**Distribution**

(Live) (Film)

Alice Kafkav

Grszcz Rocket

Krumpli

Loki

Marko

Jodiefoster (a puppet)

All the live characters wear black noses except Alice and Jodiefoster.

Rocket wears a black nose in the films.

*There is a projection screen. The title appears. The sound of an air raid siren fills the air. Flashing lights, like searchlights. Pounding electronic music.*

*The five live characters appear simultaneously amongst the crowd and in the playing space. The move as if they are being followed, or as if they are following someone, or as if they’re just lost, or each of these in turn.*

*The following rakes less than a minute:*

*Spotlight: GRSZCZ appears in the crowd, asking directions. No one understands her, but that doesn’t stop her from explaining in detail exactly what she is looking for. She wanders off.*

*Spotlight: MARKO makes his way through he crowd talking animatedly on a mobile to an unknown person. He is late for dinner but wants to stay outside. He is losing the argument.*

*Spotlight: KRUMPLI appears carrying a purse which she holds very carefully and which she tries to keep concealed, except that it keeps falling out of her bag. It’s a puppet. She smiles and greets people, and asks them if they are behaving normally. She keeps moving.*

*Spotlight: LOKI appears in the middle of a crowd; her head pops up like a small animal’s. She asks if this is the Sting concert. She tells the story of how she and Sting almost got together and how he wrote his song “Don’t Stand So Close To Me” about her. She absent-mindedly tries to sell a hat. Someone calls out “Hey! That’s my hat!” She disappears.*

*The sound, very loud, of an old PA system like those that used to be on street corners in Communist times. It announces… something… the sound is too poor to understand anything except “very important”.*

*ALICE wanders out in front of the crowd and peers at the screen.*

*On the screen we see a close-up (CU) of minister KAFKAV. He is a jolly looking man who looks like your Uncle… if your Uncle acted like Stalin. A grim woman who might be his wife, but who appears not to like him even a little, stand beside him. He holds a baby (doll) in his arms.*

Kafkav They think they are funny. They think they are like you and me. But we are ordinary citizens, law-abiding citizen. We do what we are told for the good of the nation! Listen to your Uncle Kafkav. The black noses are dangerous. Find them. *The camera goes to ECU (extreme close-up)* Report them. If you want to hurt them… of course violence is wrong, even in the European Union. So don’t tell us.

*Screen out. ALICE enters gazing up at the screen. She wrinkles her nose in distaste. She is six years old, and unnervingly confident. In fact, she is more confident than Minister KAFKAV, but because she is six she is somewhat more adorable.*

Alice Hi. I’m Alice.

*The screen shows Minister KAFKAV again. He is eating a traditional dish of food.*

Kafkav We are Crustaceans. In our beautiful country of Crustacea we know our proud history of sticking together against our many enemies. We speak the same language. We eat the same food, even when we don’t like it. *Pause* And we don’t have black noses.

*He peers meaningfully at the camera. The screen goes black.*

Alice I’m six years old and I’m a genius. I’m making a movie. When I go to Hollywood I will be a boss who runs everything like Steven Spielberg. OK, look!

*MARKO appears on screen. He is being interviewed by ALICE.*

Alice What’s your name?

Marko You know my name.

Alice You have to pretend you’re not my neighbor who lives with his mother next door even though he is forty.

Marko I’m not forty!

Alice What’s your name?

Marko Marko

Alice Like Marko Polo.

Marko Yes.

Alice Except you live with your mother and you never go anywhere except to the store to buy beer.

Marko It’s a temporary situation.

Alice Until you are seventy?

Marko No!

Alice Or until you r mother dies in a mysterious accident when the radio falls into the bathtub and you can live in the house by yourself?

Marko You said this interview would not be about my plans!

Alice What are your plans?

Marko In the short-term or the long-term?

Alice I don’t care. What does it matter? You’ll still be living at home.

Marko Stop talking about that!

Alice If there was a Queen, would she look like me?

Marko There’s no Queen. We’re not insane like the English.

Alice Do you want to play with my doll? Her name is Laura.

Marko Why would I want to play with a doll?

Alice I thought you might be lonely. I saw you play with yourself.

Marko Ok, this interview is finished.

*The camera cuts out. ALICE speaks to the audience.*

Alice I am an Investigative Filmmaker. My documentary is called “Black Nose because you are strange, or strange because you are Black Nose?” I think strange people are lonely and kind of sad, probably because they want to be like me. That’s why I’m making this movie.

*The screen snaps on again. KAFKAV sits at a desk. There is a flag behind him of the Republic of Crustacea—it features a giant rampant lobster in silhouette against a sea of blue. Through his speech, we hear screams in the background.*

Kafkav A lot of people ask me about freedom of the press. They ask, First Minister Kafkav, is it true in a democracy that journalists can say anything they want? Even Communist propaganda like in olden times? And of course this is not true. Every newspaper, ever, how do you call it, webbing site, they do not serve the people. They tell lies for their own purposes. As First Minister it is my job to help them tell the great people of Crustacea the truth.

*Screen out.*

*LOKI begins to make her way through the crowd, excusing herself. She arrives at the front of the crowd and quickly empties out her pockets: there is a man’s watch, a woman’s purse, three wallets, some pens, a large book and several single shoes. She doesn’t appear especially interested in what she has stolen.*

Loki That’s better. I feel so much lighter now!

Alice Excuse me. This is my movie. And you are not starring in it. I am.

Loki Your movie? Does it star Madonna? She’s a friend of mine.

Alice You know Madonna?

Loki Well we were friends, before, you know, that Englishman, I can’t even say his name, Guy Richie, he made her so depressed she had to go all the way to Malawi to find a child who would love her. And I told her—we met when she was leaving a concert, she stepped on my foot and said “Uh” you know, like she was really sorry but he was too embarrassed to say “sorry” and our eyes met, and in the moment I knew and she knew that we were kindred spirits, souls who had been separated many centuries ago and who had been brought back together by fate. And I told her, “look, it’s nothing”, you know, about the shoe that she had crushed and which was lying on the sidewalk like a dead pigeon, but really what I meant was “your trouble are nothing, you can walk on people’s shoes and crush all their bones in their feet because you’re Madonna, God put you on earth to inspire little girls even ones who do not live in Malawi and you can do anything, you don’t have to be married to a no-talent cockney action film maker who drinks too much and insults you body by calling you a wrestler or a man in drag, in fact you don’t have to be married at all because you kissed Britney Spears and you can be anything you want… it’s nothing!” And she kind of smiled and walked past and she deliberately didn’t walk on my other foot and I knew in the moment we were sisters and that she had heard everything I didn’t say.

Alice Did you steal her stuff?

*She scoops up most of the stolen goods an exits.*

Loki And you, little Miss, you could have had Madonna in your movie but now you with be stuck with some depressing documentary on why little girls are so boring.

Alice I am not boring.

*KAFKAV appears on screen again. He is wearing a traditional costume that looks like a goat was just killed in order to make it. HE blows a note on a traditional instrument which he obviously has never played before.*

Alice (*to projectionist*) Play my movie!

*The clip of KAFKAV cuts out. ROCKET appears on screen, extremely high. He smiles a vague kind of way. He wears a black nose.*

Alice (*on screen)* This is the man who lives beside our house. Actually in the alley beside our house, and only sometimes. Hello!

*ROCKET’s head jerks up suddenly, as if he just woke up.*

Rocket Whoa.

Alice This is Alice, Investigative Reporter, and I am here in a dirty alley beside the house with this guy.

So, Mr. Guy, why do you put needles in your arm? Does it hurt? Are you putting vitamins in your body? Are you tired? Does you mother make you eat bad food like cakes and pies and ice cream instead of spinach and cabbage and beets?

*ROCKET stares are her, trying to keep up.*

Rocket Uh…

Alice Do you live in this alley? I always see you here. Do you live outside? Is it like camping? I like picnics. But only when my mother brings healthy food, like broccoli. My brother eats *burek*. He’s disgusting and he smells. You smell. Is it because you eat *burek*?

Rocket Uh…

Alice I am doing a movie about what it will be like when I am Queen. What’s you name?

Rocket Queen?

Alice You’re not Queen. I’m Queen. Who are you?

Rocket Queen. Freddy Mercury… Bohemian Rhapsody. *Sings,* “ Can anybody find me…somebody to… lo-oh-oh-oh-oh-ve”. Heh heh heh.

Alice (*to camera*) He’s really a strange person.

Rocket I am Rocket.

Alice You’re not a rocket. How stupid do you think I am?

Rocket That’s my name. Rocket. My parents wanted to name me Apollo 13, but they thought it would be too much pressure.

Alice I think you are lying, Mr. Rocket.

Rocket Uh… I am a Spaceman!

Alice Mr. Rocket, if you could make a magic object and change your life from incredibly boring to more like my life, what would you make? (*To camera*) This is called a set-up question.

Rocket Magic object *(long pause*) Ha. Ha. Ha.

Alice Mr. Rocket, are you OK? Do you need some broccoli or something?

Rocket *looking at her* You are a funny kid.

Alice Please Mr. Rocket, just answer the question, please.

Rocket Question?

Alice If you could make a magic object to make everything better, what would you make?

Rocket I already have a magic object (*shows the needle. Realizing, in horror)* Don’t use drugs, kids!

Alice I won’t. As if I would stick a needle in the creamy skin of a Queen. (*She laughs in a goofy way*). Bye bye, Mr. Rocket. *Pause* Say bye-bye.

Rocket Bye-bye.

*The screen cuts out. GRSZCZ begins to make her way through the crowd. She appears to be asking for direction, but no one can understand her.*

*KARKAV appears on screen in fishing gear; holding a fish at the end of a fishing line.*

Kafkav The Crustacean language is the cornerstone of our identity. We Crustaceans developed it amongst thousands of years of living and working together. Of course there was a period when it was contaminated, and the world called it Shrimpish-Crustacean. But the Shrimps are Shrimps and the Crustaceans are Crustaceans. By Crustacea, for Crustacea! *Pause* Those who wear black noses are Shrimps.

*The screen cuts out. ALICE reappears.*

Alice Wow. Is it possible to be so boring? But now we can get back to my show! I will now introduce to you a first-time anywhere interview, a world exclusive. Even Oprah would be jealous except that she is extremely fat so she is already jealous of my svelte figure, and she is also unbelievably old while I am adorable. *She smiles winningly* And now ladies and gentlemen my mother’s sister, Aunt Krumpli!

*GRSZCZ has stopped KRUMPLI in the crowd to ask directions. KRUMPLI is annoyed. She comes forward, followed doggedly by GRSZCZ.*

Krumpli Go away! *notices audience. Smiles sweetly.* Oh… hello! Welcome! Isn’t my sister’s little girl adorable? And so smart? Isn’t she smart, ladies and gentlemen?

*She indicates that all should agree loudly with her: It seems more like an order than a request. GRSZCZ enters the space, looking at a map she has unfolded. It’s a really big map.*

Krumpli Will you leave! Please. *To audience* Of course we must be nice to foreigners, they come and spend money here and to enjoy the beauty of our ancient Crustacean culture which of course they don’t have in their own countries…but do they have to speak in such a funny way? I ask you. *to GRSZCZ* Go away!!!

Grszcz *in Grszczese* Oh, hello! My name is Grszcz!

Krumpli *even louder; as if GRSZCZ is deaf* GO AWAU!!!

Grszcz No…Grszcz. *pronounces it* GRRRRRRR—SZSZSZSZ—CZCZCZCZ

Krumpli *to audience, waving her hand* Foh. She’s an animal. If she is even a she. Have you noticed that foreigners all smell a bit funny? All that foreign food, I suppose. *smiles* So, little Alice, aren’t you a good girl? Isn’t she a good girl, everybody?

*She looks at the audience expectantly. ALICE squirms in her grasp, truing to get away.*

Krumpli And what would you like your Aunt Krumpli to play in your movie, Alice dear? Do you want me to act like a famous movie star?

Alice OK. You look like Bruce Willis. You can play him.

Krumpli WHAT? *a tense pause* Oh, you are such a little devil! The devil’s spawn, I told my sister when you were born, I was joking of course, it’s the result of that awful man she married, his parents weren’t quite normal. But how could my sister know? *Smiles* She was in love! And so here you are, a cute little girl with a vicious mouth. I know… do you want to play with… Jodiefoster?

Alice Jodie Foster the famous American film star, director, and lesbian?

Krumpli Well, two of those things, anyways… *she produces a large puppet, JODIEFOSTER, from her handbag and animates her.*

Jodiefoster Hello, I’m the famous American film star and director Jodiefoster!

Alice Jodie Foster doesn’t talk like that.

Krumpli What happened to little girls’ imaginations?

Alice May I interview you, Jodiefoster?

Jodiefoster Of course! I do many interview with American television. Please ask me any question.

Alice So why do you hide the fact that you are gay?

Krumpli That is a very rude question!

Alice Jodiefoster you sound funny.

Jodiefoster I do not answer questions about my personal life. Sorry.

Alice So you think it is bad to be gay?

Jodiefoster Lets talk about my movies! Silence of the Lambs!

Alice And why are you on my aunt’s hand instead of making films in Hollywood?

Jodiefoster Because your aunt is a very wonderful person and she is Jodiefoster’s best friend.

Alice Is it because she is gay too?

Krumpli WHAT?

Jodiefoster This is a hostile interview. I am not saying anything more.

*KRUMPLI puts JODIEFOSTER in her handbag.*

Alice I’m doing an Investigative Documentary.

Krumpli *to audience* I’m sure it will be very rude, and not at all normal. *recovers her calm, smiles* Isn’t that just too cute! And what are you investigating, my dear?

Alice I’m asking everyone I meet with a black nose if they feel bad because they are different.

*KUMPLI becomes extremely uncomfortable*

Krumpli That’s… not a nice question, dear. Ask me a better question.

Alice Ok. Why do you kiss girls?

Krumpli Where did you… you are a very bad girl! I do NOT kiss girls, except little girls like you because you are my niece and I love you. *gritting her teeth* Yes I love my little niece very much.

Alice Ok, you’re right As an investigative journalist I must be more accurate in my questions. You do not kiss girls.

Krumpli Certainly not.

Alice So, Aunt Krumpli, why do you kiss women who are almost as old and wrinkled as you are? And then you take each other’s clothes off?

Krumpli *hisses at her* Stop this immediately. *Smiling to audience* I think it’s time to take my little niece home now. It really is after her bedtime.

Alice Is it fun? Does it hurt? Do you dress each other like dolls? Curious minds want to know!

*KRUMPLI begins to drag ALICE off from view.*

Krumpli We are going to have a discussion, young lady.

Alice Help! I’m being oppressed! Freedom of speech for little girls!

*Screen shows an image of Minister KAFKAV, standing outdoors in a trench coat, with ROCKET being dragged away in handcuffs behind him. ROCKET is singing “Space Odyssey”*

Kafkav Law and order must be respected at all costs. The individual must always subordinate his rights to the greater will of the people. As your representative it is my sacred duty to provide you with a safe, quite, clean Crustacea.

*A close-up on KAFKAV*

Kafkav But it is not easy to give you, my people, this freedom to sleep in peace. There are forces amongst us which would destroy us. These seditionist crows seek to tear the fabric which binds our people together. To scatter the piece of our heritage across the world. To take our gifts and leave us only with bird shit.

*The sound of a bird. Kafkav takes out a gun, quick-drawn style, and fire it.*

*Silence. A painful sound from the bird. KAFKAV fires the gun again, pointing at the ground. And again.*

*Silence. He blows smoke from the barrel of the gun. Smiles*

*Evil-sounding electronic music. The other screen shows Kafkav, live, watching the audience, his eyes moving back and forth.*

***Transition***

*An Air Raid Siren cuts through the electronic music. Characters running everywhere, pursued. A series of moving lights, like search lights, fill the space.*

PART TWO

*We see LOKI out of breath, carrying two heavy shopping bags out of which spills a large number of objects that don’t appear to have been purchased at shops. She stops in front of the audience.*

Loki I know what you’re thinking. You’re wrong. I’m not a thief. I borrow things. OK, sometimes for a long time. It’s so hard to give things back.

OK, it seems in one way that I’m like a criminal. I am “on the lam”. I don’t know who is chasing me.

Maybe they are mafia. One of them fell in love with me. He was just sitting in a café talking into a mobile like all stupid mafia so with his black Mercedes parked illegally outside and his shit open to reveal all his chest hair and—I walked by. It could have happened today, or yesterday, I was looking particularly good yesterday, I had my new Prada bag, okay it was someone else’s bag but it looked new anyway,, and my Manolo Blahnik shoes which push my bum way up in the air an d I was wearing almost the same dress that Kate wore to Wimbledon—you know Kate, Kate and William, I shouldn’t have to tell you, really, Mister, you need to read about important things in the world. She is so beautiful, so timeless in her elegance, I think we would be very close friends as our fashion sense is so similar and because I am probably way smarter she would learn from all of my experience, especially with men, who are like pigs in suits, especially the mafia here, they think they are so cool in their black suits and shiny black shoes and sunglasses. *Calls behind her* Take a photo creep, it would last longer!

*Something occurs to her*

Oh… maybe they are paparazzi. It all makes sense now. They are stalking me like Diana, WHO THEY KILLED. *Yelling behind her*  MURDERERS!!! Yes she was just trying to get away with her Egyptian playboy lover for some peace and quiet on his yacht and the Paris paparazzi ran over them in that tunnel! I cried for a week, she was a saint, a modern saint, touching all those African children even when they were all skinny and sick, and that Charles, well, he was a pig in a suit, and Camilla—please! *she howls with laughter* *To man*  You, you’re not paying attention. You know if you listened to women more you might get lucky sometime. Not with me.

This is why I borrow things, you see. I look better in them than the people who own them do. And I deserve them more, because I have fashion sense and I am delicate. I am a flower in a world that is a jungle.

*She looks away suddenly. Her eyes widen with fright.*

I have to go. The paparazzi are only interested in you if they can’t catch you.

*She runs off.*

*We see MARKO. He enters with a chair, sits.*

Marko Wow. This must be a popular restaurant. I hope it’s not too expensive.

*Tries to order. Checks with photo for “Shakira”. Tries to order. Tries to order in opposite direction. Jumps up. Sits down, mobile rings.*

Marko I told you not to call me, I’m busy tonight.

*beat*

That’s none of your business. I can do what I want.

*beat*

I can meet anyone I like.

*beat*

Well, you can do whatever you want. Cook. Clean. Call your friends. I’m sure they would like to hear from you. You could all get together and exchange mindless gossip. You wouldn’t want me to spoil that for you by being there, would you?

Of course I’m not with a prostitute. Do you think you give me enough money to afford a prostitute?

*beat*

I’m on a date. Yes I am. Don’t sound so disbelieving. It happens you know. Maybe more than you think. I’m a man. I have needs. *beat* I know you’re a good cook. I mean other needs.

*beat*

No I won’t tell you where I am. Sure, that’s exactly what I want on a first date, a catfight between the woman from my past and the woman of my future

*beat*

Oh come on. Don’t cry. Stop that. I didn’t mean it like that. Of course you’re not dead to me. You’re just closer to being dead than she is.

*beat*

Okay, I’m hanging up now. She’ll be here any minute and she’ll have lots of questions for me and one of them should NOT be “Who was that woman you were talking to on the phone?”

*beat*

Well, that’s just the way it’s going to be from now on. I’m a man ho like to have a little variety. Goodbye, Mother.

*He turns off his mobile as he sees someone coming. For a moment, he looks very interested; as she comes closer, he is disappointed. It’s only a little girl—in fact it’s ALICE.*

*ALICE also appears to be looking for someone. She carries a photograph in her hand. It’s of JamesDean. She looks around. MARKO is the only one who’s alone. They both check their papers.*

Alice Um… Mr. Marko… are you James Dean?

Marko Aw, for… what are you doing here, Alice? Are you *checks paper* Shakira?

1. A calls M a freak or a perv.
2. M calls A a liar for playing a 30 year old online.
3. A mimics all that M says.
4. A jumps up and orders 6 ice cream sundaes, M a glass of water.
5. M is disappointed because he’s a big film-card collect and Shakira was supposed to be too.
6. A shows she’s a big time collector, with J. Dean, Mae West, Fred Astaire, Ginger Rogers, Audrey Hepburn, and every phase of Madonna’s career—including her “cone bra” phase.
7. M is impressed. He asks if she has M. Jackson from Jackson era.
8. A says she has a duplicate.
9. M checks his wallet and angry at his poverty, admits he only has 10 kuna.
10. A says he can have it for free.
11. They stare at each other in friendship.

*There will be a siren. ALICE will freeze while MARKO makes a break for it. The screen switches images. KAFKAV continues to watch actively, from another. GRSZCZ appears. She looks up at the screens nervously. She asks someone in the audience who the evil-looking man is, but no one can understand her, or if they understand, they don’t know the answer.*

*KRUMPLI enters with JODIEFOSTER. GRSZCZ conceals herself.*

*KRUMPLI looks bruised, as if she has been beaten. GRSZCZ watches in fascination.*

Krumpli Well it’s a scandal. Guilt by association, that’s what it is. I’m a respectable woman. I have a television show. You know it: it’s the show where I take the most mundane object in the world and I turn them into something useful by magic! Yes, it’s a great show!

Jodiefoster Yes, it’s a really great show.

Krumpli Thank you, Jodie. *To audience*  This is my friend Jodiefoster. Probably you have head of her. Jodiefoster. She is very famous, aren’t you, Jodiefoster?

Jodiefoster Silence of the Lambs.

Krumpli Oh yes, I liked that one, with that nice man, Anthony Hopkins. Well, his character wasn’t nice, that Hannibal fellow. But that’s acting isn’t it? Jodiefoster show us what a great outstanding Hollywood actor you are.

Jodiefoster No.

Krumpli Oh, come on!

Jodiefoster I am very shy.

Krumpli Hahahahahhaha. No one in Hollywood is shy. Look, Jodiefoster, the audience is waiting.

*Jodiefoster surveys the audience coyly. She ducks her head as if she is too shy. Then:*

Jodiefoster BARBARA STREISAND!

*She begins to imitate Barbra Streisand, not especially well; it is, after all, Krumpli, not Jodiefoster, who is doing the imitating. Maybe she sings a chorus from “People”. She mimics all of Barbra Streisand famous physical ticks. At the end she bows, a la Streisand.*

Krumpli Barbra Streisand, ladies and gentlemen! Yes! And of course Jodiefoster is a big fan of Barbra Streisand because gay people all love Barbra Streisand and Jodiefoster, you are a gay person, are you not?

*Jodiefoster ducks her head shyly.*

Krumpli Oh come on, Jodiefoster! It’s not a secret. You can tell us.

*Jodiefoster peeks up shyly.*

Jodiefoster My life is private.

Krumpli HAHAHAHAHAHAHAHAHAHAH. Hollywood persons are not private. Besides, you are not Brangelina. You need publicity or you will die lonely like the woman in “Sunset Boulevard”. *to audience* I am a big American movie fan.

Jodiefoster Okay. Yes, I am gay.

Krumpli See? That wasn’t so hard!

*She indicates to the audience that they should applaud, as Oprah does with her studio crowd.*

Krumpli Who else to you admire, Jodiefoster?

Jodiefoster *shyly* Lady Gaga.

Krumpli Okay, Jodiefoster! Play Lady Gaga!

*Jodiefoster does a dance number from “Pokerface” to accompanying music. Music ends, she bows theatrically.*

Krumpli But Jodiefoster, Lady Gaga is not gay!

Jodiefoster She believes that gay people are the same as everyone else.

Krumpli But Jodiefoster, come on, it’s one thing for Hollywood people to like gay people because you are not serious. But Lady Gaga—I mean, Jodiefoster—we must live in the real world, where people are responsible. And in the real world gay people should be beaten because they are not normal. Isn’t that true, Jodiefoster?

*Krumpli is crying. After some moments of awkwardness. Jodiefoster comforts her.*

Jodiefoster ’s alright.

Krumpli ‘s not alright!!!

Jodiefoster Come on, Mrs. Krumpli. You can still live your life. You just can’t tell anybody what you do.

Krumpli That isn’t living.

Jodiefoster Come on, Mrs. Krumpli. Everyone has a secret. *Pointing to audience* Why, that man there fell in love with a girl when he was ten and she broke his heart and he never got over it, did you, Sir? And that girl’s mother died when she was young and she talks to her every day, don’t you, dear?

Krumpli I’m a respectable woman. It isn’t right. Minister Kafkav says I am condemned to burn in hell.

Jodiefoster Minister Kafkav has a secret too, I bet.

*Screen of Kafkav watching cuts out and we see KAFKAV getting into a car with a much younger woman, trying to screen her from the camera. Screen returns to former image.*

Jodiefoster Mrs. Krumpli, may I ask you a question?

Krumpli Okay.

Jodiefoster Where is Mr. Krumpli?

*A long pause*

Krumpli There is no Mr. Krumpli.

Jodiefoster Mrs. Krumpli, you can’t live like this.

Krumpli What other way is there to live?

Jodiefoster Mrs. Krumpli, may I ask you another question?

Krumpli I thought you were shy!

Jodiefoster I am shy only about myself.

Krumpli What is it?

Jodiefoster Who hit you, Mrs. Krumpli?

*KRUMPLI does not answer. She appears terrified.*

Jodiefoster Was it the police, Mrs. Krumpli? Was it the Minister’s security personnel? Who hit you, Mrs. Krumpli?

Krumpli It… was an accident. I tripped over some steps and hit my eye against the edge of a table. That’s all. *beat* It’s my own fault.

Jodiefoster Oh, Mrs. Krumpli.

*Police siren is heard. KRUMPLI’s head jerks up in a panic.*

Jodiefoster Don’t run! Stand up for—

*JODIEFOSTER is silenced as KRUMPLI put her in her handbag and runs off.*

*GRSZCZ addresses the audience. Of course we can’t understand the words she speaks, but in some way we can understand what she says. She can speak international words like “passport”, “help” and “sex”. Some words, like her word for “puppet” or for “prostitute” can draw on different linguistic sources to be faintly recognizable, i.e. “putino’ for prostitute. “national” for song, “tradicia” for vowels, “problema politika” for reason G left “refugee”*

Grszcz Why was that woman talking to a puppet?

People are strange here. I don’t mean to offend you, because most of you are from her aren’t you? Are you from here?

I’m not from here.

Where I’m from people don’t talk about their problems to puppets, but then, if you brought a puppet there and talked to it like it was your friend they would just laugh. If you could get through customs. The guards would have some difficulty.

“Passport.” “I don’t have a passport, I’m a puppet.”

“You must have a passport.”

“Talk to her.”

“She has a passport.”

“She’s my owner.”

“Your owner?”

“Yes. She made me.”

“She’s your mother.”

“No, she’s not my mother. Does she look like my mother? I’m a puppet!”

HAHAHAHAHAHAHAHAHAHA.

It’s not funny, really. I don’t have a passport either, and I’m not even a puppet. Oh! I’m Grszcz. GR-SZ-CZ. GRRRRR-SZCZ. *to audience member* What’s your name?

*The audience member responds. GRSZCZ looks dubious. She mouths the words.*

That’s your name, really? ?Wow. You people have strange names. I’m very pleased to meet you, Ms. Very Strange Name Person, . Where I come from, my homeland, we only use one name. Americans are funny. They name their children after cars. “Lexus Smith” “Porsche Williams” Keep Cherokee Johnson”. I made that last on up. “Grszcz Lamborghini” Ha ha. *Awkward silence.*

Where I come from we have a very old tradition, very serious and strong tradition. This tradition it the vowel sounds are obscene and should never be spoken. You know…*whispers* “ah” “ee” “oo”… these are very dirty sounds.

Instead we try to sound like birds, which are the most beautiful creatures in the universe.

We have some trouble understanding each other, so there is big political problem in my country.

That is why I left. I am a refugee. I am looking for a place.

It’s okay. You look like nice people. Maybe I will stay here.

I’m sure you will understand me soon. Maybe I could learn your language?

Are there many dirty sounds? “Oo” “ah” “ee”, you know?

“Shit” is okay. It is a word from my language too. It means “hello”.

*to audience members* Shit, my name is Grszcz. *to others* Shit. Shit. Shit.

*The person is finally made to say “good evening in Croatian or English, or whatever the hell they speak*

Okay, now I say, “Shit” and you say . And now we are friends!

*Silence*

I like it here. People are friendly.

The land is beautiful. This is “Crustacea”?

You are “Crustaceans”? *someone in the audience may correct her*

It’s okay. You can call yourselves anything you want. I will learn. Can I stay?

*The sounds of a siren in the distance, as if from a car.*

*more urgently* I am very talented. I can sing. Here is national song of my people.

*She sings. It isn’t awful. Its just….weird. It sounds like birds strangling each other. She finishes. Silence.*

*Siren.*

I am a very hard worker. People in my country are very strong. Because we could not understand each other there was no education so we had to work very hard. You know, planting, farming, building, fishing.

Or maybe there is a man who wants to marry me so I can stay?

*She looks around hopefully. Bats her eyes. Sits on a likely lads lap. Converses about wedding ring, then stands in shock and says*

No, no sex! Only for passport, that’s all!

*She looks around, smiling. She needs help. Sirens, louder.*

It was very nice to meet you.

*She runs away.*

*Clip 1 Screen clears and we see a camera, not very expertly held, focusing in on minister KAFKAV as he is coming out of a club. He is wearing a black nose. When he sees the camera he quickly takes it off.*

*Clip 2 Kafkav in a park, urinating against a wall.*

Kafkav Give me that camera!

Alice I am doing important and brilliant documentary on weird people in Crustacea, Minister. I am sure you want to talk to me.

*KAFKAV looks unsure of what to do. He’d really like to rip the camera out of her hands, but he’s afraid it will cause a scene. So he smiles like your favorite uncle into the camera and at ALICE.*

Alice Can you tell me your name please?

Kafkav Oh, I think everyone who watches your film will know me.

Alice I don’t. I only know that you are old and fat. If you want, I will put some writing under your face on camera to indentify you, it will say “old and fat”.

Kafkav You seem like a very rude little girl.

Alice I am a genius. My parents tell me that, usually to stop me talking. But it’s true.

Kafkav Well… *coughs inadvertently, making a “kaff kaff” sounds.*  You can call me Minister.

Alice Why should I call you Minister?

Kafkav Because I am an important politician.

Alice So I should call you a “criminal”.

Kafkav *coughs inadvertently*  That’s… not very nice, little girl. Who are your parents? If I knew their names… I could take you home.

Alice It’s okay. They know I am making an important documentary. And they need time alone so they can fight over money.

*KAFKAV coughs nervously. He looks like he would rather be anywhere else.*

Alice So tell me, Mr. Minister, why were you wearing a black nose just now?

Kafkav I was not wearing a black nose.

Alice I saw you.

Kafkav Ah. But did your camera see me?

Alice Yes.

Kafkav I don’t believe you. May I see your camera to check?

Alice That is an old trick, Mr. Not So First Minister.

*Pause. KAFKAV ponders what to do.*

Kafkav Okay. Because you are a nice—even brilliant—little girl, I will tell you. But only if you promise that it will be our secret, and only our secret. You must keep it to yourself until Crustacea is safe and I am dead. Do we have a deal?

Alice Okay. So tell me why you wear a black nose.

*KAFKAV comes so close to the camera he is momentarily out of focus. The camera backs away ever so slightly.*

Kafkav It’s about freedom, you see.

I feel free when I wear this nose. It’s mine, but it’s not mine. It’s not that I’m doing something wrong, but it *feels* wrong. It feels free.

Alice So you don’t feel free normally?

Kafkav Everyone has parts of their lives where they feel trapped. Where they feel that people don’t truly know them. Yet they are judged anyways. and that is not free. Everyone has a… a secret identity, something inside them that is true and perfect, that comes from when they were just children, and that is who they really are.

Alice And so, the nose…

Kafkav You see, little girl? Sometimes the truth on the inside must come to the outside, or else no one will see it. And even when you know it’s there inside, it needs air, it needs to breathe, or it dies. And then there comes a time when you don’t believe it was ever there at all.

So, once in a long time, you wear a nose. A black nose that is not real and yet perfectly real. It is your identity. Your secret identity.

Alice Hmm. This is weird but intriguing. I will have a hard time waiting until you are dead, Not So First Minister.

Kafkav GIVE ME THAT CAMERA!!!!!!!!

*A struggle. The camera and screen cut out suddenly.*

**Transition**

*Pounding electronic music a la RUN LOLA RUN. The five characters run back and forth across the playing area as if they are being pursued in an American movie.*

*Screens: Minister KAFKAV glares at them, seeming to follow each one with his eyes.*

*The five characters run from corner to corner, looking for places to hide.*

*JODIEFOSTER tires to stop KRUMPLI for a conversation but is stuffed into KRUMPLI’s handbag.*

*MARKO is in full flight when he gets a call from his mother. He stomps out, arguing with her.*

*GRSZCZ enter with a bag full of little Crustacean flags and plastic lobsters. She has found a job. She happily goes through the crowd, trying to sell her merchandise.*

*Two men come out of the shadows.*

*With hoods pulled over their faces, they approach her. She tries to sell them merchandise: toy lobsters and little flags of Crustacea. They walk away with her, leaving a lobster on the ground.*

*On the screen, KAFKAV appears in military fatigues, holding an AK 47. He waves the gun wildly. The camera appears to duck for cover.*

Kafkav They steal from you. When you are sick, they will not help you, because they want you to die. Then they can move into your house illegally. In your house they will breed uncontrollably. The house will stink of foreign food. Your history, your ancestors, the blood of the Crustacean people that was spilled to create your home, all will mean nothing.

This problem must be solved. It is alright to be poor Crustaceans have always been poor. But we are proud. And when someone spits on us, when they spit on our flag, we will rise up as true-blood Crustaceans and fight them.

*He raises both his hands and makes a snapping sound like lobster claws opening and closing.*

*One of the screens cuts to: GRSZCZ, terrified, sanding in an empty room with a Crustacean flag on the floor. She has been ordered to jump up and down on the flag but she doesn’t understand/ She tries to pick it up. A gun barrel comes into view for a moment. An inaudible command. She puts the flag down, uncertainly. Another inaudible command. Pause. Tentatively, she touches it with a toe.*

Kafkav They jump on the flag of our mothers and fathers! This provocation must be punished.

*On the opposite screen GRSZCZ looks terrified. The camera cuts out.*

PART THREE

ALICE *wanders into the centre, holding JODIEFOSTER. She holds the puppet by its hair.*

Alice Jodiefoster, where is my Aunt Krumpli?

*Silence*

Alice It’s okay. You can talk to me. I am a documentary filmmaker and I am sworn to reveal the truth.

*Silence*

Alice I see. You are traumatized. When did you last see Mrs. Krumpli, Jodiefoster? Was she in trouble? Did she get hurt?

*Silence*

Alice You have to tell me because she is my aunt and even through I think she is kind of a bourgeois hypocrite I love her because she loves me and we all need as many people who love us as possible, don’t you agree?

*Silence*

Alice Jodiefoster you are making me uneasy.

*Silence*

Alice Puppets are stupid.

*She places JODIEFOSTER very carefully under her arm and look around. She sees the lobster and picks it up, inspects it.*

Alice Now you will see grand premiere of my documentary. At least the end. Because of the end the beginning change, you know? So now I don’t know how the story begins. But here is how it ends.

*The screen shows different character in stages of interrogation. The characters look older, shabbier.*

*The screen shows MARKO.*

Marko I never subscribed to that porno website. It just kept coming up every time I click on Google search for “Virgin Atlantic”.

*Inaudible voice.*

Marko If it’s not the porno site then what do you want me for? *beat* What? No, that is Alice. She is the little girl from next door. Okay, that sounds bad. We are friends. She was doing a movie and I was in it. *beat* Listen, we were just friend. When I met her at the restaurant it was a complete misunderstanding, I was thinking I was going to meet this beautiful girl, Shakira, who I met on the internet. *beat* She thought I was Jimmy Dean. *sadly* I’m not Jimmy Dean.

*Screen: LOKI sits on a chair, arms and legs folded, glaring at the camera.*

Loki You think you frighten me? You don’t.

I know who you are.

*Inaudible voice.*

Yes I do. You’re those guys who drove that car that killed Princess Diana. The People’s Princess. And now you want to kill me, because you know I am a threat. A threat to the established order, where Princesses cannot marry Egyptian playboys and old men always win everything and women like Camilla who lick a man’s boots are the ones you like.

*Inaudible voice*

You can destroy me, but you cannot defeat me.

*Screen MARKO sits at a bare table.*

*Inaudible voice.*

Marko Can I call my mother, please? She will be worried. I am never out of contact with her for more than an hour. *beat* That is perfectly normal. I am a good son. She is a good mother. We are good—what?

*Inaudible voice*

Marko This is my nose. I wore it since I was a child. My mother gave it to me. I can’t take it off.

*Inaudible voice*

I… You know I would like to, I don’t want to cause trouble. But my mother told me never to take it off. It’s me, you see. Part of me.

You know I heard a very funny joke once about noses. So the Pope goes into the toilet of this bar—

*MARKO trails off, uncertain. Screen cuts out.*

*Screen: LOKI has obviously been talking for hours. Even the camera looks tired.*

Loki It’s funny you ask that, because I don’t remember not having this nose. Hmm… the first time I because aware of having a nose… let me think. Yes I do recall. I was young, walking along the water. I looked down and saw my reflection. I realized I was beautiful. That I was different from everybody else. Unique. That I was special. *“Hallo, Hallo” ending.*

Alice Now, if you’re a smart audience, you are asking, where is Mrs. Krumpli? And where is that weird foreigner with the unpronounceable name?

My question exactly.

*Screen one: KRUMPLI appears, sitting on a chair, exhausted. She looks utterly worn out.*

*JODIEFOSTER is in her hand, looking like she has been roughed up.*

Alice (off-camera) Aunt Krumpli, what happened to you?

Krumpli Oh, you know dear, life is full of little surprises. You have to take the bad with good. You know, when life serves you shit, you have to make a pie out of it.

Alice I don’t think that makes sense Aunt Krumpli. Did someone hurt you?

Krumpli Oh no. No no.

Alice Did someone frighten you?

Krumpli No, no, Alice, my love, you are a very good and clever little girl but sometimes these questions… they cause trouble you can’t possible know about. They hurt people Alice. These questions.

Alice Asking if someone threatened you, is hurting you?

Jodiefoster Why don’t you just leave us alone!

Krumpli Shut up Jodiefoster!

Alice Yes, shut up Jodiefoster!

*JODIEFOSTER shakes her head in resignation and falls silent.*

Alice Aunt Krumpli, where is your nose?

Krumpli Why, it’s on my face, dear.

Alice No. Your black nose. It’s not there.

Krumpli This is my nose. The one that is on my face.

Jodiefoster This is her nose.

Alice You had a black nose.

Krumpli I never.

Alice You did, Aunt Krumpli! You did!

Jodiefoster Troublemaker.

Alice Jodiefoster! You should be ashamed!

Jodiefoster I’m just a puppet. I do what people tell me to.

Alice Aunt Krumpli, where is your nose?

Krumpli *smiling sadly* I don’t know dear.

*Screen: KAFKAV walking out of a building. Eh wear a dark suit and sunglasses.*

Alice (off-camera) Minister Kafkav, where is the foreigner?

Kafkav I’m sorry, I don’t know who you mean little girl? *beat* Haven’t we met?

Alice The one whose name no one could say. She had a big black nose but she was very kind and optimistic and she already had a job, she was going to be a good citizen.

Kafkav Ha-ha, I will have to find you a job at Customs and Immigration when you grow up, little girl. What did you say your name was?

Alice Where is she, Not So First Minister? And where is your black nose now?

*He freezes. For a moment he look as if he is going to order the guards to kill her.*

*Then he smiles*

Kafkav Good Bless Crustacean and her people!

*He waves to the camera, gets into a car and drive away. ALICE, holding her microphone, looks directly into the camera.*

*Screen changes we see a headline:*

SURGERY FAILS FOR NOSE TRAITORS

*In the centre of the playing area, we hear shuffling sounds. LOKI, MARKO, KRUMPLI, dressed in shapeless cotton clothes like patients or inmates, are seen in a group, walking unsteadily. They try hard to walk in a straight line, arguing amongst themselves what direction to move in, constantly impeding each other, yet moving forward.*

*The characters touch their noses tenderly, as if someone has been pulling hard on them. One of them inexplicably holds his bum. They are indignant, but distracted, still kind to each other. Krumpli asks the audience if they have seen Alice.*

*They stop in the middle, as ROCKET appears on Screen (they are unaware of him).*

*ROCKET, handcuffed, leans against a wall, sitting on the floor. He looks like he has been savagely beaten, but he is strangely cheerful, through he is in the throes of a cold withdrawal. He is singing “Space Odyssey”*

Rocket Though I'm past one hundred thousand miles, I'm feeling very still

And I think my spaceship knows which way to go

Tell my wife I love her very much, she knows

Ground Control to Major Tom, your circuit's dead, there's something wrong

Can you hear me, Major Tom?

Can you hear me, Major Tom?

Can you hear me, Major Tom?

Can you....

Here am I floating in my tin can far above the Moon

Planet Earth is blue and there's nothing I can do.

*Screen out.*

*MARKO, LOKI and KRUMPLI keep moving forward, gingerly, as if their legs might give out. They disappear around a corner. Lights fade out.*

**FINIS**