

GOLDEN CAGE

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In an old laboratory they find a deadly smallpox virus. Everyone who was in touch with it must be placed in hospital. Seeing it as an opportunity to earn, they all hope it is inactive.

The story takes place in a hospital room.

CHARACTERS

Laboratorian

General Ripe

Pharmacist Hunter

Doctoress

Insurance Agent

Doctor

Nurse

ACT 1

The Infectious Diseases Ward. A separate room with a curtain dividing Special cases, just right next to the Hazardous Waste Incinerator. Piles of newspaper lying on the floor.

LABORATORIAN */reads a newspaper, while a Nurse always in special clothing, prepares a bed for her/* Here, they write about me. "Lost vials with deadly smallpox virus from the '50s were

found by an employee of the American Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) on the 1st of July who was emptying the old laboratory of the National Institute of Health (NIH) ..."

NURSE It was all over the news. We immediately knew guests are coming. We're the only hospital with such equipment. */points to the incinerator/* Please, take off your clothes.

LABORATORIAN What a warm welcome. Is that all?

NURSE That is all. */gives her a pyjamas and throws her clothes into the incinerator/*

LABORATORIAN Ouch, the suit was new and it wasn't cheap.

NURSE Ahem, ... did you get it insured? You might get your money back in case the diagnosis proves negative.

LABORATORIAN No, I didn't get the chance to insure it. I bought it yesterday and this morning I got a phonecall from a television inviting me for an interview. But instead of the interview I ended up here and my suit there. */pointing to the incinerator/*

NURSE Well, it could have been the other way round. I will take some samples for the lab analysis.

LABORATORIAN I've done the analysis. The results are still hot */pointing to the incinerator/*. They were in my handbag.

Nurseis taking samples and storing test-tubes. Doctorenters to examine a patient. Doctor never wears a special protective clothing.

DOCTOR Welcome! We've been expecting you.

LABORATORIAN That's why I put on my new suit */with a sad look at the incinerator/*.

DOCTOR How many of you were there?

LABORATORIAN I'm the only one with the microscope. But when it came out, we were overwhelmed by phonecalls.

DOCTOR Came out?

LABORATORIAN When it went public. Everyone started asking. Three arrived in one hour. There was one from the government, one from the pharmaceutical monopoly and on the stairs, when I was on the way to the car, some lady stopped me and claimed that she was an "unconvinced" Doctress.

DOCTOR Nurse, please, arrange the accommodation, we expect some precious guests. Will see, how many of them have been vaccinated.

/Rubbing his hands he leaves the room. /

ACT 2

Behind a barred window there is a flashing light from a lighthouse. In a minute there can be a sound heard from a hallway and then General enters accompanied by the Nurse.

NURSE */to the Laboratorian/* Let me introduce your new room-mate, General Ripe.

LABORATORIAN You don't have to, we already know each other. And I won't shake your hand either, we're in the infectious place.

NURSE General will temporarily live behind that curtain.

GENERAL Temporal things last the longest. At least we'll have enough time to finish our conversation... */starts taking off the clothes, gets a pyjamas from the Nurse, his personal belongings are thrown into the incinerator/*

NURSE I'll only take the samples and leave you alone. */takes test-tubes and leaves/*

GENERAL Let me continue where I finished last time. As I already had said, the virus is very important for the army. In terms of safety, of course. It should be under control. Under our control. Any unauthorised use or misuse needs to be prevented. I would appreciate if you gave it to us voluntarily.

LABORATORIAN General, ...

GENERAL ...Ripe.

LABORATORIAN Mr. Ripe, it is highly likely you already have it. That's why we are meeting here today. And it is highly unlikely you will need it anymore, I mean the laboratory virus.

GENERAL The virus must be in a safe place.

LABORATORIAN It is. Noone is going to disturb you here. Silence behind the curtain heals, even if it still feels to me as if there was a radio turned on and there's no one to turn it off.

/Shadow play, characters playing in the lamplight on the curtain./

GENERAL How much do you want for it?

LABORATORIAN It's not for sale. You can only catch it here.

GENERAL You will have to give it up it one day. You'd better give it to me. It will be safe with me. Virus like this needs to be under control.

LABORATORIAN Fifty years and no one has been interested in it. No one has missed it.

GENERAL It is the regulation of the Government. The virus must be stored in a safe place.

LABORATORIAN Well then, talk to the World Health Organization (WHO), they'll liquidate it, or to the Center in Atlanta, they'd still have some left, or directly to Moscow, we have no idea how much can be found there.

GENERAL But we are only interested in yours.

LABORATORIAN So are we.

NURSE */from behind the doors/* So are we.

GENERAL How much do you want for it?

LABORATORIAN I've already told you, it's not for sale.

GENERAL Madam, let's say, today, we can agree on very favourable terms; tomorrow, you will be given an order and neither you nor me will benefit from it.

LABORATORIAN Mr. General, I've been trying to explain to you from the very beginning that the situation and the reason why we are gathered here today, is so severe that some checks and balances in the bank are of no interest to me. Oh, yes, my suit. */sad look at the incinerator/* Well, at the end of the day, I'd rather give up my suit than let it be my escape route.

ACT 3

Night. Flashing light from a lighthouse beacons hospital windows. In a minute, approaching voices can be heard from the hallway. Doors open and Hunter, the representative of a world pharmaceutical monopoly accompanied by the Nurse in special clothes enter...

NURSE I'm bringing company, General. Here you are, the gentlemen's section of this room, left to the curtain, is yours. You still have the chance to choose a bed. Ladies are to the right, some of their beds are occupied or reserved.

PHARMACIST Thank you, Nurse.

NURSE Here's your pyjamas, well it's also a lazy day cloth - until called off. We must burn all the other personal belongings.

Pharmacist takes off his clothes next to the incinerator and notices piles of newspapers. On the top he sees an article about the virus discovery.

PHARMACIST */to Nurse/* Is Madam already here?

LABORATORIAN */from behind the curtain/* Present.

PHARMACIST Great.

LABORATORIAN Nothing great about it.

Pharmacist jumps out of his bed and runs to the Laboratorian. He is entangled in a curtain.

NURSE No hugs, please, you're at The Infectious Diseases Ward. I'd like to take samples for analysis, if you don't mind. Then we can only wait for the results and will have plenty of time to talk, trust me. I'm wishing you a Good Night, my dears.

The Nurse leaves the room with the test-tubes. Dark. Only a lamplight shines on the small table next to the bed of the Pharmacist. All of them are asleep, only a new patient can be heard.

PHARMACIST Great! That's amazing! Ingenious coincidence. */hopping on his bed and rubs his hands/*

GENERAL Could you stop, please?!

PHARMACIST Stop? What? I've just started. I've got a wonderful opportunity for a bargain, best on the Planet. Can you imagine?

GENERAL Shut up and sleep.

Pharmacist sits nimbly on the bed.

PHARMACIST Sleep? Right now and sleep? When history is being born, should I be sleeping? Do you realize the greatness of this moment?

LABORATORIAN Let him be. He's right. If the diagnosis is proven right, he'll be sleeping forever. Give him a while to live.

Pharmacist pops up with joy and stands on the bed.

PHARMACIST Madam, that's great you are here!

LABORATORIAN There's nothing great about it.

PHARMACIST If I'd known you had been here, I would have brought a contract.

LABORATORIAN In vain. Everything ends in the incinerator. There's only one way out – through the chimney.

PHARMACIST That's great, the whole world belongs to us. Madam, have you brought it?

LABORATORIAN Brought what?

PHARMACIST Our precious thing. The Virus, thanks to which, we'll become rich.

LABORATORIAN Oh yes, I have brought it with me. We are always together.

Pharmacist sits up.

PHARMACIST Perfect. I'll prepare the contract in a minute, define the subject, binding parties, I'll send proposals. Of course, as the only and exclusive supporter, I am going to require a proper reward.

Satisfied lies on the bed.

PHARMACIST You won't send even a text message from here. That's more than for sure.

GENERAL What do you want to sell? Virus?

PHARMACIST Virus will sell itself alone. We'll only cash.

LABORATORIAN Hope you make it....

PHARMACIST First of all, we need a law on compulsory vaccination to be adopted.

GENERAL I can help with it. We'll give an order for compulsory vaccination of the army. All branches. Ground troops, air and marine, too. Then we expand to civil forces and finally we'll vaccinate citizens.

PHARMACIST Wow, General Ripe, a pleasure to cooperate with you.

GENERAL Well, I have my experience.

PHARMACIST That will come in handy.

GENERAL And to those who are going to be vaccinated at the beginning, we'll pay some token amount.

PHARMACIST Pay?!

GENERAL Just at the beginning, until it kicks off.

PHARMACIST Done! ...but just at the beginning!

GENERAL At the beginning, of course... what you give is what you get.

ACT 4

The Doctor with the Nurse are approaching the room with patients. The Nurse is wearing her special protective clothing.

NURSE Aren't you going to put on the protective clothes? We still have time.

DOCTOR Whatever is to happen, will happen. I don't believe in this drama. Have you checked the dates of birth?

NURSE Yes.

DOCTOR So, what does it look like?

NURSE None of them are younger than 30 years.

DOCTOR All of them should be vaccinated, but we can't be sure the vaccination still works.

NURSE Shall I prepare the vaccine?

DOCTOR We'll wait. There're still some absent. We'll see how they behave. Just observe them quietly.

NURSE And if the panic breaks out?

DOCTOR We'll give them sedatives.

NURSE Sedatives are always ready to be used.

DOCTOR That's good to hear.

Entering the room with patients.

DOCTOR G'Morning! How are you doing?

PHARMACIST Great!

GENERAL Oh, well.

LABORATORIAN I've seen better times.

DOCTOR Well then everything is as it should be.

Nurse is handing out thermometers and starts measuring blood pressure. Begins with Hunter.

NURSE Perfect. Blood pressure of a baby. Another young man. /takes a blood pressure monitor and heads towards General Ripe/

LABORATORIAN Doctor, everything hurts. I'm desperate.

DOCTOR You'll get used to it.

LABORATORIAN I don't want to get used to it.

DOCTOR That's the only way to survive in this world.

LABORATORIAN To survive or to suffer?

DOCTOR It depends. Not even a laughing gas can make you happy, if you don't want to.

LABORATORIAN But at least I'll know how it feels.

GENERAL We can still agree, Madam.

PHARMACIST I think we've already agreed.

DOCTOR It's important to have a goal.

GENERAL And the means.

LABORATORIAN And where is a Man?

DOCTOR Man is very rare today.

PHARMACIST Fortunately, there's plenty of people everywhere. *Mean while the Nurse has already measured the blood pressure, collected thermometers and written down the measures.*

NURSE The measures are within norm...

ACT 5

With a sound of an Ambulance with a siren, Doctress accompanied by the Nurse in special protective clothing enters.

NURSE I'm bringing company, Madam. */to Doctress/* Doctress, right section, the free bed is yours.

DOCTRESS I don't need any hospitalization. I'm not ill.

NURSE Whether you do or you don't, it can only be decided by others. Here is your new lazy days clothing. Make yourself at home.

DOCTRESS Your care is not appropriate. I'm well aware of my health condition. Take care of those who need it.

NURSE You were on the list. It's for the safety of humanity, you have to be isolated.

DOCTORESS Many people have already died for the sake of so-called safety of humanity. My presence will definitely not endanger them.

NURSE I'll take some samples and measure your blood pressure, if you won't mind.

DOCTORESS I will mind! Why should I allow that?

LABORATORIAN Nurses have to do it, they were trained that way.

DOCTORESS Well then, do whatever you have to do, but I won't undergo any treatment. Understood? No drugs!

The Nurse takes samples, measures blood pressure and wants to leave.

NURSE/to Doctoreess/ You'd better cooperate. Otherwise we have other means to...

DOCTORESS Without my consent, you won't even give me water.

LABORATORIAN They only do what they have to.

DOCTORESS Ok, but why me?

LABORATORIAN Because you visited me.

DOCTORESS I just wanted to warn you. It shouldn't have come out.

NURSE Out? Where out? Who else? We don't have enough capacity. We'll have to talk to our competition... Doctor, hey doctoorrr....

In a mess, she takes the test tubes and runs outside.

DOCTORESS Unnecessary big bubble.

LABORATORIAN I didn't intent it at first, but when I saw the labels on thevials, I could do nothing but report it. What else should I have done?

DOCTORESS You should have got them back to the box, closed it and left it laying on the shelf forever. No one's been missing them for fifty years and now the whole world is upside down.

LABORATORIAN Okay, but what if they are still active? It is a threat...

DOCTORESS The only threat is what's done with the information. Today people can take advantage of human fear and cash on it.

LABORATORIAN All right, but we all have been in contact with the virus. We can potentially be infected.

DOCTORESS You're the only one who's been in contact with the virus. Every other person was only in touch with you and many of them only over the phone. Why aren't they here?

LABORATORIAN I'm sorry. I just wanted to prevent the epidemic from the very beginning.

DOCTORESS So you should have destroyed the virus.

LABORATORIAN What if the results of analysis are positive?

DOCTORESS Madam, a patient infected by the smallpox virus dies slowly, conscious, after 1 or 2 weeks. For those two weeks you could have hung up a "Do Not Disturb" table on your door, fully conscious, you could have written a goodbye letter with a declaration on the word of honour that you had not met anyone and had called with no one and everything would've happened in silence. Eventually, it will ends the same way, just a few people will try to capitalize on human fear and panic, right, Mr. Hunter?

From behind the curtains a bristly haired head of the Pharmacist pokes out.

PHARMACIST What is she doing here?!

Dark.

ACT 6

DOCTORESS I'm asking the same question. What am I doing here? Anyway, I'm not surprised to see You here.

PHARMACIST You're the most reliable contraception on the market.

GENERAL Bring it on, Duce, in the army, it will be of use.

PHARMACIST I don't sell that one.

DOCTORESS This one's not for sale.

LABORATORIAN She's not interesting, she doesn't have the virus, General.

PHARMACIST She's been vaccinated against business.

DOCTORESS They've vaccinated me against human stupidity and I'm very sorry that they ommited you.

PHARMACIST I've had them all.

DOCTORESS Have you had all the vaccinations you sell?

PHARMACIST Of course. Even those that aren't officially on the market yet. That's why I approached Madam..

GENERAL We must legalize it. The law must come into force. It is a unique opportunity that comes along ...

DOCTORESS ... once in fifty years, right?! Once in a life time. And the opportunity is yours. How amazing.

LABORATORIAN Gentlemen, all the vaccination sare useless. We're only laboratory mice in the hands of the virus which will kill us whenever it wants to.

DOCTORESS You don't have any antibody, you only have an illusion of theantibody and such illusion won't save you.

PHARMACIST It's the first disease forwhich they discovered a vaccine and at the same time the first disease they managed to exterminate globally.

DOCTORESS I've seen real statistics.

LABORATORIAN And I'm not making wonders but scientific research.

DOCTORESS Not even a miracle will help here. You've come to the wrong ward, gentlemen. Your diagnosis is much more serious than smallpox. You hide behind the rash like small children and compete, who's going to have them bigger and earn more.

LABORATORIAN What's the money be for, we're all going to drop dead.

PHARMACIST And before that happens, we'll vaccinate everyone...

GENERAL Every single person.

LABORATORIAN Vaccinate? How? Are you going to inject some vitamins into their arms and pretend that you're fighting virus?

PHARMACIST We'll give them a smallpox virus vaccine.

DOCTORESS How simple. So why are you so terrified, when it takes so little? Why all the fuss?

LABORATORIAN Why are we here?

GENERALThe Virus must be under control. Under our control. Only the army can guarantee the safety of humanity.

LABORATORIAN Now I already feel safer.

DOCTORESS First you scare them to death and then start protecting them?

PHARMACIST They'll protect themselves. They'll get vaccinated.

DOCTORESS They'll get vaccinated, because they have to?

PHARMACIST They won't have to. They'll want to.

GENERAL They will have to want to.

LABORATORIAN What a fluke we're all going die and no one will ever know.

PHARMACIST I don't get involved, I'm vaccinated!

GENERAL And I'm Ripe, I mean... in a ripe old age ...

DOCTORESS And I'm immortal...

Dark.

ACT 7

The Nurse enters the room and carries a variety of medical devices. Begins to measure pressure, temperature, writes down the measures.

LABORATORIAN Any news on results yet?

NURSE Not yet. The analysis is not easy. It takes time.

LABORATORIAN I know, Nurse, that's why I'm asking.

NURSE We don't have results, but we'll start the treatment.

DOCTORESS I don't need any treatment.

LABORATORIAN Isn't it useless?

NURSE If you want to live just a little bit longer, it's not.

LABORATORIAN To live in pain a week longer?

NURSE Maybe even longer.

PHARMACIST Is this treatment going to be effective?

This DOCTORESS Is that you who's asking?

PHARMACIST I'm a trader, not a doctor.

DOCTORESS Indeed, a trader, that's accurate.

NURSE And I'm a Nurse, nice to meet you!

GENERAL I don't care anymore. I've been here for a long time, doesn't matter whether you're going to treat me or not... sooner or later we'll all go.

PHARMACIST When will we go?

LABORATORIAN Where would you go. There's no way out of here.

PHARMACIST I don't feel that good in this place, especially since she's come here.... my rival... */looks angrily at the Doctress/*

GENERAL In all likelihood we all are going to end up at the cemetery.

LABORATORIAN Not even there. Up the chimney.

Nurse finishes measurements.

NURSE I'll yet check the vaccination. We suppose you all have two marks on your arms.

PHARMACIST Mine are showpieces. I can be taken for an example.

NURSE */observes, measures/* Very nice piece of work. Next gentleman.

GENERAL I have all the one prescribed by the army.

NURSE Not very visible, but still there...

LABORATORIAN I doubt that this vaccination is going to be effective after so many years...

NURSE A virus will check it eventually, but the vaccination has been done.

DOCTRESS I don't have it, won't show it and won't get any vaccination.

NURSE It's your civic duty.

DOCTRESS I'm fulfilling my civic duties, I pay taxes and I expect you to leave me alone.

NURSE Of course, but first of all, I have to check the state of your vaccination.

DOCTRESS It's in its best form.

NURSE Do you realize that if you are not vaccinated, it is very likely that the disease will soon break out?

DOCTRESS It can break out in each of us. You're on the list too, Nurse.

NURSE Are we waiting for a natural selection or you're voluntarily showing your arms so that we can take action.

DOCTORESS I'm not showing anything.

Doctor enters the room.

NURSE Doctor, we have a problem, Doctress won't cooperate.

DOCTORESS I won't cooperate on something I don't believe in just because I have to.

DOCTOR I understand your motives, but you should try to understand us, too. We need to complete the examination, write down the data, and take action. And even if it's against your beliefs, we're at work here and that's not only your treatment that depends on such examination and your cooperation, there is the security of the inhabitants of this planet in game, too.

DOCTORESS Planet wants to cleanse so why not help it.

DOCTOR We are bound by the Hippocratic Oath. We cannot afford another slaughterhouse in the 21st century. It's against humanity, against Man, against human nature. There's not a spontaneous outbreak of epidemic on this planet, only an artificial laboratory virus. Let's not add fuel to the fire if it's been long burning out.

NURSE Now, may I look at your arm? / *Doctress turns to her, resigned, The Nurse thoroughly examining/* uh, ... and the other? ... Positive. On both arms are evident marks of vaccination.

Dark.

ACT 8

Next day. The Nurse hands out intravenous injection sets. Sets up solutions.

LABORATORIAN Have you got the results yet?

NURSE Not yet.

LABORATORIAN It's been ages.

NURSE It's not a standard analysis. They have to do it properly. The whole world is watching us.

DOCTORESS I feel so "alive".

PHARMACIST We're going to be famous. What a turn. I can see business offers coming in...

NURSE I'm sorry to disappoint you, there are no cameras in here. Your treatment is anonymous and strictly confidential.

GENERAL The Virus must be stored in a safe place. Under our control.

NURSE Under our control!

DOCTORESS Treatment? What kind of treatment? Your scars after vaccination aren't enough?

NURSE Your values are still varying, the vaccination is old, we need to start the treatment for prevention.

/Starts connecting the intravenous injections. Doctress is last in a queue. /

PHARMACIST What is it?

NURSE A bit of juice for happier veins and a more joyful life. Normal procedure.

DOCTORESS Can't be that normal as we've got it here once in fifty years. And who's going to pay damages, if it all proves unnecessary?

NURSE I don't know who's going to pay to you, but I hope they are at least going to pay us.

Lets the intravenous injection liquid leak and leaves the room.

LABORATORIAN There is no reason why should anyone pay us. Everyone is expecting our quick end. Long dying is not interesting viewing.

GENERAL Security forces would pay for it. It's in their and our interest. We need to do it as soon as possible while I am still here.

PHARMACIST Where would you go? I still need you. We need to make our bargain. It's a huge opportunity.

GENERAL Time is running wild. If the virus is here, I'll go first.

LABORATORIAN We'll all go down the drain. Like mice.

DOCTORESS It'll be very conscious pain, until the last moment you can give interviews, unless they give you a mercy injection.

PHARMACIST If you're talking about pain, I offer some means to relieve pain. They are pretty effective. Take them and you can dance on a just broken leg ...

DOCTORESS ... what about putting the leg in a plaster?

PHARMACIST There's no time. We need to go to work, to meetings, to sporting events, when would you hang a leg?

LABORATORIAN Now...Now you'll have more time than you can imagine.

GENERAL This is a state of emergency, ladies. No legs are broken in such state, by the way, the best medicine to cure a broken leg is your intellect.

DOCTORESS By the way, where's it gone?

LABORATORIAN It was lowered by those painkillers.

PHARMACIST So don't you buy them.

DOCTORESS You stop selling them.

PHARMACIST You're here to cure.

DOCTORESS You're here to supply drugs, not some healing patches.

LABORATORIAN Effective drugs don't exist. Diseases are evolving faster than drugs and the old viruses change their nature.

DOCTORESS That's what I've been saying all my life. Smallpox virus wasn't destroyed by any organized vaccination. It simply changed its character. Circumstances changed, the virus changed. Whether it's Cidofovir dripping down the intravenous injection liquid */points to the intravenous injection bottle/* or rainwater, it's all the same... Active virus will kill us all, passive will justify the vaccination theory.

Dark.

ACT 9

Shouting at the hospital hallway. The voices of the principled Nurse and pertinacious insurance agent can be heard.

AGENT I'm an Insurance Agent. I have one very interesting offer for your patients.

NURSE That's ridiculous! Do you have an idea where you are? Are you aware of the disease we have here?

AGENT I have looked very closely into the medical records of your patients and that's why I'm here.

NURSE I can't let you in. It's against all safety regulations. Where did you get this idea from?!

AGENT I'm well aware of this unique situation. That's why I prepared some very special and interesting offer for your patients and our clients.

NURSE No way! I can't let you in!

/Doctor joins the Nurse and the Insurance Agent./

DOCTOR Don't hesitate to let him in and prepare a bed.

AGENT Thank you, Doctor!

NURSE What do you mean Doctor?

DOCTOR I mean what I say. Let him in, if he wants to; however, he'll stay inside.

NURSE I haven't seen anything like that before. Never before. */shakes head and allows Agent to go in /*

AGENT Good morning ladies and gentlemen!

Everybody watches the man in the door.

DOCTRESS What is this?

AGENT Let me introduce myself. I am an Insurance Agent.

DOCTRESS I thought we are at The Infectious Diseases Ward.

NURSE It's "Visiting day"!

Prepares a bed for the new patient.

DOCTRESS If I'd known what's about to come, I would have got me some apples...

AGENT I have come to you with a very interesting offer.

NURSE I just want to warn you that you can only make verbal agreements. All the others will end up in the incinerator. Samples for analysis and your personal belongings won't be taken away. You'll only get infected in here.

LABORATORIAN ... patients with smallpox won't go to autopsy, the reason of your death will remain unknown.

GENERAL It reminds me of the end of an unknown soldier.

AGENT I'm known. I'm very well known.

LABORATORIAN You were. Those times are gone.

AGENT Anyway, I've come with an absolute innovation on the market. An exclusive Life insurance.

ALL What?! */in unison/*

AGENT You are a specially selected target group to which we decided to offer this product with 15% discount. In addition, we have decided to compensate Madam for her clothes, as well as all the others who have lost their personal belongings.

DOCTORESS Oh my God, is this why you have willingly decided to get closed in this cage?

AGENT Of course.

LABORATORIAN Do you know you can't leave?

AGENT Yes, I do.

PHARMACIST That's my man! Businessman until death do us part!

GENERAL It deserves a medal, my dears, trading till he's dead!

LABORATORIAN ... he'll get a coffin instead.

DOCTORESS ... a discounted one.

AGENT It's a truly exceptional offer, otherwise I wouldn't come to you.

LABORATORIAN You shouldn't have come at all.

PHARMACIST I'd be interested in such insurance.

AGENT Perfect! I knew I won't be leaving breakeven.

LABORATORIAN You won't leave at all...

GENERAL An insurance is always good for the army. I think we can make an agreement.

DOCTORESS I am more and more convinced that this room should have been situated in a mental hospital, for within those two, actually, only one remaining week to live, one would you have done a doctoral examination.

Dark.

PART TWO

ACT 1

Panic. Stress. Tension. Endless waiting in constant insecurity. Not only do they not know what the results will be, but when they'll be.

The Nurse enters for regular examination and treatment.

LABORATORIAN Hey Nurse, have you got the results yet?

NURSE No, not yet. Still nothing. We have to wait. But we consulted your treatment and the Doctor doubled the dose of your medication.

DOCTRESS To all of us?

NURSE To everyone.

AGENT Even to me?

NURSE Your insurance company will give you a refund.

AGENT I'm healthy!

NURSE Healthy or not, you all are going to undergo the treatment.

AGENT What are you going to treat me on?

NURSE Right now? The smallpox.

AGENT I've already had smallpox. Not very long ago, it tormented me a bit.

NURSE It wasn't the same smallpox.

AGENT This is what one would call wasting of my employer's money. I am going to complain.

NURSE Prevention is cheaper than treatment.

DOCTORESS What kind of prevention do you mean?!

NURSE The most effective one!

DOCTORESS The most effective prevention is your own conscience. It will say exactly what you've done for your own health.

In the meanwhile, the Nurse measures all patients' blood pressure, writes down the measures and hands out the thermometers.

PHARMACIST I've done enough. My conscious is clear. I don't need your intravenous injections.

NURSE Calm down. These intravenous injections are from You. We couldn't have found a better supplier.

PHARMACIST Ours... No way.....

DOCTORESS ... What's that? Compunction?

PHARMACIST Knowledge and experience.

GENERAL So you don't trust the products you are selling?

PHARMACIST I don't trust anything. What are we chasing after if we're all going to end up in a cemetery?!

LABORATORIAN We're not. We'll turn into ashes...

PHARMACIST I refuse to undergo any treatment.

DOCTORESS Are you coming to your senses.. ? Congrats!

NURSE Oh, and one intravenous injection for you, too.

PHARMACIST Infusion, transfusion...., ... always something... ... one can't even leave this world peacefully. We're going to chase after power, glory, money... to the last breath... and one can only be certain about a coffin.

LABORATORIAN Cinerary urn.

PHARMACIST Okay, unr.

DOCTORESS Seems like I'm beginning to like you.

PHARMACIST I'm not doing it for you, trust me.

DOCTORESS I do.

NURSE */to the Agent/* O.k., I'm going to inject it into your vein.

AGENT You're against me. All of you. I feel it from the very first moment I've come in here.

NURSE How did you come to this conclusion? After all, we only want to give you a treatment!

AGENT Indeed. You want to treat me when I don't care about your treatment. I've only come for a business matter. By the way, I can't even work here because your patients refuse to cooperate.

LABORATORIAN It's all useless in our situation. Treatment is like a pain patch and insurance is a plaster cast on a healthy hand. Why didn't you throw us all together with all our stuff into the incinerator, it would have saved so much money. What are we waiting for?

GENERAL All your life you have to wait for something... even for your own death...

ACT 2

Doctor enters the room to calm the situation and takes care of the adherence to the treatment.

GENERAL As military pilots, we were waiting for our death every day. One leg in heaven, the other on Earth.

DOCTOR It was a great time. Great men were born then. Large and strong.

GENERAL Oh yes, I met some great guys there. They only were in their twenties but mentally older than anyone of us is right now.

DOCTOR Illnesses were no match for them. The way they were thinking did not allow to get sick. They couldn't afford such luxury. Fly or fall. Nothing in between.

GENERAL Up in the air, it was a matter of seconds. There was no time for discussions. Only the right or wrong decision. Yes or no. Black or white. Up or down. Every one of them was like my brother. We got to know one another up in the air. And we greeted each other, friend or foe. I knew which pilot was sitting in the airplane by his flight technique, manoeuvres, the strategy he had... and I tell you, I only met elite humans, the top Humans.

DOCTOR That era demanded strong personalities.

DOCTORESS They were pure, because they were born into pure era. What kind of potential can this era have? Conditions changed, circumstances changed. People are trading with health, they are in human trafficking. Something is rotten in this world.

DOCTOR We'd need such personalities today, sooner than we exterminate ourselves.

LABORATORIAN Sooner than someone releases something in the name of humanity... some virus, flu or smallpox...

GENERAL That's why I keep repeating that the virus must be under control.

DOCTRESS And where's the conscious got lost? Where is a human being? Until when are we going to be under control?

DOCTOR It's a game that tracks our human fear...we all have it and still, one'll wear protective */subtle but telling gesture towards the Nurse/* the other won't.

NURSE Doctor, patients refuse to undergo our treatment.

DOCTOR */to himself/* No wonders... */aloud/* We are going to do something about it...

AGENT I am going to complain. I'm healthy and I refuse to be cured.

DOCTOR No one's healthy. There are only cured and uncured patients. What's your problem?

AGENT No problem.

DOCTOR Nice one. Nurse, inject the intravenous injection.

AGENT I am going to complain! I know my rights!

DOCTOR Go ahead. Someone else to complain?

PHARMACIST I don't want to complain or to be cured.

DOCTOR I wouldn't even expected it in your case. What happened Mr. Hunter?

PHARMACIST Nothing, I've just made up my mind. And I even intent to change the job, when I get out of here by any chance...

/Everyone with a surprised look on the Pharmacist./

LABORATORIAN No way to leave, but I keep my fingers crossed for you.

DOCTRESS I can't believe what I'm hearing!

DOCTOR In such case, you certainly won't mind if we give you one farewell intravenous injection. It needs to be celebrated, don't you think?

PHARMACIST */resigned/* One farewell intravenous injection, dear friends. Don't leave me alone with it. Come on, friends!

AGENT */with leaking intravenous injection/* You can count on me. Will complain later.

GENERAL Dear Rep, in the name of such good thing, I'll have one.

LABORATORIAN I'll have one, too. It'll be easier to leave this place.

DOCTORESS I'd never agree to it, had it not been for a big change which I am noticing! We definitely need to celebrate it */while the Nurseis injecting the intravenous injection/*Wow, seems like I'm starting to like you, Mr. Hunter.

PHARMACIST Careful, or I'll think it over...

DOCTORESS I am straight-forward. Yes or no. Black or white. Up or down. Right, General?

GENERAL Right!

DOCTOR */satisfied/* Everything is as it should be. Let's go, Nurse, you first.

The Nurse and the Doctor both leave.

ACT 3

Doctress sits closer to the Pharmacist.

DOCTORESS Dear Mr. Hunter, Gejza..., we can do things together!

PHARMACIST You mean the two of us?

LABORATORIAN Sorry to interrupt you, but I would like you to come back to reality, to the timespace we currently arein and from which there is no escape.

DOCTORESS Even if it concerned the last two days of our lives, it still makes sense. */moves closer/*

PHARMACIST I'm not sure whether I want to spend the last two days of my life with you... */moves further/*

DOCTORESS I didn't mean the two of us as in *The Two of Us...* I thought about the idea, the big idea that has already been mentioned here a while ago. The idea of the renaissance of your personality which we can do great things with.

PHARMACIST That would be a long-term process, we don't have enough time.

DOCTORESS Sure, we don't, but we can still try it.

GENERAL You should definitely try it. Nothing to lose, you can only gain.

DOCTORESS "You"? You must have meant "We" can only gain!

GENERAL That's right, "We" can only gain. Well, if you mind my age...and diagnosis... you see... you shouldn't...

DOCTRESS Where's your determination gone, General? You are in the best of age, your experience is priceless and the diagnosis... I should know something about it.

PHARMACIST Absolutely, General, we need you here and now.

DOCTRESS We'll immediately start taking radical measures.

AGENT I'm in, too. We will complain, write a resolution, petition, charter....

DOCTRESS... until the last moment we are going to live so that the generations that come after us can be proud of us. The whole world is watching us, let's show them we deserve it, that we're not cheap or average. Show them that we are!

AGENT Man, I think we should be more radical. And shoot those who won't cooperate.

DOCTRESS */through the corners of the mouth/* It can't be cured, but some electroshocks can stimulate respective centers...*/with full intensity/* Let's get back to our topic. Even though we don't have much time, we're more or less on the same boat, even the tough ones... */with a smile at the Pharmacist/*.

LABORATORIAN Unbelievable, but true. You have already made it, it's a miracle, Doctress.

DOCTRESS And we'll make it even more!

PHARMACIST We will!

GENERAL Yes, we will!

AGENT We will!

LABORATORIAN For sure we will!

ACT 4

LABORATORIAN Even though we don't have much time left, this is the second week we've been here and the symptoms haven't appeared yet. Isn't that strange?

AGENT What kind of symptoms?

LABORATORIAN Smallpox symptoms.

AGENT Huh, they've started the treatment already, haven't they? Against our will, let me emphasize...

PHARMACIST That's pretty interesting, but don't underestimate the situation, please. The "cocktail" in our veins has nothing to do with it.

DOCTORESS It's probably been a milder form of the virus, which in the end of "its career" stopped murdering.

GENERAL Then why would they put it off for so long?

DOCTORESS Obviously they didn't have any other to use. Which again only proves my theory...

GENERAL In terms of some great ermenace then, it is absolutely unnecessary and harmless.

LABORATORIAN I wouldn't underestimate it. It was a killer, exterminating everything that came into its way.

AGENT Seems, like I can leave.

LABORATORIAN The symptoms will only appear when we're no longer here. By the way, where would you go in this pyjamas?

AGENT I must enter your insurance data into our system. Well, not yours, only those who wanted to sign, gentlemen. */to General and the Pharmacist/*

GENERAL */emphatically/* We wanted.

PHARMACIST We did.

DOCTORESS That's very pleasant. Very pleasant. But I wouldn't rush. If time proves the virus inactive, such insurance will be useless.

AGENT I am going to complain, you're ruining my work from the very beginning.

DOCTORESS I'm not ruining anything, that's just your character that's bizarre in this story.

AGENT You're insulting me again, I am going to complain, that's for sure.

LABORATORIAN No one is insulting you, trust me.

DOCTORESS You're just wasting your time, Madam, even though this diagnosis isn't fatal, it can't be cured either.

LABORATORIAN Hopefully it's not contagious.

DOCTORESS No, it's not. It's hereditary.

AGENT Have you been speaking about me?

DOCTORESS Oh no, just some women talk... You know, we don't even have time to talk to each other.

AGENT Women like to talk about me. I'm really very well-known. I have the greatest amount of insurance contracts and I was first...

DOCTORESS There aren't many like you. 'm pleased that I could have met you.

AGENT Pleasure is mine.

DOCTORESS And if it wasn't for anything else then at least we found much in common here which has made it worthwhile.

Dark.

ACT 5

PHARMACIST These were the best moments of my life. I've gone through an enormous transformation... and if it was meant to be the last day of my life, I would've said to myself, it was worth it.

DOCTORESS We haven't won yet...

PHARMACIST I know, I know, but now I'm on your side and I absolutely agree.

DOCTORESS Gejza!

PHARMACIST Just be careful...

LABORATORIAN I'd fancy such happy ending.

GENERAL I guess we can be satisfied with the flow of events.

AGENT I am going to complain, that's for sure. I won't leave it as it is.

LABORATORIAN Pardon me?

AGENT What's happening here, I consider it a limiting act of performance o my duty.

DOCTORESS Hm, by the way, what about you Sir, are you insured?

AGENT Me?

DOCTORESS You.

AGENT Well, it depends... To tell the truth, I'm not.

DOCTORESS I knew that!

AGENT I'm not insured for safety reasons... I'm not on any the list, you won't find me on the internet or social networks...

DOCTORESS The fact that you are not insured is good and I can approve of that. But your reasons are only a result of a certain condition... which I'm not going to deal with.

AGENT What do you mean?

DOCTORESS That's not my responsibility. I mean, it's good that you aren't insured. Frankly, I'd rather, if I found out I hadn't been vaccinated, but they hadn't asked kids back then and their parents had thought they'd been doing the best for their own child.

GENERAL It's all the same, I mean, whether one's insured or not, vaccinated or not... the only thing that matters is being a human being.

ACT 6

The Nurse comes in to take Agent's samples for analysis and generally examine everyone else.

NURSE /to Agent/ It's your turn, Sir.

AGENT Me again? Am I in focus again?

NURSE You have finally made it to our field of vision. Congratulations.

AGENT I've always been in the field of vision...

NURSE And today laboratories have shown their interest in you.

AGENT Have I been here for long enough to be finally considered infected?

NURSE Exactly. We'll finally have something to do with you.

AGENT We too, our insurance company will. Finally something to do.

NURSE Exactly, finally some interesting thing to do.

DOCTORESS That's absurd!

AGENT That's reality, Doctress.

DOCTRESS Sick reality of a sick community.

AGENT Don't take it so tragically, I'm happy.

NURSE So am I.

LABORATORIAN Do you realize what's ahead of us?

AGENT Nop. My duty is to prepare documents.

LABORATORIAN I see, this is where your happiness comes from.

DOCTRESS */shaking head/* Sheer naivety!

LABORATORIAN Let him be happy. Don't take his illusion away. That's what can save him in this situation.

AGENT What kind of illusion?

DOCTRESS Illusion of happiness that doesn't exist.

GENERALI concur, don't take the illusion away. Sometime it is better not to know and obey...

AGENT You're all against me.

DOCTRESS Quite the opposite, we all want to help you, but can't predict whether we'll protect you.

LABORATORIAN After all, the intensity of the virus will have its final word...

AGENT I should be informed about that, I need to inform the insurance company.

DOCTRESS Well, you don't have it in your questionnaires. It's a fact no one writes or talks about. These aren't the topics one's willing to listen to...

AGENT I'd like to.

DOCTRESS Even if you do, you still may not understand.

AGENT If to know and to understand means to agree then it's surly better not to know and not to understand.

DOCTRESS Correct.

AGENT Well, don't tell me then. I've managed without the information by now, I can manage further, as well.

DOCTORESS I guess you can.

LABORATORIAN It'll be easier for you.

DOCTORESS Definitely.

GENERAL The lesser information, the lesser problems.

PHARMACIST And a more satisfied life.

DOCTORESS Everyone has a choice. You can either walk the path of least resistance or lead a complicated life in the name of higher ideals...

PHARMACIST I won't complicate it.

DOCTORESS ... Thank you for your support, I know that I can count on you.

PHARMACIST Always.

LABORATORIAN Always.

GENERAL Always.

AGENT It depends...

Dark.

ACT 7

The Nurse and the Doctor enter the room. The Nurse is still wearing her special protective clothing.

NURSE Here's one good news and one bad news. Which one do you want to hear first?

DOCTORESS Both slowly at the same time so that I can choose. Neither too much happiness nor disaster.

LABORATORIAN Have you got the results?

NURSE Partly.

AGENT What does it mean?

NURSE It means we have all but yours.

LABORATORIAN What are they?

DOCTOR What do you think?

LABORATORIAN I feel fine, but I don't trust these viruses, not even a little...

DOCTOR Your results are negative. The presence of smallpox in you wasn't confirmed. This seems to be inactive, or in a modified form. It would need to be further explored.

Happy patients hug for the first time and shake hands.

LABORATORIAN I'll start immediately. I'm so curious about what has changed in the course of time.

AGENT Hey, and what about me?

DOCTOR That's bad news. Theoretically, you should get the infection either, but we need to wait for the official results.

NURSE Well, you may have caught something else here... At the end of the day, we are at The Infectious Diseases Ward */emphasizes her protective clothing/*

AGENT I am going to complain. Since the very first moment, everything and everyone have been against me.

DOCTOR I'd like to transfer you to another hospital ward until your results arrive. They'll make different professional examination and you can complain there...

AGENT Different professional examination? But I'm really healthy!

DOCTOR Everybody says so.

NURSE You'll get a confirmation about it, there.

AGENT Will I be able to complain there?

DOCTOR For sure.

Dark.

ACT 8

The Doctress sits next to Pharmacist.

DOCTRESS Nothing stands in our way anymore...

PHARMACIST One great historical epoch has begun.

LABORATORIAN Fortunately, the history hasn't claimed our victims.

DOCTORESS The history needs us, we can't be sacrificed yet.

GENERAL There aren't many with such conviction and determination today. Big thumbs up for you to break the ice...

DOCTORESS ...and not to drown. We're on the same boat, General. We know what we want and since we've survived what we have/a *big gesture around the room/*, we'll survive everything.

LABORATORIAN I'm sure about it. Nothing can stop us now.

PHARMACIST Nothing anymore.

The Nurse comes in.

NURSE Dear friends, I'm bringing guests... Fashion designers, media, journalists... Here they go!

The room is overcrowded with journalists with microphones, cameras, camcorders... Lights, reflectors, the most famous designers present their opinions on the clothes these patients are wearing after being released from their isolation. Interviews, live streaming... Doctress steps away from the crowd.

DOCTORESS We've survived smallpox, we can also survive this mess! */shows the mess around her /*

Dark.

THE END