

A MAN'S HOME...
An Ode to Kafka's Castle
Written by Aaron Henne

In collaboration with Theo Black, Gary Graves, Joe Jordan,
Marissa Keltie, Sylvia Kratins, Gregory Scharpen and Jan Zvaifler.

A Central Works Method Play

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Cast of Characters

#1 - Village Ruffian, Nursing Mother, Bathing Man, Frieda, Jeremias, Father, Wife, Cart Pusher #1, Authority#1, Male Villager

#2 - Village Inn Landlord, Bathhouse Owner, Artur, Barnabas, Olga, Castle Inn Landlady, Hans, Cart Pusher #2, Authority #2, Old Mother

K - A Land Surveyor.

A Man - K knows him as Klamm.

He takes on characters (Village Inn Landlady, Village Mayor, Schoolteacher, Barnabas) when he is so moved.

Author's Notes:

The floor and walls may be covered with paper and writing.

Props should be or appear to be made of paper.

Crumpled balls of paper, reminiscent of snowballs, are found throughout the playing area and in large piles.

All entrances should come from the same location.

The script speaks of "A Garden Door." This may be an actual door or it might be indicated by actors' relationships to a space where exits take place.

"You will hold in your heart the hope of returning to the castle and no one can take that from you."

St Teresa of Avila, The Inner Castle

K breathes deep and is thrust into the space.
He looks into the darkness.
Walks this way then that way then this way.
His body sags.
Makes his way to the fireplace.
Lies down.

As soon as his body hits the floor, #1 breathes
in, thrust into the space. #1 is A VILLAGE
RUFFIAN. Walks to K.

VILLAGE RUFFIAN
It is time.

K
Hnnnuh?

VILLAGE RUFFIAN
It's time.

K
(still coming out of sleep)
For what?

VILLAGE RUFFIAN
For you
to leave.

K
But I have just arrived.

VILLAGE RUFFIAN
You cannot be here without permission.

K
I have permission.

VILLAGE RUFFIAN
From whom?

#2 breathes in and is thrust into the
space.

K
(indicating #2)
The landlord.

VILLAGE RUFFIAN

The landlord cannot give permission.

K

Of course he can. It is his establishment, unless he is a liar.

VILLAGE INN LANDLORD

I lord over the land, but do not truly own it.

VILLAGE RUFFIAN

See. This Village Ruffian told you so.

VILLAGE INN LANDLORD

This Inn belongs to the Castle.

K

There is a castle here?

VILLAGE INN LANDLORD

Did you not spy its spires?

K

I entered and did not see anything but this place to rest my head.

So weary.

RUFFIAN grabs K by the arms and shows him
the audience.

VILLAGE RUFFIAN

See, Spires!

K

(as though he is looking far away)

Ah, I don't know how I missed them.

VILLAGE INN LANDLORD

Well now you know and you must obey its ordinances.

K

Ordinances?

VILLAGE RUFFIAN

He don't got no papers.

VILLAGE INN LANDLORD

Anyone who arrives here needs have a note or a memorandum or at least a letter of invitation from The Castle.

VILLAGE RUFFIAN

Yeah.

(beat)

Except me.

VILLAGE INN LANDLORD

Then you must leave.

VILLAGE RUFFIAN

You tellin' me what to do?

LANDLORD holds up a piece of paper.

VILLAGE INN LANDLORD

What is this?

VILLAGE RUFFIAN

Hey, that's mine!

RUFFIAN grabs the paper from LANDLORD>

VILLAGE INN LANDLORD

Exactly. You may stay.

(beat, to K)

In this place, what is written is.

K

Is what?

VILLAGE INN LANDLORD

Is

K

What?

VILLAGE INN LANDLORD

Is what is.

VILLAGE RUFFIAN

I'll handle this.

You are nobody.

VILLAGE INN LANDLORD

Without written correspondence.

VILLAGE RUFFIAN

Nobody.

VI LANDLORD

And if you are nobody there is no place for you as only somebodies need to rest their heads.

K
I assure you I have an invitation.

VILLAGE INN LANDLORD
Assurances alone cannot confirm your purpose here.

K
Purpose?

VILLAGE RUFFIAN
Yeah, what is your purpose?

K
I ...
set things down.

VILLAGE INN LANDLORD
Specifics.

K
On a page.

VILLAGE INN LANDLORD
Better.

VILLAGE RUFFIAN
Still not enough.

K
So that others may read them.

VILLAGE RUFFIAN
Alright. Go on.

K
And know where they are going.

VILLAGE INN LANDLORD
Just say it, my good man.

K
I
MAKE
MAPS!!

VILLAGE RUFFIAN

Yes! That is what you do.

(beat)

Who cares.

VILLAGE INN LANDLORD

What the gentleman is trying to say is "*What are you?*"

K

I am a man.

VILLAGE RUFFIAN

And I'm not?

Puts his dukes up.

VILLAGE INN LANDLORD

(tries to calm RUFFIAN, speaks to K)

That is plain.

But vague.

K

I am a maker of maps.

VILLAGE RUFFIAN

I ain't lost.

VILLAGE INN LANDLORD

(calms RUFFIAN but speaks to K)

True, but redundant.

(beat)

One more try and I think you'll have it.

K

I

AM

A

LAND SURVEYOR!

VILLAGE INN LANDLORD

GOOD FOR YOU!

(beat)

This land has no need for a surveyor.

VILLAGE RUFFIAN

(smiles)

Go away.

K
But I was summoned.

VILLAGE RUFFIAN and LANDLORD
Proof.

...

K
Call them.

VILLAGE RUFFIAN
Them?

K
It.

VILLAGE RUFFIAN
It?

K
The Castle.

VILLAGE INN LANDLORD
One does not call The Castle.

RUFFIAN
Yeah.

K
One does not or you do not for you do not have the proper authority and need someone with a bit more stature to reach its walls?

VILLAGE RUFFIAN
Where's your phone?

VILLAGE INN LANDLORD
We are just a poor Inn and do not have a phone.

VILLAGE INN LANDLORD
Oh! A Phone!

VILLAGE RUFFIAN grabs the VI LANDLORD and thrusts him into the air.

VILLAGE INN LANDLORD picks up a phone, made of paper and hands it to the VILLAGE RUFFIAN.

VILLAGE RUFFIAN

Hello and please forgive me for disturbing you so late in the evening. I am not calling on my own behalf but on behalf of another who did not know the number and as such consider my voice his and if you have a complaint about the hour his ears should receive it not mine for—

Yes, a man who claims he has been summoned.

(beat)

Land Surveying.

(pause)

Very well.

Please accept my regrets and express them to the proper—

(gives the phone to LANDLORD who puts it in his pocket)

There ain't no summons.

K, who has rested at the fireplace during the above exchange, suddenly speaks as though channeling.

K

My development was a simple one. While contented I wanted to be discontented and with all the means that my time and tradition gave me, I managed to plunge into discontent and then wanted to turn back again.

RUFFIAN AND LANDLORD approach K as though about to attack.

VILLAGE RUFFIAN

Bum.

VILLAGE INN LANDLORD

Vagrant.

VILLAGE RUFFIAN

Liar.

VILLAGE INN LANDLORD

Fibber.

VILLAGE RUFFIAN

Nobody!

VILLAGE INN LANDLORD

(into it now)

NOBODY!!

K

And so I decided to pretend I was not who I was when I was there.

VILLAGE RUFFIAN

I will pull his limbs.

VILLAGE INN LANDLORD

And I his feet.

K

Strange how make believe if engaged in systematically enough can change dis-ease into acceptance.

VILLAGE RUFFIAN

I will rattle his torso.

VILLAGE INN LANDLORD

And I his teeth.

K

(still channeling)

I deliberately cultivated a facial tic, for instance.

K does a facial tic.

VILLAGE RUFFIAN

Look at him, so scared.

VILLAGE INN LANDLORD

Not to mention frightened.

K

And crossed my arms behind my head.

K stands up, facial tic going and his arms swiftly bent behind his head.

VILLAGE INN LANDLORD

I'm not touching him.

VILLAGE RUFFIAN

Don't be a ninny.

K

All of this while crossing the path.

K starts spinning about, wild.

VILLAGE INN LANDLORD

He might have rabies.

VILLAGE RUFFIAN

Oh.

K
A repulsively childish but successful game.

They back away.

VILLAGE RUFFIAN
Now's our chance!

K stops and smiles, triumphant.

K
If it is possible so to force misfortune upon oneself, it is possible to force anything upon oneself.

They pounce on him.

K opens up, jumps to his feet as though about to fight back. THE MEN stand back.

K
But my nature cannot make it so.

K, as though not of his own accord, flops to the ground.

VILLAGE RUFFIAN and VILLAGE INN LANDLORD
him three times.

K
Steadfastness. I don't want to pursue any particular course, I want to change my place in the world entirely, which actually means that I want to go to another planet. It would be enough if I could consider the spot on which I sit as some other spot. It would be enough if I could exist alongside myself.

VILLAGE RUFFIAN and VILLAGE INN LANDLORD
both lift their feet high to give the climactic kick.
The phone rings.
Rings.
Rings.

VILLAGE RUFFIAN
Answer it.

VILLAGE INN LANDLORD
It is for you.

VILLAGE RUFFIAN
It is your inn.

VILLAGE INN LANDLORD
You were the last to make a call.

VILLAGE RUFFIAN

And so, I would be the last to get one.

VILLAGE INN LANDLORD

It could be your father.

VILLAGE RUFFIAN

Oh.

VILLAGE RUFFIAN drops his foot and picks up the telephone.

VILLAGE RUFFIAN

Yes?

I see.

An error?

Of communication or judgment?

Neither?

Then, whose error was it—

Mine?

But

No

But

No

Yes, the error was mine.

Thank you.

VILLAGE RUFFIAN leans into the VILLAGE INN LANDLORD whose foot is still in the air and does a whispering cartoon thing.

VILLAGE INN LANDLORD

You don't say!

VILLAGE INN LANDLORD puts his foot down.

VILLAGE RUFFIAN

Mr. Land Surveyor, welcome to the village.

They hold out their hands and lift him.

VILLAGE INN LANDLORD

Now sir, do you still wish to sleep?

K

I may wish to, but I cannot, for the castle Authorities are waiting.

VILLAGE INN LANDLORD AND VILLAGE RUFFIAN

But-

K
But nothing.

VILLAGE RUFFIAN
But sir, they have not summoned you.

K
Good! I must already have permission to begin my work.

VILLAGE RUFFIAN
No.

VILLAGE INN LANDLORD
Oh my no.

K
But if they have not summoned me
And I do not have permission
Then

VILLAGE RUFFIAN
You have nothing.

VILLAGE INN LANDLORD
Too true!

A soft sound, like wind blowing and something
breaking. Lights flicker.
K looks up.

K
What was that?

VILLAGE INN LANDLORD
The Castle's Count and he is quite powerful. With a single decree, a momentary stroke of his pen, he can change our world. He can peer into our minds and know our hearts. He can grant us blessings or take us to the depths of despair. A father to us all...

VILLAGE RUFFIAN
--Yeah, yeah if you're into that sort of thing.

VILLAGE INN LANDLORD
We do only what he wishes.

VILLAGE RUFFIAN
Speak for yourself.

K
What is his name?

VILLAGE RUFFIAN

His name?

K

Yes, for he must have one.

VILLAGE RUFFIAN

(the sound of the letter)

k...

VILLAGE INN LANDLORD

(the sound of the letter)

k...

VILLAGE RUFFIAN

(as though speaking it for the first time)

k...lamm

VILLAGE INN LANDLORD

Klamm.

BOTH

KLAMM!

Both get on their knees as though praying.

K reaches upward into the light.

Suddenly, his arm is thrust downward.

K

Good to know!...I shall seek permission and being on a first name basis can only help!

VILLAGE RUFFIAN and VILLAGE INN LANDLORD

look to each other and laugh.

The laughter grows.

K joins them in laughter, thinking

they are laughing in agreement.

K

To the Castle, then!

K turns away from them.

VILLAGE RUFFIAN and VILLAGE INN LANDLORD

return to neutral.

K walks.

Looks into the distance.

Points.

Walks.

Points a different direction.

Walks.

This continues until K is stuck, having twisted and turned again and again.

ACTOR #2 coughs.
Coughs.
Coughs again –hard and glottal.
K sees #2.

K
Pardon!

ACTOR #2 stares straight ahead in neutral and does not respond.

K
You there!

Nothing.
K picks up a balled piece of paper.
Tosses it at #2's feet.
#2 breathes in, opens the paper and speaks a jumble of phrases (sounding like backward speech) until she is THE BATHHOUSE OWNER.

THE BATHHOUSE OWNER
Slab ot yldnik ekat tnod ew...We don't take kindly to balls of ice thrust at our door.

The open paper sails gently to the floor.

K
Please forgive me. I was on my way to The Castle, but I had to trudge through so much of the village that I became weary.

THE BATHHOUSE OWNER
The Castle and The Village are not separate, stranger.

THE BATHHOUSE OWNER waves him in.
K "enters"

K
I am the Land Surveyor.

K reaches out his hand as if to shake.

BATHHOUSE OWNER
I am a bathhouse owner.

BATHHOUSE OWNER gestures for K to join him inside.

K
Mist.
Sweat hangs in the air and sticks to my nose.
I walk.

Turns to the left.

K
A puddle beneath my feet.
Nowhere to sit.

Turns to the left.

K
A pile of garments. I can't make out their shapes for they are limp and it is dark.
Nowhere to kneel.

Turns to the left.

K
Something hard. I run my hand along its smooth surface until I reach something soft.

BATHHOUSE OWNER
Watch it. I'm bathing here!

K turns away.

K
Nowhere to rest.

He is walking in a circle until he is stuck.

ACTOR #1 breathes in and lies down.
She is THE NURSING MOTHER.
The sound of hope mingled with that
breaking/coughing sound we heard earlier.
K wheels about.
Sees her.

K
No mist, not any longer.
A skeleton, thin and pale, as though her bones are her body and her skin, merely a blanket to keep them
warm, bathes.
Breasts hang, limp and full.

#2 breathes in - is a boy.

K
A boy

#2 suckles the air in front of him.

K
 suckles hungrily,
 his cheeks gaining
 color
 While her flesh grows
 translucent
 with
 every
 passing
 second.

He walks directly towards her, transfixed, arms
 out.
 Suddenly, NURSING MOTHER breathes in,
 quakes and when she breathes out,
 she is now A BATHING MAN.

BATHING MAN
 That one's not for you.

#2 is the BATHHOUSE OWNER again and grabs
 K's shoulder.

BATHHOUSE OWNER
 This is how you abuse my hospitality.

BATHING MAN
 Not for you.

BATHHOUSE OWNER
 Abuse my hospitality!

BATHING MAN
 Not you!

BATHHOUSE OWNER
 Abuse!

Throws K to the floor.
 Go to neutral.
 The sound of a door slamming.
 K stands, wipes himself off.
 From shoulder to toes, until he gets stuck, just
 wiping the space in front of him.
 THE TWO walk in neutral to K.
 Both breathe in, then
 One gets under his feet, the other his head.
 Scoop him up.
 ACTOR #1 is JEREMIAS, ACTOR #2 is ARTUR.

K
 Pardon me!

ARTUR

Just trying to help you get along.

JEREMIAS

Help you for your bones are fragile.

ARTUR

Help you for it can be dangerous here.

JEREMIAS

Do you feel helped?

K

Who are you!?

ARTUR

Your assistant.

JEREMIAS

Your assistant.

ARTUR AND JEREMIAS

Your assistants.

K

My new assistants?

ARTUR

No, your old ones.

JEREMIAS

Very old.

ARTUR

From way back when

JEREMIAS

When?

ARTUR

Way back.

JEREMIAS

Indeed.

K

Proof.

ARTUR
Proof?

K
Written Correspondence.

THE ASSISTANTS look to each other and then
JEREMIAS finds a paper in his pocket and reads
from it.

JEREMIAS
The land surveyor,
These are your assistants.

K
From whom does it come?

JEREMIAS
(twists it)

K...

ARTUR
(Turns the paper upside down)
K...

K
Klamm?

JEREMIAS AND ARTUR
Klamm!

They both fall to their knees.
K looks up into the light again.
Reach.
Arm thrust down.

K
Where is my equipment?

ARTUR
Equipment?

JEREMIAS
We are assistants.

ARTUR
Humble

JEREMIAS

Lowly

ARTUR

We do not have equipment

JEREMIAS

We are not qualified

K

But I left it with you.

JEREMIAS

Not with I

ARTUR

Nor I

JEREMIAS AND ARTUR

Nor us.

K opens his mouth as if to speak again, but instead he reaches into his throat, trying to pull out the words.

Then he suddenly grabs his stomach.

Bends over. Squeezes and from his ass, comes a piece of paper. Looks at it.

K

This is a...Surveyor's Measuring rope.

(rips the paper in two)

And this a...compass.

Hands them each a half and they walk the space, utilizing their new "tools"

K

I remember my apprenticeship days. Such humble beginnings.

But you see, young fellas, from such starts comes what I have – Expertise,

knowledge, a summons from a far off Count to see the world and track its progress. Not bad, huh?

The ASSISTANTS are paying no attention, caught up in activity.

K

Fellas!

Boys!

Children!

(they stop, caught)

ARTUR
Aaa..AAA..Artur

JEREMIAS
j...
je...
Jer e mias

K
Excuse me?

ARTUR AND JEREMIAS
Our names.

K
I shall call you both Artur.

ARTUR
Oooohh!

JEREMIAS
But, my name!

K
What does a name matter? You are an assistant.

JEREMIAS
Sometimes, I'm a...

JEREMIAS picks up a few of the balled up pieces of paper. Looks at them. Music runs backward until it becomes circus music, playing forward.

JEREMIAS
 juggler.

Suddenly, JEREMIAS juggles. ARTUR does a magic trick. K looks as though he walks a tight rope.

The balls fall out of Jeremias' hands. Everyone collapses.

The sound breaks away.

As K speaks, they all slowly rise.

K
I call you by the same name at great inconvenience to myself for I will now not be able to separate you from the other. Every job must be undertaken by the two as though one and so you bear half the responsibility but 100 percent of the glory.

(beat)

Artur!

The ASSISTANTS are now one body, having been thrust together by K's words.

K
Tell me what you know of the Castle.

ARTUR
The Castle?

K
Yes, the place from whence you came.
(beat)
Oh, don't look so surprised. My eyes were open.
(turns to Jeremias)
Artur?

JEREMIAS
Oh well.
(beat)
The Castle looks remarkably like the Village.

ARTUR
(whispering)
Artur, we know not of the Castle.

JEREMIAS
Oh yes, we know not.
For we are merely fools.

They stand side by side once again and act as though they are a ventriloquist's act, one doing the voice for the other.

JEREMIAS
Sir, how can we help you survey the land when it is so frozen here and thus the land is hidden?

ARTUR
We need not do anything for anything we do will change the land and then it will not be accurately surveyed.

JEREMIAS
Yes, too true and so—

K
Enough!!
You will walk across the ice towards the castle.

ARTUR
 But it is so warm in this
 (looks around)
 familiar Village Inn where you have been before.

“Ahhh.”

K
 Warmth will get us nowhere.
 You know the path and in your footsteps I will follow. Clear?

They are both shaking their heads “no”.

ARTUR
 As crystal.

JEREMIAS
 As glass.

ARTUR
 As Paper.

JEREMIAS
 As stone.

K
 GOOOOOOOOOOOO!!

They both stand, snap their heels, give a salute.

K
 Wait.
 (beat)
 War.

ARTUR and JEREMIAS
 Pardon?

K
 (coming out of him, rapidly, as though not his own voice)
 There was a war with young boys snapping their salutes and clicking their heels
 and saying yes sir
 when what they wished to say was no
 And then they were dead.
 (beat)
 Have a beer.

K grabs three paper beer mugs
 They all “Drink. “ In silence.

They each try to speak, but nothing comes.

ARTUR breathes in.
 Breathes out.
 In. Out. In. Out.
 Rapid.
 ARTUR shakes as though getting ice off his
 boots.
 He is BARNABAS.

BARNABAS
 Hello!

K
 A thick head of white hair and large thighs.
 Clothing which might not be silk, but seems refined.

BARNABAS
 I have a message for the Land Surveyor.

K
 It is written?

BARNABAS
 Of course.

K
 I am the Land Surveyor.
 From Whom does the message come?

BARNABAS
 The ultimate authority.

BARNABAS reaches into his inside pocket and
 pulls out a note.

K
 (taking it)
 It is warm.

BARNABAS
 Of course. I keep it close to my flesh so that it will reach its recipient as a blanket.

K
 (opens it and reads)
 Dear Sir,
 We welcome you to our village and our pleased to have you in our employ.
 Although you and I may not have direct correspondence, you may, through intermediaries communicate
 your wishes. These wishes will surely reach my ears and you will be accommodated, if the request is
 filled with reason. We do so wish for contended inhabitants.
 (beat, points to the letter)
 What does that say?

BARNABAS
Oh, that is his name.

K
But it is blurred.

BARNABAS
Yes.
(reading)

k...
k...
Klamm.

BARNABAS falls to his knees.
K looks up into the light.
His whole body stretching towards it.
He is crushed, so that he collapses to his knees.
Meanwhile, JEREMIAS has continued to drink.

K
(calling out to Barnabas)
MESSENGER!

BARNABAS
Yes, Mr. Land Surveyor?

K
My, you have traveled far.

BARNABAS
Only a few steps.

K
Seems like kilometers.

BARNABAS
As I said, a few steps.
(beat, he stands)
b...Ba...Barnabas.

BARNABAS puts his hand out.
K takes it.

K
Pleasure.
May I join you, Barnabas?

BARNABAS
Why yes!

K
May I lean against you?

BARNABAS
If you wish.

K
Are we headed there now?

BARNABAS
Indeed we are.

They walk, K leaning against BARNABAS facing
down the cold.

K
It is quite cold.

BARNABAS
Frozen.

K
When did it snow last?

BARNABAS
Snow?

K
The ground is covered.

BARNABAS
It is.

K
Surely, it snowed recently causing such difficult terrain for walking?

BARNABAS
Difficult? The ground is the ground and it is always this way.
(beat)
We have arrived.

K
The Castle?

BARNABAS
My home.

K
Not the Castle?

BARNABAS
My home.

K
I thought we were going to the Castle.

BARNABAS
My home.

They enter.
JEREMIAS, still sitting over his beer, breathes in
and slumps, becoming the FATHER.

K
I hoped we were headed somewhere filled with jewels and carved stone.
But instead, there is nothing but tile and worn wood.
And an old man slumped over his beer.
I turn to Barnabas--

K turns to BARNABAS , who is removing his
coat.

K
But he is busy changing.

BARNABAS breathes in and is OLGA.

OLGA
I am Barnabas' sister,
OOOOHHHHLGA,
(beat)
Olga and we do hope you find our humble lodgings acceptable.

She starts wandering about, "tidying" up.

K
She has a thick throat and smells of milk.
I want to rest my head in her lap, my mouth underneath her bosom until I am full and then I sleep.
(he just stares at her)

OLGA
Father.
(she sets her hands on his back and grows still and calm)

K
Ahem.

OLGA
You may sleep in the corner, on top of the straw, beneath the plank. I am just nearby, centimeters
away.

K

The corner is small and the straw damp and the plank eaten by worms.
But she and centimeters are pleasing enough.

He walks to the corner and rests.

OLGA

(mechanically)

I must go.

She walks as though being controlled.

K

Stay. Please.

OLGA

I cannot for the

Place

Lodging

Motel

Inn

Gentleman's Inn

Castle Inn

The Castle Inn awaits.

K

The Castle Inn, you say?

OLGA

Yes, that is where I must go.

K

Is that not where we just came from?

OLGA

Oh no, you were at the Village Inn. A much lowlier place.

The Castle Inn is for Castle Authorities and their doings.

(beat)

Goodbye.

K

I will join you.

OLGA

But it is warm here.

K

No, it is cold and you have a heavy coat on.

He springs to his feet.

Takes her arms and puts them on his shoulders.
 Ahhh.
 They walk.
 Walk.
 Walk. Circle.
 OLGA starts to dance, her body pulling K's.

K
 Why are you dancing?

OLGA
 Because what else is there to do?

K
 Why are you dancing?

OLGA
 Because there is wonderful music playing.

K
 Why are you dancing?

OLGA
 Because the servants in the Castle Inn's bar are spinning me round and round.

We suddenly hear men and the sound of a tap
 room.
 Her dancing/spinning grows and K spins away.

K
 She has said "servants" not authorities and as such they are of no interest to me.
 (beat)
 This "Castle Inn" appears no different to him
 To myself
 To me
 Than the Inn where I first arrived.
 But the bar stools do look comfortable.

He sits and sags, still having not slept.
 THE FATHER breathes in and is
 now FRIEDA.

FRIEDA
 Beer?

She picks up one of the paper mugs from
 earlier.
 K sits up.

K
 The barmaid has thin lips and small hips and sallow cheeks
 And a distinct air of superiority, indicating that she knows things.

K

(cont'd, beat)

Don't mind if I do, Barmaid.

He reaches for the mug.

She doesn't let it go.

FRIEDA

Mistress.

K

Bar Mistress,

the head of such a grand establishment who obviously wields power because she is deserving of her position.

She lets go of the mug.

FRIEDA

Go on.

OLGA

(still spinning, which continues throughout)

There were no gentleman in evening dress.

K

And although you clean glasses and spit shine the wood, your hands are soft and your spit always flowing.

OLGA

No ladies in gowns.

K

It must be difficult to stay here when there are so many other posts you might take on, offers must come from left, right, above and below.

Not to mention, in between.

FRIEDA

I need no other post for there are positions I take which are not apparent to the untrained eye.

OLGA

Everyone talked freely.

K

Yes, my eye is untrained in these matters.

You can enlighten me.

FRIEDA

I can.

OLGA

Everyone touched carelessly.

K
Indeed.

FRIEDA
Look here.

K
(starts to reach up, but thinks better of it)
But—

FRIEDA
Through this keyhole.

She holds her hand up towards the ceiling and makes a circle shape with her fingers.

OLGA
I did not need to be ashamed.

FRIEDA
(he looks)
What do you see?

K
(reluctant, for he knows this drill)
A man, he appears to have taken a break.

OLGA
It was my first time.

FRIEDA
That is not just a man.
When his head is down, he is working.
When it is up, he is working.
Always working.

K reaches up to her “keyhole”
Then traces the space as though a man’s face.
FRIEDA abruptly closes her fist.
K’s hand is suddenly thrust downward.
OLGA’s spinning abruptly stops and she goes to neutral.

FRIEDA
You are not qualified to see Klamm.

K
Well, I did see him, thanks to you.

FRIEDA
His head was down.

K
He has lovely hair.

FRIEDA
His eyes were closed.

K
He has soft lids.

FRIEDA
He was dreaming.

K
(suddenly sad, he grows still)
That I cannot see.

FRIEDA
Neither can I.

OLGA breathes in and calls out. She is THE
CASTLE INN LANDLADY.

OLGA/CASTLE INN LANDLADY
BAR MISTREEEEEESSSS!

FRIEDA
That is the Castle Inn Landlady.
...
Under the bar. Quickly.

K
Why?

FRIEDA
Strangers are not allowed here.

K
But I was welcome at the Village Inn.

FRIEDA
This is *not* the Village Inn.

CASTLE INN LANDLADY
WHERE IS THAT LAND SURVEYOR!?

FRIEDA

If you wish to stay, this is your place.
(she indicates the floor)

K

(he gets down)
It smells of fish.

FRIEDA

Now, hush.

K

It reeks of urine.

FRIEDA

That's beer.

K

Cheap Beer.

FRIEDA

Swill.

K

Slop.

FRIEDA

Shush.

...

K

Can I get up?

CASTLE INN LANDLADY

Where did that stranger get to?

FRIEDA

(she puts her foot on K's chest)
I wouldn't know.

The CASTLE INN LANDLADY turns away
as though looking elsewhere for the Land
Surveyor.

K

You have lovely ankles.

FRIEDA

Too skinny.

K

I could wrap my mouth around them.

FRIEDA

They should be fat with wine and stuffed liver. But no, I sit atop Klamm's lap and bounce and thrust and pop into the evening, sweating until my dress becomes loose because my belly is empty of everything but him and then...he doesn't even give me liver.

K

You sit atop Klamm's lap, eh?

FRIEDA

You have heard nothing.

K

You are wrong.

FRIEDA

Proof.

K

I would not give you liver either.

FRIEDA

Pshaw--

K

I would give you beef.

K wraps his mouth around her ankle.

FRIEDA

(she breathes in, ecstasy – This tumbles out of his mouth)

Beef in my belly and calves blood on my lips, lips meant for kissing and whispering I love you to a man who would whisper back whisper back whisper back BACK BAAAACCCCKKKK

She orgasms.

K

May I get up now?

FRIEDA

The landlady is gone.

I wish you wouldn't.

K
But, Klamm--

FRIEDA
You need not see him. I am so much prettier.

K
I do not desire pretty. I desire satisfaction.

FRIEDA
I am so much more satisfying.

She wraps her mouth around his ankle.

K
(Breathes in and the words tumble out)
Satisfaction comes not from without but from within and within cannot be seen unless one is without
without without WIIITTTTHHH OUUUUTT

He orgasms.

FRIEDA
f...Fr.. FFFFFFFFREEEEE
DA

K
(lets it soar on his tongue)
Frieda.

FRIEDA
And yours?

K
What?

FRIEDA
Name.

K
You wish to know my name?
(she nods and he makes the sound of the letter)

k
(the sound)

k
(finally)

K.

FRIEDA
K?

K
K.

FRIEDA
K K K K...

They lie there as FRIEDA whispers his name.
Entwined, they appear as one body.

K
A man has free will.
It takes three distinct forms.
First, he is free for he wants this life.
Second, he is free for he may choose the speed at which he progresses.
Third, he is free for he wills himself to try many turns on the path set before him. And in following every twist he is eventually brought back to the beginning.
These forms exist separately and simultaneously and, as such,
will becomes irrelevant, be it free or without freedom.

C I LANDLADY tiptoes to K and FRIEDA. Suddenly
starts tickling them.

K and FRIEDA
(Wake up)
Hnnnuh!

C I LANDLADY is now ARTUR.

ARTUR
(tickling them)
Hee hee! Hee Hee!

K
Artur, stop that!
(he hits him)
Where's Artur?

ARTUR
I am right here.

K
Time?

ARTUR
Short.

K
Early?

ARTUR
Late.

K
Well, then we best rise and speak to Klamm.

FRIEDA
He will never speak to us for I will never speak to him again.

K
But Frieda, surely you do not wish to leave without a parting word, which I can accompany you to deliver--

FRIEDA
You are now mine as are these fine young men
(she rustles ARTUR's hair)
and we have no need for his meddling ways.

K
Should we not—

FRIEDA
No we should not for we have you and I and them and it is enough.
(she turns to the light)
IT IS EEEENOOOOUUUUGGGHHH!

She stands, puts out her hands.
ARTUR takes one.
K eventually takes the other.

K
Ahem.

K switches positions with FRIEDA, so that he is
in the middle, leading the way.
They walk.
K points(There's the Castle)
He gets pulled the opposite way.
Point.
Pulled the opposite way.
And again.
Pulled.
Circle.
Circle.
Circle.

They are walking in a tighter and tighter circle.
 There is wind.
 No response.
 Whispered on the wind we hear "Artur"
 The circle only grows tighter.
 The wind grows.
 And on it we make out words:
 "Frieda K Castle Lodging Villager Inn..."
 The circle is tighter. Spinning.
 These words grow into a cacophony of sound,
 which also sounds like a pen scribbling, a chair
 shifting, a frustrated moan and coughing...
 The three are completely stuck.
 The sound peaks, the Lights flicker and the
 downstage door flies open.
 A MAN enters. The door closes behind him.
 He sees that the three are stuck, just
 vibrating/shivering.
 A MAN breathes out and is the VILLAGE INN
 LANDLADY.

VILLAGE INN LANDLADY

Well, get yourselves into our Inn for it is cold.

K

Frozen.

VILLAGE INN LANDLADY

Indeed.

K

Where is the Landlord?

VILLAGE INN LANDLADY

Who?

K

The gentleman I met many days ago. The first to give me a place to rest.

VILLAGE INN LANDLADY

Oh, he merely watches the bar and runs his fingers across my chest in the winter time.

I am The Village Inn Landlady.

K

K

He

I think it is strange that this Landlady was nowhere to be seen when I was last here. It is a small inn after all.

VILLAGE INN LANDLADY

Small perhaps, but it does have other rooms.

K

I did not speak.

VILLAGE INN LANDLADY

You had thoughts and really, what is the difference.

Now Frieda, my little Frieda, how is that you got mixed up with such a disreputable gentleman?

K

I beg your pardon.

VILLAGE INN LANDLADY

Yes, go on, BEG.

K

It was a figure of speech.

VILLAGE INN LANDLADY

I see, you say things you do not mean.

To provoke response.

And in my little daughter's heart, you have caused want.

K

I have caused nothing.

I do not have that power.

VILLAGE INN LANDLADY

Ask me.

K

For what?

VILLAGE INN LANDLADY

Her hand.

K

I have her hand.

He holds up FRIEDA's hand.

VILLAGE INN LANDLADY

Yes, you hold it between your fingers and her palm grows sweaty.

But you do nothing. You take her for granted all this time.

K

I take nothing for granted!

But as I do not have permission to be here, I cannot possibly marry such a noble woman as your daughter.

VILLAGE INN LANDLADY

You understand nothing of our ways.

Ask for her hand and in the asking you are stating a commitment to her and thus the village and thus the Castle. Once you have achieved the concrete nature of such a union, your place here is all but certain.

K

Certain?

VILLAGE INN LANDLADY

All but certain.

...

K

(turns to FRIEDA)

Fraulein Frieda, I am now going to ask you a favor which sounds quite crazy, and which I should regard as such, were I the one to receive it.

I belong to you and as that is still not a strong enough expression of my state

(gets on his knees)

I must marry you.

FRIEDA

You must?

K

(looks to VILLAGE INN LANDLADY, who nods)

Yes. I must.

FRIEDA

You must!!

A moment of celebration.

Music!!

Perhaps, ARTUR and VILLAGE INN LANDLADY dance around K.

VILLAGE INN LANDLADY has a coughing fit.

FRIEDA

Mother, are you alright?

VILLAGE LANDLADY

Yes, it's just the dreadful cold. Nothing thaws here.

K

Perhaps you should rest.

VILLAGE INN LANDLADY

No.

I cannot rest for there are problems that need solving.

I cannot rest for there are hallways to walk.

I cannot rest for people, everywhere in this place, need.

And I hear them calling

And Moaning

And asking for the night to end.

And so I cannot rest!

Cough Cough Cough into a hankie.
Looks at the hankie as though there is something there, perhaps blood. Quickly conceals it.

VILLAGE INN LANDLADY

Perhaps for a short time then.

VILLAGE INN LANDLADY lies down.
They all follow suit, as though suddenly they had no choice.

K

Strange dreams.

As though my head is not my own.

(beat)

I am a regular man.

Not a Beetle.

A Bug is not a man so why should I need to make the distinction?

I am wearing a suit.

Not some hunger artist in rags

Hunger artist? As though I am starving?

I am standing in the street

Not burrowing in some cave

Burrow, well that sounds nice

And then my father walks over,

or I think it's my father, some man, with big hands and large forearms

He presses his palm to my chest.

(beat)

Crack.

Is that a rib?

ALL

"How are you feeling?"

K

He says

"Fine", I respond

even though my white shirt is now covered in blood.

ALL

"Fine, huh? Let me see your eyes."

K

I look up and it's you, Frieda.

But you look like Olga, Barnabas' sister, with her round face.

No matter.

You pull your hand from my chest

And in it is my heart

You tell me to

ALL

"Eat"

K

I sink my teeth in

I have never eaten heart before, not like this

And oh, I have to admit, my dear Frieda Olga Woman, it is GOOD!

You take a bite

And I bite

(beat)

And then it is bile

A steaming mass of bile.

ALL, led by VI LANDLADY, are starting to toss about, making glottal throat sounds.

K

I can't choke it down

Choke

Choke

Choke

VILLAGE INN LANDLADY is coughing in sleep.

ALL characters are jerking about.

VI LANDLADY sits up.

K sits up.

ALL Sit up and breathe in deep.

ALL

Hnnnnnnuuuhhhh!

VILLAGE INN LANDLADY

You cannot stay here.

K

Why not?

VILLAGE INN LANDLADY

The Castle awaits.

K
We Cannot stay here!

VILLAGE INN LANDLADY
She can.
They can.
You Can
Not

K
She is to be my wife.

VILLAGE INN LANDLADY
Yes, but as you lose sight of the Castle when she is near
she must remain here on her mother's arm.

K
But it was you who said I must marry her.

VILLAGE INN LANDLADY
As a matriarchal figure, it is my duty to make such demands.
They keep you men on your toes.

K
What of my assistants?

VILLAGE INN LANDLADY
They...make me laugh.

Looks to ARTUR, who is playing pattycake with
the air. VI LANDLADY laughs.

K
Frieda, you must come with me.

FRIEDA
I must?

VILLAGE INN LANDLADY
(now plays pattycake with ARTUR but speaks to them)
You must stay.

FRIEDA
I must?

K
You belong with K.

FRIEDA
I belong with K?

LANDLADY
You belong with me.

FRIEDA
I belong with you?

K
I am the one who will take you to the Castle.

FRIEDA
You will
take me
(she reaches out to him)
TO THE CASTLE!

VI Landlady stops playing.

VILLAGE INN LANDLADY
He hates everything that does not pertain to The Castle!
Until he breaches its walls, which could take many more days,
he will find conversations boring and companionship a burden.
He will never marry you until all else is achieved!!

FRIEDA
You will never marry me?

K
Until all else is achieved.

FRIEDA
I will remain.

She crosses back to VILLAGE INN LANDLADY.

K
(about ARTUR)
They are mine.

VILLAGE INN LANDLADY
Are you not bothered by their ways?

ARTUR now rolls around on the floor.

K
I may be, but as they are my assistants they are my bother.

...

VI LANDLADY

(who looks to ARTUR and laughs again)

Very well.

K

ARTUR!!

FRIEDA

Where will you go?

K

The Castle.

FRIEDA

If you do not make it this night, I mean?

K

I will.

K lifts ARTUR up. Brushes him off.
They travel.

K

Is that the Castle there?

ARTUR

Oh, it just might be!

K

Is it or is it not?

ARTUR

Quite possibly!

K

Nevermind, Artur. What do you think, Artur?

ARTUR

It does look Castleish.

ARTUR and K point and go.
Point and Go.
Point and Go.
Circle.
VI LANDLADY Speaks to FRIEDA.

A MAN/VILLAGE INN LANDLADY

We're fine now.

(points to a balled up piece of paper)

Hand me that, won't you?

FRIEDA
This....

A MAN/V I LANDLADY
Yes that...piece of gefilte fish

FRIEDA
For you are hungry?

A MAN
Right.

She hands him the piece of paper.

FRIEDA
Where do you think they are, mother?

A MAN/V I LANDLADY
They have made their way to the
(unrolls a paper and as he does so –backwards speech)
Sroyam Egallic eltsac
(the paper is now fully open)
Castle Village Mayor’s home.
(now the Mayor)

K and ARTUR stand up straight, stop circling.

K/ARTUR
We have?

FRIEDA
(simultaneous)
They have?

VILLAGE MAYOR
Grape.

FRIEDA breathes in and is THE MAYOR’s WIFE.

MAYOR’S WIFE
Tired.

VILLAGE MAYOR
That is hunger and when one is hungry one cannot concentrate on the task at hand.

He opens his mouth.
She grabs a bunch of paper grapes. She feeds
him.

VILLAGE MAYOR
Mmmm.....

K
Ahem.

VILLAGE MAYOR
(beat, to K)
Take a seat.

K
The mayor offers him
Me
Him
K
MEEEEEE
A seat, but I have places to go and so I do not wish to--

VILLAGE MAYOR
You do not wish?

K
I did not speak.

...

K
I have a woman who will be my wife and she is waiting.

VILLAGE MAYOR
Waiting. For what?

K
For me to gain official permission.

VILLAGE MAYOR
SHE is waiting?

K
Oh yes, she refused to come with me until I had reached the pinnacle
The point
The Apex!

VILLAGE MAYOR
Yes, that's women for you. Always wanting more than you can possibly offer.

He opens his mouth. Another paper grape.

K
Oh, I can offer. It will take just a few more steps. And as you are the mayor and have told me to sit and I have complied by remaining here surely you will tell me how to get where I am headed.

VILLAGE MAYOR

We did once have need for a land surveyor or so we thought. There was a written order. Perhaps wife, you may search it out?

MAYOR'S WIFE

Where do you suggest I look?

VILLAGE MAYOR

Be Creative!

VILLAGE MAYOR points to a giant pile of crumpled papers.

The wife starts to look through them.

K

Help her, Artur.

ARTUR

Yes, sir!

VILLAGE MAYOR

As Mayor, I provide a needed service. I hold council meetings and preside over projects or rather over the decision to proceed with projects which will eventually result in tangible outcomes.

But you, my friend you do not provide nor preside and I can guarantee that any projects you might pursue will result in nothing of substance. Now, I can see you are sad. Don't be sad, no siree!

This is fine news. Fine indeed. You see, I must toil all the time. I may look as though I lie here with clotted cream and blueberries and chocolate sauce and port drenched figs, all vegetarian options mind you, but my lying about is an illusion. I am working, my brain constantly whirring with this memo and that contract and this villager's request and that innkeepers petition. There is no leisure, there is only the dream of leisure.

Even in sleep, I am planning what I shall do when I am awake and when I am awake, I am hopeful that in dreams some solutions shall come. And as such, my dreams are not my own, they are the village's.

You are of one purpose and as such the only dreams you know are those you want. Lucky.

ARTUR and WIFE have fallen asleep, noses buried in the papers.

K

Artur!

ARTUR and WIFE wake up.

ARTUR and WIFE

Hnnnuh!

K

Have you found the paper yet?

ARTUR

Still Working on it!

K
Keep working then!

ARTUR
Yes, sir!

They start reading once again.

K
Frieda will not have me without progress and without progress I am nowhere and with nothing but nowhere I am nobody and if I am nobody I might as well stop and If I stop having been nothing but nobody then why should I have arrived in the first place?

VILLAGE MAYOR
If you can find it in yourself to forgo passion in favor of duty I may be able to offer you something. The trick will be to not let duty become passion and thus you are no better off than me. So, we must acquit you with something that fills your time but not your heart, your head but not your brain, your fingers but not your palm. Then at the end of the day, your body is weary but not full of anything, no ideas, no hopes. And by having nothing, you are empty. And when you are empty, you can be filled by simple things, a touch from your wife , a nice piece of buttered asparagus, a soft bed.

K
That's something...right?

VILLAGE MAYOR
You will be a
j...Ja...Janitor!, A
(beat)
School janitor!
(beat)
Yes, it is decided.

He reaches into his inside pocket and gives K a paper.

K
(holds it to his cheek)
Warm.
(beat)
What is this?

VILLAGE MAYOR
The written approval for your new position...From Klamm himself.

K
But how did he know?

VILLAGE MAYOR
He did not but now he does and thus it so.

K
Now what?

VILLAGE MAYOR
Tell your lover
And more importantly, her mother,
that you are a man who holds a firm position.
Whose passions are buried deep.
No one can resist such proclamations.

K
Artur!

ARTUR and WIFE
Hnnnuuh!

K
Is anybody home?

A MAN
All you had to do was knock.

K
Who are you?

VILLAGE INN LANDLADY
I am the Village Inn Landlady.

ARTUR and WIFE are sprawled out on the floor,
asleep again.

ARTUR runs to K.
WIFE just looks at her husband, hands on hips.
K and ARTUR walk.
They point and go.
Point and go.
Point and go.
Suddenly, the sound
Wind Blowing/Breaking.
From ARTUR's mouth comes a white hankie
with a blood spot.
The Breaking sound, stronger.
From K's mouth, another hankie with blood
spot.

A MAN picks up hankies and stuffs them into his
pockets.

A MAN breathes out and is THE VILLAGE INN
LANDLADY again.

THE WIFE changes her stance and is now FRIEDA. K goes toward her.

VILLAGE INN LANDLADY
Frieda does not wish to see you.
(steps in between K and FRIEDA)

K
I have a position.

VILLAGE INN LANDLADY
Yes, you are standing.

K
I have been made an employee of the school.

V I LANDLADY
Why don't you tell her all about it.

V I LANDLADY steps aside.

K
Come with me, Frieda.

He tries to take her hand. She pulls away.

FRIEDA
Thanks to you, I have lost my place.

K
I have been appointed and so, I have some standing and you can stand upon that standing and thus, have height.

FRIEDA
But what of the ways I may bore you?

K
I never said such things.
The landlady did.

FRIEDA
She knows people.

K
Oh, she knows nothing but herself.

VI LANDLADY now stands with ARTUR. They both watch the scene play out, enraptured.

FRIEDA
What is the position?

K
At the school.

FRIEDA
An educator! Excellent.
(beat)

K
Shall we?

FRIEDA
Shall we...what?

...

K
Shall we marry?

FRIEDA
We shall!

They take hands and walk. The circle.
ARTUR and VI LANDLADY celebrate.
Suddenly, K scrubs the floor.

FRIEDA
A janitor?

VI LANDLADY has become the other ASSISTANT.
He and ARTUR play pattycake.

K
Just until the Castle recognizes my efforts.

FRIEDA
And when will that be?

K
Soon.

K continues scrubbing and whistles.
Meanwhile, THE ASSISTANTS playtime grows larger.
FRIEDA crosses slowly away as though to make the space habitable.
K is putting finishing touches on his work.
Finally, A MAN/ASSISTANT grows weary, coughs a bit and breathes heavy.

A MAN
Artur, do you ever wish to stop playing all these silly games?

ARTUR

Well yes, and that is when I rest.

A MAN

But then, tomorrow, the same games once again.

ARTUR

Oh no, there will be new games.
I hear Parcheesi is quite wonderful.

A MAN

But games nonetheless.

ARTUR

What else is there?

A MAN

I was hoping you would tell me.

ARTUR

You are not yourself today Artur.

A MAN

I am very much myself.
Just more so.

ARTUR

Rest.
It will all be better in the morning.

They lie down.

K, still whistling, walks over and nuzzles
FRIEDA's ear.

FRIEDA

You'll disturb them. They are just falling to slumber.

K

Good, let them be disturbed, for perhaps they will get restless and LEAVE!

FRIEDA

Oh, you don't mean it. They are yours.

K

No Frieda, they were given to me, without my consent and now you dote on them.

FRIEDA

I do not dote, but they do deserve comfort.

K

Why? They are just men, like so many others and comfort is not for you or I to provide.
It is for them to find.

FRIEDA

Like you found me?

K

Exactly.

FRIEDA

I was lost, serving ale to faceless faces with greedy eyes and greedier hands.

While I waited for a hidden figure who sometimes looked like my father

(beat)

But the bar was mine; I polished its oak until it shined.

And then I, with my limp hair and thin chest, stood reflected in its light until I became the wood,
dead but bright.

K

And now you are not dead.

FRIEDA

No, just dull.

K

Frieda, don't you see, that here in this classroom, we can learn to start again. To become not a land
surveyor nor a bar maid

FRIEDA

Mistress.

K

Fine. Nor a bar Mistress.

FRIEDA

K, we were born to better things.

K

Born! Ha! I arrived in this place.

FRIEDA

Yes and upon your arrival The Castle appointed you
as it did me

K

Well then, I reject the Castle's appointment!

FRIEDA

K, there is no rejecting the Castle. They are our employers, no matter what we choose.

K

No! We can chop wood and make a home.

We can kill elk and make a meal

We can forget them and their rules.

FRIEDA

But they own the wood

And they govern the elk

And I cannot forget them.

K

Well then, we may simply stay here under the Castle's rule and enjoy these better things.

FRIEDA

The assistants, with their youthful ways, will not allow it.

THE ASSISTANTS talk in their sleep and snore.

K

They won't stay forever as they will have to find other work, for I will have none to offer.

Then, it will be you and I and nothing

But

Food

(he plucks a paper grape from the bunch – Feeds it to her.)

Warmth

(wraps himself about her)

Pleasure.

FRIEDA

This is pleasurable.

K

Yesssssss.

(beat)

Shall we ...

(he wraps himself about her)

FRIEDA

(she wraps about him)

Dream?

K

If you wish for that is what warmth allows.

They are entwined once again.
As K speaks, A MAN slowly rises from slumber.

K
I am holding a woman in my arms.
Her face is like Frieda's
And not at all.
She has straight hair, the color of mud.
Skin is parchment, thin and crinkly.
There, in blood, are scrawled these words:

FRIEDA and K are starting to rock back
and forth.

K
"Perhaps everything is now over.
That might be for the best.
What I suffer
What you suffer
What we suffer can result in nothing but suffering.

A MAN is now fully on his feet, still coming out
of sleep.
The rocking has grown more intense.

K
It is enough that we tortured ourselves during this time together.
You will realize this soon.
If you fail to, I will most certainly marry you, for I am at my eeeennd."

They orgasm.
A MAN is now fully awake.
Sees them all, not moving.
Wraps a scarf or piece of paper about his face
or head and becomes the SCHOOLTEACHER.

SCHOOLTEACHER
This will not do!!
(cough)

All three jolt awake and breathe in (a
repeat of the opening image, of all three
conjoined and then brought to life)

ALL
Hnnnnuuh!

They are blown apart.

SCHOOLTEACHER
The children will be arriving momentarily and here you are, sleeping the day away as though there are
no tasks to complete.
LAZY!

K
Who are you?

SCHOOLTEACHER
I am the Schoolteacher who runs this establishment.

K
The man's face is drawn
Skin hanging off its bones.
His voice too is weak.

SCHOOLTEACHER
(he growls)
It is not weak!

K
I did not speak--

SCHOOLTEACHER
Work!

K
We are merely resting for the tasks will require strength.

SCHOOLTEACHER
Yes they will but time waits for no man and yours is already running late.

SCHOOLTEACHER pulls a hankie from his pocket and gives it to K.

K gets on his knees and starts wiping the floor with it.

Meanwhile, FRIEDA and ARTUR are standing in neutral.

SCHOOLTEACHER walks into another area of the space and takes out a quill. Drips ink onto the floor.

SCHOOLTEACHER
Ahem.

K crawls over and wipes it.
SCHOOLTEACHER crosses to another are.

SCHOOLTEACHER
Ahem.

Another ink drip.
K crawls over and wipes it.

SCHOOLTEACHER
Oh...land surveyor.

A puddle of ink.
K crawls over and wipes it.
As he is wiping:

K
The smell of soap and work makes for a clean and hearty life.
True, the soap is made of lye
And my nostrils burn
My lips sizzle
My eyes tear
And there is a ringing in my ears.
But, when the day is done
I will crawl into bed beside my love.
Well, not bed since there is no mattress here and the floor is hard.
But, I will not have to stay there, on the wood planks, for very long
Because I will awaken and there will be muck on the floor
And I will scrub it all away
The smell of soap

#1 and #2 start moving in conjunction with K's words.

K
Burn
Sizzle
Tear
Ring
Done
Crawl
Bed
No, Floor.
Hard
Awaken
Muck
Scrub
Soap
Burn Sizzle Tear Ring Done Crawl Bed Floor Hard Awaken Muck Scrub Soap Scrub Muck Awaken Hard
Floor Bed Crawl Done Ring Tear Sizzle Burn Sizzle Ring Bed Hard Scrub Burn Burn Burn Burn Burn Burn
BUUUUURRN!

K pounds the floor, throws down the hankie. #1 and #2 return to neutral.

SCHOOLTEACHER
Is there a problem?

...

K
No, sir.

The schoolteacher holds out his quill.
Ink drip.

SCHOOLTEACHER
You missed a spot.

K returns to scrubbing.

K
This will not do.
I am not meant to crawl, hands and knees, on the floor.
(K crawls across the floor, scrubbing as he says this)
I am meant to stride, legs and feet, across it, mapping out its rise until I reach the door and can determine that this is the place where its reach ends, its outermost boundary.
(he is at the Garden door. He looks up for a moment)

But
There are no options here
(he looks down again)
And here I shall remain.
(he continues scrubbing, making circular motions over and over the same spot)

SCHOOLTEACHER looks at K, scrubbing
mindlessly.
Thinks.
Crosses to ARTUR, who
has been standing in neutral.
ARTUR breathes in and is now a schoolboy,
HANS.

HANS
Teacher was very unkind to you, mister.

K looks around to make sure TEACHER is gone.
K doesn't see him standing where ARTUR was a
moment ago.
FRIEDA remains in neutral.

K
Lots of people are unkind.

HANS
Maybe so, but you are new here and don't know the way of things.

K

I may be new, but I know what I know and that is known.
What do you know?

HANS

My mother is the woman with pale skin.

A MAN gestures to FRIEDA.
She becomes NURSING MOTHER.
The sound of hope and breaking.

K

You were the boy at her nipple those many days ago in the bathhouse.

HANS

She is dying.

I can see it in her sunken eyes.

They used to light up when I came in the room, her new little boy, with tiny fingers she could explore
and feet so small,
but now they remain dark.
Even when I suckle.

K

I'm sorry son.

HANS

They have that old light again, when she mentions you.

She does not see very many strangers and, as she is of The Castle, she grew up being privy to their
comings and goings, but now--

K

From the Castle, eh?

HANS doesn't answer.

K

Who are you?

HANS

A Village Schoolboy.

K

Your name.

HANS

hhhhHHHans.

K

Well, Hans, your mother's life must be quite difficult.
So small when she is born to be big.

HANS

No sir, she is small and always has been.

K

As she is from the Castle, she could once see the entire village and thus her view was big in spite of her physical limitations.

HANS

She knows not of the "Entire village" and an equally little of The Castle.

K

But you said she is from there and surely she might be healed of her illness if she could return.

HANS

I said no such thing.

K

Oh my boy, I know you have grief and it must be hard to reconcile the things you've said from the things you want and the things that were from the things that are

HANS

She is "Of The Castle", that is what I said.

...

K

I wish to help her.

I want her eyes bright so she can once again see her little boy's tiny fingers grow large.

HANS

You would do that for her?

K

For you.

HANS

For us?

K

I would.

HANS

How?

K

As I am new here I know things which only a stranger can know.

HANS
Like secrets?

K
Like secrets.

HANS
Like answers?

...

K
If you like.

HANS
You may visit with us.

HANS kisses K.
He returns to his former position and goes to neutral.

K
Frieda, did you hear?
(K turns to look for her)
Frieda!

He spins around looking for her.
A MAN kisses NURSING MOTHER on the lips.
Breathes heavily into her.
She is now FRIEDA.

FRIEDA
You do not love me.

K
What?

FRIEDA
The landlady pulled me aside and told me it was so and I did not believe her.

K
Smart girl.

FRIEDA
She said that you might feign love and you might even believe that you do love but what you love, in fact, is my position as it relates to Klamm, which you completely miscomprehend; it is one of flesh not of heart and while a heart can be beaten into submission it is covered by the flesh and as such the flesh is more susceptible to wind and ice and other destructive elements--

K

--You have no proof, only conjecture, influenced by a landlady, who--

FRIEDA

And yet I have more than conjecture for when you spoke to that boy just now it was not him you were interested in, it was his mother, for she is of The Castle and thus of Klamm and, so, you gave him sympathy that smelled like compassion and looked like love but was merely greed. Now you will meet her and I will be forgotten. Do not tell me it isn't so, for can you even remember the boy's name?

K

Hans. His name was Hans.

FRIEDA

Well, that's irrelevant. So many named Hans in this village. Isn't that right, Artur?

HANS becomes ARTUR.

ARTUR

That's right mum.

He plays pattycake with the air.

K

I am not going.

He gets on his knees.

K

Until you go with me.

A MAN

As much as he wants to, K does not get on his knees.

K is blown to his feet.

K

K

I

He

I

K

IIIIII get on my knees

(He slowly struggles to get on his knees)

and say, Frieda--

A MAN

He does not beg for understanding.

K stands up straight.

A MAN
 He merely turns on his heel and exits.
 He--

K turns to the left as if to go.

K
 I!
 (he turns back to her)
 Am doing this for us.

A MAN
 He exits.

He turns.

K
 (turns back)
 I arrived here in this village

A MAN
 Some might consider this departure
 (K turns around again)
 A breaking of their engagement.

K
 (fighting it)
 And met so many, Barnabas, Olga,
 (to her)
 Frieda
 (looks to ARTUR)
 Even Artur.

ARTUR perks up.

ARTUR
 Wanna play?

ARTUR rushes over to K and wraps around his leg.

K
 Not now.
 (kicks him away – Artur tumbles backward and cries)

FRIEDA
 K!
 (she crosses to ARTUR)
 He didn't mean it.

A MAN
 Now, when there is strife, it is time to go.

K
Each of you knows where you belong
Here

K starts to turn but turns back – at war with himself.

A MAN
Here, after all is no place to be.

K is now starting to vibrate, unable to leave, unable to stay.

K
And each of you knows what you do
Messenger, Sister, Schoolboy, Lover--

A MAN
--No place to be when one must reach the Castle.

The vibrating has grown.

FRIEDA
(still petting ARTUR, who is doing the little kid end of crying/sniffing thing)
K, I was once something other than your lover.

K
Yes! and because you belong here, you once knew what you were and because permission was granted by virtue of your birth, you did what you did and having fulfilled that purpose you could pursue another.

A MAN
He leaves !

K is shaking hard.

FRIEDA
Maybe I didn't want another.

K
That is your choice.

K stops quaking.

A MAN
Having said his peace, the land surveyor is finally ready to—

As K speaks, A MAN tries to continue, but his lips struggle for the words, overtaken by the force of K's talk.

K
I am stranger who belongs no where
I am a land surveyor
If I do not survey the land I am nothing
If I am nothing then you will forget me

A MAN's lips finally form words identical to K's.

K
No, I won't be forgotten

A MAN joins K's speech.

K AND A MAN
for I will have never existed--

FRIEDA
Oh K, you need not survey the land.

FRIEDA rustles ARTUR's hair – His crying has mostly subsided. She crosses to K.

FRIEDA
You need only hold me close.

She reaches for him. Pull him to her breast.
Squeezes tight. A MAN starts getting short of breath.
Tighter still.
His breathing gets raspy and rapid.

A MAN
(deep breath in and breath out, reveals himself to K)
You must keep going.

K
Who are you?

FRIEDA
Your mistress, darling.

A MAN
I am...here to tell you what comes next.

K
Who are you?

FRIEDA
Your lover.

A MAN
I am...very important.

K
Who are you?

FRIEDA
Frieda!

A MAN

I am...someone who can give you what you want.

K

What do I want?

FRIEDA

Me, of course.

A MAN

Permission.

K

K...K...KLAMM!

FRIEDA

Klamm! I knew it!

She holds him away from her body.

K

Give me permission.

FRIEDA

No.

Not

(she indicates her body.)

here.

She pushes him away.

A MAN

(whispers)

Not here.

A MAN cocks his head – “Let’s go”
K turns away and goes.

A MAN

The Land Surveyor once again travels alone, ice crunching below his feet.

K

But you are right here.

A MAN guides K.

A MAN

Business cannot be done here for you have not yet seen the Castle’s inner walls and without standing inside them with your eyes open, my permission would be meaningless for it would not have come from the Castle, but merely from me and one without the other is incomplete.

K
I--

A MAN tries to guide him towards a different area.

A MAN
--He tries a new direction.

K tries to speak.

K
I--

A MAN tries again.

A MAN
--Surely this one must be right.

K tries again.

K
I—

One more time.

A MAN
--This is most certainly the path.

K continually tries to speak up but
A MAN talks over him.

A MAN
He finds a way to break out of this pattern.
He creates a solution as yet unknown.
He...He...He...
(beat)
What course of action would best suit you?

K
We would stop here for a moment
and I would turn to
The ultimate authority, that would be you, and say
“I have a great skill to offer this village.”
You then gather me in your arms and we arrive in The Castle’s inner chambers, where I am granted
permission to ply my trade and by having that permission I gain proper admittance to the village.

A MAN
But what then?

K
Then?

A MAN
After you have succeeded at attaining the position?

K
Does such a question really matter?

A MAN
I suppose not...yet.
(beat)
Perhaps, someone you already know can provide you with satisfaction.

A MAN points to ARTUR and FRIEDA, who
switch positions .
ARTUR is now OLGA and she has her hand on
FRIEDA's back who is now FATHER.

OLGA
Father, you must eat.

K
Yes, I know you.

A MAN
Very clever. But, as I am the ultimate, as you have said, it is my duty to insure that not a single step is
skipped or the whole enterprise comes crashing down.

K
If I speak to her and do your bidding, how will I find you?

A MAN
I'm right here.

K
You're not leaving?

A MAN
No.

K
Very well.

K turns to walk toward OLGA.
K turns back to A MAN.

K
But what shall I ask her, Klamm?

A MAN

Oh, is Klamm near?

(gets on his knees)

How very exciting.

K

Please, sir.

A MAN

I do enjoy being called sir. But as I am just the Messenger Barnabas do not waste the title on me.

K

But—

A MAN

Come inside for it is cold.

On his knees, A MAN leads the way “inside”.
A MAN sits with FATHER.

K

Why won't anyone stay with me, Olga?

First Frieda, Then—

OLGA

I am right here.

K

Anyone of consequence I mean.

A MAN

How are you Father?

FATHER

Not well.

OLGA

Someone of consequence once wanted me to stay.

A Castle appointed Upper Secretary to the Under Secretary

K

Excellent! His name?

OLGA

...

Sortini. He called on me to come to him in the dead of night wearing nothing but socks.

K

Did you go?

OLGA
Certainly not.

K
But you could have visited the Castle.

OLGA
I live in the Village and really, what is the difference.

A MAN
Do things ache?

FATHER
All the time.

OLGA
When word spread that I had denied his advances, the villagers cast me out.
They spoke of nothing but Castle Authority after all, and I, who was given an offering, had rejected it out of hand!

A MAN
It will be over soon.

FATHER
I hope not.

A MAN
But you are sick and dying.

FATHER
I have yet more to do.

OLGA
Why do you think I dance with those in the Castle Inn, wrap my thighs around their ankles and my breasts around their chins? I must convince them, true or no, that I am available for offerings.

...

K
Thank you.

OLGA
For what?

K
For answers.
I have been too selfish, after only what I desire.

A MAN

As it is, you do nothing but sit here.

FATHER

Yes.

K

Of course the Castle authorities have desires as well.

I simply need to find out what those are and fulfill them immediately.

OLGA

Yes, you could do that, I suppose. It worked so well for your Frieda!

She turns away from him.

FATHER

I provide a spot for your Olga to rest her hands when she is fraught.

A MAN

So you are nothing but an object that fills space.

K

I am here with you.

OLGA

And I with you and yet we both wish for somewhere else.

FATHER

You are not yourself today Barnabas.

A MAN

I am.

Just more so.

K

I will stay for a short time.

He snuggles up next to her, sexual.

OLGA

Not like that, K.

K

You did not call me Land surveyor or Stranger or--

OLGA

Your name is K. I heard you tell Frieda.

K

I thought you were busy with dancing.

OLGA

I was, but I listened for I wished to know you.

K

I wish to know you.

(he rubs her thigh – she removes his hand.)

Then how are we to distract ourselves ?

OLGA

We could simply share space.

K

And do what?

OLGA

Nothing. Just sit here. Knowing that each of us wants something more and cannot reach it.

(she pats her knees)

He lies in her lap.

She places her hands on him.

Calm.

FATHER

Why don't you try it, son?

A MAN

What?

FATHER

Resting your hands on me. No roads to walk, no messages to deliver.

A MAN

Then I am no messenger.

FATHER

That's right. You're just a boy.

He takes A MAN'S hand and places it
on his back.

OLGA

(she starts speaking , at first casually)

The power comfort has over you - your powerlessness without it. I know no one in whom both are so great. Consequently, everything you build is insubstantial, unstable.

K

Pardon?

OLGA

(her manner, voice is changing)

At the same time, you are under comfort's constant harassment. It robs you of not only the strength to bear up under anything, but also the strength to create comfort.

K

Oh, I'm fine.

(beat)

I suppose I could use a pillow for my back.

OLGA

(deeper now, more tortured)

You achieve comfort, false as it may be, by renouncing the more important things.

K

Olga, my back is indeed dreadful. A pillow please.

OLGA

(she barely sounds like herself)

Possibilities exist in you K, so close at hand.

K

Shall I get it myself?

OLGA

(she is moving her lips but now A MAN is speaking)

Only to find a way to those possibilities.

And when you have found it, to dare!

To dare to strive! An outgrowth of the belief that a man can be happy, happy when he is honest.

And to be honest is to admit that one is never honest and thus, you must keep striving to reach

happiness and only when you have reached it can you be honest about that which still gnaws at you!

A MAN pushes FATHER away. FATHER returns to the slumped over position.

K

I must go.

OLGA

(back to her own voice)

But why? We were so happy.

K

It was you who told me that I must dare!

OLGA

I said no such thing. Why would I, for I like your company.

Don't you care for mine?

A MAN struggles to his feet.

K
Of course I do.

OLGA
Then stay and be content.

K
But Olga, I must go forth.

OLGA
You said yourself that it can only end in destruction as of where here, it will only end in silence and laps.

K
If happiness comes from honesty then I must speak. To live a small life in a small room would be a dream if the room were my own. But as it yours and your family's, I am doomed to having no private goings on and that includes my thoughts. Perhaps, with an appointment from the Castle, I can find a private space, for a land surveyor needs room to lay out his maps without having to worry that someone might soil them.

She lays her hands out.
He puts his face between them.
Slap!

OLGA
That was goodbye.

K crosses the stage.
A MAN does as well.
OLGA crosses to FATHER, rests her hands.

K
(calling out)
What
Do
You
Want from meeee!?

A MAN
An important question.

K
(sees him)
Oh.
(beat)
What do you want from me, Klamm?

A MAN
I want you to travel to the next destination which will lead you to the one after that.

K
Why?

A MAN
Because it is the process. We have been over this.

K
But what do YOU want?

A MAN
I have told you already.

K
A bit of pleasure.
(he nuzzles him, sexual – No response)
Comfort then.
(he pats his lap)

A MAN
The pursuit is all.

K
Why must I pursue when you are standing right here?

A MAN
Because if I grant you permission here you will not be able to trust that it holds sway for you do not see Castle Walls surrounding me and thus I could be anyone or no one or nothing. And then what would that get you?

K
Enough speaking!
Enough asking.
Enough pleading.
Enough begging.
Enough.
(beat)

Action...cannot be negotiated for it does not consist of words, it merely consists of me.

K pushes past A MAN and immediately gets stuck, trying to push past the same place again and again.
A MAN shivers and coughs.

A MAN
Do you have a handkerchief?
(beat)
It is cold and I have been searching for you and now I grow ill.

K

I have been here with you the whole time.

A MAN

No sir, it has been so long since you left our home and I,
Barnabas,
have just found you.

K

Barnabas! Where is Klamm?

A MAN

I wish I knew!

A MAN, the shivering grows and he coughs.

K

Here.

Hands him the hankie.

A MAN

You are kind.

K

Do you have a message for me?

A MAN

Oh yes!

But as my hands are cold may I recite it?

He wraps the hankie about is hands.

K

Will it hold the same bearing as that which is written?

A MAN

It will have to, for now...It does, after all, exist.

K nods.

A MAN

To the Land Surveyor,

Please report with immediate haste to the Castle Inn.

A meeting of great importance and with undeniable bearing on your case shall take place.

Bring yourself, for that is all which will be required.

With expediency,

The Over Secretary to The Upper Administrator,

Sortini.

K

Sortini, you say.

(beat)

No. I am headed to The Castle.

A MAN

Through the Inn is the most direct route.

K

I will take my chances with the roads. Surely a land surveyor can find his way.

A MAN

They will not receive you. The door may open but no one will be there. Just a hinge that responds to pressure.

K

Once the door is open I can go up and down every corridor until I find the real authority's quarters.

A MAN

Real authority?

K

What is Klamm but a name? I have seen no proof of his power.

A MAN

It is all around you.

K

In my own experiences he is nothing but words.

A MAN

You may do what you wish but Secretary Sortini is a very well regarded authority with a great deal of pull at The Castle.

A meeting with him might just be the key that opens the door.

K

But—

BARNABAS

Yes, sir?

K

But

(quoting himself from earlier)

"enough speaking!"

A MAN

Oh, I imagine that you won't have to speak. From what I've heard they usually do the speaking.

K
Well, that is a relief. My throat hurts.

A MAN
Lean against me, like you did before.

K
I know the way.

A MAN
Of course you do.
But it is my job to help you and if I do not help I am a hindrance. And that is what I least desire to be.

K leans against him. At that moment, darkness descends and a large pool of light comes from the Garden door.

K starts to walk into the light as A MAN slowly collapses to the ground. #1 and #2 follow K.

K
It is dark here.

K and the TWO grow closer to the light.

K
Are we lost?

The door is now within reach for K and the TWO.

K
Barnabas!?

K and the TWO hold out their hands as if to open the door.

A MAN
(back to his familiar Klamm/weakened voice)
You cannot go through that door!

K
K...Klamm?

A MAN grabs his chest.

A MAN
Yes.

K
Until I reach the Castle, your words carry no weight.
You told me so yourself.

K starts to turn the handle.

A MAN
No!

A MAN's hand works his way up his chest to his neck.

K
This door swings outward and somewhere is better than nowhere.

A MAN's voice grows strained.

A MAN
There is a door over here.

A MAN coughs/points and #2 turns away from the door, breathes in and stands straight.

K
But this one is closer.

A MAN's hand is at his throat.
His voice is growing hoarse.

A MAN
But this one leads to the place of final decision.
In there, Castle Authorities seal fates and give satisfaction.

K
Is Secretary Sortini back there?

A MAN
Sure. That would make sense.
(beat, we barely make out what he says)
Go on.

K pushes the "door" open.
#1 turns away from the garden door.

K
(to #1)
Pardon me, do you know Sortini?

#1 and #2 remain in neutral.

K
You there. Sortini?

One more time.

K
SOOORRTIINI!

K turns about, looking for Sortini.

A MAN tries to speak but he cannot. Grabbing at his throat.

Reaches into his pocket and pulls out a notepad and a pen. Begins to write.

#1 breathes in and is CART PUSHER#1.

CART PUSHER #1
Two people enter the corridor,

#2 breathes in and is CART PUSHER #2.

CART PUSHER #2
They push carts upon which are stacked piles of papers, envelopes and other memoranda.

CART PUSHER #1
There is a long row of closed doors

CART PUSHER #2
Behind which, sit the authorities who are busy with their work

CART PUSHER #1
And their meals

CART PUSHER #2
And their rest.

#1
These young workers stop before each of them, offering up paperwork, which requires attention.

A MAN points to a balled up piece of paper.

#1
"I have yours", one says.

#1 picks up the paper and holds it out.
A MAN points to another.

CART PUSHER #2
"And I yours", says the other.

#2 picks it up and holds it out.
CART PUSHER #1 unfurls her paper, breathes in and is AUTHORITY #1.

AUTHORITY #1
"Enim ton seno that That one's not mine." calls out an authority who presides over trials. His eyes are shoved between the jam and his closed door.

CART PUSHER #2
Sir, this one is yours and if you take it, you will feel better for the job will be done." the second cart pusher assures him.

AUTHORITY #1
"It is not, it is someone else's for I have already taken mine." says the man.

CART PUSHER #2

Open your door.

AUTHORITY #1

Absolutely not. Such impertinence.

CART PUSHER #2 unfurls her balled up paper,
breathes in and is AUTHORITY#2.

AUTHORITY #2

“Rehtie enim ton Not mine either!” says another authority whose specialty is torture, mouth pressed against the keyhole of his door.

AUTHORITY #1

It is yours, for I have had my fill and now it is your turn.

AUTHORITY #2

I have had more than you!

AUTHORITY #1

I have!

K

I HAVE BEEN SUMMONED!

#1

As soon as K calls out, everything goes silent.

K

I wish to ask you a question.

#2

He wishes to ask a question.

K

Yes, I wish to ask you a question.

#1

But these

#1 and #2 Ball up the pieces of paper.
#1 and #2's body's crumple.
Throw the paper to the floor.
They Collapse.
A moment.

K

Hello?

A MAN writes once again in his book.

#1 and #2 slowly rise to their feet.

#1 and #2

These cart pushers refuse to answer.

K

To whom are you speaking?

#2

He does not understand their silence.

K

You are not silent.

CART PUSHER #1

He insists that they respond, but they have work to do.

THE TWO continue walking. – A MAN writes on the pad, rips the paper out and holds it up.

CART PUSHER #1

(grabs the piece)

“This is from a place that grants permission”

(balls the paper)

#1 and #2 crumple.

K

Excuse me.

CART PUSHER #1

One Cart Pusher says as he drops a stack of papers at a closed door.

CART PUSHER tosses the balled paper.

#1 and #2 collapse.

A MAN writes again.

#1 and #2 uncrumple.

A MAN rips the paper and holds it high.

CART PUSHER #2

(grabbing the sheet)

“This is from a place that hears requests”

(balls the paper)

CRUMPLE.

K

I have a request.

CART PUSHER #2

Another cart pusher says at a different closed door.

(tosses the paper)

CART PUSHER #1

(grabs the sheet)

This is from a space that provides answers.
(ball)

K

A question--

CART PUSHER #2

This is from a person who makes decisions .

K

Perhaps—

CART PUSHER #1

A human who allows pursuits

K

I want—

CART PUSHER #2

A man who knows...things

K

I neeeeeed—

CART PUSHER #1

A man who knows nothing...

#1 and #2 Collapse.

Another piece of paper. Write.

Uncrumple.

Rip. Hold it high.

CRUMPLE.

CART PUSHER #1 tosses.

Collapse.

Another piece. Write.

Uncrumple.

A MAN crosses what he wrote out.

#1 and #2 crumple slightly.

A MAN keeps writing.

Crosses it out.

#1 and #2 crumple more.

A MAN keeps writing.

Crosses it out.

#1 and #2 crumple more deeply.

Write.

A MAN crosses it out and tosses his pad and pen to the ground. Paper and ink everywhere.

#1 and #2 collapse to the ground.
They try rising to their feet, but
they keep falling.

K
I am
where
Final decisions are made
Fates sealed
Satisfaction given
 (looks around)
Nothing but walkways
And rooms
And petty
And bicker
And
Chaos.
 (beat, he stops, hopeless)
Done with walkways.
Done with petty.
Done with chaos.
Done.

ALL stop.

A MAN coughs.
Blood from his mouth.
Sticks his finger in his mouth until it is covered
in blood.
Crosses to K and writes in the air with his finger
as though a pen.

K
K...will...keep...traveling.

K does not move.
A MAN keeps writing.

K
K will rise to his feet and continue on his journey.

K does not move.
A MAN keeps writing.

K
K will do so because it is what he was brought here for
 (K starts reading in the air as though he can see the writing)
and the land is still waiting to be surveyed.

A MAN keeps writing.

K
K does this...

A MAN writes on K's face.

K
Now!

K and ALL are pulled onto their feet.

K
(pause)
Why are you doing this
k...
k...
Who are you!?

The TWO say "why why why" again and again as they walk.
A MAN holds his bloody finger out as though to write again.
K grabs his hand.
He starts to move it as though he controls the writing.

A MAN
(breathes in as it is being written and speaks the writings)
Fathers sometimes are cruel even when they do not intend to be.

K
You are not my father.

...

K
If I stop, it will matter to nobody.

The Writing in Blood.

A MAN
It will matter to me.

K
Nobody!

K
Why did you create a world where I do not belong?

THE TWO repeat "Why" again and again.

A MAN
I didn't create it.
I merely oversee it and put what I choose in ink.

K
Why can't I do the same?

A MAN
Because you haven't permission.

K
Why can't I get permission?

A MAN
Because you haven't reached the Castle's inner walls.

K
Why did you make the Castle so hard to reach?

A MAN
There is no difference between the Castle and the Village.

K
What does that mean?

A MAN
I don't know but it makes you unable to take the measure of either.

K
Why don't you know?

A MAN
Because I
...
don't.

K
After confronting the ultimate authority
K now knows that this man
For that is all he is
Can provide no satisfaction.
And if there is no count
There is
no castle-

The "Why's" come to an abrupt end.
ALL STOP.
A MAN makes his way to the Garden
door.

K
And so, the Land Surveyor must...

The two start fully walking in the space as cart pushers again. #1 slowly turns into Frieda, her gesture becoming scrubbing.

K
look at the place where he is.
(beat)
Frieda?

She is now fully FRIEDA. #2 is walking the halls, just doing what a cart pusher does, delivering papers.

FRIEDA
I'm busy.

K
What are you doing here?

FRIEDA
As you returned to your work I returned to mine in the Castle Inn.
It's not my old position but you have to start somewhere.

K
Yes. You do.
(beat)
Your neck is thin, Frieda
And enticing.

FRIEDA
K, I am not just for pleasure.

K
Enticing for it holds up your head.

FRIEDA
Alright, go on.

#2 slowly starts doing gestures from her characters we've seen throughout the play.

K
You collarbone, I can make it out beneath the fabric, is a clear boundary between one area, the face and another, the chest.
Your chest, my darling, are two little hills.

FRIEDA
Yes, foothills.

A MAN finds himself starting to write in the air, as though not of his own accord.

K

Perfect for a stroll.

(beat)

Your stomach is a rise. To cross it as one travels down is an adventure.

Travel down

to the pelvis, a region which has many contrasting features.

#2's slowly gestures from ALL characters in the play.

A MAN's writing grows.

K

The hard bones jutting beneath the fatty flesh until one cannot tell the difference between what is under and what is over and one must just walk the slopes until one knows them.

This Fertile area is covered in thick growth, the grass twisting this way and that.

#2 is now doing gestures from all walks of life

FRIEDA

Finish the job, land surveyor.

K

And then two roads, leading away from the farmlands.

A MAN points toward #2 who breathes in and speaks.

#2

A traveler, K reasons, can walk both

K

I shall straddle the distance between them.

(he does)

There is a small incline, knobby and a little loose.

#2

But he lingers there for a time

K

Because gravel can be fun to play with.

(tickles her knees)

Then the roads begin to narrow

#2

One must walk carefully, K thinks

K
 And so, I wrap my feet about the soft earth.
 (He wraps his hands around her ankles)

#2
 He notices a scar

K
 (K is at her ankle)
 Cut across the land here.
 (beat)
 What is the history of this spot?

FRIEDA
 I fell when I was a kid.
 Some things don't go away.

...

K
 I'm sorry.

FRIEDA
 Thank you.

She nods to him. Keep going.
 He heads to her toes.

#2
 Oh, what a surprise

K
 Many new roads.
 (he starts moving from the toes to the air about her)

#2
 As the land surveyor

K
 As I have done

#2
 (simultaneous with "have done")
 Has done his job

K
 I

#2
He

K and #2
May now be
Content.

He is at FRIEDA' face.
A MAN puts his finger down.
All stand there.
Content. Good job.
A few moments.

#2
The Castle Inn Landlady enters. She wishes to talk of her clothing and—

#1
A Male Villager appears. He was in the hallways with K earlier and –

#2
An old woman, a mother, obviously filled with wisdom, sits in the corner.
She says--

All turn and look at A MAN.
A MAN looks at them.
He turns and exits through the Garden door.

Time passes.

K
Let us go...
To The Castle.

They stand there, not moving.

END OF PLAY