

The Trial

By Kenneth Albers

Adapted from the novel by Franz Kafka

In a nutshell, it begins:

The story opens with Joseph K.'s sudden arrest in his room at his lodging house on the morning of his birthday. Two guards inform him that he is under arrest, but they don't tell him on what charges, nor do they know what the charges are. Joseph K. is subjected to an equally puzzling and brief interrogation by the inspector. The inspector informs K. that he is under arrest, but is free to go to work at his bank and otherwise live life as usual.

...And so begins a year-long purgatory in the Legal System.

Performances are March 2, 3, 8, 9, 10, 2018.

Rehearsals are, for the most part* after school from 3:30 to 6:00 pm. (*The schedule will be different around Finals in January.)

Dress rehearsals are Monday, February 26, through Thursday, March 1. These rehearsals will go a bit later into the evening, but no later than 8PM.

Not every character will be called to every rehearsal, but **it is VITAL that all conflicts are listed on the audition form**, as the rehearsal schedule is crafted around conflicts as best it can.

Important note about LINE LOAD:

This show is **VERY** line-heavy with some of the characters such as Sophie the lawyer, and Joseph K. **Joseph is in EVERY scene, and Kafka is a wordy writer.** 😊

As this is a word-heavy show, studying lines BEFORE and DURING the Winter Break is an absolute MUST.

DO NOT TAKE THIS RESPONSIBILITY LIGHTLY. Once you return to school in January, you will be faced with end-of-semester academic requirements, Finals, etc.... the Winter Break is a very important time to study lines, with less academic distraction. USE THE TIME.

AUDITIONS:

Please read through all the audition sides, to be familiar with them. Please choose ONE character to audition for. You will be free to read with others auditioning for the other parts opposite your character. You may get "matched up" with someone, and if you read for Joseph, you may find yourself reading with several different people.

Please print and fill out the audition form PRIOR to the auditions on December 4. Please print out the audition sides you wish to read on December 4.

Not all auditioners and characters will be called back for more reading on December 5 ("Callbacks"). The list of who will be called back will be posted the evening of December 4.

For those that are cast, there will be a **read-thru on December 6**, with another possible read-thru/tablework rehearsal the following week, depending on availability.

**West Linn High School
Theatre Arts Department
Audition Form**

*The Trial – Performances are **March 2, 3, 8, 9, 10, 2018***

NAME _____ GRADE _____

PHONE _____

SCHOOL EMAIL _____

(Certain communications, such as rehearsal reports, will be sent to your school email.)

Is there a particular character you're interested in? _____

Will you accept ANY role? _____

Do you have any special talents? (please list any) _____

Rehearsals are generally after school each day, 3:30PM to 6:00 PM, until the week the show opens. After that, dress rehearsals will run a bit later in the evening. *Your character(s) may not be scheduled for every single day, but the schedule is built around accurate and honest reporting of conflicts.

PLEASE LIST ALL ACTIVITIES AND OBLIGATIONS THAT MAY CONFLICT WITH REHEARSALS. (Private lessons, a job, Driver's Ed, family vacation, etc.):

Please list any experience and/or skills below. (Classes taken, shows performed, private lessons, etc.) Please use the back, if necessary:

PLEASE LIST YOUR CLASS SCHEDULE:

<u>Period</u>	<u>Class</u>	<u>Teacher</u>
1.	_____	_____
2.	_____	_____
3.	_____	_____
4.	_____	_____
5.	_____	_____
6.	_____	_____

The Trial

Character Descriptions

Joseph K: Our “hero.” A lonely, humble worker at a bank, who wakes on his birthday to find he’s been accused of a crime, but no one will tell him of what he’s accused. The story revolves around Joseph trying to understand, and stop, the madness.

Willem/Franz: Two fellows from the Court, who are willing, but unwitting, participants of the “system.”

The Inspector: Another “cog” in the “system.” Just doing his job.

Frau Grubach: Joseph’s landlady at the boarding house where he lives. Kind and caring, but like everyone, Joseph can’t be sure how much she knows.

Marthe/Hilde/Eva: Three co-workers (assistants) of Joseph’s at the bank. Like everyone else in this story, they may know more than they let on.

Manager: Joseph’s boss at the bank.

Aunt Clara: Joseph’s aunt; tries her best to make sense of everything, and tries to keep Joseph focused on the trial.

Sophie: The “wise” lawyer of Joseph’s.... old friend of Clara, and in declining health, but still full of self-importance.

Magistrate: The epitome of the (corrupt?) court system. Like everyone else, knows much more than he lets on, and works hard to keep things cryptic.

Leni: Sophie’s nurse. Attracted to Joseph (but why?) and also seems she might be a key to figuring out all this craziness. (Pronounced “Lay-knee.”)

Herr Schultz: A businessman, whom Joseph deals with at the bank. Just like everyone else, he seems to know a thing or two about Joseph’s trial, but is no more helpful.

Titorelli: The official sculptor of the Court. (Female) Again, might have some insight into how to terminate all this unknown chaos.

Block: A tradesman, who, like Joseph, seems trapped in his own purgatory of the accused. Represents Joseph’s fate, perhaps.

Priest: Also engaged by the Court, he offers cryptic insight into the proceedings and fate ahead of Joseph.

Joseph/Franz/Willem

[In the black we hear three huge echoing knocks on an unseen door. Silence. Three more knocks. A light bulb snaps on revealing Joseph K. standing center stage in his pajamas or nightshirt looking at a man standing in a doorway. We see a chair and table and an oversized clothes rack filled with black suits and trousers white shirts, ties, shoes a black hat.]

K: *[after a long pause]* Who are you? *[silence]* What time is it? *[silence]* Who are you? I don't know who you are. What are you doing here? *[silence]* I haven't had my breakfast. Frau Grubach always brings my breakfast. *[the man turns to the doorway]*

FRANZ: He says that Frau Grubach will bring him his breakfast.

WILLEM: *[unintelligible because his mouth is full of food]* Not today.

FRANZ: Not today.

K: Really? Well, that's news to me. *[suddenly]* What do you mean, "Not today?" *[K moves to the clothes rack and begins to take off his pajamas and dress as another man comes through the doorway eating]* Frau Grubach always brings me my breakfast. Where is Frau Grubach? Did she let you into my room? *[notices the man eating]*...is that my breakfast?

WILLEM: *[unintelligible because his mouth is full of food]* I don't know. Some lady gave it to me. I don't know who she was. It's good! *[laughter from offstage]*

K: What is going on out there? *[a woman appears in the doorway and quickly disappears]* That was Frau Grubach. Wait! Frau Grubach! Come back!

FRANZ: *[K moves toward door]* You need to stay here.

K: What?

FRANZ: You need to stay in this room.

K: I will not stay in this room, and I will not talk to you, or you, or anyone else until one of you tells me who you are, and what is going on?

FRANZ: *[to the other man]* Try to help...

WILLEM: You need to stay here...in this room. Franz is right.

K: Franz? So, your name is Franz? All right. Franz. Thank you for being so helpful, but I need to...*[he moves toward the door]*...find Frau Grubach...

FRANZ: No.

WILLEM: No.

FRANZ: You can't leave this room.

K: Why? Why not?

FRANZ: You're under arrest.

K: [*stunned*] What? What did you say?

FRANZ: [*slowly*] You are under arrest.

K: Arrest? Arrest!!! For what? What have I done. Arrest? I haven't...

FRANZ: We're not at liberty to say anything about your case.

K: Case? What case? There's a case?

FRANZ: I just told you. I'm not allowed to say.

K: Just a moment. [*to FRANZ*] Excuse me? [*K quickly moves to the clothes rack and begins to check through all the pockets of his suit coats*]

WILLEM: [*sotto voce*] Do you think he might cause trouble? [*FRANZ shrugs*]

K: [*finds something among his wardrobe*] Here! [*he offers a card to FRANZ*]

FRANZ: I see...well...good for you. [*to WILLEM*] His library card.

K: What? Give me that! [*snatches the card back...returns to his wardrobe and searches again*]

WILLEM: What do you think he's looking for?

FRANZ: I don't know, but but he's not very good at finding it. [*they quietly laugh*]

K: Here! Here! My identification papers. [*thrusts papers at them*] Now, I'd like to see yours, and I would also like to see a warrant for my arrest.

Joseph/Inspector

INSPECTOR: *[walks to the chair and sits, crossing his legs and draping one arm on the back of the chair.]* Joseph K?

K: Yes.

INSPECTOR: I suppose you were surprised by the events of this morning. *[he arranges the items on the table as if their relationship to each other was part of the interrogation.]*

K: Certainly I was surprised. I was very much surprised. *[The INSPECTOR looks at him. Pause.]* Well, perhaps “very much surprised” is something of an exaggeration. I mean, I was very much surprised, but I’m forty years old...today!...as a matter of fact. In all the confusion of this morning, I’d actually forgotten. *[no reaction]* This is my birthday! *[no reaction]* Today! *[no reaction]* Well, as I was saying, I was surprised, but I’m forty years old...old enough to know that this world is full of surprises, so I don’t take any of them too seriously. *[pause]* Particularly surprises like this.

INSPECTOR: What do you mean, “surprises like this?”

K: Well, one might think that this is all some elaborate practical joke. I mean...wait a minute! This is April first. April Fool’s Day! I was born on the first of April! This is an April Fool’s prank! Isn’t it? *[pause]* I mean...one might think that this is an April Fool’s prank except that for a prank it seems terribly elaborate. I mean...*[referring to the crowd in the door]*...everyone in this house would have to be in on it, as well as everyone here in this room...even you. So, it’s probably not a joke. *[silence]* But, I can’t believe that it’s a matter of any real importance. I mean, I know that I have been arrested for something, but I have no idea what I might have done to cause me to be arrested. What have I done? Even more important, who is accusing me? And, who is conducting these investigations. Are these two officers of the law? I see no uniforms. And, what about you? No one has shown me any identification. I demand an answer...*[a crowd has gathered in the doorway...we may see all of them or only a few, but we hear them all mumbling]*...what do you want! Why are you watching? This is not a play! Stop watching! *[the crowd mumbles sotto voce]*

INSPECTOR: *[lights a match from the box]* I don’t know anything about this case. I can’t even confirm that you have been charged with anything...or, I should say, I don’t know if you’ve been charged or not. I know that you are under arrest, but I know nothing more than that. I can, however, give you a piece of advice; worry less about who we are and what we are doing and more about who you are and what you may have done. And, try not to proclaim your innocence so often. It’s unseemly.

K: *[stares incredulously at the INSPECTOR]* Unseemly? This is nonsense! Nonsense! I’m going to make a phone call. *[unsure]* May I make a call?

INSPECTOR: Of course. *[K heads for the door. The crowd retreats, mumbling.]* But, I don’t really see the point.

Joseph/Magistrate

MAGISTRATE: [*his voice enhanced by a microphone*] You're late. [*pause*] Where have you been? We were scheduled to begin an hour ago. [*silence*] I asked you a question. Where have you been? You were expected to be here an hour ago. It is now after ten o'clock. You are more than an hour late. Where have you been?

K: [*he gathers his courage*] Well, it's not my fault. When the Inspector called to tell me of this inquiry...

MAGISTRATE: This is not an inquiry. This is the Initial Interrogation.

K: Initial Interrogation, yes, that's right. That is what the Inspector said. Sorry. Well, as I was saying, when he called he didn't tell me what time to be here, and he didn't leave a number for me to call to find out what time to be here, so...yes, yes, yes I...I...I...I am late. I had no idea that I would be late, because no one told me what time to be here. But, you say that I'm late, and I have no reason to doubt you. So, yes, I am late. But, it's not my fault. But, I am late. I admit that. I am late. [*bravely*] But...I am here!

MAGISTRATE: Nevertheless, you are late. And, because you are late, I am under no obligation whatsoever to take your statement or offer you any other considerations. However...since your tardiness is the result of simple ignorance and not intricate intent, I am willing to make an exception. But, if you are late again, your statements will not be taken nor entered into the Court record. Do you understand?

K: Yes, I do.

MAGISTRATE: Please step into the dock. [*a light on the floor snaps on*] Be careful...[*K stops*]...that first step is a killer. [*K looks...steps into the "dock"*] Your name is Joseph K?

K: Yes.

MAGISTRATE: You live at Frau Grubach's boarding house at 13 Shillestrasse, room 13.

K: Yes.

MAGISTRATE: You have lived there for thirteen years.

K: No, seventeen years. Seventeen years. Since I was twenty-three.

MAGISTRATE: And...you are a house painter.

K: [*pause*] I beg your pardon?

MAGISTRATE: You are a house painter?

K: House painter? [*he manages a laugh*] No. I am the Accounts Manager for the Bank. [*there is*

a pause] I have been with the Bank for as long as I have lived at Frau Grubach's.

MAGISTRATE: Thirteen years?

K: No. No. Seventeen. Seventeen years. This...this...*[big breath]*...
this business of me being a house painter, of all things...well, this entire affair is laughable.

MAGISTRATE: "Affair?" This "affair," as you call it, may lead to a "trial." Do you find that
"laughable?"

K: *[after a moment's consideration]* Well...yes, I do! I mean, to think that this "mess" could
turn into a trial is laughable. *[pause...losing his courage]* I mean...I don't mean...I mean, if I
conducted my business for the Bank with such incompetence, I would not have lasted a year in
my position, let alone thirteen.

MAGISTRATE: Seventeen.

K: *[realizes his mistake]* Seventeen! Seventeen!

Clara/Joseph

CLARA: Joseph!

K: Aunt Clara!

CLARA: A ghost from the past, eh?

K: A most welcome ghost, Aunt Clara. [*he kisses her on her cheek*] What brings you...?

CLARA: Joseph, we need to talk

K: Well... I'm very busy at the moment.

CLARA: Now.

K: Right now?

CLARA: Yes, now.

K: [*looking around*] Can it wait until the Bank closes?

CLARA: No, it can't. For God's sake, Joseph, what is going on? Is it true?

K: I'm sorry, Aunt Clara, I have no idea what you're talking about.

CLARA: Really? Joseph, you have always been honest with me. You have always told me the truth...at least, as far as I know.

K: Aunt Clara...

CLARA: Don't lie to me, now, Joseph.

K: [*with difficulty*] I suppose...well...have you heard something about...

CLARA: Well, yes! Of course I have. Did you think your arrest would remain a secret?

K: How did you find out?

CLARA: Does it matter? Well?

K: Well what?

CLARA: Is it true? [*K just stares at her...losing patience*] Is there a case against you?

K: Apparently...

CLARA: Is this a criminal case?

K: [*calmly*] I don't know.

CLARA: My God! [*shaking her head*] A criminal case!

K: Aunt Clara.

CLARA: I don't understand you, Joseph!

K: Aunt Clara, I am trying to remain calm. The calmer I am, the better I can handle all of this. I'm sure there's no cause for worry.

CLARA: "No cause for worry?" Very easy for you to say. Joseph...your attitude toward all this puzzles me. Is this how an innocent man behaves? He calmly accepts his fate? Offers nothing in his own defense?

K: How can I possibly offer a defense? I don't know...against what? Against who?

CLARA: Your case has something to do with the Bank, I assume?

K: The Bank? No, not at all.

CLARA: Misappropriation of funds?

K: No, no!

CLARA: Embezzlement?

K: No! Nothing like that! I don't...[*he takes a deep breath*]...Aunt Clara, I don't know what this case is about.

CLARA: There must have been some indications before the arrest.

K: Indications? Of what?

CLARA: Warnings, Joseph. Warnings. That your arrest was imminent.

K: Warnings? No. There were no warnings. And, if there were, I have no idea what they might have been.

CLARA: Why didn't you call, or write? Perhaps I could have done something.

K: I saw no reason to. Why should I? I hadn't done anything.

CLARA: Oh, Joseph...dear, sweet, naïve Joseph. [*decisively*] All right. I want you to come home with me...get out of the city. You've gotten thin. You're not eating well, are you? All this pressure. You're going to need your strength in the next few months. And, we need to get you away from the jurisdiction of the Court.

K: Aunt Clara, I can't believe that you're taking any of this seriously.

Clara/Joseph

CLARA: Joseph! You cannot be serious! [*lights snap on...we are in K's office at the Bank*]

K: I am very serious, Aunt Clara. [*K's clothes are wrinkled and unkempt...he is a mess*]

CLARA: What you are considering is shocking! Dismissing your lawyer? Dismissing Sophie? Joseph, it's so precipitant, so rash! I've never heard of anyone dismissing his lawyer while their case was still pending. It's simply not done. And, think of the insult to Sophie.

K: This is my trial! Mine! I am the one who has been accused. And, I am not guilty of anything! I cannot continue to sit in this office and wait for "good news!" I intend to let the Court know that, for once, an accused man is going to demand his rights! I am going to file my Initial Plea myself by the end of the week.

CLARA: What are the charges?

K: I don't know! But, whatever they are, I must respond to them. [*takes a deep breath*] Aunt Clara, I can't sleep...I've been drinking...I'm not eating properly...I haven't done laundry in more than...what?...six months? This is my last suit, my last shirt, my last tie. I have no more socks. I haven't worn underwear since I don't know when! But! I must take charge of my own case. Yes, the specific charges are unknown to me, which simply means that I must reconstruct my entire life down to the smallest incidents and accidents, and examine each them from every possible angle. By doing so I might be able to discover what I might have done that might have caused my arrest. Once I discover what I might have done, I might be able to file my Initial Plea.

CLARA: And...if you don't make any such discoveries? [*K had not considered this...he looks at her and finally shrugs*] Joseph, I think this is a terrible mistake, and I cannot condone your dismissal of my dear friend.

K: [*sharply*] You don't have to condone it. I'm not asking you to.

CLARA: [*surprised by his tone*] Well. All right, Joseph. I have tried to help you, but you seem insistent on ignoring my advice.

K: I'm sorry, Aunt Clara, but this is something I have to do myself.

CLARA: I'm glad to hear you say that, because you are now, officially, on...your...own. [*exits*]

Clara/Sophie

SOPHIE: [*from the dark...clearly, not a sick woman*] Leni! Who the hell is that?

CLARA: [*loudly*] Sophie, it's Clara!

SOPHIE: Clara who?

CLARA: Clara K.

SOPHIE: Oh, my God! Clara! C'mon, c'mon, c'mon! Don't dawdle! Move it, move it, move it! [*an elderly lady in a wheelchair careens onto the stage*] Clara! Clara! [*they embrace like two young schoolgirls*] How wonderful to see you again. How long has it been?

CLARA: I refuse to answer that question on the grounds...

CLARA/SOPHIE: ...that I may embarrass myself! [*they both laugh*]

SOPHIE: Oh, Clara, my Clara! It's been ages! But, as only old friends can, we'll simply pick up where we left off.

CLARA: And, where, exactly, did we "leave off?"

SOPHIE: [*thinks for a moment*] I refuse to answer that question! [*they laugh...SOPHIE suddenly stops and is very still...a pause*]

CLARA: Sophie? Your heart...again?

SOPHIE: [*with absolutely no difficulty*] I'm afraid so. It's worse this time. Difficult to breathe. Can't sleep. Exhausted all the time. I'm getting old, Clara.

CLARA: Well, take a number. Stand in line. [*they share a laugh*]

SOPHIE: [*sees K*] Leni? Bring me a stiff whiskey, would you, Leni...over ice? [*LENI exits...SOPHIE turns back to K*] Who is this delicious young man?

CLARA: Sophie, this is my nephew, Joseph. [*JOSEPH has been watching LENI all this time*]

SOPHIE: Joseph. I've always admired that name...strong, historic, Biblical. [*she offers her hand...K kisses it...looks to where LENI exited...to CLARA*] Handsome young man. If I were thirty years younger...hell, if I were thirty days younger...

CLARA: Sophie, Joseph needs your help. He's been arrested.

SOPHIE: I know.

Joseph/Frau Grubach

K: Frau Grubach.

GRUBACH: [*delighted*] Joseph. [*she stops her work*]

K: I hope I'm not disturbing you.

GRUBACH: Not at all. Come in, Joseph, come in.

K: [*enters the room*] Thank you. [*he watches her work*] You're up very late.

GRUBACH: There's so much to do. Running a boarding house takes a lot of time.

K: Yes. [*pause*] Frau Grubach?

GRUBACH: Mm?

K: I wanted to apologize to you.

GRUBACH: Apologize? Joseph, why ever for?

K: I caused you a great deal of extra work today.

GRUBACH: You did? Well, shame on you. [*laughs*] How?

K: Well...this morning...

GRUBACH: Oh, that. Don't be silly, Joseph. No one cares.

K: Well...that's very kind of you, Frau Grubach, but I want to assure you that such a thing won't happen again.

GRUBACH: [*looks at K*] No...it can't happen again.

K: [*a pause while he considers*] Well...no, it won't.

GRUBACH: I know it won't, Joseph. It can't. [*K doesn't know what to say*] Don't worry about it. Life is full of surprises. Especially life at your age! [*secretive*] Joseph...I might be nothing more than your landlady, but I have your happiness and best interest at heart. I listened outside the door this morning. I heard everything. And then I had a lovely talk with Franz and Willem, and they told me...[*she stops*]

K: [*carefully*] What? What did Franz and Willem...?

GRUBACH: Oh, I shouldn't tell you. [*struggles with herself*] I really shouldn't. [*struggling*] All right, but you didn't hear any of this from me. [*looks out the door*] You are under arrest...that's true. But, not like a common thief is under arrest. No, no...this arrest is sophisticated. Even erudite.

K: Sophisticated? Erudite? I'm sorry Frau Grubach...ERUDITE! I would call it idiotic. Imbecilic. I mean, I was totally unprepared. I didn't have...if this had happened at the Bank, things would have been very different. At the Bank I am always prepared. If this had happened at the Bank, well...Franz and Willem ...and the Inspector...[GRUBACH is staring at him]...Well, I just wanted to apologize to you for any inconvenience that this affair may have caused you.

GRUBACH: Don't worry about it, Joseph. No one cares.

K: And, I will make it a point to apologize to the other boarders.

GRUBACH: No need to. No one cares.

K: I wish people would stop saying that.

GRUBACH: Saying what?

K: That no one cares.

GRUBACH: Well, no one does. Why should they? Your arrest has nothing to do with them. Miss Burstner slept very late and went to the theater for her matinee without knowing anything about what happened this morning. Professor Bernhardt has his first class at seven, and was long gone before Franz and Willem arrived. The Captain is old and feeble and very hard of hearing, and, the Inspector, of course, was just doing his job...

K: Inspector?

GRUBACH: Yes, the Inspector.

K: Not the Inspector...?

GRUBACH: Yes. The very same.

K: He lives here? He has a room? Here?

GRUBACH: Yes.

K: How long has...

GRUBACH: Eleven years.

K: Eleven years! I had no idea. I mean I've never seen him here. Which room?

GRUBACH: He lives right across the hall from you. [K looks up...she shakes her head] To think that you and the Inspector have been living under the same roof together for eleven years and have never met? Well, that's just terrible, and it certainly doesn't say much about me as a landlady.

Leni/Joseph

LENI: Not at all. I'd be happy to. [*SOPHIE and CLARA exit*] Joseph? [*a light represents a very small door*] In here. [*K gets down on hands and knees and peers thru the doorway...he sits and scrunches his way into the room which allows him to lie down only...LENI lies down with him*]

K: Small room.

LENI: Yes. I find it quite cozy...intimate. I enjoy...intimacy. Do you mind being so close to me?

K: No, certainly not.

LENI: You were looking at me.

K: I was?

LENI: You couldn't keep your eyes off me.

K: Well...

LENI: You were undressing me...with your eyes. [*K is silent*] Do you deny it?

K: No. No. No. But I have no designs, of any kind, upon you...I don't...

LENI: [*moves closer to K*] Really? [*flirting*] You don't "like" me?

K: "Like" you? Oh, yes, of course, I do. I like you very much.

LENI: Is that all?

K: Well, "like" is a rather innocuous and impotent wo...I don't mean "impotent" in it's usual sense...I mean...[*LENI suddenly kisses him ...passionately ...as they separate*]...I mean, "impotent" is not a word I would use to describe my feelings for you...[*she kisses him again*]...you certainly don't give a man any feelings of "impotence"...quite the contrary...[*she kisses him again*]...any feelings I have for you are feelings that, I must confess, are quite...quite...unimpotent...[*he notices something downstage*] Who is that?

LENI: Who is who?

K: The man in that portrait.

LENI: He works for the Court.

K: The Court?

LENI: Yes. He's an Interrogating Magistrate.

K: I wonder if he was the Magistrate who interrogated me.

LENI: [*suddenly stops her advances toward K*] You've been interrogated?

K: Yes. Sunday before last.

LENI: You were interrogated on a Sunday?

K: Yes.

LENI: [*she pulls away from him*] Joseph...your name is Joseph?

K: Yes. Joseph K.

LENI: [*stops his mouth*] No! No! No last names. You must never mention your last name.

K: [*confused, but...*] Very well.

LENI: [*secretive*] Listen to me. You must confess.

K: Confess? Confess what?

LENI: Your guilt.

K: What guilt? I'm not guilty of anything.

LENI: Joseph, we are all guilty...of something. I'm guilty of something. You must be guilty of something.

K: I...I...I don't know. If I am, I have no idea...

LENI: Would you like to be guilty of something? [*K is silent*]

K: I...I don't understand.

LENI: You are so innocent.

K: Yes, I am. I am innocent!

LENI: I must caution you...a woman is like the Law...mysterious, cryptic, seductive. Dedicated, but inconstant. True, but deceptive. Rigorous, but mercurial.

Sophie

SOPHIE: Joseph! Joseph! Joseph! How wonderful to see you again, you delectable young man! My dear Clara told me you'd be coming by, and I canceled all my previous engagements so that I could give all my attention, all my attention to you. [*she laughs*] You look a little frazzled, Joseph, but I'll take care of that. Follow me to my office where we can enjoy some privacy, and I'll have Leni bring us a white wine to settle your nerves and whet my appetite. [*we hear a door close*] Here we are. Please do sit down, and make yourself comfortable. [*lights snap on revealing JOSEPH and SOPHIE on opposite sides of a table...one cannot see under the table*] Your Aunt Clara is one of my most treasured friends but she does occasionally display a flair for the...dramatic, shall we say. [*laughs*] Personally, I could care less what has happened or will happen between you and Leni. She is a most attractive young woman, yes? Leni? [*K is silent...a pause*] Well, Joseph...may I call you Joseph? I am absolutely delighted to take your case. I already feel like a new person. My heart is beating stronger than ever, and I look forward to joining this battle with you. The good news is that I have handled and won many cases such as yours. [*she pulls a single sheet of paper out of a folder and places it on the desk...K looks at it with some disbelief*] Unfortunately, I am not at liberty to discuss any of these cases with you. [*she wads it up and throws it on the floor upstage*] The Law prevents me from doing so. But, the vast experience I have gathered from these cases will certainly be of great benefit to you. Now...the initial draft of the "Initial Plea" is almost finished, which is very important, because the initial impression made by the "Initial Plea" often determines both the initial and the final outcome. But, I must warn you that the "Initial Plea" is sometimes not even read by the Initial Court. Rumor has it that they are often initially mislaid or lost, initially. Regrettable, of course, but you must initially remember that the initial proceedings of the Initial Court are not initially public. Therefore, any initial records of a case...initial arrest warrants, initial charges...are not initially available to either the accused or his initial attorney. Consequently, one can never be sure what charges need to be answered by the "Initial Plea." Do you follow me so far?

K: I...I...I...

SOPHIE: [*pays no attention and continues*] I mean, given such initial circumstances, if the Initial Plea were actually to address the initial, but unknown charges, well...[*laughs*]...that would be something of an initial miracle, don't you think? [*laughs*] No, no...only the second, third, fourth, fifth, sixth, seventh, eighth, ninth, or tenth Initial Pleas might be initially effective...once the initial charges became clear or could be guessed at from the tenor of the Initial Interrogation. The initial attorney for the accused, such as myself, is in a very difficult position, initially. In fact, the Law does not initially recognize the status of the initial attorney. We are merely tolerated by the Court. Following?

K: I...I...[*K stops and seems to stiffen*]...I think so...

SOPHIE: [*calling off stage*] Leni, bring us a large carafe of wine! A reasonable Reisling, if you please! [*continues*] Yes, tolerated...that's all. The next time you find yourself in the offices of the Court, take note of the quarters reserved for the defense attorneys. Scandalous. Absolutely scandalous. Cramped, filthy, no windows, a single bare bulb hanging from the ceiling and a hole

in the floor...not large enough to fall through, but certainly large enough to swallow a leg! I've had my right leg swallowed on more than one occasion! I have complained, of course. No effect. [*secretly*] They are trying to eliminate defense attorneys from the legal system. They want you to be responsible for your own defense. No assistance from anyone. Such a thing might be acceptable except for the fact that all the proceedings of the Court are secret...not only from the public at large, but from the accused, as well. Still following?

Sophie/Block

SOPHIE: [*with growing anger*] You feel neglected. You don't like being neglected, do you. You need attention. A great deal of attention. You need to be the center of whatever universe you think you inhabit. You are upset because no one is attending to your case as you think they should. You have been arrested! Charged! And, now your case is simply pending. You want all of this to be finished don't you? Well...pay very close attention to what happens next. [*she calls*] Rudi!

BLOCK: [*he quickly attends*] Yes, Ms. Kleist.

SOPHIE: A few days ago I spoke with the Judge handling your case. [*looks to K*] The twelfth Judge to handle his case, actually. Would you like to know what he said?

BLOCK: Yes, very much.

SOPHIE: By the way...who is your lawyer?

BLOCK: [*laughs...quick look at K*] You. [*laughs*] You are?

SOPHIE: And who else?

BLOCK: No one else...really...no one.

SOPHIE: No one?

BLOCK: No.

SOPHIE: [*as each name is spoken, a masked character appears representing each of the lawyers*]

Meuller...Scheuller...Geuller...Feuller...Peuller...Heuller...Beuller...and...Kleist. [*gaily*] Meuller-Scheuller-Geuller-Feuller-Peuller-Heuller-Beuller, and Kleist. Sounds like a law firm, doesn't it, Mr. K? Well, Meuller, Scheuller, Geuller, Feuller, Peuller, Heuller, and Beuller are all lawyers, but, Meuller doesn't know Scheuller, and Scheuller doesn't know Geuller, and Geuller doesn't know Feuller, Feuller doesn't know Peuller, Peuller doesn't know Heuller, Heuller doesn't know Beuller, and Kleist doesn't know any of them! Each of us have been engaged by Mr. Block, but each of us, including Kleist, believed that they were the only lawyer engaged by Mr. Block, and conducted themselves as such. Do you have any idea how embarrassing it is to learn that you have been betrayed by your own client? There is only one thing more embarrassing...to learn about it from the Judge handling your client's case! The Judge was not favorable to your case, Rudi. "Don't talk to me about Block! You are wasting your time defending that man! And so are Meuller, Scheuller, Geuller, Feuller, Peuller, Heuller, and Beuller!" Yes! Yes! Oh, yes! That's exactly how I found out! Do you want to know what he said next? "Block's case is hopeless! In fact...Block's case may never begin!" Do you know why, Rudi?

BLOCK: No.

SOPHIE: Because of Zueller! Number nine! Waiting in the wings, as you so theatrically put it!
[*BLOCK falls to the floor*]

SOPHIE: [*looks at K*] Clients who engage more than one lawyer are susceptible to all kinds of delays...obfuscations, protractions, obstructions, interruptions, recesses, adjournments, foot-dragging, lingering, loitering, dilly dallying, dawdling...[*waving her hand to indicate more synonyms...a long pause*]

BLOCK: I see.

SOPHIE: Engaging more than one lawyer is a crime...known as “caboodling.” As in a “caboodle” of lawyers. There is only one crime more serious than “caboodling.”

BLOCK: What crime is that?

SOPHIE: “Dismissing.” As in “dismissing” your lawyer. [*pause*] So...you were saying?

Titorelli/Joseph

TITORELLI: How may I help you, yes?

K: Mr. Schultz...a client of mine...told me about you.

TITORELLI: Schultz? Ah! Oskar, Oskar. Yes? [*K nods*] You wish to buy one of my busts, yes?

K: Buy one of your...oh, no, no.

TITORELLI: You have come for a sitting, yes?

K: A sitting?

TITORELLI: You wish me to make a bust of you, yes?

K: Oh...no, no...I don't...uh...[*small laugh*]...I wouldn't make a very good...

TITORELLI: You have a name, yes?

K: Of course.

TITORELLI: [*waits*] Well?

K: Well?

TITORELLI: You will tell me your name, yes?

K: Oh...uh...Joseph. Joseph K. [*a partially finished bust of K appears*]

TITORELLI: Ah, Mr. K., yes? [*K is staring at his bust*] It's not polite to stare, yes?

K: I'm sorry. I was just wondering...this bust...it looks somewhat familiar to me.

TITORELLI: I'm not surprised. I still have a great deal of work to do, but...

K: Is it a Judge?

TITORELLI: A Judge? No. This is a defendant. Recently arrested? On his birthday? Late for his Initial Interrogation, yes?

K: [*K puts two and two together...he backs away from the bust*] I'm sorry to say this...I don't know very much about art... but this doesn't really look like me.

TITORELLI: Why should it look like you?

K: Well...

TITORELLI: It's not finished. You are not finished, yes? I must wait for you to finish. Then I can finish you, yes? [*TITORELLI gestures up and out*] Do you recognize this?

K: [*backs away to get a better view "Justice"*] Yes, yes. I have seen pictures...this is "Justice"...a statue of "Justice"...eyes covered...blind...[*confused*] Why are there wings?

TITORELLI: Wings?

K: There are wings. Why does "Justice" have wings?

TITORELLI: Wings, yes? My client asked for wings.

K: But, "Justice" doesn't have wings. Why would your client ask for wings?

TITORELLI: I don't know. Perhaps he wishes for "Justice" to fly, yes?

K: But...no..."Justice" does not fly. This is not "Justice."

TITORELLI: How do you know? [*pause*] I have never seen "Justice." Have you seen "Justice?" A client comes to me, yes? He commissions me to create a sculpture of justice. He tells me what he wants "Justice" to look like. He gives me a great deal of money. And I give him what he wants, yes? That is my job. He wanted "Justice," and this is how he wanted "Justice" to look. If you had come to me for "Justice," it would not look like this, yes? You would want your "Justice" to look the way you wanted it to look, yes? Everyone sees "Justice" differently, yes? [*stares at him a moment*] Why don't you ask me what you want to know?

K: I...I...

TITORELLI: You want to know about the Court. And, you have bored me with all this gibberish about "Justice," so that I will tell you about the Court. Yes?

K: I...I'm sorry...

TITORELLI: [*cuts him off sharply*] Spare me your apologies! Oskar called me about your case yesterday. He asked if I would be willing to help. "If Mr. K. comes to see me, I'll see, we'll see, yes?" You are in luck, Mr. K. I enjoy the confidence of almost everyone at Court. My influence with the Court is...immeasurable, yes?

K: You have an official position at Court?

TITORELLI: [*curtly*] Oh, no, yes? Influence, Mr. K., is of two kinds...cosmetic and real. Cosmetic influence is public and often seen in "official" positions. Real influence, however, is private. Real influence is never seen. It exists in a landscape of shadow, but not substance.

Those who enjoy real influence, such as myself, are never officially noticed, never officially recognized, never officially acknowledged, never officially known. [*pause*] Are you innocent?

K: Innocent? Yes! Yes, I am. Absolutely! Yes! Innocent! Completely!

TITORELLI: Don't...don't...don't...don't...don't...do that. [*K stops...pause*] Didn't anyone tell you not to do that? Proclaiming your innocence at the top of your voice creates the opposite impression, yes? It is...uhh...

K: [*on his guard*] Unseemly?

TITORELLI: Yes. Unseemly. Unbecoming, indecorous, impolitic, inelegant, inapp...[*a long pause as she stares at K*] Well...if you're innocent, then the matter is quite simple, yes?

K: No! I mean...what do you mean "simple?" My innocence doesn't seem to make anything simple. I mean...I was arrested. I was interrogated. Charges have been filed...everyone assumes that I'm guilty.

TITORELLI: But, you are innocent, yes?

K: Yes! But, I'm afraid that the Court will assume I'm guilty, and that makes it difficult to prove that I'm innocent.

TITORELLI: Difficult? [*laughs*] Try impossible, yes? You would have better luck trying to prove your innocence before these busts than before the Court!

Priest/Joseph

PRIEST: [*looks up from his book*] You are Joseph? Joseph K?

K: I am. How did you...?

PRIEST: [*reading his book as he speaks*] You have been arrested? [*turns page*]

K: Yes.

PRIEST: And interrogated?

K: Yes...initially.

PRIEST: I have been waiting for you.

K: You've been waiting for me?

PRIEST: Yes.

K: I didn't know.

PRIEST: Why would you know? [*turns page*]

K: Have you been waiting a long time?

PRIEST: Almost a year.

K: A year? I'm sorry to be so late. I was also late for my Initial Interrogation.

PRIEST: I know. [*laughs at something that he has read*] I love that story about Jonah. Your case is not going very well. Do you know that?

K: [*pause*] I don't know what else to do.

PRIEST: How do you think your case will end?

K: I don't know. [*pause*] Do you know what's going to happen?

PRIEST: [*gently*] No, I don't. I do know that you have been found guilty.

K: That's not possible. I'm not guilty. I'm not guilty of anything. You must be mistaken. I am not guilty!

PRIEST: Joseph...don't...don't...don't...it's unseemly.

K: I don't care if it's unseemly! This can't be true! It can't be true!

PRIEST: Joseph, are you familiar with "symbolism?"

K: [*pause...deeply*] I don't like "symbolism."

PRIEST: You don't? Why?

K: Because I never understand what it means.

PRIEST: But, "symbolism" is one of the tools that we use to make sense of the world.

K: [*with rising frustration*] No. It isn't. "Symbolism" doesn't make sense of the world. It jumbles and muddles and fuddles the world. A symbol is something that clearly stands for something else...clearly! But! I defy anyone to find in symbolist literature or symbolist poetry or symbolist art any symbol that CLEARLY stands for something else!

PRIEST: [*overlapping the last few lines*] All right, all right, all right, easy, easy, easy...

K: And, if you mention the name of Strindberg...

PRIEST: I won't, Joseph. I won't. I promise. [*JOSEPH calms...a long pause*] How about "metaphor?"

K: [*pause*] Metaphor?

PRIEST: Yes. Is "metaphor" better?

K: [*like a child*] Okay.

PRIEST: Good. Close your eyes. Joseph? [*K closes his eyes*] Very good. I want you to imagine the Law as a huge...room, auditorium...perhaps a concert hall or even a theater. Now...imagine that one enters this huge room through a huge doorway, which is always open. Very important to remember that. The door is always open. Now...imagine that standing in front of this open door is a Doorkeeper. To this Doorkeeper comes a man...let's call him our "Hero". Our Hero begs to be admitted to this huge room. But, the Doorkeeper says that he cannot admit our Hero... "at this time." "Might I be admitted later?" "Possibly," says the Doorkeeper. "But, not at this time." Our Hero tries to peer through the open doorway. The Doorkeeper steps aside. "Go ahead. Try to enter without my permission. But, you should know that I am very, very powerful. And I am the least powerful of all of my Brothers" [*pause*] Joseph?

K: [*pause*] I don't understand.

PRIEST: It's a metaphor.

K: Sounds like a symbol.

PRIEST: [*pause*] Well, shit. Crap, shit. Shit, crap. Shit, crap, poop. [*pause*] All right...sorry...