. FINISHES HIS PORTION,, STEALS WHAT'S LEFT OF PAULI'S.

MAX: What's for afters?

PAULI: Tapioca.

MAX: Tapioca.

MAX AND PAULI (IN UNISON..) It's very healthy.

PAULI GETS A PLASTIC TUB OUT OF THE BAG, PUTS IT IN FRONT OF MAX THEN CASUALLY, WITHOUT MAX NOTICING PALMS THE LANDLINE HANDSET,CHECKS TO SEE

MAX ISN'T WATCHING, PUNCHES IN
NUMBERS, PUTS IT BACK.

MAX: Tabioca. I remember my fourth birthday party,
we had a junket fountain; we had a banquet in
the palace courtyard with four hundred guests,
including Grand Duke Frederick of Swabia and
Cardinal Spinkle.

PAULI'S MOBILE RINGS

PAULI: (TO PHONE, HUSHED BUT SEXY) Halo love...can I
ring you back? ...(GIGGLES) That's outrageous.
You too. (KISSES) A bientôt.

HE RINGS OFF, PUTS HIS MOBILE BACK
IN HIS POCKET .

(TO MAX) Sorry about that.

MAX: Rosemary?

PAULI: No, Helen.

MAX: Bloodline?

PAULI: Polish. She's a Zamoyscy on her mother's side.

MAX:: Zamoyscy? Don't say I didn't warn you. Where
was I?

PAULI: Your birthday party.

MAX: Ah yes. We had an ice sculpture of a mounted
hunter and six hounds chasing a life sized
ice cream stag , and we ate swan en croquette
and armadillo in aspic with sun dried dung
beetles. And Tabioca, of course. Have you ever
eaten sun dried dung beetle?

PAULI: No.

MAX: The legend is that after his defeat at the
battle of Grimala King Edgar and his knights
retreated into the desert. There was nothing
to eat or drink. They became increasingly
desperate. Then one day one of the knights
came across a dried up dung beetle and brought
it to Edgar. The king took his sword and cut
the beetle in half and gave one half back to
the knight; the knight hesitated for a moment
then ate the beetle . And to his astonishment
it tasted absolutely delicious. Edgar waited a
few moments to make sure the knight didn't

die; and then he bit his half, and it was indeed absolutely delicious. So from that day on it became a great national delicacy.

For afters there were eleven kinds of tropical fruit and meringues shaped like humming birds, and an Italian soprano sang my favourite nursery rhyme:

(SINGS, DOES A KIND OF JIG) Milkmaid milkmaid, sitting by the well/how many animals can you smell?/ Sniff sniff sniff sniff something big/ Could it be kangaroo? A camel? No - a pig! Sniff sniff sniff sniff grunt grunt grunt - quick. Toilet. Quick...

MAX MAKES A RAPID EXIT. PAULI GATHERS UP THE PLATES. HE SPOTS MAX'S NOTEBOOK, STARTS READING, GIGGLES, GOES FRONT OF STAGE, READS ALOUD:

PAULI:: (MOCKINGLY) My fellow Octavians. It's good to be back. And to such a welcome. Thank you thank you. Let this be a new beginning- for you, for me, for our country. I love you.

HE BLOWS KISSES TO AN IMAGINED CROWD

Come into my arms! We will be young lovers- anything will be possible.

HE TURNS THE PAGE, READS ON

You will talk, and I will listen.

HE ABANDONS THE SCRIPT, IMPROVISES.

When you are in pain I will comfort you, when you are tired I will give you rest. When we are hungry we will feed each other.

MAX COMES BACK INTO THE ROOM. PAULI DOESN'T NOTICE.

I love you. God, how I love you. I love who you are, the way you look, the way you smell. Without you my life has no meaning. Absolutely none. (SOBERLY) But - today, this glorious day, is both a halo, but also a goodbye. The road ahead is a task for a younger man, a man in the prime of life; and so I have decided on this glorious day to hand over this crown,

HE PUTS A TEA-CLOTH OR SOMESUCH ON
HIS HEAD

this sacred crown, to my beloved son Pauli,
to have and to hold -

MAX: (VIOLENTLY) Give me that !

HE SNATCHES BACK THE NOTEBOOK,
STARTS HITTING PAULI WITH HIS
WALKING FRAME; PAULI COWERS, PUTS
HIS HANDS ON HIS HEAD; MAX GETS
INCREASINGLY VIOLENT, BATTERS HIM
INTO A CORNER WHERE HE SLUMPS DOWN.

You ignorant spineless halfwitted thieving
little milksop - how dare you? You wouldn't
know a piece of oratory if it sat on your head
and took a dump. You're useless. Utterly
useless. What in heaven's name am I supposed
to do with you? You're meant to be kingly, You
should be preparing yourself, reading books
about of chasing after women and iron ore
futures . Hand over the crown? Hand over the
crown? To a halfwit?

A PAUSE. MAX GIVES HIM A FINAL
THWACK, SITS AGAIN

(SUDDENLY WEARY, QUIET) We're going back. Do
you understand? We're going back.

THE PHONE RINGS. MAX ANSWERS.

MAX: (TO PHONE) (HEAVY RUSSIAN ACCENT) Royal Palace.
(PAUSE) No, I'm afraid he's on a religious
retreat. (PAUSE) Addis Ababa. (PAUSE) No, he
didn't say. You could try calling back in a
year or so.

HE HANGS UP. A LONG SILENCE THEY
BOTH LOOK AROUND THE ROOM AT
ANYTHING EXCEPT EACH OTHER. PAULI
SNUFFLES

I didn't mean what I said about you. I'm
proud of you, Pauli. You've done well. I'm
proud of your career. Of what you've achieved.

PAULI: Are you really?

MAX: Yes. Very proud.

PAULI: Thank you. Thank you.

MAX: And I'm confident that by the time I die, you'll be ready to succeed. But be careful of the women . They're after my money.

PAULI: I didn't know you had any.

MAX: Oh yes, there's money. Oh yes. Yes indeed. Lorry loads of it. I was worried if I told you you'd rush out and spend it

HE SHUFFLES OVER TO THE SHELVES,
OPENS A SHOE BOX, TAKES OUT A BIG
BUNDLE OF SHARES, BANK NOTES, SLAMS
THEM ONE AT A TIME ON THE TABLE

The State Bank promises to pay the bearer 2 millions shkoti. Government of Octavia 50 year bond, 4 million shkoti at 8%. Kingdom of Rumania 6% War Bond.

PAULI: That's not real money, that's -

MAX: - that's the least of it. There's more, much moreGold. Silver. Ancient things. Icons from the time of Ivan the Propagator. A jade bracelet worn by Alexander The Great's mother-in-law. A tie pin belonging to Napoleon the third. Carefully stored away in forty lead-lined trunks, each as big as ..as...a hearse. He had them buried.

PAULI: Who had them buried ?

MAX: Your grandfather. When he saw what was coming down the line. He had them buried in the mountains. And while the soldiers were burying them he set up a machine gun in the book depository, overlooking the grassy knoll, and as soon as they'd finished he mowed them down, so that no-one would know where it was buried.

SFX: SOUND IN STREET. MAX STOPS
DEAD, LISTENS.

Shh.

HE GOES OVER TO THE WINDOW, LOOKS
OUT, BECKONS TO PAULI WHO GOES OVER

Who's that?

PAULI: Who?

MAX: Him.

PAULI: That's Fat Freddy from number 7. He's lived here for years.

MAX: Quick!

HE GRABS PAULI, PULLS HIM AWAY FROM THE WINDOW

What they do is kill someone and take their place.

PAULI: Like Little Red Riding Hood.

MAX: Who?

PAULI: Never mind.

MAX: Get under the table.

THEY BOTH GET UNDER THE TABLE, MAX PUSHES HIM OUT AGAIN

The light!

PAULI TURNS OFF THE LIGHT, GETS UNDER THE TABLE.

MAX: Ow. Careful.

PAUSE

Hold me. Ouch. No, not like that.

PAULI: That better? It's OK. It's OK. There now...

BLACKOUT

LIGHTS UP, SAME SCENE, NEXT DAY.
PAULI IS ON THE PHONE. MAX IS AT THE TABLE, WHISTLING THE PIG NURSERY RHYME, EXAMINING A PLATE OF FOOD

PAULI: (TO PHONE) Have you talked to the minister yet?....No, then hold off until we hear from Brussels....Fine.

MAX: What's this?

PAULI: (TO MAX) Mung leaf crumble.

MAX: It tastes like wet sandpiper. Will we give them a few more minutes?

PAULI: They're not coming.
MAX: None of them?
PAULI: Nope.
MAX: Well will we start anyway?
PAULI: Why not.

MAX PUTS ON A SASH. PAULI STANDS TO ATTENTION; THEY PUT THEIR HANDS ON THEIR HEARTS; (? PAULI PRESSES A BUTTON ON A CASSETTE RECORDER; A DRUM ROLL; THEN A BAND PLAYS?) THEY SING TO THE TUNE OF BA BA BLACK SHEEP. ALONG. MAX IS ENTHUSIASTIC, PAULI BORED.

BOTH: Yashlik goldik- soctivia!
gobtan rosh -proclavia!
Shiglag, bogglag ragman - tant!
Ficton flactia magman - crant!
Yashlik goldik- soctivia!
gricsom grint - - OCT-A-VI-A!!

THEY RELAX, PAULI SITS, OPENS A BOX FILE, TAKES OUT DOCUMENTS, ARRANGES THEM

PAULI: (WEARILY) Does it please your highness ?
MAX: It pleases us.

PAULI CLEARS HIS THROAT, READS FROM HIS PAPERS

PAULI: Minutes of the meeting of the Council of State of the kingdom of Octavia held on the 13th of August inst. Present -

POINTS TO MAX

His Royal Highness King Maximilian 10th. Also present-

POINTS TO HIMSELF

Crown Prince Pauli Carl Joseph de zouche,
Prime Minister and acting Minister of Finance
Defence Public Hygiene and Woman's Matters.
Apologies received (*reads off-hand, very
quickly*)- The minister for Equality and Law
Reform,-

MAX: You think I'm paranoid.

PAULI: previous engagement-...the acting Minister for
tourism the marine and social media

MAX: You think I should get out more. You think I
don't want to?

PAULI: - immigration appeal hearing.

MAX: You think I like being cooped up in here all
day?

PAULI: - the acting minister for Science Technology
and Waste Disposal-

MAX: There are people out there who want to kill
me.

PAULI: - taken into care. You could wear a disguise.

MAX: - they thought Trotsky was paranoid . What?

PAULI: It's what kings do. Dress up as a commoner and
mingle with ordinary people. It's been a long
time since you went out.

MAX: (THINKS) February. I fell in the shower. We
went to the hospital.

PAULI: With a blanket over your head.

MAX: They thought your great great uncle the Tsar
was paranoid. If he had been he might still be
alive.

PAULI: He'd be a hundred and sixty seven.

MAX: And Archduke Ferdinand.

MAX STARTS COUNTING THEM ON HIS
FINGERS

MAX: Princess Diana, JFK, Martin Luther King,
Abraham Lincoln, John Lennon, Sam Cooke,
Marvin Gaye, JR Ewing,

PAULI: Item One. Draft plan for proposed road and rapid transit links to proposed King Maximilian international airport.

PAULI PRODUCES A PIECE OF PAPER,
WAITS WHILE MAX FINISHES, PASSES IT
OVER

MAX: That's it?

PAULI: Yes.

MAX STUDIES IT, REACHES FOR A CUP,
CONDIMENTS, OTHER OBJECTS, STARTS
ARRANGING THEM

MAX: OK. So this is the old cathedral. And this is the National Museum. So if you want to - let me see - is the zoo still beside the lake?

PAULI: I don't know. I've never been there.

MAX: You did this yourself?

PAULI: I got some stuff of the internet

MAX: Useless.

MAX SCRUMPLES UP THE PAPER, PUTS IT
IN THE BIN

Next.

PAULI: Item two: Motion- 'This Government deplores the continued failure-

MAX: This is ridiculous. What's the point. I want to go home. They need me.

MAX BEGINS TO GET AGITATED,
SCRATCHES HIS HEAD, DRUMS HIS
FINGERS MORE AND MORE VIOLENTLY ON
THE TABLE

Take me home! Now ! That's an order!

PAULI: (QUIETLY)Did you take your medication this morning?

PAULI GETS UP, GOES OVER AND COUNTS
MAX'S PILLS

MAX: I'm going. You can't stop me.

PAULI BRINGS HIM A GLASS OF WATER
AND SOME PILLS .MAX PUSHES HIM AWAY,
GETS UP ON HIS WALKING FRAME, WAVES
HIS ARMS, CIRCLES THE STAGE.

No-one can stop me. No-one! Try and stop me!
You can't! I'm a force of nature. A horse! A
horse! My kingdom for a horse. Neeeeeeagh !
Neeeeeeagh! Neeeeeeagh!

HE SUDDENLY STOPS, SITS, PUTS HIS
HEAD ON THE TABLE. PAULI GENTLY
BRINGS HIM THE PILLS AND WATER;HE
TAKES THEM, THEN REACHES OUT AND
TAKES PAULI'S HAND AND STROKES IT.

PAULI: It's OK. It's OK. Take it easy.

MAX STARTS TO SOB QUIETLY

MAX: I'm sorry. Did you write to them again?

PAULI: I did. I said you would like to go home,
quietly and without any fuss, so that you can
spend your last years in the country you love.
All you ask is for a place to live. Somewhere
quiet and peaceful, a little cottage maybe, by
a lake - are there lakes in Octavia?- With a
garden, a few fruit trees, a porch..

MAX: ...and a rocking chair where I can sit in the
shade of the vines and watch the country
people go about their business, haymaking,
chopping logs...and in return?

PAULI: ..I said you would agree to renounce your
titles and all claims to the throne-

A PAUSE

MAX: (QUIETLY,SLOWLY)- OK, so the deal is - I get a
run down cottage in the back of beyond with a
couple of apple trees-

PAULI: No, no, it's only a suggestion - -

MAX SLAMS HIS FIST DOWN ON THE TABLE

MAX: And in return you've told them I'll abdicate.
ABDICATE. (THUMPS)Never!(THUMPS) Never! The
day we go back is the day they come begging,
cap in hand.

LONG PAUSE. THEY SAY NOTHING. VERY SLOWLY PAULI CLOSES HIS FOLDER, PUTS HIS PEN BACK IN HIS POCKET ETC.

PAULI: (MUTTERS) It's never going to happen.

MAX: What are you talking about?

PAULI: You're never going back.

MAX: Yes I am. We are. We're going home.—

PAULI:: Home? Home? I've never even been there. Where the hell is Octavia?

MAX COVERS HIS EARS, STARTS MUTTERING THE NATIONAL ANTHEM, (BA BA BLACK SHEEP AS BEFORE)

MAX: (SINGS, TO THE TUNE OF BA BA BLACK SHEEP) Yashlik goldik- soctivia!

gobtan rosh -proclavia!

PAULI: (MOCKINGLY) Octavia? No, never heard of it.

MAX: (SINGS)

Shiglag, bogglag ragman - tant!

Ficton flactia magman - crant!

PAULI: Didn't they win the Eurovision? No, that was Moldova. Let me think. Octavia.

MAX: (SINGS)

Yashlik goldik- soctivia!

gricsom grint - - OCT-A-VI-A!!!

MAX: I'm going to report you.

PAULI: Who to?

MAX: The newspapers. You could go to prison.

PAULI KEEPS PACKING

PAULI: For what?

MAX: Cruelty.

PAULI: What??

MAX: Filial neglect. Look at me. I said - look at me ! A poor sick invalid refugee, housebound, begging for a bit of hot food . In every house in every street in the country there are people saying 'I wish I'd talked to my mother and father while they were still alive, so many questions I'd have liked to ask that I can never ask now.'

PAULI: OK - I've got a question for you. What. Is. The point?

MAX: What's the point of what?

PAULI: This nonsense. All these years - what have you achieved? An invitation to a conference in North Korea, if you paid your own fare. None of it matters.

MAX: Matters? I'll tell you why it matters. It matters because since we left -

PAULI: Since you left. I wasn't born, remember

MAX: Since your mother

CROSSES HIMSELF

and I left, Octavia has gone through eleven Presidents. Nineteen prime ministers. What it hasn't had is a wise leader who puts his people before himself.

PAULI: Hold on -did you say wise? Wise?? Ha! This is brilliant. Maximilian the Wise! Inheritor of a line which emerged from the insatiable loins of none other than the legendary robber-baron, psychopath and child rapist -Hubert The Strange.

HE GETS TO HIS FEET, POINTS TO A GENEALOGICAL CHART ON THE WALL

And Hubert begat Simon the Sheepstealer. Begat Magdon the Mad, begat Edmund the Incontinent, begat Georgi Oneball, begat Martin The Hairy, begat Hannah Halfwit, begat... begat...begat...Nigel the Nice. begat Boris Threeballs, begat - who did Boris beget?

MAX: Mikhail Monkfish.

PAULI: Right. Begat (POINTS AT MAX) Maximilliam
(HEAVY SARCASM) The Unbelievably Wise.

MAX: Shut up!

PAULI: Currently living in exile off the Dumbarton
Road but who cares! No-one's actually looking
for him. I've had it. You're fooling yourself.
I'm fooling myself. I'm off.

PAULI STARTS TO GATHER UP HIS
POSSESSIONS.

MAX: Where are you going?

PAULI: Kazakhstan. Peru. Belgium. No - Octavia!
Octavia! Of course! 'Octavia - land of mud,
turnips and toxic waste! Where the taxis have
no brakes and the sun never rises!

MAX: You selfish little runt. Off having sex while
I'm sitting here struggling to fit new
batteries into the remote. You can't even make
a decent cup of tea. I'm ashamed of you,
you're nothing but a - a - a peasant. No,
peasants do what they're told.

PAULI CONTINUES TO IGNORE HIM,
WHISTLES A DEFIANT, UPBEAT TUNE.

PAULI: La la la la la .

MAX: I'd hoped maybe that I'd be able to see out my
life here-

PAULI WHISTLES ON, PUTS ON HIS COAT

PAULI: Bla bla bla bla ..

MAX: - that you'd find a little kindness towards an
old man, the way you promised your mother as
she lay dying-

PAULI FREEZES

PAULI: Promised her what??

MAX: That you'd take care of me.

PAULI: Hold on, hold on..

MAX: You took her hand and promised you'd take care
of me. You swore. On the bible.

PAULI: My mother?? Do you know old I was when she left for the Ashram?

MAX: I forget.

PAULI: Two hours. I was in an incubator.

PAULI GOES OVER TO THE BOOKCASE AND LOOKS FOR THE ENVELOPE. IT'S NOT THERE.

PAULI: Where is it.

MAX: Mrs May would probably do a bit of shopping for me. I don't mind eating out of tins. I'll find someone to come in and open them for me.

PAULI GETS MORE FRANTIC

PAULI: The money. There was three hundred quid in there. Where's the rest?

MAX: What money?

PAULI BEGINS TO RANSACK THE ROOM

PAULI: You know fine well what money. Three hundred quid. In an envelope

MAX: I don't know what you're talking about.

PAULI: (MENACINGLY)Where is it?

PAULI GRABS HIM BY THE HAIR

MAX: Ow.

PAULI: You thieving old maggot.

PAULI BEGINS TO STRANGLE HIM. MAX GULPS, STRUGGLES, POINTS TOWARDS THE CHAIR

Where??

MAX POINTS AGAIN

MAX: Gurgle gurgle cough gurgle cough

PAULI GOES OVER TO THE CHAIR, SEARCHES. WHILE HIS BACK IS TURNED MAX PRETENDS TO PASS OUT. PAULI TURNS ROUND, SEES HIM

PAULI: Fuck.

PAULI SHAKES HIM; MAX IS INERT.

Fuck fuck fuck fuck fuck fuck

PAULI TRIES TO REVIVE HIM. OPENS HIS EYES, THEY STAY OPEN. CLOSSES THEM AGAIN.

BLACKOUT. MUSIC. IN THE DARKNESS THE PHONE RINGS AGAIN.

LIGHTS UP. MAX IS IN HIS CHAIR, PROPPED UP WITH EXTRA PILLOWS. A VASE OF FLOWERS . PAULI IS FUSSING OVER HIM, ADJUSTS HIS PILLOWS.

MAX: Ow. Be careful. That hurt.

PAULI OFFERS HIM GRAPES. MAX EXAMINES THEM, TRIES ONE, SPITS IT OUT

MAX: I asked for muscadels. Did you get me the paper?

PAULI: Yes.

PAULI HANDS HIM THE PAPER. MAX HANDS IT BACK

MAX: Read.

PAULI: Where we would you like to start?

MAX: The horoscope.

PAULI: (READS) 'Pisces. Today is a good day to think of others, to appreciate those friends and relatives who you rely on to get you through the day.'

MAX: You're making this up.

HE SNATCHES THE PAPER, LOOKS, HANDS IT BACK

You could have killed me.

PAULI: I've said I'm sorry.

A LONGISH PAUSE; PAULI MAKES HIMSELF BUSY

MAX: I know I'm a burden. I'll try and be less of a nuisance.

PAULI: You're not a nuisance.

MAX: Yes I am.

PAULI: OK. Yes, you are.

MAX: You know what my dream is? To take you back. To show you. There's a chain that begins with the Emperor Charlemagne, and it ends

HE TAPS HIS HEAD

here. And from here it will pass - when I die-

HE TAPS PAULI'S HEAD

to here. I've got something for you.

HE PRODUCES A SMALL ANTIQUE
BOX, HANDS IT TO PAULI.

PAULI: This is for me?

MAX: Open it.

PAULI OPENS IT. INSIDE IS A PIECE OF
LEATHER WRAPPED IN TISSUE. HE
UNWRAPS IT, EXAMINES IT, SNIFFS,
HOLDS IT UP TO THE LIGHT

PAULI: What is it?

MAX: Guess.

PAULI: No idea.

MAX: It's a relic.

PAULI: A relic of what?

MAX: Saint Boris. Boris IXth.

PAULI: Boris Smalltooth? Boris Smalltooth was a saint?

MAX: He had the cure. People would bring the sick to him and he'd order them to stop whingeing and malingering and mostly they did. If they didn't he'd put them on the rack until they did. Not a bad system if you think about it.

PAULI: And this?

HE HOLDS UP THE RELIC, A PIECE OF
LEATHER ROUGHLY SIX INCHES SQUARE

MAX: It's his foreskin.

PAULI HOLDS IT UP AGAIN, MEASURES IT

PAULI: His foreskin?

MAX: It's over seven hundred years old. I want you
to have it. For luck.

PAULI: For luck.

MAX: And potency.

PAULI: What do I do, wear it?

MAX: No, just keep it somewhere safe.

PAULI: Does it work?

MAX: It does if you believe in it.

PAULI: Do you?

MAX: No. But maybe it might work for you.

PAULI: Why was Boris a saint?

MAX: The story is that he was out hunting in the
forest one day with his brother.

HE GOES INTO ONCE-UPON-A-TIME
STORYTELLER MODE.

The weather was hot. They were thirsty. They'd
chased a pack of wolves further than they
meant, the pack led them deeper and deeper
into the woods, until they found themselves in
a part of the forest they'd never been in
before. They were lost. The sun was setting
in the east.

PAULI: The east?

MAX: The east.

PAULI: Are you sure? The sun usually sets in the -

MAX: Positive.

PAULI:: Oh. OK.

MAX:: They came to a clearing. In the middle of the clearing was a woodcutter's hut, and beside the woodcutter's hut a clear cool stream-

PAULI: And a waterfall?

MAX: and a waterfall, yes. And beside the waterfall was -

PAULI: a pool...and beside the pool there sat..

MAX: .. a pretty young-

PAULI: ..milkmaid?

MAX: ..milkmaid. The moment King Egbert saw her -

PAULI: Hold on - Egbert?

MAX: Yes, King Egbert.

PAULI: What about Boris? This was meant to be about King Boris.

MAX: Was it?

PAULI: Yes, you were going to tell me how Boris got to be a saint.

MAX: Was I? No. I don't think so. This is about how Egbert fell in love with the orphaned shepherdess. Only she turned out not to be a milkmaid at all, she was really a tortoise - who - who...where was I?

PAULI: Boris. And the milkmaid and Prince Egbert.

MAX: What's Egbert got to do with the relic? Egbert was a muslim. No, that was Ali, Egbert killed Ali...no, Boris married his page, didn't he? Anyway, it's Boris's foreskin, I thought you might like it. It's an heirloom. My father gave it to me.

PAULI: What happened to the brother?

MAX: What brother.

PAULI: Egbert's brother.

MAX : He died. I think. Choked to death on a dung beetle.

HE BEGINS TO DROP OFF TO SLEEP

Hmmm.

MAX YAWNS, APPEARS TO FALL ASLEEP, STARTS TO SNORE. PAULI MAKES SURE HE'S COMFORTABLE, EXITS, WE HEAR THE FRONT DOOR CLOSE. A PAUSE; MAX OPENS HIS EYES, LOOKS AROUND, GETS UP, POTTERS AROUND THE ROOM, BEING NOSEY. HE NOTICES PAULI'S MOBILE, PICKS IT UP, FIDDLES WITH IT. SUDDENLY THE LANDLINE RINGS. HE LOOKS AT THE MOBILE, THEN AT THE LANDLINE; PICKS UP THE LANDLINE.

MAX: Halo?

HE LOOKS BACK AT THE MOBILE. PUNCHES THE LANDLINE; MOBILE RINGS. HE REPEATS ALL THIS TWO OR THREE TIMES

BLACKOUT; LIGHTS UP ON SAME SOME TIME LATER. PAULI IS DUSTING, CLEANING, TIDYING, IN PLASTIC GLOVES. THREE KNOCKS ON THE DOOR, PAULI KNOCKS TWICE, FOUR KNOCKS FROM OUTSIDE ETC. PAULI EXITS, SOUNDS OF LOCKS AND BOLTS ETC, HE RE-ENTERS FOLLOWED BY MAX, WEARING A TERRORIST-STYLE BALACLAVA; HE POSES, MAKES PISTOL SHAPES

MAX: PEEOW! PEEOW! What do you think? Eh? Incognito, or what?

MAX REMOVES HIS BALACLAVA

PAULI: Where were you?

MAX: Mingling with the common people.

PAULI:: (OFF HAND) How were they?

MAX: Common. They like to shop. They want to know how to eat more and lose weight at the same time. They talk about the weather, and football, and celebrity divorces. And they keep ringing each other up to say where they are and where they were and where they're going to be and that they'll ring again when they get there.

MAX LETS PAULI HELP HIM INTO A
CHAIR. MAX HANDS HIM A NEWSPAPER.
PAULI SITS.

PAULI: I was worried about you.

MAX: Were you? Really? Oh. Thank you. Thank you.
I'm glad.

MAX HANDS HIM A NEWSPAPER, SMILES

Pisces. Did I ever tell you the story of how
Maurice The Hairy repulsed the Turks?

PAULI: Yes.

MAX: The Sultan and his army were camped on the far
side of the River Synp. A huge army, fifty
thousand elephants and camels and sixty
crocodiles in canvas water tanks ready to be
unleashed in the river.. There was a shepherd
boy, his name was - Sam? Tim?

BOTH: Mim.

MAX: Mim. Yes. Now Mim was - was -

PAULI: - handicapped?

MAX: No, a cripple. His mother died in a typhoid
epidemic, his father was carried off into
slavery by the ...

PAULI'S PHONE RINGS, THEY BOTH REACH
FOR IT, MAX GETS THERE FIRST

Halo? (PAUSE; HE WINKS AT PAULI) yes , this
is the Crown Prince talking....(PAUSE)? Oh.
May I ask who's calling? (WARMLY) Halo,
Rosemary, Remind me again - this is in
connection with..St Mungo's, yes, yes, about
my father....the sheltered accommodation ...

HE LOOKS AT PAULI

Yes, of course I remember. And you have a
place, you do? Refurbished...no problem, not
at all. Still interested ? Absolutely. Yes,
we've talked it over and he's quite happy
about it.. to be honest his health isn't
great, and I'm out at work all the day, he's
on his own, he thinks he'd feel safer ...well
of course, I'll discuss it with him and ring
you back....Not at all, my pleasure.

HE HANGS UP. THEY LOOK AT EACH OTHER

MAX: Well well well. The. Saint. Mungo.
Residential. Care Home. East Kilbride.

PAULI:: It's not a home. It's sheltered accommodation.
I was only making enquiries. There's a waiting
list, you have to put your name down.

MAX: Like Eton.

A LONG SILENCE

I'm losing my marbles, is that it?

MAX GETS UP, USES HIS WALKING FRAME

Well we'd better get on with it, hadn't we.
Shouldn't be too complicated, I assume it's
just the one room. Do I need to take sheets
and towels?

HE GETS A GRIP OUT FROM UNDER THE
BED, STARTS PACKING. PAULI SITS WITH
HIS HEAD IN HIS HANDS

PAULI: It was just an enquiry.

PAUSE

MAX: (quietly)You're right.

PAULI: What?

MAX: You're right. I'm just a selfish old man.
(LAYS IT ON WITH A TROWEL) (SNIFFLE)I'll go, I
know when I'm not wanted, I'm a burden. You're
young, you have more interesting things to do.
Travel. Join a golf club. Have sex. Marry
Petunia.

PAULI: Don't do this.

MAX LOOKS AROUND, PICKS UP STUFF,
BOOKS ETC, PUTS A COUPLE OF THINGS
IN HIS GRIP. HE RETRIEVES THE
ENVELOPE WITH PAULI'S MONEY IN IT,
CHECKS THE CONTENTS, SLIPS IT INTO
HIS POCKET.

MAX: No, it's entirely sensible. I imagine St
Mungo's is very popular, I'm lucky to get a
place. It's that big grey Victorian building,
isn't it? Next to the old prison? Used to be a

workhouse? I think I saw in the paper, they converted the cellars into sheltered accommodation. For (DOES QUOTES GESTURE) 'independent living'.

PAULI: (Mutters) They weren't cellars, they were Mews.

MAX:: But they'll have a fire escape these days, I'm sure. And hot water. And it won't matter if you're a bit deaf BECAUSE EVERYONE SHOUTS AT EVERYONE SO THEY CAN BE HEARD OVER THE DAYTIME TELEVISION WHICH IS KEPT UP LOUD SO THAT PEOPLE CAN HEAR IT OVER THE SOUND OF OTHER PEOPLE SHOUTING AT EACH OTHER. Do they have organised activities? Singalongs, bingo, old time dancing - I bet they do. Come on everyone,

HE MIMICS AEROBICS MOVEMENTS

- hands in the air, clip clop clap! Bend the knees, wiggle your bottom- come on at the back there! Whoops - a- daisy, Bumps-a-daisy, one two - careful with the walking frames -OUCH !

HE TEARS THE GENEALOGY CHART OFF THE WALL

I don't imagine anyone else will be much interested in this stuff. Doesn't really mean anything unless it's part of your own life.

PAULI: Stop.

HE STOPS

MAX: It's you I'm sorry for. You'll be lonely. I heard you lost your job.

ANOTHER PAUSE; MAX CONTINUES TO SORT THINGS, LOOKS AT THEM, TOSSES THEM IN THE BIN.

PAULI: What job.

MAX: The restaurant.

PAULI: (FREEZES FOR A MOMENT) What restaurant?

MAX: Old Mother Nature's Original Organic Wholefood Larder. Home of the legendary left over lentil and goji quiche and tepid brown rice.

PAULI:: What are you talking about.

MAX: They fired you.

PAULI: How could they fire me? I don't work there

MAX: I looked in the window and recognised the menu.

PAULI: (MORE FLUSTERED) Oh - Mother Natures- that place-

MAX: There's a big vacancy sign - 'kitchen porter wanted'.

PAULI: I sometimes pick something up for us on my way home.

MAX: So I went in and asked what kind of person they were looking for.

PAULI: They stay open late.

MAX: Ah yes, the global market in goji bean quiche futures never sleeps.

PAULI: For god's sake, what are you suggesting?

MAX: They said anyone as long as they're not Octavian. I said why, what's wrong with Octavians? They said, day dreamers. Day dreamers. Live in a world of their own. And I don't think this is the first time it's happened - remember when we always had reheated shish kebab? And before that there was previously loved pizza.....

PAULI: I work in financial services.

MAX: Of course you do

MAX TAKES THE LANDLINE PHONE, DIALS,
PUTS DOWN THE RECEIVER, PICKS UP
PAULI'S MOBILE; IT RINGS; HE ANSWERS

(IMITATING PAULI AS BANKER) Hi
Brian...great...so why don't we offer six
trillion and see what way the spaghetti bends?
Great.

HE HOLDS ON TO THE MOBILE, PUNCHES
SOME NUMBERS AT RANDOM

(SEXY) Puss puss my darling how about
Thursday? (PAUSE)Tuesday ? Hold on...

HE PUNCHES IN MORE NUMBERS; THE
LANDLINE RINGS; HE PICKS IT UP

(AS BANKER)Hi Boris can't talk now I'm in a
meeting

HE PUNCHES NUMBERS INTO THE
LANDLINE; SPEAKS INTO THE HANDSET ,
MEANWHILE AS HE TALKS PUNCHES IN
ANOTHER SET OF NUMBERS. THE MOBILE
RINGS; HE SPEAKS INTO THE PHONES
ALTERNATIVELY

(TO MOBILE, SEXY) Of course I love you, Prime
Minister

(TO MOBILE, AS BANKER) Henry? Option the fur
handcuffs and dump the dildos .(TO PAULI) Do
you want a word with him?

HE STOPS, GRASPS HIS BACK, LEANS
AGAINST THE TABLE. PAULI STILL HAS
HIS HEAD IN HIS HANDS. NEITHER OF
THEM MOVES. MAX SITS. THEY BOTH
STARE AT THEIR HANDS. A LONG PAUSE.
EVENTUALLY MAX SPEAKS

Did I ever tell you the story of the old
cockroach and the young cockroach

PAULI: Remind me.

MAX: Once upon a time, a long time ago, in a far
far distant land, in the depths of a dark and
gloomy forest, there lay a rotting log; and
under the log there lived -

PAULI: -is this a sad story?

MAX: - I'm not sure. It could be. I'm not sure.
There lived a decrepit old cockroach and his-

PAULI:: - handsome -

MAX: Umm - no, not particularly -

PAULI: -dashing-

MAX:: -son.

PAULI: Every day the son would set out to forage for food. It was boring, humiliating, unrewarding work. His days were long and dreary. And he found himself doing what people do when faced with an eternity of dreary pointlessness. He daydreamed. He dreamed he was lying on a tropical beach with his arm round Begonia -

MAX: Hydrangea.

PAULI: Hydrangea.

MAX: Hydrangea. But soon as the son had left the old man crawled out from under the log, poured himself a large husk of fermented fox urine and fell asleep. He was wakened by the gentle but persistent cooing of a pigeon. And in his beak the pigeon held a letter.

HE EXTRACTS AN ENVELOPE AND HANDS IT TO PAULI

Open it.

PAULI OPENS THE ENVELOPE; INSIDE IS A LETTER; HE EXAMINES IT, LOOKS AT THE ENVELOPE, THEN AT THE LETTER AGAIN.

Read it.

PAULI: Private and Confidential. Dear Mr Gustafflenstickle. Who's Gustafflenstickle?

MAX: I am. You are. It's our family name.

PAULI: Dear Mr Gustafflenstickle, Thank you for your letter. After careful consideration the government has agreed to accede to your request, on condition that you renounce all outstanding claims to title or property in perpetuity . Subject to these conditions the government of Octavia will provide a modest pension and lifetime tenure of -

MAX HANDS HIM A PHOTOGRAPH

MAX: - a small cottage overlooking a lake , with a bit of a garden, a few fruit trees...

PAULI: Why didn't you tell me?

MAX: I don't know.

A LONG SILENCE.

Because...

MAX SHRUGS

The great advantage of living in dreams is that you can live there without having to be there.

PAULI: What's it really like?

MAX: Octavia? I don't know. I really don't know any more. There's an Octavia in here (HE TAPS HIS HEAD) and an Octavia out there, and I've no idea where one ends and the other begins. As far as I can remember it's a flat dull place with a few dull towns where nothing much happens, nor ever did. It is what it is. A place I come from that's different from where other people come from. I don't want to be like everyone else.

PAULI: So who *will* you be?

MAX: Plain Mr Gustafflenstickle.

PAULI: And who will *I* be?

MAX: Pauli (*choose one..*) the Sad? the Procrastinator? The Patient?

PAULI: Tell me about the treasure.

MAX: What about it.

PAULI: Does it exist?

MAX: Yes, absolutely. All we have to do is find it. It's important to have something to look for.

PAUSE

PAULI: If we get there, we're going to wish we were back here wishing we were there.

MAX: Of course.

PAULI: But if we don't go we're going to wish we were back there wishing we were back here.

MAX: Of course.

PAULI: And if we don't not go we're going to wish we weren't back there not wishing we were back here.

MAX: Precisely.

PAUSE

PAULI: So what *are* we going to do.

MAX: You decide.

PAULI: No, you decide.

MAX: No you decide.

PAULI: Uh uh. You're the king. You decide.

MAX TAKES THE TEA TOWEL AND PUTS IT ON PAULI'S HEAD

MAX: No, your highness, *you* decide.

PAULI: Your highness??

MAX: I've abdicated.

PAULI: But...you can't

MAX: Yes I can.

PAULI: Oh no you can't

MAX: Oh yes I can...

(Etc)

FADE UP MUSIC: NATIONAL ANTHEM

FADE DOWN LIGHTS