

Everywhere Absent

– version for theater –

Everywhere Absent / version for theater

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Everywhere Absent

– version for theater –

told by
The Dolphin and the Gull

inspired by
The blue butterfly

[A young woman is talking to a man. They sit opposite each other and she is holding a small screen in her hand]

– Though your application is complete, we'll do a final check to 'lock' your choices... So...

Form...

– Human.

– Gender...

– Male.

– You want to keep your current appearance...

– I'm pleased with that...

[She smiles]

– You want to keep your sexuality or erase it?...

– I'm pleased with that...

- Age of Start...
- Current age.
- Do you want to grow old?
- No.
- No one does. Special Skills... You left it blank.
- I would like your advice on this... I was thinking of a great voice and artistic abilities...
- You won't be a first. It's more or less a common choice...
- Can I choose to fly?...
- He limited the choices to resemble the existing world... So... no. But you can choose the form of a bird. You will maintain your thinking ability, if you wish to. And there is a great range of popular birds, so you won't feel lonely...
- No, no, I'll keep my form.
- So, Special Skills... Though in the Absents' World, it doesn't really matter...
- Well... Surprise me...

[She smiles and marks something on her screen]

- Do you want to keep your Memories of the Past, or start anew...
- To be honest, I thought a great deal about it before answering, and I don't really know which is the right choice. [smiling:] Can I keep only the good memories?
- I'm afraid it's all or nothing... You just keep a minimum base –your language, your kinetic skills...– but you have to rebuilt yourself over there... It might make things a little bit awkward...
- I'll start anew. There's been so much blood and injustice in this world... Why carry them with me?
- Anything else you'd like to add?...
- No.
- We're almost finished. Just a reminder that life expectancy in the absent mode is more or less similar to life expectancy in the present mode, enhanced by the absence of danger. So, according to your age, a life of more or less 180 years is expected. Beyond that, despite technology's achievements, your heart or brain, at some point, will fail.

– Well, it seems more than enough to me...

– And the last box. You realize that there is no turning back... After a few hours, chemicals in your body will permanently put it to sleep, except from your heart and brain.

– Yes, I realize it.

– I'll need your final signature...

[She turns the screen she is holding towards him, and he places his open right hand on it]

– Thank you for your choice. You made this an affordable world, and life and its quality sustainable on our planet...

[Next scene:

He is lying on his back on a flat surface, with a helmet on his head. The doctor surveilling the procedure smiles at him and says "Try to relax and sleep". Watching him slowly going to sleep, he wishes him: "Have a nice trip..."

A voice is heard:]

City M•XVI•L

Presents: 10,000

Absents: 15,094,653

[The voice continues:]

City M•XVI•L

Presents: 9,999

Absents: 15,094,654

Everywhere Absent

[Change of scene: He wakes up in the exact same place, lying on the floor without any helmet on his head, taking a deep breath and suddenly raising his right hand. He is naked, with only a fabric around his waist for theatrical purposes. The sound of waves is heard and some birds singing. He gets up, looking around him. He takes a handful of {invisible} sand, raises his hand high and lets the sand fall again to the ground. A beautiful young woman comes to him. Smiling, she says:]

– [She:] Welcome...

[He is quite at a loss. He doesn't speak. He looks at her...]

– [He:] How did I get here?...

– [She:] “No memories.” Relax... You're among us... You'll understand everything soon... Wear this...

[She helps him put on the clothe she is carrying. A simple linen garment, reaching to his thighs...]

– [She:] Come with me... Let us walk inland for a while...

[They start walking while he is looking around him.

He stops, looking in front of him, confused. The sound of a roaring lion is heard. He takes a step back. She takes a step forward caresses the head of this *{invisible}* lion, saying “Stop kidding Daryl... Stop frightening our new friends... Go elsewhere to play...”. Watching it for a moment moving away, she turns back to him, holds him gently by the elbow, and starts again to walk with him, while once more the song of a few birds is heard]

– [He:] I see a land of beauty... I see white horses shaking their manes, under leafy trees with red and blue parrots on their branches... I see panthers and deer walking side by side... [the laughter of a group of children is heard, and then again, a lion roaring] I see children and lions play together... I see men and women, black and white, making love in the naked light of day... Down by the river I see lionesses and buffalos peacefully drinking water together, and giraffes walking gracefully the lush valley spreading to the foothills of a towering mountain...

What is this place? Where am I?

– [She:] In the Absents’ World, by the choice you made, no more than a few hours ago...

– [He:] I don’t remember anything...

– [She:] You chose to forget your previous life...

– [He:] Why?

– [She:] There is no answer to that any more... Relax, an easy life awaits you... I’ll take you to your room, but you can return later, if you want to...

– [He:] My room?

– [She:] You see there, perched on the mountain slope, the city that awaits us? It’s mostly made of glass, with inbuilt gardens and waterfalls of various sizes on its outer sides, so it isn’t easily distinguished from afar... You see the second wide waterfall on its right?... Your room is somewhere over there...

– [He:] How do we get there?

– [She:] Transparent, hovering vehicles are readily available in several places. Look... Just here there’s one waiting for us... Come on... We’ll be there in no time... Get in... *{they exit the stage from its right exit/entrance, because, for that scene, this is the door of the vehicle}*



[Change of scene: They're standing in a room, with nothing in it, but a wide bed and a small wardrobe]

– [She:] I'll leave you to rest. The first day can be tricky... Whenever you feel ready, you can wander around... You'll have no problem blending in...

– [He:] Thank you...

[She smiles at him and leaves from the left exit of the stage... He looks out of the window. Then he lies on his bed, closes his eyes and goes to sleep. The lights dim.
He wakes up to a knock on the door.
He sits on the side of the bed and says to himself...

– [He:] It's night... [then, speaking louder:] Come in...

[A man enters the room {from the left entrance of the theater stage, no door needs to actually exist}, and turning towards the back side of the room he says...]

– Lights.

[Lights turn on. He continues speaking...]

I was expecting you to come out of that room, brother... I heard you coming this morning... I've waited long enough... Welcome... [he smiles at him] We live next doors... I'm Eric, by the way... Your name... [he sees him wondering, sitting on the side of his bed, having just waken up. He understands he hasn't kept his memories] ...is... [...he beckons him to say a name...]

– [He:] ...gone...

– [Eric:] Ok, Gone, [he says smiling] nice to meet you... You didn't come to this place to sleep all day... Come on, we're having a party... [He opens his wardrobe, takes out a shirt, a pair of trousers, and a pair of shoes, and brings them to him...]
Come on, you can't go to a party dressed like that...

[He starts to get dressed slowly... He puts on his trousers and his shoes...]

Faster, my friend, faster... Girls won't wait... [suddenly he realizes that he doesn't know anything about him...]

I hope you kept your preferences...

– [Gone:] I don't know.

– [Eric:] Well, you don't, but they do...

[At the same moment there is another knock on the door. Without waiting for an answer a beautiful woman wearing an attractive evening dress walks into the room]

– [Eric:] Sheena... We would be coming soon...

– [Sheena:] You were toooo late, darling... And I also wanted to see the newcomer first... [she turns to Gone and says smiling] Hello...

– [Gone:] Hi... [He puts on his shirt and starts buttoning it up]

– [Eric:] We would be coming in a while... But he is a slow dresser...

– [Sheena, going near him and starting buttoning him up:] Let me help you with that... [and then turning to Eric] You can go darling, no need to keep you waiting... We will come to find you in a while...

– [Eric understands, and starts to leave, saying smiling:] Ok, we'll see each other later... [and when he gets to the door he turns back and says in a low voice to Gone:] ...It's like riding a bicycle...

[The girl is openly flirting him...]

– [Sheena, while still buttoning him up:] Well, what's your story?...

– [Gone:] I remember nothing, actually...

– [She:] No memories! That's interesting. Then, we have to offer you some, don't we?

[She has just finished buttoning him. She turns towards the back side of the room and says:]

– [Sheena:] Music.

[Romantic music starts playing. Putting her stretched arms on his shoulders she starts to dance with him slowly... She smiles...]

– [Sheena:] Lesson number one... Life is a dream... It has always been, and it will always be... Sometimes it's sweet, sometimes it's bitter, but as long as it has a taste, it is alright with me...

[She kisses him softly on the lips...]

– [Sheena:] Doesn't this feel sweet? [she goes on kissing him slowly, one kiss after the other]

It's the taste of love...

[She starts unbuttoning him little by little... Lights go out]



[Change of scene: They wake up in the morning on his bed. She gets up and after getting dressed she walks to the door and turns to speak to him...]

– [Sheena:] Have a nice day, love... We'll see each other again...

[He stays alone. He gets up from the bed, and goes to the window to watch the view. Then, searching his wardrobe, he chooses and gets dressed in simple linen clothes. He walks to the door, carefully looking right and left for any sign of Eric. Afterwards he moves on, gets to the *{invisible}* elevator, and passes his palm before it. A sound of an elevator cabin opening its door is heard. He enters the elevator *{literally leaving the stage from its left exit, because the entrance to the elevator is also the exit of the stage}* and speaks to himself...]

– [Gone:] No buttons... That's a pleasant surprise...

– [A voice is heard:] Where would you like to go, sir?
{While special sound effects should be recorded, simple dialogue sounds, could be performed from an actor not appearing on stage}

– [Gone:] Top level.

– [The voice:] Currently Inaccessible.

– [Gone:] Ground level.

[The elevator opens its door. On the ground floor where he arrives, he directly steps out into a lush *{invisible}* garden. Again, birds singing can be heard, and sounds of wild nature as he walks *{towards the stage's right exit}*, looking around him in amazement. Lifting his hand and stretching his finger a bird or a butterfly pauses there for a moment... A group of children is heard laughing and playing again, along with the wild nature sounds... He exits the stage from its right side, entering simultaneously a waiting vehicle. He speaks, outside the stage:]

– [Gone:] Can you take me to the beach, please?... [A female voice asks for more information...] "Be more specific, please... Provide the name or the number of the beach..." He says "Beach, No 138".

[He enters again the stage to the soft sound of the sea caressing the shore. He takes off the T-shirt he is wearing and starts walking towards the front part of the stage, so as to enter the sea. He pauses. Turning his head to the left, looking upwards, an image captures his gaze. He takes his T-shirt back to his hands, and the lights go out]



[Change of scene: A woman in a white simple airy dress, stands *{facing the front part of the stage}* drawing a painting on an easel. He silently approaches her from behind *{entering the stage from its left entrance}*. She seems not to have noticed him. He comes very close to her and looks at her painting. It's the plain picture of a sea, with some clouds over it. *{It isn't necessary that the image is visible from the audience.}* She speaks to him, without turning:]

– [She:] You know, its impolite to peek...

– [Gone:] I'm sorry... I was going for a swim but I saw you standing alone up here on the rock, and I felt I wanted to come nearer. Sorry for looking. I thought you wouldn't mind...

– [She:] I don't... It's just that it's not good. I should have chosen "Painting" as a Special Skill...

– [Gone:] Chosen "what" as "what"?

– [She:] Ah, a pure one! [she says, while at the same moment turning to face him for the first time. While looking at him she adds:]

Well, no one stays pure for long... In any world...

[He also looks deeply at her and then turns his gaze to the painting...]

– [Gone:] I think it's nice... A waveless sea...

– [She:] A standing moment in time...

– [Gone, smiling:] Why would someone want to capture a moment in time?

– [She:] Vanity, perhaps... Believing that time can fit in a moment...

– [Gone:] Even so, it is a beautiful image...

[She turns again towards the painting. After placing another stroke of the brush on it, she continues to speak:]

– [She:] It's fake. Everything is fake... This, the sea, the island, you and me...

A stage, to pass our days...

– [Gone:] Are you here for long?

– [She:] 40-50 years. Somewhere after 10, I lost counting... What difference does it make?

– [Gone:] What is this place?

[She turns again to look at him...]

– [She, with a tone of irony:] A dream come true...

– [Gone:] Isn't it?

– [She:] Well, the dream is here. I don't know where truth is...

– [Gone:] Perhaps, we can find it together...

[She turns again to look at him. For a moment she speaks not, she is just looking at him. Then, as if speaking to herself, she says:]

– [She:] You're pure.

– [Gone:] Do you often come here?

– [She:] Usually by the end of the week... It helps me relax... Go now. The wind grew stronger. The water is cool, and a wavy sea may be more interesting than a serene one...

[He leaves silently from the left exit]



[Change of scene: He is alone in his room, lying on his bed, dressed in the clothes he was wearing earlier. A familiar knock on the door is heard]

– [Gone:] Come in...

[Passing through the doorway, Eric appears...]

– [Eric, as if talking to himself:] What a gentleman... I surprise myself sometimes... [and then speaking to Gone:]

I figured you'd be sleeping all day... Come on you fool... Come on... A beach party awaits us...

[And grabbing his elbow, he drags him out of the room... They enter the elevator. They are heard talking inside it...]

– [Eric:] Ground floor... [and after a while, while they are still in the elevator...]

Well, what did you think of Sheena, wasn't she something?

– [Gone:] Who?

– [Eric:] Sheena... The girl, last night... And she says she kept her original form... Gee! What a liar...

[Lights go out]



[Change of scene: Eric is sitting between two girls, one softly playing the guitar, and another beautiful young girl {preferably with Asian characteristics}. Another man {preferably black} is sitting with them. Gone is standing alone at the edge of the stage, watching the sunset. The handsome young black man approaches Gone and speaks, offering him a coconut drink...]

– [Young man:] The instincts of thirst and hunger are erased, so there is no need for that, to be true, but for those of us who kept our memories, it's an old habit...

– [Gone, taking the drink:] Thank you...

– [Young man, watching the sea:] I think I'll never get bored of sunsets...

– [Gone:] Well, "never" is a strange word...

[Distant seagulls can be heard...]

– [Young man, pointing to the sky:] Perhaps I should have become a seabird... But everything, finally, succumbs to gravity...

[The beautiful girl with the Asian characteristics gets up and goes near them...]

– [Girl:] What are the boys saying here? [she grasps them both from the elbows and continues] Come on, sit by the fire, we're having a party, remember?... It would be a shame to miss it...

[They all go and sit around the fire. The black man lies in the girl's arms, and she starts caressing his face... The lights go out...]



[Next scene: She is up there, on the rock, wearing a white dress again, behind a painting on the easel. He shows up slowly behind her. He stops and speaks to her from afar, while she is turned towards her canvas...]

– [Gone:] Hello...

[She answers him without turning from her painting]

– [She:] You may peek, if you want to...

[He approaches her and peeks behind her back. On the easel is a new, completely white canvas. *{It isn't necessary that the front part of the canvas is visible from the audience.}*]

– [Gone:] An all-white canvas... It seems exciting...

[She smiles, without turning to him. She points with the back of her brush somewhere on the canvas, saying:]

– [She:] Here, was the trickiest part...

[He smiles]

– [Gone:] Did you finish the last one?

– [She:] Let's say I felt like I gave what I had to give...

– [Gone:] What will you draw now?

– [She:] I haven't got the slightest idea! Perhaps I should leave it as it is... Start from zero, the way you did. Draw nothing.

– [Gone:] Have you ever tried to draw 'nothing'? It might be more difficult than drawing 'something'.

– [She:] Well, people have always struggled to fill the void. With love, with hate, with joy, with pain, with right and wrong... With all the possible combinations...

– [Gone:] What did you fill it with?...

– [She:] I tried love... Honesty... Depth... But all these colors, were rather difficult to find... Only cheap replicas...

– [Gone:] So, where are you now?...

– [She, turning to face him:] Alone... Hiding in a tiny corner of paradise... Ashamed... Failed... [she lowers her voice] Absent...

[She walks away from Gone, and then she turns again to speak to him...]

– [She:] You asked me what this place is... It's about time you learnt... [Leaving the painting where it is she moves away from the easel... After a few steps, she turns, spreads her hand towards him and says...] Come with me... We'll take a vehicle to town...

[They exit the scene from the left side, and the lights go out]



[Next scene: A voice, coming out from the elevator speaker, is heard:]

– [The voice:] Level 3 – Floor 14 – Library...

[They enter the scene from the right entrance. They are in a library. The only things appearing on stage are two glass concave screens, symmetrically placed at the two ends of the stage. They walk the room while he is carefully watching the back of the stage, filled with *{invisible}* books. While he is looking towards there, she says:]

– [She:] Books... “Moments in time...”

[Then, she stops walking by his side, saying...]

– [She:] I'll let you read...

[He turns to her, obviously wanting to prevent her from leaving, but before he speaks a word she is already heading back to the elevator.]

He turns again to the books. He touches one of them, and is about to take it out of its place... At the same moment, a beeper sounds as if the screen on the right is currently activated, so he turns his head instantly towards it... Leaving the book back in its place, he goes near the screen. A female voice is heard...

– [The voice:] “The Animal Farm”. Would you like a summary, to read, or load it?

– [Gone, answers hesitatingly:] A summary...

– [The voice:] Written in the 1st century Before the Creator, the book displays a farm where animals, using their long since sleeping force, rebel against the tyranny of man, in the hope of creating a society of happiness and equality...

[After a moment of silence, the voice continues:]

– [The voice:] You may ask for a specific book, or you may choose one from the list...

[Gone makes a movement with his hand, touching the screen, like accelerating the turn of a rotating list. He stops the rotation, at a random book. The voice is heard again...]

– [The voice:] “The Happy Prince”. Would you like...

– [Gone says, interrupting the voice:] Read...

– [The voice:] High above the city, on a tall column, stood the statue of the Happy Prince. He was gilded all over with thin leaves of fine gold, for eyes he had two bright sapphires, and a large red ruby glowed on his sword-hilt...

[Gone stops the voice by making the list of the books rotate again. He stops the rotation to another book...]

– [The voice:] “The Golden Bough”. Would you like...

– [Gone speaks, before the voice says anything more:] Load.

– [The voice:] Please place your hand in loading position...

[Gone places his hand hesitatingly on a flat surface in front of the screen. His eyes and expression show information acquirement... When the loading ends, he pulls his hand away]

– [Gone now speaks to the screen and says:] World History.

– [The voice:] Can you be more specific? “Ancient History? Medieval History? World Wars?...”

– [Gone answers:] Everything. Load.

– [The voice:] It will take time...

– [Gone answers while placing his hand in loading position:] I have time.

[His eyes reflect his emotions. Before long they show question and pain, and soon tears start rolling down his eyes. He removes his hand from loading position]

– [The voice:] Loading interrupted... Please place your hand to loading position to continue...

– [Gone:] Perhaps later...

– [A young woman comes near him:] Is everything alright? May I help you?

– [Gone:] No, thank you... I'm alright...

– [While the girl walks to another part of the stage, Gone turns to the screen and speaks...] The Absents' World.

– [The voice:] There are numerous books on the Absents' World, sir. For more inclusive information may I suggest an encyclopedia entry?...

– [Gone:] Make a choice and read, please...

– [The voice:] By the late 20th Living's Century, Anem No, world known as 'The Creator', astounded mankind with the

invention of the "Absents' World", the incarnation of man's oldest and deepest desire. Leaving behind him his heavy, decaying body, anchored in a polluted, unjust, carnivorous world, anyone could now enter this flawless virtual reality, where no war, no pain, no famine existed.

Open to infinite possibilities, the Creator himself spent 40 years of his life expanding and perfecting this limitless world, before He himself entering it on the year marked as "zero" on our calendar... It was.....

– [Gone virtually stops the voice, by placing his hand to loading position and saying:] Load.

[When the loading procedure finishes, he remains with an expression on his face showing query. He moves away from the screen and heads towards the woman who asked to help him before, and who is now standing somewhere in the middle of the room]

– [Gone:] May I ask you something, please?

– [The woman, smiling:] Yes, my friend, of course...

– [Gone:] I just finished some loadings, but I can't seem to find.....

[While he speaks the girl seems completely frozen...]

– [Gone:] Are you ok? Are you ok?

[Two girls lightly dressed in simple, white, airy dresses enter slowly the stage, drawing with them a simple, long, delicate black fabric, each holding a corner of it, while the rest is dragging on the ground. They are invisible to Gone who is at a loss, looking at the ‘frozen’ girl... They cover her slowly, with the fabric they’re carrying, and lead her with them, exiting the stage. Gone keeps looking in surprise at the place she was standing. Another woman, enters the stage with fast steps, and goes near him...]

– [Gone, speaking to her about the other girl:] She slowly faded away and disappeared...

– [Woman, speaking to him sadly but calmly:] Her time came to join the Creator... May I help you with anything, my friend?

– [Gone, takes some moments to come around, then says to her:] I seem not able to find some data on the Creator, from his time in here...

– [Woman:] You are in the “Sector of the Living”. The data you ask for are in the Absents’ Sector, at the other end of the room... It has a much smaller number of titles still, but it is promising...

[Gone nods, thanking her, and then he walks slowly towards the other screen, while she leaves the stage...]

Gone, goes near the screen at the left side of the stage, makes a rotating movement with his hand on the screen and speaks at the same time:] “The Creator”

– [A voice, a male voice now, is heard talking to him:] Can you be more specific, sir?

– [Gone:] Show me some photos of him... [after a moment of silence, he speaks to himself in a low voice:] Only one. A handsome man with a short white beard... [he speaks again to the screen:]

What else is written on the Creator?

– [The voice:] There are numerous literary references on the subject... Can you be more specific?...

– [Gone:] I would like to know more about his actual presence here... Perhaps you can read me an entrance from an encyclopedia...

– [The voice:] The most widely discussed personality of every world, and the absolutely least known to everyone, due to his concrete dedication to an obscure life, the Creator, is said to have spent his time in the Absents’ World, secluded in his

laboratory, expanding and adorning our world. Until, only 23 years after entering here He, our Father, passed the gates of the Universe, having made true the collective, eternal wish of mankind. Though many claimed to have seen and talked with him, their testimony is strongly questioned, as driven by personal benefits... Information on his previous life can be found in the living's sector.

[Gone remains numb, looking at the screen]

– [The voice, after a while:] Would you like to read anything else, sir?

[He stays silent]



[He is on the rock, in the hope to meet her. She hasn't come yet. The wind had obviously thrown the white canvas away so he takes it and fixes it –reversed, showing the frame at its back side– on the leg of the easel, using the small case with her colors. Then he goes to the edge of the cliff *{the front part of the stage}* and sits there, watching the sea. After some time, he smiles and turns his head back. She is coming... She is wearing a dark red-brown dress, slightly blowing in the soft wind. He smiles at her]

– [She:] ...Somebody must have sent you to destroy my painting career...

– [Gone:] What makes you think he was only one?

– [She, smiling:] Two?... Three?...

– [Gone:] ...We could stay here all day...

– [She, smiling:] Well, humanity has always been suicidal... Unable to unwrap its greatest gifts...

– [Gone:] I wander, what special skills should I have picked, to unwrap you...

[She smiles, without answering his question. In a moment she says:]

– [She:] ...Somebody has been doing his homework...

[She doesn't approach her easel, she just goes near him]

– [Gone:] I had to learn about the world I'm in.
...I was also slightly afraid of the teacher...

– [She, smiling:] Good for you... So, what did you find out about this world?...

– [Gone:] It seems a lot better than the one I was before... A world of... unreasonable inequality and multiform violence...

[She sits close to him]

– [She:] And does it seem so much better here?

– [Gone:] Yet it does... A world of tranquility and brotherhood...

[She smiles bitterly...]

– [She:] You don't remember anything from the world you came, only what you've read... You never saw this tiny blue planet, floating in the void... This gift of chance... A peaceful harbor, in the vastness of the universe...

But everything seems peaceful from afar... No thorn stands out, neither can bleed you from a distance.

You should come closer to this floating miracle, to understand its violent nature... To see that peace and blissfulness were never there... That it was only an illusion... A wishful thinking... A mirage in the blaze of the desert...

And the hardest is, that it could have been true... They could have made it... But they chose not to.

[she pauses for a while]

Go, my dear... Go to this serene new world of yours... Let me do my useless painting... Go enjoy this untroubled land...

Perhaps, [she lowers her gaze] it would be better for you not to come here...

– [Gone rises and, going away, he turns to speak at her:]
I am going, but there is no other place that I would rather be...



[Change of scene: At the back side of the stage a large white stretched fabric is hanging, like a high white fabric wall. It will remain there for a significant time of the play.

Gone, walks slowly and silently on the stage, watching it. Its dark other side is slowly lit at intervals revealing moving shadows, in absolute silence, of different groups of people on the back side of the fabric, in the following order:

...Four shadows, of two men and two women, kissing and erotically touching each other... *{the light slowly fades, making the shadows disappear – after some seconds it is slowly turned on again, revealing a different scene}*

...A couple, a man sitting on the ground, and a woman lying resting her head on his thighs, both reading books...

...A man hitting a chisel with his hammer to form a statue out of a piece of marble...

...A man and a woman playing chess...

...Two men playing cards... Suddenly, one of them stands up, throws the cards he was holding at the other's face, who is getting up, and they start pushing one another, while Gone

watches their silent shadows in wonder...

...A circle of four standing people, having their hands lifted towards the sky, their open palms turned upwards...

...Three people, sitting on the ground, having their backs close to one another, forming a triangle, meditate...

The light goes out, and so do the lights of the stage]



[He is on the rock, waiting to meet her. She hasn't come yet. The canvas is exactly where he left it last time – she hadn't even touched it... He goes again to the edge of the cliff and sits, watching the sea. After some time, he smiles and turns his head back. She is there, looking at him. She now wears a blue dress, waving in the wind. He smiles at her. She smiles back at him, without speaking a word. She goes to her easel, turns the canvas and puts it on its place. She opens her small case, takes out her paints and starts getting ready to paint.

She puts red and brown color on the palette]

– [Gone:] So, was “Nagging” your ‘special skill’?

– [She, smiling:] Among the many of my adorable qualifications...

– [Gone:] And... the most distinctive of your charming characteristics?

– [She, smiling:] “Elusion” I guess... [after a moment of silence she continues seriously] I was the missing letters in each alphabet...

– [Gone:] ...Sounds fitting...
...Did you keep your memories?

– [She:] They were me... I couldn't let them go...

– [Gone:] What could you let go?

– [She, bitterly smiling:] Some burdens of everyday life... And I erased my sexuality, if you need to know... Perhaps I should have told you earlier... I'm telling you now... Sorry to disappoint you...

[She starts painting]

– [Gone:] You don't... You don't...

[She smiles looking at her painting. In a while Gone speaks again]

– [Gone:] How could someone give up pleasure? At least this one?

– [She:] Pleasure has two faces... It often turns to pain.

– [Gone:] Did you know much pain?

– [She:] Love can hurt the most.

– [Gone:] Why?

– [She:] Because you have no defense... No walls to protect you from the ones you love... They hit you from within.

[She goes on painting]

– [Gone:] Do you carry many wounds?

– [She:] More than you can think of... But it's ok. Each state has a price...

– [Gone:] What about happiness?

– [She:] What about it?

– [Gone:] What's the price of happiness?

– [She, smiling:] When you find someone happy, ask him... And then let me know... But if it's a small price, maybe it's a small happiness... [she turns to look at him]
Like the one that surrounds us...

– [Gone:] Beauty can bring happiness...

– [She:] Yes, it can... And there is so much *superficial* beauty around us. Everything's perfect, as promised...

[She leaves her brush in a small jar with water]

“Come...”, she says to him... “Come with me...”

[Gone rises from where he was sitting, and goes to her. Passing next to the canvas, he pauses for a while to see what she was painting. {Again, it isn't necessary that the image is visible from the audience.} It is a draft outline of a red and brown tree without leaves or fruits...]

– [Gone, speaking to himself:] ...The trunk and branches of a leafless tree...

[He moves on and they leave together...]



[Change of scene: They enter the empty stage from its right side and, taking only a couple of steps, Gone stops and looks in awe at the surrounding beauty]

– [Gone, speaking to himself in a low voice:] ...A magical place... Blue butterflies flying silently over golden flowers... Resting for a moment, on their velvet disks...

[He lifts his hand, and stretches his finger, watching a butterfly, stopping on it for a moment...]

The light turns softly on behind the white fabric, revealing the shadow of a beautiful tree. She leaves him at the end of the stage, and moves alone towards the tree. He then takes some steps towards her.

She waits under the fruitless, majestic tree, watching its rich foliage. He comes close to her... She turns to see him. He is about to speak to her...]

– [Gone speaks in a calm voice:] Why.....

[Before he pronounces another word, she silently places her finger on her lips, showing him that he mustn't speak. He silences. Then, leaving him standing there, she raises her hand and silently passes her fingertips at the side of the trunk's shadow, almost as if touching it, but not touching it at all. She then goes a few meters away from the tree.

The sound of water, coming from a small stream is heard. She sits on the ground, takes a handful of this {invisible} water, using both of her hands, and then cools her face with it. She invites him with her hand to come close to her. He goes, passes the tiny stream, and sits on its other side facing her. She looks at him and he looks at her, her figure surrounded by the thick foliage that spreads just behind her. She speaks to him:]

– [She, inviting him:] Ask me...

[He stays silent, looking at her. Her sweet, commanding voice, repeats:]

– [She:] Ask me...

[He is staying silent, watching her for a moment, and then he speaks, hesitatingly...]

– [Gone:] I have this strange feeling that... you know the answer... but I don't know the question...

[She smiles understandingly. She spreads her hand and caresses his hair at the side of his head. Keeping on smiling at him, she peacefully stands up and paces away from the water and the tree...

In a while, he is near her again... She caresses his hair and cheek again, but now speaking at the same time:]

– [She:] My love... you are too young...

– [Gone:] So are you...

– [She:] Time, only stopped outside.
And now, it's time we separate...

– [Gone:] I don't wanna wait for a week to see you again...
I can't...

– [She:] You won't. I'll come to you earlier... But, we are running out of time...



[Change of scene: The stage is empty. The elevator stops at his floor, making a characteristic sound, and Gone comes out thoughtful. After taking some steps away from the elevator Eric appears coming laughing from the other side, together with two girls, holding them by their waists... They are all laughing out loud... He is pausing for an instant, while walking in front of Gone]

– [Eric:] Ah! The disappeared one! Where have you been?
[and he keeps walking towards the elevator...]

– [Gone, smiling widely at him:] Round here...

[Eric turns to him together with the two smiling girls and, just before entering the elevator, shouts to him:]

– [Eric:] Enjoy Absent Life!

[Gone is smiling widely]



[Change of scene: Gone is sitting on the ground by the edge of the stage, with his back leaning against a tree {/wall}, while songs of birds and sounds of wild nature can be heard, including the flapping of a duck or swan wings and the distant sound of an elephant cry.

Near him, having his head bent as if peacefully drinking water or eating grass, is the painted figure or a replica of a lovely small deer.

He is watching the beauty around him.

Slowly the two girls lightly dressed in simple, white, airy dresses enter the stage again, drawing with them the black fabric. Gone is looking calmly at the deer. They cover the deer with the fabric they're holding, and take it with them, exiting the stage, while at the same moment she enters the stage from its other side, behind him. She smiles at him. She extends her hand to him... He smiles back... He stands up and follows her, holding for a while her hand...

They pause in the center of the stage. She caresses a beautiful flower, bending to smell it]

– [She:] Are you happy here?...

– [Gone:] I'm only happy, because of you...
[after a small stop he continues]
...Why did you say we're running out of time?

– [She, having turned to look at him:] This world is ending...

– [Gone:] How do you know that?

– [She:] I know...

[Gone is shocked]

– [She, after a moment of silence:] Shouldn't all things come to an end?...

– [Gone:] No... Not truth, not good, not love...

– [She:] Do you think we can ever reach them?

– [Gone:] Are they so high? Are we so small?

[She doesn't answer]

– [Gone speaks again:] We can try...

– [She:] Casting stones at them? Begging them? Climbing the tree?

– [Gone:] Yes, climbing the tree.

– [She:] Perhaps, we should have picked the form of a monkey... For we're too slow at climbing...

[He speaks not. She walks a few steps away]

– [She:] My poor love, would you like to see some other island?

– [Gone:] Are there other islands?

– [She:] You don't learn everything from the books...

Come, we'll take a vehicle to the heart of the ocean...

[They leave from the right side of the stage, and the lights go out]



[In a while the lights turn on again, dimly, revealing them standing up in the center of the empty stage]

– [Gone:] ...Why did we stop?

– [She:] Look up...

[Gone raises his head. The light behind the fabric slowly turns on again, making the shadow of a small group of humpback whales appear above them. A group of resting whales, most of them almost vertically submerged in the water. He looks at the gigantic creatures.

She goes near him and touches him on the shoulder, making him turn to face her. She approaches him and starts kissing him. On his eyes, then on his nose, and finally slowly on his lips. In a while he responds and kisses her back.

The song of the whales starts echoing.

They are tightly embraced... The lights of the stage turn off, leaving it lit only by the light behind the fabric. Their shadows also appear. They kiss. The song of the whales is heard clear and strong... She wipes the sweat from his forehead, and he, the tears from her eyes.

The song fades... The lights of the stage slowly turn on, and they are sitting embraced on the floor]

– [Gone:] Thank you... [and after some moments of silence, he adds:] I only wish you had felt it...

– [She kisses him tenderly on the forehead, saying:] The body, isn't everything...

[and after a pause she adds:]

Let's move on.

{The white fabric will not be used again, and so it may be pulled aside}



[Change of scene: They are sitting at the edge of the stage talking about the view before them]

– [Gone:] I would have never thought I'd see ancient Egypt one day, spreading before my eyes. Its sand dunes and its palm trees, its houses and temples with people walking among them, its pyramids and obelisks, and the winding river flowing slowly, shining under the sun...

It's such a different island...

– [She:] Egypt, Greece, China... Civilizations of Asia, Europe, Africa, America and everywhere else... They all dreamed of a different eternal life...

– [Gone:] Can we go there?

– [She:] You have to load the appropriate language... Or you can stay silent... Do you want us to go?

[Gone answers negatively with a movement of his head]

[They don't speak but she understands that he is troubled]

– [She:] What?... What are you thinking of?

– [Gone:] I can't stop thinking what you said and that, perhaps, we could prevent the ending of this world...

– [She:] Perhaps the Creator could... ..but...

[She stands up and walks further away]

– [Gone, after a while:] On the top level of our building, access is always unavailable... Do you know what's there?

– [She:] The Creator's old lab.

– [Gone:] Perhaps if we got in there... Perhaps we could do something about it...

– [She:] Perhaps...

[He stands up, and goes near her]

– [Gone:] I know you're not so fond of this world, but can you help me get there?

– [She:] I can...

– [Gone:] Access is denied...

– [She:] There are secret doors... He used to sneak out from there, unseen...

– [Gone:] How do you know?

– [She:] I'm here for long, remember?

– [Gone:] Did you know him?

– [She:] I did...

– [Gone:] How was he?

– [She:] He was a kind man... But I don't wanna talk about it... I'm sorry...

– [Gone:] Will you take me there?

– [She:] Yes...

– [Gone:] Can we go now?

– [She:] No. Not now.

[She walks further away... She says to him:] Tomorrow...
[and after a short pause she repeats:]

Tomorrow, I'll take you there...

– [Gone:] Will you come to me?...

– [She:] No, you will. Meet me tomorrow where we first met...

[Lights go out]



[The scene changes: He is alone in the middle of the empty, dimly lit stage, watching thoughtfully and silently the sky...
Lights go out]



[She is watching the sea for long, sitting where they first met. She has lowered the easel and the canvas from their standing place. She is just watching silently the blue sea expanding to the horizon... Unhindered... Unclouded... Untroubled...

He comes from behind her, and sits close to her. He looks at her face. She continues watching the sea. After a while he speaks...

– [Gone:] You must be the only unhappy creature in paradise...

– [She:] “Paradise”? [she wonders with a bitter smile] Then, look at it... [she points at the sea with a gesture of her hand] Look at it...

– [Gone, without turning his gaze away from her face:] That's what I'm doing...

[She lowers her eyes, and then her face, and then she turns to look at him]

– [Gone, speaking calmly to her, after a while:]
I know.

– [She, looking at him questioningly:] You know what?

– [Gone, repeats calmly to her...] I know.

[She doesn't speak at first. Then she does]

– [She:] So, it wasn't that hard to guess...

– [Gone:] You may be beyond my grasp, beyond my ability to ever reach you, but at least I wasn't so blind as not to see as far as that...

So, will you take me to your old lab... Creator?

[She looks down and takes a deeper breath. After a while she speaks, continuing looking down]

– [She:] Now that you know... What do you expect to find there?

– [Gone:] The key... The beginning...
Maybe it will help me understand the end.

– [She:] ...Remembering might make you unpopular, in a world trying so hard to forget...

– [Gone:] Even so, will you take me there?

– [She, raising her head again to face him:] I will.
Getting down the slope, we'll take a vehicle to one of its secret entrances...

[She gets up and then he does. They exit from the right side of the stage {and someone removes the easel and the canvas}.
While still not seen from the audience, she speaks]

– [She:] We're here.
Inside this cave, we'll find our way up...



[They reenter the stage, being in the cave... Gone looks around him impressed]

– [Gone:] It's such a beautiful cave... An agate with white, grey and blue stripes, forming at places circles of pale colors...

[They take some steps forward]

– [Gone:] Light fades... {so can fade the lights of the stage}

– [She, spreading her hand to him:] Will you let me guide you through the dark?

[He gives her his hand and they follow a short winding route, before coming in front of the left exit of the stage]

– [She:] This elevator will get us up there...

– [Gone:] To your old lab?

– [She:] No, it will take us beyond it... All the way to the top of the mountain. The towering mountain, standing over the city...

[The exit the stage from its left side, and the lights go out]



[Change of scene: She gets out of the elevator first and then he follows. The stage is half lit. They are in a large room. At its back side there is a crescent-shaped wall, with a big lever in its center. There is also a flat surface, the size of a bed]

– [She:] We don't need this cover any more, do we? [and making a movement with her right hand, as if pulling the rock aside, she adds:] Let me remove this rock, to see this world from above, in the naked light of the sun.

[A sound is heard as if a gigantic roller shutter gradually opens, and the light on the stage comes to normal levels]

– [She:] Should everything collapse this would remain standing.

My new lab...

For the same dream...

[She walks ahead, while he takes a few steps and stops behind]

– [Gone:] Tell me of your dream...

[She turns to look at him. A moment of silence follows. Then she speaks]

– [She:] I dreamed of Man.

[And after a pause she continues:]
It was a dream destined to fail. The dream of a fool.

But you know dreams. You strip them, and hit them, and burn them, and bury them, and they're still alive. I dreamed of Man, and I got This... [She shows the island before her, with a gesture of her hand. She walks further away and continues to speak:]

They were in a destroyed world, for they had destroyed it. A world polluted, for they had polluted it... Inside and out. A world of lies and wrong and blood, for they had lied, and wronged, and killed. For they had eaten the flesh of one another!

But they were children, weren't they? 10-12-50-120 years-old. They were children.

And love, and truth, and good, and justice, were candies in their mouth.

So they dreamed of it... This perfect world. This eternal playground! And I gave it to them...

I gave them time to live and space to spread and toys to play and access to art and knowledge. A thematic park for their amusement! And I thought they would flourish. They would enlarge. They would evolve...

No. This After *Lie*, was just as futile as the previous one... They would surrender to each pleasure, inhale the blissful sleep of easy life.

You don't see inside of them, but I do... You think that greed and self-interest aren't here? That pettiness and lie extinguished? [...She laughs for a tiny moment...] They're everywhere...

Do you think they're Pure? Enlightened? Complete?

I dreamed of Man as a fortress no wrong could conquer, no scheme seduce, no evil penetrate. A tree no wicked wind could bend. Each one, a Sun of Wisdom.

I dreamed of an Army of Gods, and I got a colony of ants.

[...She stops for a moment to speak and then she looks at him and says...]

I will destroy this world I created.

– [Gone, whispering:] No...

– [She:] I made a better one...
I'll send you there...

[She approaches him]

– [She:] I want you to go... I want you to leave this world...

[He seems unwilling. He slightly moves his head negatively... She spreads her hand towards him. He stands still for a moment. He looks at her hand. Then he holds it and he lets her lead him towards the flat surface, the size of a bed. He lies on it. She sits by his side, looking at him]

– [She:] No harm will ever come to you, my love... No mortal hands will touch you... You'll nest to the laws of nature, surpassing them...

– [Gone:] Will I ever see you again?

– [She moves imperceptibly her head implying 'no', while saying:] I'll be where you are... We will always be together...

– [Gone:] But, will I know it?

[She doesn't answer. In a while she says:]

– [She:] Be Pure...

[Then, she bents and kisses his forehead. And then softly his lips. They kiss. Then she puts on his head, surrounding his forehead, a simple, transparent cylinder, the width of a ribbon]

– [Gone, bitterly smiling:] I now also know the answer... [he raises his hand towards her face]

The answer is you...

[She kisses his stretched fingertips and says...]

– [She:] Have a nice trip, my love... No anchor will tie you any more...

[She gets up and, while looking at him, he softly closes his eyes and goes to sleep. She cries continuously. Soon a voice is heard saying:]

– [Voice:] Procedure completed.

[She walks slowly to the T-shaped lever in the center of the wall. Placing both her hands on it, she pulls it downwards, saying in a slow, determined, loud voice:]

– [She:] I Will Destroy This World I Created...

[Only seconds after the lever descends a voice is heard:]

– [Voice:]
Crucial error...
Restore power...
Inability to maintain energy levels...
Energy failing...
Restore power...

– [She speaks determinedly:]
Destroy all the islands.



[The fluttering of some birds, flying instantly to the sky, is heard. And then the following sounds:

Some people making love, cease.
A hammer hitting a chisel, silences.
A sound as if the ground is splitting...

Elephants letting out a desperate cry.

A deep sound, as if an underwater explosion takes place.
This same sound is heard a few more times.

She sobs.

People can be heard shouting and running scared.
Rocks tumbling down.
Glass breaking and buildings collapsing.

Roaring and sounds of scared running animals.
The sound of falling and breaking trees.

She sobs continuously.

The foaming sound of water when something sinks inside it.

Distant voices of people asking for help, in various languages.

The sound of water covering everything, some birds screaming, and then silence]



[She is standing alone and devastated in the middle of the stage. Then, speaking to herself, she says softly...]

– One last thing is left...

[Right afterwards, raising her voice, she adds:]

– Erase After Life...
Erase Everything...

[Two girls, with their arms widely open, dragging a wide black fabric behind them enter the stage. As they move on, they cover it slowly. Before reaching her, she looks at resting Gone's body, and says calmly to him in a low voice...]

– We're free...

[The fabric covers her, then the bed where Gone's body is lying, and finally the whole stage. The girls exit.]

Then, in the completely covered stage, the standing figure of hers peacefully lowers, her falling to her knee and bending her head, as if her body disappears.

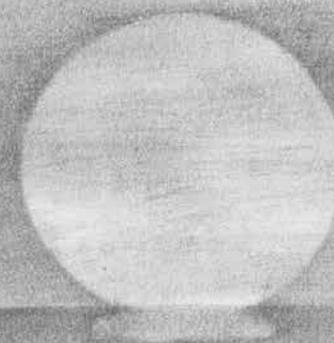
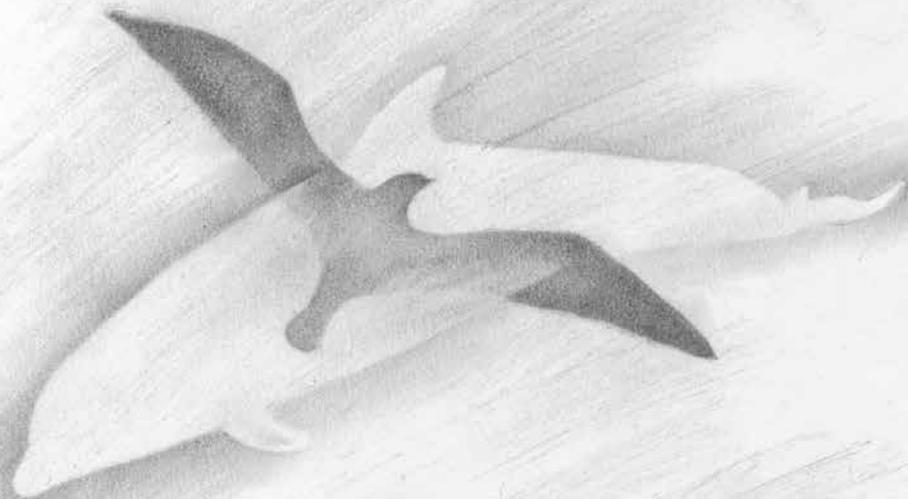
Seconds afterwards, Gone raises his open hand towards the sky. The black fabric is instantly stretched.

Lights go out]

The Dolphin and the Gull

(When two suns meet,
then two worlds unite for ever.)

...A dolphin dreaming of the world above the surface of the sea and a gull drawn by the depths. Met on a sunset, when the sun meets its reflection on the water, they will leave for a trip of knowledge, against the constraints of their own nature.



— I will fly for you...
— And I will swim for you...

Touch me...

...We are only the two sides of a coin. Tell me about you! Tell me what you look like. I am the other side of you...

...It sung the first notes and stopped full of shame. It wouldn't want to be seen, to be heard! It was a melody for younger pianos...

...And it was my first time seeing so many gathered blue planets. White and blue, with yellow suns at the edge of their dream...

...A book with no name and content, that was shouting to the other books and was calling them near it, till tears dissolved its empty pages...

The blue butterfly

(...To those whose small bodies, big wings they wear...)

A butterfly of strange beauty drawn to her destination. Enriched by the forest voices, she will enter an impressive castle — an immortal world of butterflies, ruled by a gentle king. He will trap her. He will take her to his tallest tower. Undisclosed there, in numerous frames on his wall, is the rarest collection of precious butterflies.

She will be forced to choose either to fly for him in his gardens or to be put to death. He will be forced to see that no one can obtain what cannot be possessed...



*...I've always been waiting for you. Before everything,
I felt deep inside me that you'd come someday...*

The Underworld
— bilingual edition —
12 lyrics

*Back at the playground of our youth,
playing with words, we lost the truth,
Forgot it somewhere in the mud,
while growing old, and growing sad...*



Φύγε από τη γη (Οι άνθρωποι νεκροί...)
— δίγλωσση έκδοση —
12 στίχοι

*Στης νιότης πίσω τη δροσιά,
μέσα στην παιδική χαρά,
Με λέξεις παίζοντας και πάθος,
ξεχάσαμε σωστό και λάθος...*

The Blackboard

...You are still young. Your body has not yet undergone the deformation of gravity and in your gaze infinity still shimmers.

Your wings, those unready, rudimentary wings await above all the blood of your heart to be blooded and strengthened. To dare to defy every wind. The choice of your course and the height of the flight lie ahead of you.

Don't be afraid of the sun...

Everywhere Absent
— in film version & in play version —

*I dreamed of Man as a fortress no wrong could conquer,
no scheme seduce, no evil penetrate. A tree no wicked wind
could bend. Each one, a Sun of Wisdom...*

The Mountain of Immortality

— I saw in a vivid dream, a voice telling me that high above the joys and passions of men, is the Mountain of Immortality. No one knows where to find it, nor what it hides at the top, it told me... But everything in this dream moved me to walk upwards... Fate, is this path that I took the right one, is this the mountain, that I'm searching for?

... I see the earth weaving the forms of men and animals, and death unweaving them. I see a fabric of shadows and colors, struggling to escape from the loom and from its warp. That tries to create a form unknown to it, to find a melodic tune beyond the repetitive hum of the machine, a road superior to the snakelike entrapment of the shuttle...

The books, the lyrics and various extras —including additional information on “To All the Young”— are provided in several languages on...

www.b00k.gr
(written with zeroes)