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## EVERYBOY (or THE BEARD) A MORALITY PLAY

Algirdas Landsbergis

ALGIRDAS LANDSBERGIS was born in 1924, in Kybartai, Lithuania. Landsbergis studied Lithuanian language and literature at the University of Kaunas, English at the University of Mainz and later English and Comparative literatures at Brooklyn College and Columbia University. At present Landsbergis is Assistant Professor of History at Fairleigh Dickinson, New Jersey.

He made his literary debut with poetry, although later he turned entirely to drama and prose. His first play *Five Posts in a Market Place* (Penki stulpai turgaus aikštėje, 1957) was produced in his own English adaptation (Five Posts) by the Gate Repertory Company in New York and several other theaters. Other published plays are: *The Wind in the Willows* (Vėjas gluosniuose, 1958), *The School for Love* (Meilės mokykla, 1965), *Everyboy (or The Beard)* (Kiekvienis / arba barzda, 1967) and *Farewell, my King* (Sudie, karaliau, 1967). His prose works include a novel, namely, *The Journey* (Kelionė, 1954) and a collection of short stories entitled *The Long Night* (Ilgoji naktis, 1956). Together with Clark Mills, Landsbergis edited two anthologies of Lithuanian poetry and folk songs in English, *The Green Oak* and *The Green Linden*. He has also written film reviews, radio scripts in English and articles and essays on the theater and literature in Lithuanian.



## EVERYBOY (or THE BEARD)

A MORALITY PLAY

by

Algirdas Landsbergis

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### CHARACTERS

EVERYBOY  
HIS FATHER  
HIS MOTHER  
THE BEARDED LEADER  
THE BALD LEADER  
THE FORK-BEARD LEADER  
THE BEARDED SOLDIER

THE BALD SOLDIER  
THE FORK-BEARD SOLDIER  
ANNIE

NOTE: The three Leaders are played by one actor; the three Soldiers, also.

*The Time: Yesterday, Today, Tomorrow and Tomorrow. ...*

*The Place: Everyboy's Homeland and beyond.*

*As the lights in the auditorium begin to dim, LEADER and SOLDIER climb on the stage from the first row of seats. They are dressed as average straphangers and carry attache cases. LEADER puts his case on the floor, wipes off his face with a Kleenex.*

LEADER. Summit! At last. .. (*Points upward. To the SOLDIER*) Think He'll respond? (*SOLDIER shakes his head*). Skeptic. (*Points at the audience*) All damn skeptics. Just wait. (*LEADER cups his hands to his mouth and emits a series of yodelling sounds; listens; disappointed*)

As usual. . . Honest, Chief, is it so difficult for you to give me some sort of a sign? What about a little thunder? — Yes, of course, Hollywood has rattled it to death. —Rain, dew? (*Holds out his palm, puts it down.*) Don't tell me, you are dead? ! Where would that leave me? ! I've been reading a paperback on the bloody subject. (*Pulls out a paperback, waves it at heaven. The paperback sags, shrivels in his hand, turns into smoke.*) Hey, that was boss! Old-fashioned but neat! (*SOLDIER points at the sky, makes a jagged sign with his finger.*) Atmospheric causes? Bah! (*To SOLDIER*) Agnostic imbecile! (*Upwards*) And yet I don't think you quite appreciate all my efforts. I could have addressed you from any mountain, couldn't I? Somebody else would have taken a cable car to a luxury hotel in the Alps. And poor old me, climbing Mount Sinai, clawing the slope with my own ancient nails. . . Yes, yes, you'll say Moses made it in a dozen hops. But don't forget how many thousand years I'm older. And no cloven hoof to bother him! Don't you think I could have taken the Icelandic Airlines here — believe me, I could have used the discount. No, for me it's El Al, or nothing. I'm a sentimentalist: memories of the Old Testament, stewardesses resembling Shulamith. I get a funny feeling that you and I are the only traditionalists left today... But to the point! I'm here on business. No, not another Faustian affair. None of those today. Souls go begging for me. It's fire sale every day. Routine case: Everyboy, medium-average freshman. In exactly one half hour he'll renounce his — pardon — unique soul and will follow me. Small fry? Just try to cast a net today — there's nothing but. . . So, let me introduce Everyboy. So long, and forever and ever, etcetera.

*(Music: pastoralissimo. The slowly rising curtain discloses a two-level platform in the middle. EVERYBOY, facing downward, is stretched out on the upper platform, his chin fitted to the platform's edge, his lips touching ANNIE's. She lies on her back on the lower platform. They are dressed in the style of the mid-sixties: college blazer; mini-skirt. As the curtain rises, each slowly lifts a leg, puts it down, lifts it again, etc., to the rhythm of the music and of the kissing. EVERYBOY'S unmoving foot is under one of the two high stools on which sit his FATHER and MOTHER, their backs to the audience. Their clothes suggest 1912 or thereabouts. FATHER is avidly fidgeting with abacus beads. MOTHER nostalgically eyes a baby's night bag in her hands; gradually, she begins to dose. A playpen is visible behind the platform. On the right, a coat-stand on which hang several beards, uniforms.*

*LEADER and SOLDIER walk to the coat-stand, take off their jackets, put on military uniforms of the late 19th century. They also don false beards. As they turn to the audience, resplendent in their military spit and sparkle, the pastoralissimo music is interrupted by a Wag-nerian-Technicolor anthem. FATHER dutifully stands up and nudges dosing MOTHER, who gets to her feet, too. EVERYBOY and ANNIE go on kissing as before. The anthem thunders away; the soft melody returns. FATHER and MOTHER sit down, and MOTHER doses away again. LEADER and SOLDIER sit down on chairs in a dark corner to observe the family scene.)*

MOTHER (*rubbing her eyes, still holding on to the night bag*). Sulphur! Can't you smell? !

FATHER. Impossible! The wind comes from the orchard^, past the beer garden. Roses, malt, oompahs.

MOTHER. The same stench of sulphur was in my dream!

FATHER. You're awake now.

MOTHER. But the sulphur stays on! And the parade: Huns in furs and unfrocked nuns, Tottenham Hotspurs and St. Louis Browns, bearded cossacks, mafiosi in cassocks, red guards, black shirts, turquoise muslims — and our boy's high school band in front.

FATHER. Didn't I tell you to stay away from cream cakes.

MOTHER. But the sulphur...

FATHER. Some visiting foreigner big shot let out a big fart. . . (*MOTHER puts the night bag to her cheek.*)

MOTHER. Our boy — what would he be doing on such a night ?

FATHER. What else can he do, an upright, red-blooded chip of the old block? His bags are packed. Time to catch a wink of sleep before the long journey home. But he pushes himself to books again, against the stream. . .

MOTHER. Against? He always preferred going with the stream.

FATHER. Ten more pages! His head slowly sinks down to the scholarly words, and the words crowd into his brain like sheep, a whole Australia.

MOTHER. Not much room for all those sheep.

FATHER. Seven more years, and he'll be a doctor. A word now, a dollar then. A Latin word — five dollars.

MOTHER. But why such a sulphurous night? I've never seen such shadows, crawling toward us, Indians in war-paint.

FATHER. Old wives' nightmares! — He'll be a doctor!

MOTHER. God grant it. The doctors' cheeks are baby-velvety.

*(EVERY BOY turns his head toward the audience, to catch breath after a long, suffocating hiss, and only now the spectators notice his dense beard, which resembles the LEADER'S. ANNIE grabs his beard and turns it to herself.)*

ANNIE. Hold it! No interruptions! "This is the forest primeval, murmuring. . ." When I part it, I'm an amazon at the dawn of the world. (*Site lets out a Tarsan yell. He shushes her ivorriedly.*)

EVERYBODY. What about me, Annie? How do you like me?

ANNIE. Beard-beard-beard! Each tingling, quivering hair!

EVERYBOY. Met ! D'you hear? ! "Me? !" "I? !"

ANNIE (*still enmeshed in the beard*). You? What are you? Oh, you, yes. Frankly, you're not too much.

EVERYBOY. What d'you mean? !

ANNIE. Don't get miffed now. Remember, we, under thirty, we must be brutally honest with each other. The trouble with you is that you're just too plain average, medium-square. How such a revolutionary beard could have selected such a face. If you'd only be a square-square, an extremist of suburbia. But not the bull's-eye middle middle.

EVERYBOY'. I could try, could'nt I?

ANNIE. Don't waste time. Just stick to the beard, otherwise the wind will blow it away. Feed it, water it, let it grow — more and more. Bring it to me every day, bend it down to me. . .

EVERYBOY. Wait, honey. I hate to break it to you, while we're so close and warm, but you'd better say good-bye to the beard right now. My injector blade is poised. Tomorrow morning I'm off to visit my parents. Smooth cheeks.

ANNIE. To shave off my beard? ! Beardicide! No! I forbid! The beard's mine.

EVERYBOY. Your beard? ...

ANNIE. Who inspired you to grow it. For whom did you grow it? !

EVERYBOY. For you I'd grow horns, barnacles. You made all the words of my textbooks evaporate. But the beard. . . (*ANNIE pulls his face down to hers. A long kiss. They lift and lower their legs again.*)

ANNIE. Promise not to shave it?

EVERYBOY. Mom and dad will kick me out into the snow if they see it.

*(ANNIE again pulls him down to herself. Again a long kiss.)*

ANNIE. Promise?

(EVERYBODY opens his mouth to respond, but she closes it with her hand and ties a pink garter on his beard.)

ANNIE. So you won't forget.

(ANNIE stretches, rises lazily, stands at the edge of the platform. EVERYBOY pulls out his foot from tinder his mothr's chair and stands nxt to her. He traces his finger along her arm; she lovingly traces hers along his beard. They turn away from each other, walk a couple of steps, then ANNIE suddenly veers around, rushes to him. grabs his beard with both hands, buries her face in it, lets out a scream of ecstatic delight, and runs out. EVERYBOY waves to her; then takes his beribboned beard in his hand and observes it curiously.)

EVERYBOY (remembering suddenly), Annie ! But what about me? ! Me? ! (No reply. EVERYBOY descends from the platform. FATHER and MOTHER rise and put their chairs on the lower platform. FATHER lifts the playpen on the upper platform. MOTHER gently strokes the night bag and folds it over the edge of the playpen. They sit down on their chairs, facing the audience, and scan the horizon with their eyes, waiting for their son. When EVERYBOY, having circled the platform once, appears left-stage, FATHER and MOTHER jump on their feet and begin to wave liandkrcrcllieves zealously. EVERYBOY stops, quickly wraps a big woolen scarf around his cheeks, and only then steps towards their wide-open arms.)

FATHER. Baby!

MOTHER. Babykins!

FATHER. Babytootsykins!

MOTHER. Babytootsypootsykins!

(They embrace liim, but then step back, wondering at his wrapped head.)

FATHER (to MOTHER). Didn't I tell you lie was studying hard. Look how his brain is swollen.

MOTHER. Maybe it's the pollution, the sulphur. . .

EVERYBODY. No... My tooth. . . Mmm...

FATHER. It's the soft life! Did we have toothpaste when we trekked to Transvaal in covered wagons ? But our teeth — ah! — hard and white like wolves'.

MOTHER. Believe me, son, as soon as you mentioned your tooth, mine started hurting more than yours. (MOTHER hands EVERYBOY a dish, a knife and a fork. He shakes his head and points at the aching tooth.)

MOTHER. Eat, baby, eat! Six months without mama's cooking. . . No wonder you're swollen all over. (EVERYBOY turns aside and swallows a couple of bites.)

FATHER (flipping the abacus beads). Two terms out, six terms left. Seven years — a doctor of medicine. In eleven years — a wife; I've already made arrangements with our good neighlxir; you remember little Nellie? There'll lie two children; one boy. . .

EVERYBODY. The medicine, dad. I don't know. . .

FATHER. Humwash! My son knows what he wants. I'm your father — logically, you know what you want. (EVERYBOY puts his knife across the plate.)

MOTHER. Sweetheart, have you forgotten? Never, never! The knife always goes on the edge of the plate, always!

EVERYBOY. But is medicine?...

FATHER. Son, you're an obedient son's son and that spells obedience.

MOTHER. Boils and rashes and cancer will never disappear. And that spells security.

EVERYBOY. Those Latin names of bones — enough for all the Roman dogs.

MOTHER. My dream again! The hands that held the trombones in the high school band, nothing but bone! Huns in furs. . .

FATHER. Oh, hold your tongues, both of you! Come to the window, both. How sweet the era! How gay the nineties! Open the newspaper — a man in England has invented the steam engine. Listen, and you'll hear cars coupling in garages, chicken necking in pots. Dreyfuss and Dolfuss. Roll it in your mouth. And get to bed before I hear more gloomsday talk! EVERYBOY. I. . .

FATHER. Tomorrow, after a good night's sleep, you'll sound again like a sober Luxemburger that you are.

MOTHER. Dad's right again. You're tired to the bone. Come, your playpen's ready.

*(They lead EVERYBOY to the playpen. MOTHER takes his nightbag from the edge of the playpen.)* EVERYBOY *(jokingly, to MOTHER)*. Think I'll fit into it?

MOTHER *(soulfully)*. If you love me, if you won't be stubborn.

*(FATHER and MOTHER take EVERYBOY by the elbows and begin to lift him into the playpen.)* FATHER. What's that, perfume?

EVERYBOY. No, no... laboratory smell!

*(MOTHER, suspiciously, puts her nose to his neck.)*

MOTHER. "Chanel Five"? ! "Arpege"? ! "Queen of Night"? !

EVERYBOY. Night? Yes! We were researching the night. . . Chemically. . . In the laboratory.

MOTHER. That night? ! Don't lie, child! That night smelt of sulphur. Huns in furs and unfrocked nuns. . .

FATHER. Malts and hops.. .

*(They burrow their noses under EVERYBOY's shawl to check the perfume. The shawl slides off and the gartered beard emerges in all its beauty.)*

MOTHER & FATHER *(in the tones of Greek tragedy)*. Aaaaaa!

MOTHER *(clasping her heart)*. My baby. . . murdered. . .

FATHER *(to EVERYBOY)*. Babycide!

*(MOTHER jabs the garter on EVERYBOY's beard.)*

MOTHER. A garter. . . and still warm? !

EVERYBOY. D'you mean this thing here? It's like a knot on a handkerchief. To remember a formula.

MOTHER. The ancient formula to break a mother's heart!

FATHER. I'll shut the windows. If the neighbors should see it!

*(FATHER closes the windows. MOTHER, combatting her disgust, touches the garter again and trembles with revulsion.)*

MOTHER. She bought it on sale, I'm sure. From a pile of garters panting for calves, squirming for lecherous fingers of menfolks. A foreigner, she must be a foreigner!

FATHER. Why?

MOTHER. The garter's hot and musky.

FATHER. An arabess!

MOTHER. A Muslim Negress! Aaaaaaa!

*(MOTHER swoons.)*

FATHER. She's fainted! Confess, admit! Where, when, how? And — where? !

*(EVERYBOY's eyes dart around in panic. LEADER nudges SOLDIER; they rise and ceremonially walk across the stage.)*

EVERYBOY. Why? Because...

*(He notices LEADER and SOLDIER. Sudden inspiration.)*

EVERYBOY *(pointing at the leader with his finger)*. Because I wanted to be like our leader!

FATHER *(hopefully)*. Mom, listen!

EVERYBOY. Yes, mom, that's the way it was. There I sit, in my history class, and suddenly, like a Liberty Bell — like my head was Philadelphia — our history, it just grabbed me by the throat: Ripping Jack and Slashing Jill, rolling Sisyphus down the hill, Third Rome and Reich shaking hands under the canopy of Disneyland. Montezuma, here we come!

MOTHER. Huns in furs...

FATHER. Quiet, mom. Listen to him! And all that in one year of college. . .

EVERYBOY. And then I told myself — I must cut a little notch of my own in history. But how?

FATHER & MOTHER. How? !

EVERYBOY. And I told myself — I'll be the spitting image of our leader!

MOTHER. Never say „spitting" — did you forget, sweet child?

EVERYBOY. The vomiting image of our leader. . .

FATHER. My son!

EVERYBOY. A walking historical example.

FATHER. The chip fell right by the old block!

MOTHER. As soon as he read the first word in the primer — „aa aa aa" — I already knew that he was destined for great things.

EVERYBOY. May I keep the beard — for a week at least?

FATHER. Don't dare to touch it! Just wait till the neighbors get the story — they'll bite their hedges from jealousy!

*(Anthem. Enter BEARDED LEADER and SOLDIER, who takes out some giant lollipops from his basket. MOTHER curtsies, FATHER kneels on one knee. The music stops. BEARDED LEADER shoves his hand to FATHER'S and MOTHER'S lips.)*

BEARDED LEADER. No hand-kissing, please. This went out with feudalism.

*(FATHER and MOTHER kiss LEADER'S hand. LEADER looks up. SOLDIER gestures to all to be quiet.)*

BEARDED LEADER. My countrymen, when one surveys the world about him before, after or during the great storm, if he is a patriot he breathes the clarified atmosphere with a strange mixture of new hope. . .

FATHER *(whispers, smiling)*. Roses, malts, oompahs. . .

BEARDED LEADER. I would rejoice to acclaim the era of the golden rule, mindful of the solemnity of the occasion. . .

*(Everybody applauds. LEADER stands, deep in thought, turns to SOLDIER.)*

BEARDED LEADER *(whispering)*. What did I come here for?

*(SOLDIER points at his beard, beckons with his head at EVERY BOY.)*

LEADER. Yes, yes, of course. . . *(To FATHER and MOTHER)*. So you've raised a quarterback for our national team. Be

proud.

EVERY BOY. D'you hear, mom, dad?

BEARDED LEADER. We sure need quarterbacks, since storm clouds are gathering over the playing fields of Eton, and as much as I don't like this term that we are living in a storm, because we are not, I then say, but who really knows. Therefore we need quarterbacks.

*(BEARDED LEADER motions to SOLDIER who distributes lollipops to FATHER and MOTHER. EVERYBOY also stretches out his hand, but BEARDED LEADER stops SOLDIER with a motion of his hand.)*

LEADER. Wait. What was the role of Field Marshall Hindenburg, Marshall Budenyi, ex-Marshall Cha-Chou?

EVERYBOY. Gesundheit!

BEARDED LEADER. Right! Who won the Channel Eleven Basketball Game of the Week on January 11, 1964?

EVERYBOY. The better team.

BEARDED LEADER. Splendid. Why am I the greatest living statesman?

EVERYBOY. You are living?

*(FATHER and MOTHER put fingers to their lips, warning EVERYBOY not to contradict BEARDED LEADER. Mini-skirted ANNIE walks by downstage, carrying a placard: BAN SHAVEN, NON-PHYSICAL LOVE! EVERYBOY and BEARDED LEADER follow her with their eyes.)*

EVERYBOY *(watching BEARDED LEADER'S reaction to ANNIE.)* I guess, you are living.

BEARDED LEADER. Err. .. So it was you, lad, who in this hour of danger, with ripe bombs hanging over our fruity heads, decided to honor your leader?

EVERYBOY *(throwing a quick glance at his parents)*. I wanted to cut a little notch in history...

*(ANNIE crosses the stage again and EVERYBOY follows her with his eyes, swallowing the rest of the sentence. She departs.)*

EVERYBOY. Err.. . But what am I for history — without guns, armies, rockets. And so I decided: I'll be a spitting. . .  
*(MOTHER lifts her finger.)*

EVERYBOY. Retching image of you.

BEARDED LEADER. A boy? A man for my heart!

*(BEARDED LEADER beckons to SOLDIER who hands EVERYBOY a lollipop.)*

BEARDED LEADER *(to EVERYBOY)*. Come.*(BEARDED LEADER seats EVERYBOY on his knee.)*

BEARDED LEADER. I'll give you the highest reward — the executive key to happiness and contentment. *(EVERYBOY stretches out his hand, but instead of putting the „key“ in his palm, Bearded leader puts his lips to EVERYBOY's ear.)*

BEARDED LEADER. The key, the magic formula, is... *(He beckons to SOLDIER who makes an orchestra conductor's gesture. An invisible orchestra' plays a circus crescendo.)*

BEARDED LEADER. „Be obedient“.

*(EVERYBOY looks at his empty palm, turns it around.)*

BEARDED LEADER. And now I'll finalize your life path — be as I am!

*(EVERYBOY gives him a sceptical look.)*

BEARDED LEADER. You're off to a good start — your beard is a grandchild of mine. Once it turns gray, nobody will be able to distinguish which is mine and which is yours. You'll become my mirror — the greatest achievement on this earth.

*(EVERYBOY takes his own beard and compares it with the BEARDED LEADER'S.)*

EVERYBOY. But mine's got a different type of curl.

BEARDED LEADER. Shush, child! That's anarcho-syndicalism, alien theories spread by individuals with a mongoloid germ plasm.

EVERYBOY. And I?

BEARDED LEADER. Not „1". "Aye, aye, Sir!" That's the spirit which made our nation great!

EVERYBOY. And yet I move, I speak, I think — I am.

*(Silence. BEARDED LEADER motions with his head to SOLDIER, who bends to LEADER. They throw their joint glances at EVERYBOY and imperceptibly shake their heads.)*

BEARDED LEADER *(to SOLDIER, whispering)*. Stubborn. *(SOLDIER points at his uniform.)*..

BEARDED LEADER. Good idea — nothing like a new uniform to drum in obedience. *(Coughs to attract EVERYBOY'S attention; in a concerned voice)* I hear something and it's not music there!

MOTHER. What d'you hear. Huns in furs?

FATHER. The hob-nailed boots from alien cobblestones?

BEARDED LEADER. Something much more specific. These unique decibels when the DEW line is being penetrated by cobalt missiles.

EVERYBOY. What will happen now? What shall I do?

BEARDED LEADER. Stand guard. Horatio Alger at the bridge of Thermopylae! You'll go down in history!

EVERYBOY. I rather stay up.

*(BEARDED LEADER and SOLDIER hurriedly put him into a guard's pose.)*

BEARDED LEADER. My image obliges!

EVERYBOY. What's my job? Give me something! A gun! A white flag!

MOTHER. Not the gun!

BEARDED LEADER. The wisdom of a mother's heart! Yes, guns are for ordinary soldiers. But you're my image. There's a marshall's baton in your future.

*(BEARDED LEADER puts a second lollipop into EVERYBOY's hand.)*

EVERYBOY. Wait! And you? !

BEARDED LEADER. We'll be back!

EVERYBOY. When?

BEARDED LEADER. Before a thousand years go by.

EVERYBOY. A thousand? ! What will be left of my beard? !

BEARDED LEADER. What's a thousand years in a life of a nation? A hair of eternity.

*(BEARDED LEADER and SOLDIER march out backward and sneak to the coat-stand, as the stage grows darker. They change their masks and some details in their uniforms. FATHER and MOTHER embrace EVERYBOY, run out, and immediately pop in again: MOTHER with a basket of sandwiches, FATHER with a hairbrush, with which he begins to clean EVERYBOY. MOTHER combs his hair and beard. EVERYBOY fidgets a little, but — a man on guard must keep his composure. The combing completed, MOTHER begins to feed a sandwich to him. ANNIE steps in, a bunch of flowers in her hand. FATHER and MOTHER do not notice her. They embrace EVERYBOY once more and sit down on their chairs.)*



*ANNIE steps to EVERYBOY who straightens himself proudramrodlike. She adorns him with flowers, sticking them into his clothcs, beard, hair. She crowns it all by concealing his beard under a garland.)*

EVERYBOY. What d'you think you are doing? Will this protect me from the enemy?

ANNIE. With a progressive beard like this, how can your lips be so backward? ! He who comes to destroy a rotten world is an enemy of rottenness only! For me — it's a breath of fresh air!

EVERYBOY (*sniffing*). It stinks of sulphur.

ANNIE. Your nostrils have been brainwashed by the past! He who comes has given an official permission for the flowers to blossom; his thoughts are one big garland of flowers. D'you think he'd hurt you — a mirror of his thoughts ?

EVERYBOY. He won't? Annie, I've an idea!

ANNIE. Don't scare me.

EVERYBOY. What if we two got married, right here and now ? Flowers, bombs, dangers! I saw Errol Flynn do that and, boy, did it look great! With one hand I'll hold your waist and with the other I'll exclaim: „Newlyweds! Don't disturb!" ANNIE. Sweet, silly boy. Errol Flynn is "out" , didn't you know?

EVERYBOY. What's "in"?

ANNIE. What you call the enemy.

EVERYBOY. My beard shall be yours till death or something worse do us part.

ANNIE. Yes. .. If, after all, something should happen to you, leave me your beard. Take it off carefully. Make it legal — notary public and all that crap. You won't have any use for it — if something should happen. . .

*(Gargantuan tuba brass-band erupts backstage.)*

ANNIE. Ta-ta, Every-pet. Ring out the old!...

*(She blows him a kiss and runs out. FATHER and MOTHER, frightened by the band, hurry to EVERYBOY and drag him to the playpen; they lift him into the playpen and cover it with their bodies. The anthem is now heard, marches and brass forever.)*

BALD LEADER & SOLDIER.

The West is shaggy,  
The East is bald.  
Welcome the New,  
Shave off the old! Shave off the hair,  
Shave off the skin,  
Weed out old thoughts,  
Destroy all sin!

*(BALD LEADER takes a flashlight from SOLDIER and the finger of light sweeps past six skeletons downstage, lined up as ducks in the shooting gallery.)*

BALD LEADER. The enemy!

SKELETON. Look boss, no hair!

BALD LEADER. I quote from myself: "He who looks like an enemy is an enemy. He who does not look like an enemy is an enemy in disguise."

SKELETON. Not even skin, flesh, gristle! Beat that for purity !

BALD LEADER. I'll test your purity. Complete the thought from page seven of my book: „If you want to plant tomatoes. . ."

SKELETON. "...don't use cauliflower seeds."

BALD LEADER. "'Water chestnut' seeds!"

*(BALD LEADER motions to SOLDIER, who shoots the SKELETONS down, one after another. BALD LEADER again moves his flashlight. The finger of light passes FATHER and MOTHER, shielding the playpen with their bodies, jumps back, and catches EVERYBOY's flower-covered face.)*

BALD LEADER. What's that? !

FATHER. A hundred flowers, great leader. . .

MOTHER. To greet your triumph, special arrangement. . .

*(SOLDIER meanwhile tiptoes to the playpen and pulls out the beard.)*

BALD LEADER. Aha! A beard!

EVERYBOY. Ouch! Let it go!

FATHER & MOTHER. Mercy!

BALD LEADER. A poisonous weed you have raised, a racial boil! To prison with him!

*(SOLDIER turns the playpen over on EVERYBOY who falls on his fours.)*

MOTHER. But he's only a baby!

BALD LEADER. A bearded baby? !

FATHER. It grew by accident.

MOTHER. He wasn't even aware of it.

BALD LEADER. Your confession, puss-filled boil!

EVERYBOY. I'm gonna tell the whole truth!

MOTHER. The truth? !

FATHER. We're lost!

EVERYBOY. I did it for a girl. Nothing political!

BALD LEADER. The pussyboil oozes dirty lies!

MOTHER. I beg your pardon. There was no cleaner baby in the whole town — not a speck. . .

BALD LEADER. The beard's a proof of his guilt. The hairs of his beard are a secret thread which leads to the secret caves of the subhuman race, where they, filthily bearded, draft plutoprotocols and hatch leprous plots against the pure race. And that's me!

MOTHER. What will you do with my baby? !

BALD LEADER. For the beards — only one solution, the final one! Fire!

FATHER *(exhales with relief)*. But, of course, great leader. Burn it. Excellent solution. He'll shave it off immediately. Into a platter.

BALD LEADER. Correction. Beards are creamated together with their owners!

MOTHER. My son the frier! *(She faints.)*

FATHER. Leader, Sir, we haven't had a single beard in our family for ages. Not since B. C., and that doesn't count.

BALD LEADER. Prove it!

FATHER. How?

BALD LEADER. Your genealogical tree!

FATHER. But it's in the forest!

BALD LEADER. I give you two minutes.

FATHER. Aye, aye!

*(He drags MOTHER out with him.)*

FATHER *(departing)*. Tell him "yes!" Only — "yes!" Nothing but "yes!"

*(FATHER and MOTHER leave. SOLDIER brings a pile of sticks and puts them by the playpen.)* EVERYBOY. I'm innocent!

LEADER. You were born, you've got a beard — you're guil-ty!

*(EVERYBOY pounds the roof of the playpen with his fists.)*

EVERYBOY. I want to call my lawyer!

*(SOLDIER ties EVERYBOY's hands.)*

LEADER. Subhuman speech pollutes the air. The fire will be your lawyer and your judge.

EVERYBOY. Please untie my hands.

BEARDED LEADER. Why?

EVERYBOY. I... I want to touch my beard once more. BEARDED LEADER. The criminal always returns to touch the focus of his crime. Another proof!

*(SOLDIER lights a match.)*

BEARDED LEADER. Hail, fire! You'll sweep away the forests of beards and on the clean faces we shall build a thousand-year.. .

FATHER. The proof! The proof!

*(FATHER and MOTHER push in the geneological tree. On its branches hang pictures of roundcheeked women and cleanshaven men, bowlers, corsets, veils. BALD LEADER sighs with disappointment and blows out SOLDIER'S match.)*

BALD LEADER. Seventy-seven generations?

FATHER. Seventy-seven!

MOTHER. Seventy and seven! Oh, my baby!

*(BALD LEADER takes out a magnifying glass from his pocket and surveys the picutres. There is a touch of music with each face and object surveyed: brassband, Chopin, Vivaldi.)*

BALD LEADER. Hmm.. . Aha! What's that! A hair!

MOTHER. No, no! Just a cobweb

*(MOTHER quickly wipes the cobweb away with her handkerchief. BALD LEADER continues his investigation.)*

BALD LEADER. Hmmmmmm. . . Got it! A hair in the ear!

*(FATHER rummages through his pockets, takes out pincers and deftly pulls out the hair from the picture's ear.)*

FATHER. That hair grew up in the picture after his death.

BALD LEADER. Proof!

FATHER. It's dead, see! It's not live hair.

*(BALD LEADER looks at the hair through his magnifying glass.)*

BALD LEADER. It seems to be dead.. . And what if it's pretending? ! We'll find out!

*(BALD LEADER puts a piece of paper on the top of the playpen, carefully places the hair on it, gives a sign to SOLDIER, who carefully aims and shoots at the hair.)*

FATHER. You see! It didn't scream, bleed, even wince!

BALD LEADER. Hmm. .. No hair when alive?

FATHER & MOTHER. Cross our hearts! Never!

*(BALD LEADER steps to the playpen-prison, surveys EVERYBOY's beard with his magnifying glass, ponders.)*

BALD LEADER. I'm amazed at my generosity. I allow you to live.

*(FATHER, MOTHER sink on their knees, mumbling their gratitude. SOLDIER unties EVERYBOY's hands.)*

BALD LEADER. What a life is opening for you now! You'll get a uniform. You'll cheer me in mammoth rallies. You'll quote me left and right! And then, you'll march to destroy all the bearded subhumans. Yours will be their land and golden teeth: molars for me, canines for you!

EVERYBOY. Let me out first!

BALD LEADER. You'll be out — in an orderly manner. Order is the navel in my race's majestic body. Your signature first.

*(BEARDED LEADER motions to SOLDIER who hands him a pen and a sheet of paper.)*

BALD LEADER *(reading)*. I...

EVERYBOY. I?

BALD LEADER. Declare that the beard was forcibly glued to my face.

EVERYBOY. My? Face? Glued?

BALD LEADER. By bearded, long-nosed subhumans, on Friday eve. I further submit that, while forcibly glueing the beard to my face, they slaughtered three infants and drank their blood.. .

*(BALD LEADER hands the sheet and SOLDIER the pen to EVERYBOY.)*

EVERYBOY. But it didn't happen that way.. .

BALD LEADER. Warning! I can suffer the young ones to come unto me with one sound only — "Yes"

FATHER. Sign!

MOTHER. Live! O, baby.. .

EVERYBOY. And if I do. If I'll say "yes". What then?

BALD LEADER. Your beard will be shaven off.

EVERYBOY. My beard? !

BALD LEADER. Forcibly glued on you. Never forget!

EVERYBOY. The beard I grew?

FATHER. Son, what can we do against an earthquake?

EVERYBOY. Perhaps... save the beard?

MOTHER. Child, all that matters will be left even after the beard is gone.

EVERYBOY. But it's my part now. To forsake, to betray a part of myself?

BALD LEADER. You grew it for a filthy girl and now you speak of betrayal. A reactionary jester!

MOTHER. Yes, that's what he is, he's only kidding!

EVERYBOY. What will be left of me if I begin to parcel out myself?

BALD LEADER. That's enough now! Time is the blood of my enemies, of monsters and freaks. While you were stalling, it had stopped flowing. The razor!

*(Enter ANNIE, in a surgical robe, and hands BALD LEADER a giant razor.)*

EVERYBOY. Et tu, Annie!

FATHER. He did learn Latin.

MOTHER. Name of some bone. . .

ANNIE. His own.

EVERYBOY. Why? Why? !

ANNIE. Science, my pet.

EVERYBOY. Science? !

ANNIE. Look at it this way. I could have hidden from all this. But then I would have shut myself off from life, from progress. What is, is. Bald heads are life, they are progress. Where would humanity be today if our forefathers would have merely hidden themselves from difficult decisions. We would be still running around in furs of wild animals, covered by ugly hair. . .

EVERYBOY. But, Annie, you loved my beard! *(ANNIE gives him a sign to be silent.)*

ANNIE *(softly)*. I still do, silly. It's a survival of the past in my psyche which I'll try to erase. But nobody needs to know about it, right?

EVERYBOY. I guess so.

ANNIE. You wouldn't like me to be erased?

EVERYBOY. No, but. . .

ANNIE. Well then, ta-ta, pet. Progress is a locomotive, and you fell asleep on the rails.

BALD LEADER. Stainless steel and swift strokes — that's how the great questions of history are solved.

*(BALD LEADER touches the playpen with the razor. SOLDIER takes out a match, poised to strike. EVERYBOY, FATHER, MOTHER, ANNIE cover their faces with their hands. SOLDIER points at EVERYBOY and, looking at BALD LEADER, makes slicing motion with his finger across his throat.)*

BALD LEADER. Much too easy. He must submit, on his own free will.

*(SOLDIER points at his uniform, opens a button.)*

BALD LEADER. Yes — one more change of uniform. The uniform's the ploy wherein I'll catch the conscience of Everyboy!

*(BALD LEADER puts the razor on the playpen and tiptoes with SOLDIER to the coat-stand. They take off their baldpate masks and put on forked beards. SOLDIER adds a row of medals on BALD LEADER'S back. EVERYBOY slowly opens the fingers over his eyes. FATHER, MOTHER, ANNIE do the same.)*

MOTHER. They're gone!

FATHER. We've been liberated — again!

EVERYBOY. I'm free! !

*(ANNIE shrugs her shoulders and takes off her surgical robe. A martial band strikes on an anthem backstage. She notices flowers on the floor, quickly gathers them, and runs to the edge of the stage. FORK-BEARD LEADER and SOLDIER march onto the stage. ANNIE hops in front of them, throwing flowers under their jeet.)*

ANNIE (singing).

Let the bells peal  
And strippers ring,  
Let cannons boom  
And abbots sing!

FORK-BEARD LEADER. Average underdogs, the long night of your feudal servitude has dissolved itself in its antithesis. Your troubles are over!

*(SOLDIER hands out giant lollipops to FATHER, MOTHER, ANNIE.)*

MOTHER. My baby! He likes candies!

FORK-BEARD LEADER. Aaa! The flower of youth wilting in prison! A shocking illustration of my enemy's brutality!

*(He pinches ANNIE who jumps but keeps her smile. All applaud his words.)*

FORK-BEARD LEADER. I'm a friend of youth! *(SOLDIER hands a lollipop to EVERYBOY.)*

EVERYBOY. Hooray! Open the door now. It's stuffy in here!

FORK-BEARDED LEADER. Let us bow our heads now in a moment of positive prayer.

*(SOLDIER collects the lollipops from FATHER, MOTHER, ANNIE, EVERYBOY.)*

EVERYBOY. Hey, that's my candy! The door!

FORK-BEARD LEADER. A prayer to peace! *(All bow their heads reverently.)*

FORK-BEARD LEADER. We all love peace. But that is not enough. We must be militant in our devotion to peace; believe in it so intensely that we would grind to instant dust anyone anywhere who'd try to raise his finger against peace!

ANNIE. Pax-mir-salam ! Rah-rah-rah!

FORK-BEARD LEADER. And is peace in peace today? No! It's in danger! As long as there's a single baldie left in the world, peace is in mortal danger! *(To EVERYBOY)* Youth!

*(SOLDIER hands the lollipop to EVERYBOY again.)*

EVERYBOY. I'm all ears, all beard!

FORK-BEARD LEADER. Go West, young man! Then go east, north and south — to grind the bald pates to dust! Let the smooth, shiny orbs of their skulls — the proofs of their guilt — crack and crack again!

ANNIE. Salam-mir-pax ! Ko-ax, ko-ax, ko-ax !

FORK-BEARD LEADER. Death to walking pitchers, doom to talking geodesic domes, damnation to breeding billiard balls!

MOTHER *(to FATHER, in a whisper)*. Don't forget to chop down your billiard table.

FORKBEARD LEADER. The future belongs to beards!

EVERYBOY. Up the beards! — May I leave now?

FORK-BEARD LEADER. Why rush, young man? A couple of days, and we'll have abolished all prisons. Imagine — you, one of the last prisoners ever. Savor your uniqueness !

MOTHER. Let him go, please.

FORK-BEARD LEADER. Am I not the friend of youth? (*To EVERYBOY*) When the prison gate will close behind you, you'll make a formal statement to the press that you were thrown into prison because of me. My example inspired your deeds!

EVERYBOY. And my beard?

FORK-BEARD LEADER. Beards are the thing to wear. After I'll fork yours.

EVERYBOY. But why? !

FORK-BEARD LEADER. Because this is the way history forks itself. Unforked beards mean selfishness, blindness. Do you want to remain selfish and blind?

EVERYBOY. Well, no.

FORK-BEARD LEADER. What you want is an immediate improvement on your beard.

EVERYBOY. But my beard just doesn't fork. That's not the natural. . .

FORK-BEARD LEADER. What's natural or not, I decide. Chin operation, a month in a cast. . . My robes! (*ANNIE helps him into a surgeon's robes.*)

FORK-BEARD LEADER. Scalpel!

(*ANNIE hands him the gigantic razor left by BALD LEADER.*)

EVERYBOY. Wait! It's nice of you to be so interested in my beard. Many thanks. But I'd just rather keep it.

FORK-BEARD LEADER. Ah, the confusions of youth! Just think: with a forked beard you'll be able to march on my left and on my right. Can the densest beard provide a shadow of such happiness?

EVERYBOY. Happiness — without my beard?

FATHER. Don't be stubborn!

MOTHER. Do as he says!

EVERYBOY. I'm sorry, but we're past any parting — my beard and I. As I crouched in prison, as the beard nestled into my chest, I realized, there is no other beard like mine in the whole world, there'll never be. If I let it be taken away, the blank tablet of my cheeks will reproach me from every mirror. What a beard you've had — they'll say — one in a billion; how it would have grown, spread, rustled — and you betrayed it. . . What will I gain from a million forked beards, if I lose my own? (*FORK-BEARD LEADER raises the razor.*)

FORK-BEARD LEADER. Your last chance!

EVERY BOY. No!

FORK-BEARD LEADER. Silly wretch! The people's wrath will scorch you now. They already look at you wrath-fully, the people, yes!

EVERYBOY. The people? Where?

FORK-BEARD LEADER. I am the people, dunce! Where do the deepest aspirations of the people turn into flesh? In me! Wherein lies the people's future ? In me! Your beard plots to suffocate the people's happiness — the people will strike back!

MOTHER. My baby!

FORK-BEARD LEADER. Peace and silence!

(*SOLDIER turns the playpen on its side and pushes EVERYBOY behind it, like a defendant in a court.*)

FORK-BEARD LEADER. In my domain, justice rages. Even this monster will have a scrupulously objective trial.

(*FATHER, MOTHER, ANNIE bring in chairs and sit down, their backs to the audience.*)

FORK-BEARD LEADER. The trial begins!

*(He rummages in SOLDIER's basket, takes out a gavel, bangs it.)*

FORK-BEARD LEADER. Before we can go on, I must read from the thousands of letters we received on this case. This one impressed me most deeply — it's from a a mother of the people, I mean, the little people: „An unforked beard in our midst? This is obscene. How can I explain it to my children ? Can we permit walking pornography ?" Signed: "Worried Mother." — Citizens, are we going to turn deaf ears to a mother's outcry?

*(SOLDIER prods FATHER, MOTHER, ANNIE with his rifle butt.)*

FATHER, MOTHER, ANNIE *(mechanically)*. No!

FORK-BEARD LEADER. We'll dispense with the reading of the prosecution statement. It evokes such horror that the people would tear the defendant to pieces right here on the spot. It will suffice if we mention that this week alone he murdered four high officials.

EVERYBOY. But I was in prison!

FORK-BEARD LEADER. Only average criminals have to be in the place of the crime when they comit it. Another proof that what we face here is an unusual criminal. And then — what satanic cleverness — to eliminate our cattle while still sitting in prison!

MOTHER. But he loves animals!

FATHER. He does!

*(MOTHER pulls out several photographs from her handbag.)*

MOTHER. Here! He's five, with a rabbit! Seven, with a dog. Eleven, with a pony. ..

FORK-BEARD LEADER. Any unicorns?

MOTHER. No... But. ..

FORK-BEARD LEADER. Another proof? You. see, our proofs can lick your proofs with one hand tied behind their back! Why wouldn't he be photographed with a unicorn ?

EVERYBOY. Because they don't exist!

FORK-BEARD LEADER. Desperate evasion! It was because you hated them! Five herds of our prime unicorns died suddenly, with his name on their lips. Listen to the recording of this crime of the century. *(FORK-BEARD LEADER flicks his fingers. Caterwauling through a loudspeaker.)*

EVERYBOY. I don't hear my name.

FORK-BEARD LEADER. Now I read from a sworn statement by the outstanding international authority on unicorn language. "These sounds, "These sounds," he writes, "spell: E-V-E-R-Y-B-O-Y." Which means: Everyboy ! *(Flourish of drums.)*

EVERYBOY. And my beard? ! You said yourself that the future belonged to beards!

FORKBEARD LEADER. Positive beards! *(He grabs EVERYBOY's beard.)*

*(SOLDIER hands two mirrors to FORKED BEARD LEADER who "consults" his own reflections in them — he nods, then shakes his head seriously, shrugs his shoulders. The consultation completed, he returns the mirrors to SOLDIER.)*

FORK-BEARD LEADER. The verdict! The judges, having heard out the voice of the people, decide that the defendant is: ug mr pum pum uk tintinabulationallistically gra gra mimb -ug. One and only punishment fits his crime — destruction. But while we were debating, our system has been evolving toward ever greater humanity. And, therefore, in our overwhelming generosity, with which we overflow.

*(SOLDIER takes a big towel from his basket and dries LEADER with it.)*

FORK-BEARD LEADER.. .overflow, we have decided to reeducate the defendant instead. To the far north he will go, to



total solitude, until he'll say "yes".

EVERYBOY. No.. .

FORK-BEARD LEADER. Off with his body!

*(FORK-BEARD LEADER leaves. SOLDIER puts a dunce cap on EVERYBOY's head and grabs his elbow. FATHER and MOTHER embrace each other in despair. ANNIE, hipswings past EVERYBOY.)*

EVERYBOY. Annie! *(She stops.)*

EVERYBOY. Annie. . . You said once, remember, that my beard was a song and the rest of me a yawn. You've seen what's happened to me. Isn't that something?

ANNIE. It's something, yes. You fit your beard better now.

EVERYBOY *(hopefully)*. Annie!

ANNIE. But certain somethings are still more meaningful than others.

*(During EVERYBOY's speech, ANNIE compares his beard with SOLDIER's, who stands next to him. She begins to lean toward SOLDIER.)*

EVERYBOY. Come with me, Annie! My beard shall warm us both! We'll build a cabin — from the crudest logs, like Lincoln's — we'll feed on birds' eggs, and we'll fly through white plains in sleek sleighs.

ANNIE. A Christmas card? How campy. And, then, I never liked birds' eggs.

EVERYBOY. We'll have chicks, and geese...

ANNIE. And the surrey with a fringe on top. Ah, where are the shows of yesteryear ?.. . Everyboy, dear fool, I'm not so young anymore.. .

EVERYBOY. But you are!

ANNIE. Don't spoil it by being polite. Hipocrisy is for those over thirty and you still have some years to get there.

EVERYBOY. Annie...

ANNIE. I've chewed my chandelier at all ends, and all that's left now is a twenty watt night bulb for retirement. I've earned my right to retire, haven't I ?

EVERYBOY. Whatever you say. But if you reconsider. ..

ANNIE. Send me a postcard, will you?

*(ANNIE leaves, hand in hand with the SOLDIER. The stage grows darker. FATHER and MOTHER, grey sil-huettes, rise from the chairs, stiffer, more monotonous than before. FATHER still holds the abacus in his hand.)*

FATHER. My son. ..

MOTHER. Baby mine...

EVERYBOY. Mother! Father! How wonderful! I'd ask you to sit down, but I'll get my first chair only in seven years. Now don't mistake me, it's not too bad here, not at all. . . They gave you a permit to visit me, didn't they ? For how long ? Together again!

MOTHER. Never together anymore.

FATHER. We died — from cold, from loneliness. *(EVERYBOY takes off his dunce cap.)*

MOTHER. Baby, my baby, our years just gave out.

FATHER. So stubborn you were.

MOTHER. I forgive you everything, all.

FATHER. "Yes" — such a small word. And you couldn't mouth it, you couldn't answer him "yes".

MOTHER. We'd be all alive now, together.

EVERYBOY. I couldn't. Father, please understand, I couldn't.

FATHER. Do you understand?

EVERYBOY. How much I wanted you to hear my "yes"! But I didn't have it — my own "yes". Had I pronounced an alien "yes", I would have begun to die. I might have been with you, but would it be "I"? The only way I could hope to climb to my "yes" was by saying "no".

FATHER. That's what I thought — you don't understand it yourself.

MOTHER. Stubborn, but still my very own. ..

FATHER. We must go. Farewell.. .

MOTHER. Farewell, my baby. ..

EVERYBOY. Not yet! Wait! Did you understand me? ! Say something...

FATHER. Yes, yes...

MOTHER. The knife across the plate, don't forget. ..

*(FATHER and MOTHER slowly recede during their last sentences — grey to black. A moment before they vanish, FORK-BEARD LEADER, in a fur coat, emerges by FATHER and deftly swipes the abacus from him.)*

FORK-BEARD LEADER. Psst!

EVERYBOY. Who's there?

FORK-BEARD LEADER. The leader. Forked beard.

EVERYBOY. Why do you whisper? Deserts of ice have no ears.

FORK-BEARD LEADER. Naive as ever. Is a leader ever alone? Beneath this ice, the ears and eyes of our enemies quiver like fish, hidden microphones itch. ..

EVERYBOY. That's how powerful you are...

FORK-BEARD LEADER. What do you know about power and ruling? It's a thousand times easier to say "no" and to stand alone than to lug the gorilla of governing on your back, from day to day after day. Someone has to rule, understand? !

EVERYBOY. Why didn't you speak like this during the trial?

FORK-BEARD LEADER. To open my heart to the mob? ! To awaken chaos, which would hurt whom most? The mob!

EVERYBOY. Your heart? Where?

FORK-BEARD LEADER. You never realized, did you, that under this furcoat, gold braid, bullet-proof vest, woolen underwear with a replica of the state seal there beats, suffers, sings... a heart.

*(FORK-BEARD LEADER opens his furcoat, unbuttons his uniform, unlocks the bullet-proof vest and jams EVERYBOY's ear to his heart.)*

FORK-BEARD LEADER. Listen!

*(Rasping noise of execution drums.)*

FORK-BEARD LEADER. Execution drums! My historical burden! It's so easy for you. Even here your heart beats like. .. just a heart.

EVERYBOY. What do you want?

FORK-BEARD LEADER. Say "yes".

*(EVERYBOY slowly shakes his head. FORK-BEARD LEADER pulls out from inside his furcoat a Sears-Roe-buck catalog and a copy of "Playboy" magazine. He turns their pages and pushes them into EVERYBOY's face.)*

FORK-BEARD LEADER. Look, touch! Feels warm, tastes good! Enjoy, enjoy !

*(He points to a two-page spread of a naked girl.)*

FORK-BEARD LEADER. Ah, I've got you! Your eyes, two beetles, are rock'n'rolling up her skin! Look, the snow is beginning to melt in your beard. One flip of my fingers and she'll be next to you. On a bear rug. Next to a fire. "Yees ?"

EVERYBOY *(very softly)*. No. . .

FORK-BEARD LEADER. Diner's Club! American Express! *(He jams credit cards into EVERYBOY's pocket.)*

FORK-BEARD LEADER. Three weeks for two in Bermuda? Two weeks for three in the Crimea? Why should a bright young man like you stay in a place like this?

EVERYBOY. If I hold out, alone, someone might hear me.

FORK-BEARD LEADER. From here? ! Try it. Say something. Shout.

EVERYBOY. Hear me! ! !

*(His words echo away. FORK-BEARDED LEADER laughs, then signals by whistling. SOLDIER, furcoated. runs in with two large icicles in his hands and stands to attention.)*

FORK-BEARD LEADER. Your two words — instant icicles. Nothing, nobody ever slips through the Ice Curtain. If you want to reach others, you can do it only through me. Staying here, you divorce yourself from humanity, and that's inhuman. Nobody will even know that you stayed here — except me.

EVERYBOY. I. . . will know.

*(FORK-BEARDED LEADER thrusts the abacus into EVERYBOY's hands.)*

FORK-BEARD LEADER. Play to me on the harp, sing my praises!

*(He grabs EVERYBOY by the collar.)*

FORK-BEARD LEADER. As far as I can remember, not a single man in my domain has ever said "no" to me! Here, unbowed, you are a rusty nail, waiting to puncture my power. Until you'll sing my praise, my power will taste flat. Say "yes", I beg you, be at my side — oh, the limitless chances for promotion — sing "yes" through your new split beard!

EVERYBOY. You have wasted a trip. After growing a beard to please a girl; left on guard for a thousand years; falling in love with my beard and about to marry death — how can I stroke the harp and sing your praise? All I have left are two words, the most important in life: "Yes" and "No". To you it's "No"!

*(FORK-BEARD LEADER pulls out the abacus from EVERYBOY's hand and breaks it on his knee.)*

FORK-BEARD LEADER. Freeze to hell!

*(He storms out. The stage darkens. EVERYBOY cradles himself in his arms to keep warm.)*

EVERYBOY. And what if I am wrong? Who'll tell me that I'm right? ! God? *(EVERYBOY looks up. Silence.)*

EVERYBOY. Answer, God!

*(Silence. The stage grows quite dark and EVERYBOY remains surrounded by a pale circle of light.)*

EVERYBOY. No ! No! No! No! No. . .

*(As his voice gradually fades, he slowly turns away from the audience and then faces it again, completing a circle. His beard is now all gray, he is a cowering old man.)*

EVERYBOY. No. No. No. . . No. . . No...

*(His voice dies away. As he sinks to his knees and his head on his chest, the stage begins to lighten. Majestic organ music is heard in the distance. Four angels begin a measured descent from above, with parachutes. EVERYBOY slowly, hopefully begins to raise his head. At his gesture, the angels quickly disappear, the music ceases.)*

VOICE *(backstage, resembling a TV commercial announcer)*. Feel like pampering yourself ? Use Gillette blades! A touch of Gillette opens the door to adventure in smooth pleasure. The best shave this side of paradise!

*(All hope spent. EVERYBOY collapses. Again — dazzling light, organ music. Four angels, two on his right and two on his left, descend together with the slowly sinking curtain. Signs in Chinese, Arabic, Armenian also descend. What do they mean? Ah!.. .)*

THE END

*Scenes from the 1967 production of 'Everyboy (or The Beard)'  
by the New York Lithuanian Theater.:*



