

MONOLOGUE ONE

A very elegant woman, Elizabeth Claire who is in her early 70s, is sitting very still on the sofa center stage. She is dressed in an old couture evening gown from the 1940s. She is also wearing a gas mask. It is close to six o'clock in the evening, one month after 9/11.

ELIZABETH CLAIRE

Can gracious living continue while wearing a gas mask?

(She removes the gas mask rather ceremoniously.)

I now sit for one hour and nineteen minutes each day wearing my old couture bought after the last big... fun war. Which one was that? Two. Yes, two. I sit every day and remember... things. We used to throw the loveliest parties. We raised millions for the war efforts. My uniform was an evening gown and my weapon was my checkbook. We had beautiful civilized dinners and dancing. We helped adorable crippled orphans, hearty war widows, little half-destroyed European towns and villages. We always made an effort.

(Pause.)

I was recently asked to participate in a benefit for orphaned African children with mutilated vaginas.

(She calls off-stage.)

Infancia, I'll take my tea now.

(She waits for an answer, looks at a piece of paper in her hand, and reads it out loud.)

At yoga. Back soon.

(She looks at the audience.)

How odd that my maid has chosen to start breathing... but these are troubled times. Walter would not have approved of these times. Thanks God he isn't here to see them... It happened so quickly for him... for us... 106th floor. Infancia ran in screaming. I fainted. Cried... for days. Sweet, sweet Dr. Haber prescribed the most delicious little blue pills.

(Pause.)

Did he jump like a Greek god... floating to earth like a gentle snow... or did he explode into... raining down on our fair city?

Well, I suppose it was fitting considering how much a part of this town Walter is... was... is... was.

(Pause.)

Walter was terrified of airplanes. Crashing. He hadn't been on one in years. And yet, so strange, death will eventually find us one way or another. We can't escape it no matter how hard we try.

(Pause.)

I wore a simple black Mr. Beane creation. Just perfect. Perfect outfit. Perfect funeral. Walter would have approved. Very tasteful... What in Christ's holy name does one wear to a party for mutilated vaginas?

(Pause.)

Pink?

## MONOLOGUE TWO

Gertrude, Elizabeth Claire's daughter comes into the room. She is in her late 40s and dressed in a chic black suit by Yoji Yamamoto. She is also wearing a large fur coat, very dark sunglasses, and a black scarf wrapped around her head. She is carrying six or seven shopping bags from Armani, Gucci, Prada, Barneys, and Bergdorf's. She drops the bags on the floor.

### GERTRUDE

Is anyone home?

She looks around the room, goes to a table, and runs her finger across it. She sees how dusty the house is and coughs. Something in the air catches her attention. She grabs it, looks at it, and starts to taste it, but she decides not to. She flicks it on the floor and runs to the staircase.

## GERTRUDE

Infancia?

(She looks frightened for a moment. Then she looks out and sees the audience and smiles.)

Oh, hello. Please excuse my manners. I'm Gertrude. This is the first time I've been out in two weeks. I've been waiting... waiting for my husband to return with news. He said he was going to help... dig.

(She begins to cry.)

I've been glued to CNN. Waiting and watching. Things are so bad that they even called Elsa Klensch back to the network to discuss how to dress in times of disaster. Black, black, black with accents of dusty gray.

(She models her outfit for the audience.)

I wore one of my old Comme des Garçons suits to the service. Mother, of course, thought I looked like a bag lady. She's just not willing to understand the concepts. I have come to love the Japanese designers. I have this theory. I think the Japanese came into their own as designers after Hiroshima. All that nuclear energy unleashed this amazing creative power. The shapes. The poufs. Like beautiful mushroom clouds. Sometimes good can come out of bad, but I'm rambling.

(Pause.)

I really don't know what to do with myself these days. Waiting and watching and waiting and watching. I'm not really sure if we're dead or alive anymore. Oh, how this somber mood has wrapped itself around me... us... like my grandmother's old moth-eaten fox fur stole that I used to wrap myself in as a child. Will you excuse me please? I need to lie down for a moment.

She takes off her fur coat and places it on the floor just so. She lies down on it and curls into the fetal position.