

Kate and Kafka

A Dream Play in Two Acts

CHARACTERS

KATHARINE HEPBURN, mid-30s, in her *Philadelphia Story*
persona

FRANZ KAFKA, 41, the age he died

GUARD I

and

GUARD II, from Kafka's novel *The Trial*

SETTING

The Sanatorium Ultime [*pronounced Ulteem*],
located in the mountains of an unnamed country.

TIME

Today, wartime.

* * *

I dedicate this play to my husband, Larry, and to Saba Bernstein,
survivor of Auschwitz. Thanks along the way to Phillip Wickstrom,
Jiri Fisher, Kristina Zantovská, Nick Olcott, Carter Jahncke, and
Milan Stitt of New American Theatre School (New York).

PLAYWRIGHT'S NOTE

This is a dream play in which Franz Kafka, the Death Force, is pushed by Katharine Hepburn, the Life Force, to discover his life spark—a spark which lay latent most of the famous death-loving author's life.

A technical note: Knowledgeable readers will be aware that Franz Kafka did not publish in his lifetime his world-renowned novels—*The Trial*, *The Castle*, *Amerika*. (His executor, Max Brod, saw to publication after Kafka's death.) Only a few stories and the novella *The Metamorphosis* were published while Kafka was alive. But mine is a dream play and artistic license may be taken: In this context, the characters are treated in their most full-bodied, ultimate form. The Franz Kafka that my Kate Hepburn encounters is the one she studied in college, the author of “those disgusting novels.” Likewise, the Hepburn that Kafka encounters is “the famous American comedienne.”

More important, an interpretive note: Knowledgeable readers may also question the notion, in fact may consider it sacrilege, that Franz Kafka comes equipped with anything approaching a life spark. While the portrait of Kafka I paint in this play is at variance with his death-loving stereotype, it represents the *real* Kafka, which I discovered in studying his diaries, letters, and fiction. Kafka set escape hatches throughout all his writing, either with a “perhaps” that undermined the bleakness of a passage; or in outright repudiation of an earlier position—for example, the repudiation of his death wish when his tuberculosis became terminal (in the play's reversal scene, Sc. 2, Act Two, Franz' opening lines are verbatim from his late diaries); his conciliatory letters to his parents when he was dying, mitigating the tirade of his famous *Letter to His Father*; or with images in his fiction that go unremarked. One such image—the figure who appears at the end of *The Trial*, whom Joseph K. spots as he is about to be executed—provides my play's premise. In the novel, Joseph K.'s last conscious act is to wonder

of this person, “Who was it? Was it a friend? Was help at hand?” In my play this figure is Katharine Hepburn, who ultimately forces Kafka to return to that novel’s *actual* first draft (discovered in a footnote in Frederick Karl’s biography of Kafka)—the draft that Kafka feared to publish—in which Joseph K., rather than submit passively to execution, raised his hand to state, “I have something to say.” This play imagines what he would say....

Prologue

Setting: From the end of Franz Kafka's novel "The Trial"—the execution site, set in a quarry. A two-story HOUSE stands nearby.

At rise: The GUARDS, in top hat and tails, have come to take Joseph K./FRANZ KAFKA to his execution. FRANZ is dressed in a dark business suit.

FRANZ: So: You are meant for me?

GUARD I: Your trial is over, Joseph K. Come with us.

FRANZ resists. GUARD I pushes him.

FRANZ relents. THEY walk, arm in arm.

GUARD II: Isn't this nice...?

THEY stop. GUARD I pushes FRANZ to the ground and draws a KNIFE. THE GUARDS pass the KNIFE across FRANZ' chest several times.

FRANZ: I take it from these odious courtesies that I am to plunge the knife into my own breast.... Yes: Why try to be a hero and make difficulties now?

LIGHTS UP on the HOUSE. A FIGURE in shadow stands at an upper window. In reaction, GUARD II gasps.

GUARD I: (To GUARD II) Relax. On the last page of Franz Kafka's novel *The Trial*, as Joseph K. submits pas-sive-ly to execution, a figure appears—but it says nothing, NOTHING!

KATE: Not this time, mister. STOP THIS EXECUTION! Stop it!

LIGHTS UP to reveal: KATHARINE HEPBURN, with hands on hips. SHE wears the white dressing gown from “The Philadelphia Story.”

GUARD II: Wow: It’s Katharine Hepburn!

KATE: Make difficulties, Franz Kafka! Be a hero! MAKE DIFFICULTIES!

FRANZ: But, I’m not Franz Kafka, I’m Joseph K.

KATE: BUNK! Take that knife and turn it on those repulsive fellows—

GUARD II reacts hurtfully to “repulsive.”

KATE: —because: You have something further to say. I know it! I know it!

GUARD I: (*To GUARD II*) Come on, let’s finish him. Hold him.

As GUARD II holds FRANZ down by the shoulders, GUARD I begins—in slow motion—the downward plunge of the KNIFE.

KATE: SAY IT, Mr. Kafka. You have something further to say!

In slow motion, FRANZ raises a HAND, then turns his HEAD toward the audience:

FRANZ: Am I in a dream? Am I in a dream...?

BLACKOUT.

MUSIC UP: Noel Coward’s “Twentieth-Century Blues,” updated to present century.

Act One

Scene One

Setting: The terrace of the Sanatorium Ultime. It is sunrise. A BODY completely swathed in bandages lies in one of several deckchairs.

At rise: FRANZ KAFKA sits at a table upstage, in shadow, trying to write. MUSIC continues.

FRANZ: [German] *Schreien, Schreien* [pronounced *shreye-en*]. . . .
[English] Silence! No radio! This is a sanatorium, for God's sakes.

MUSIC OUT. FRANZ tries again to write.

FRANZ: *Ach*, it's no use. No use! (*Puts hands over ears*) It's like monkeys in tree-tops—again!

KATE (*off*): Yes-yes, I'll return the tray. No-no, I *will* eat in the fresh air—*much* healthier. That's why we're here: to get well. So many rules. . . .

Enter KATE with tray piled high. SHE wears the dressing gown from the Prologue.

KATE: Hello, everyone— Oh: thrilling sunrise! Look: peeking over the mountains. Golly: paradise.

FRANZ, groaning "Golly," glares at KATE.

KATE: Splendid morning, isn't it?

FRANZ: It's ordinary: It bears its teeth at me.

KATE: Mumble-mumble. (*Unloading tray*) I like breakfast e-e-normously. Big breakfasts. Food is vital to getting well—vital. And—divine thought: There’s a second breakfast. When is it? (*Consults Order of the Day; sits*) Ah: second breakfast, 11:00. Preceded by....: “Wake-up call, 6 a.m., wake-up stretches”: I did three times the required number, three times. Then...“First breakfast”—(*eats*) for which (*shouts off*): Bravo, kitchen, bravo!

FRANZ groans louder, glares at KATE.

KATE: Next: “Sport of choice.” Good, excellent: Exercise is also vital to getting well—heals the lungs. I’ve a touch of pneumonia, you see—one lung, nothing serious. I’ll be full-power again with this splendidly practical regime, whose next step following exercise is....: “Rest cure,” from 9 to 10. Hmmm, what if one is not “cured” by 10 on the dot?

FRANZ: What if one is never cured, eh?

KATE: (*Pointedly*) And then of course: There is attitude. They don’t mention attitude, because that you bring yourself. Attitude—that is to say, volition—is *the* most vital ingredient to blowing this place. I mean, the Sanatorium Ultime is the ultimate, though they’re a tad bureaucratic with their rules, and the extracurricular activities—concerts, lectures: banal. I’ll have to scare up something for excitement. But, no matter: I’m going to get well and leave soonest so I can—(*catches self*) attend to something. Oh, delicious muffin! (*To FRANZ*) What’re you in for, may I ask?

FRANZ: You’re very noisy, every word’s a punch in the eye, how can one person make so much noise?

KATE: Excuse me, I can’t hear you. Nor see you. You’re sitting in the shadow.

FRANZ: I live in the shadow.

KATE: Oh dear: another moaner [*moanuh*].

FRANZ: Well, this *is* a sanatorium. Moaning is to be expected—
Please: I am trying to write, and the rule is: Eat in the dining hall.

KATE: Silly rule. Wouldn't you like something? (*To bandaged BODY*)
Would you, sir?

FRANZ: He doesn't eat. Neither do I.

KATE: Boy, you certainly got up on the wrong side of the bed.

FRANZ: Apart from a horrific war going on—! There is no right side
to the bed because: I do not sleep.

KATE: That's exactly (*catches self again*) what a friend of mine says.
You two state it like a principle. "Listen to the song of life": That's
my family's motto.

FRANZ: Listen to the song of life—and you'll hear mad shrieking.
Life is squandered earning one's grave.

KATE: Oh no. We must progress, we must develop, we must improve
ourselves. Volition!

FRANZ: Ha, my life has "progressed" only as decay progresses in a
tooth. Fate!

KATE: Oh bore [*boah*]. With that attitude, you'll never get out of
here.

FRANZ: I haven't come to get well. I've come to fulfill my life's
purpose: to die.

KATE: To get well!

FRANZ: To die.

KATE: Have it your way.

FRANZ: I'm afraid I will.... The first sign of the beginning of
understanding is the wish to die.

KATE: Such a Gloomy Gus. You sound like that Franz Kafka: death, decay, death-death-death.

FRANZ rises into the light and bows.

FRANZ: A pleasure, I think.

KATE: WELL!! As I live and breathe.

FRANZ: And you are Katharine [KAT-rin] Hepburn, the American comedienne.

KATE: Actress.

FRANZ: Comedienne.

FRANZ sits, once again in shadow.

KATE: Of all the sanatoria and gin joints in the world, I land in the one with you, author of those disgusting books. I'll bet this fellow here (*indicates bandaged BODY*) prefers my comedies to your books— Mr. Kafka, scoot into the light.

FRANZ: So, what brings Miss Spunk to a sanatorium: volition?

KATE: An excess of fun—a sensation alien to you. I adore swimming in the ocean, especially in a high wind.

FRANZ: *Mein Gott*, why?

KATE: Punishment—a sensation you know too well. But I do it to build character, which I believe can be developed but which you as Mr. Victim don't— Mr. Kafka, you need to come into the light.

FRANZ: And you, Miss Hepburn, need to come into the dark....

Beat.

KATE and FRANZ: How is it *you* know my work?

KATE: I'll tell Mr. Famous Author—if he comes into the light. He's giving me a crick in the neck.

FRANZ: (*Beat*) Perhaps the Answer prowls around the Question...?

Clutching his few sheets of paper, FRANZ scoots into the light.

KATE: There you are. Not so scary.

FRANZ: Just don't ask me to smile.

KATE: Speaking of: Which of my comedies have you liked best? We'll get to you later.

FRANZ: *The Philadelphia Story*: your metamorphosis from goddess to human being—quite the fantasy. And that piece of amusement you did with Spencer Tracy, *Woman of the Year*—

KATE: Wasn't Spencer [*Spensuh*] wonderful...?

FRANZ: *Ja*. I feel a certain affinity with him.

KATE: You? Huh, you two are totally unlike. Totally.

FRANZ: That scene where you two go to a baseball game and you understand nothing. It was a pleasure to see you confused. You are always so definite. (*To self*) And so alive....(*surreptitiously checks his pulse*).

KATE: I'm confused right now. I don't know if I should ask you to join me. You're a complicated person, Mr. Kafka, and complicated people give me melancholia. The worst problem I want is carrying two pails of milk over a fence.

FRANZ: As if you could choose your problems!

KATE: That's exactly—what my friend says. In his moods.

FRANZ: Which doubtless is the thing you'll "attend to." "Rah-rah-rah." Just what he needs—

KATE: —He does— Dammit, see here, Mr. Kafka—

FRANZ: —(*To self*) and just what I need....

FRANZ rises abruptly with his papers.

FRANZ: I am working on my autobiography—that is, I’m trying to. More precisely, I am conducting my autobiographical investigations, to detect the component parts, out of which I will then construct myself. I need to set my soul in order—soon—since the end is near. *This* is the vital business.

KATE: Indeed it is. If that is the manuscript, it appears you haven’t gotten far.

FRANZ: I’ve only just started.

KATE: But Mr. Kafka, there are two contradictions, which in your trademark confusion you’ve failed to see: How can a man write his autobiography if he’s not constructed himself? And, how can he possibly write a book, a project which takes time, if he’s come here to die, which, as he’s not eating, will happen in very short order?

FRANZ: Perhaps he could produce a fragment...?

KATE: Not without rest, food, and exercise. And volition.

FRANZ: You’re skilled at finding the internal contradictions.

KATE: A more practical mind would have spotted it instantly. You want to die but you want to live: quite a large contradiction, that. E-e-normous.

FRANZ: Only slightly smaller than the motif you’ve been developing, none too subtly. “My friend”? You refer to Spencer Tracy. You’re mixed up with him.

KATE: Excuse me?! (*Spreads marmalade on her eggs*)

FRANZ: Talk of e-e-normous contradictions: Spencer Tracy's very complicated and you're not. "Spensuh" and I are a lot alike. You might learn from me—starting with a "perhaps."

KATE: (*Rising*) And you both might learn from me—starting with grit!

FRANZ: You're—not leaving me, are you?

KATE: (*Beat*) Not—on—your—life. (*Sits*) You are dangerous.

FRANZ: So are you. (*Beat*) Actually, I like the cinema—though it impedes the imagination.

KATE: If it impedes yours, good. You've saddled the world with a distinctly creepy brand of anxiety.

FRANZ: More guilt! I need to sit. (*Starts to drag his chair back to his table*)

KATE: Hmm, perhaps...? (*Beat*) Mr. Kafka, you may sit at my table—if you eat.

FRANZ: It would just make for heavier shipment out.

KATE: Forget your autobiography then. Forget even that fragment.

FRANZ moves his chair to KATE's table.

FRANZ: I'll consider one of those delicious muffins, or were they "thrilling?" (*Sits*) You spread marmalade on your eggs. Is that usual?

KATE: Old Yankee custom. Now: Why are you here? As you're a walking case like me, and not a bed case like that poor fellow (*indicates bandaged BODY*), your physical ailment can't be too serious, unlike your considerable mental ailment.

FRANZ: I have tuberculosis. Both lungs.

KATE: Oh dear! Well then, you cannot fast, Mr. Kafka. You must eat. I've masses of food here. And milk: Drink milk (*pours*). Milk's the thing for arresting T.B.

FRANZ: Must you say "arrested"? (*Looks around uneasily*)

KATE: T.B. is never cured, only arrested. Milk heals the lungs (*pushes milk toward FRANZ*). Tell me: What stage are you? How many times have you hemorrhaged, coughed blood?

FRANZ: (*Ignores milk*) Once. Back in Prague. It was quite extraordinary! Usually I have insomnia, very bad. But after the hemorrhage—which lasted ten full minutes (*laughs*)—I went to sleep!

KATE: Cheered by your impending death, I'm sure. Mr. Kafka: You've a 50-50 chance of getting well. Your T.B.'s only first-stage.

FRANZ: Miss Hepburn, are you licensed to practice medicine?

KATE: I'm a doctor's daughter. I know lots in the physical department.

FRANZ: Though not much in other departments, certainly not in subtext—where Spensuh dwells.

KATE: ("*Smiles*") You mean the basement—ugh. Back to our point: With first-stage T.B., Mr. Kafka, you need not be here. You could be at home with your family.

FRANZ: I...am not at home...with my family.

KATE: Well, your attitude wouldn't help your family relations.

FRANZ: My attitude is the result of, not an aspect of, my family relations. I come here for the quiet—the theoretical quiet. And for the nerves.

KATE: Yours—or those you give other people? How often have you come here?

FRANZ: This is my ninth, tenth visit. First time I came was after my law exams.

KATE: But, why a sanatorium? This place is nice, but it's not my idea of fun.

FRANZ: "Fun..."? I have never had fun. I've had moments of contentment, but I strained toward discontentment. Thus I am always discontented, even with my discontentment.

KATE: (*Rolls eyes*) If I followed: You're gloomy because you want to be gloomy. Just like—

FRANZ: Spen-suh. Not even psychiatry would help Spen-suh and me.

KATE: Well, we agree there. Psychiatry is bunk, a narcissistic indulgence.

FRANZ: Psychiatry is "bunk"—because it doesn't even begin to address the problem!

KATE: Dammit, bet I could get you well—*if* I wanted to, though I'd be cuckoo to try—and if you'd let me, which you won't because you're too much in love with death. And stubborn, just like—! Well, I can be just as stubborn. You decide what you're going to do, then you do it.

FRANZ: I "decide" by letting my problems devour me.

KATE: Oh the self-pity, the self-pity!

FRANZ: You know, Katharine of Arrogance: If you wanted to, you could be as sick as the rest of the human race.

KATE: Oh boy, is this place big enough for the both of us? Mr. Kafka: Do you live to live or do you live to die?

FRANZ: We're forever stumbling through unfinished suicides. Give it up!

KATE: Your attitude offends me in the extreme! Leave this table.

FRANZ: Forgive me, but: You love a suicidal man. I imagine Spencer drinks—and it isn't milk!

KATE: What a nerve! I withdraw my offer (*retrieves his milk*).

FRANZ: And I withdraw myself—of my own volition!

FRANZ drags his chair back to his table, with his "manuscript." HE tries to write, but can't. KATE fumes. Long beat.

KATE: How would Famous Intellectual Author hear the lies about Spencer's drinking?

FRANZ: (*Relieved*) Saviors can't help themselves.... Simply: I can imagine. And, my eye fell on a Hollywood "item," though what I'm doing reading such rags when I must (*indicating his "manuscript"*) construct myself.... Also, I study the movie posters, look at the actors' faces, imagine their lives. The poster of *Woman of the Year*: you and Spencer gazing at each other; very powerful. It reminds me of...someone.

FRANZ checks pulse, which KATE sees.

KATE: You check your pulse.

FRANZ: It's just habit.

KATE: It's life, Mr. Kafka. Life! Which you need for your autobiography—and this "someone."

FRANZ: You remind me of her. You have such fire. (*Beat*) Perhaps I will have a little coffee....

FRANZ moves his chair back to KATE's table. KATE pours a few drops of coffee into his glass of milk and rises to hand it to him.

KATE: A “little” coffee—with masses of milk. You smile.... (*Sits*)
Now: this “someone.”

FRANZ: *Ach*, she’s so far above this hell-hound....(*sits*). Please, before you attack again: How do you know my work? How is it that Famous American Comedienne knows my work?

KATE: I read, Mr. Kafka. Sophocles, Shakespeare, Ibsen: all the fighters of former centuries—unlike the puny types of today. It was in college—Bryn Mawr—where I was forced to read you. My life was so thrilling I couldn’t concentrate, and in my progress my grades weren’t doing well—I’ve an airy mind regarding things intellectual. So if I was to continue in theatricals—by then, you see, I’d decided to become an actress—I had to improve my academic performance. So for my thesis—the theme was “A Major Influence on the Modern Era”—since the list had been picked over—nobody wanted you—and since I’d yet to make my mark and couldn’t pick myself—I’d a wild desire to fascinate—I was forced to pick you, Franz Kafka, the man with a wild desire to be absolutely revolting. I read your comparatively small and exceedingly dreary body of work— Mr. Kafka, why can’t you write books that rouse us up?

FRANZ: Rah-rah-rah. Books should wound! Pierce the frozen sea within us!

KATE: Samuel Johnson said, “Books should enable us either to enjoy life or endure it better.”

FRANZ: A pacifier! (*Beat*) How would *you* know about Samuel Johnson?

KATE: Brrryn Mawwr. Good God, your story about that fellow who wakes up as a bug—ugh.

FRANZ: Yes: exceedingly repulsive.

KATE: You agree? How—confusing. And—and how could you write a novel called *Amerika* without having been there?

FRANZ: I read Benjamin Franklin's autobiography. He was always smiling.

KATE: And that fellow who's a circus act with his fasting. Sounds autobiographical to me.

FRANZ: I would have eaten—if I'd found the food I liked.

KATE: Hold on: If your work is autobiographical, why write an autobiography?

FRANZ: Because my books are botched, unfinished, loathsome—

KATE: Especially your story about the penal colony: that torture machine!

FRANZ: Ah, there I disagree emphatically. Ask him (*indicates bandaged BODY*).

KATE: —and—and *The Trial*: Joseph K. drives me absolutely mad—

FRANZ: Good.

KATE: Not your mad, my mad. (*Beat*) Strange: Recently I had one of my rare nightmares—and it was about him. Joseph K. so infuriates me, submitting to execution, that I woke up shouting, "Make difficulties, make difficulties!" Some protagonist.

FRANZ: Then, that *was* you....

KATE: I don't follow.

FRANZ: In the innermost heart of every individual, there is...The Indestructible.

Unseen by Franz or Kate, THE GUARDS, still in top hat and tails, lean into scene, GUARD I glaring at FRANZ, GUARD II swooning at KATE.

KATE: “The Indestructible . . .” Why, that’s lovely. But: We don’t see The Indestructible in your work, do we? Wouldn’t it be wonderful, not to mention downright miraculous, if we did?

Alarmed, GUARD I grabs GUARD II, exits.

KATE: As it is, Mr. Kafka, I confess I found your books so repulsive, I skipped parts.

FRANZ: I don’t blame you.

KATE: Is that your famous ambiguity? Or—is it irony? Paradox? I get them all confused.

FRANZ: So much penance on my account, and all for theatricals. What was the prize role?

KATE: Pandora.

FRANZ: Ha, delightful woman!

KATE: Nobody remembers, least of all you, that what remained in Pandora’s box was Hope.

FRANZ: HOPE?! In these singularly dreadful times? The tribal wars I foresaw rage now in every corner of the globe. People—*ach*, people!—they drag their sacred trinkets from overheated attics, shoot their neighbors. It all starts with flags and salutes and newsprint and ends with pillage and blood, brought to high boil by religion. *Ach*, religion gets as lost as people do! All this carnage (*indicates bandaged BODY*), all this infernal carnage: It stems from a tragic lack of imagination—a monstrous lack of imagination: man so beset by his own demons that he can’t possibly imagine the suffering of others. Ah, but he can imagine ever more efficient torture machines. The most recent (*again indicates bandaged BODY*): lungs vaporized by chemicals!

KATE: I agree the outlook is not sunny.

SOUND of train whistle.

FRANZ: Another trainload: carnage without end! The world's now one monumental penal colony.

KATE: You paint the picture accurately. But, Mr. Kafka: What do you propose to do about it? What is your solution?

FRANZ: As a writer I can only represent the negativity of my age, I cannot fight it.

KATE: Sounds like an excuse to me.

FRANZ: Counter-forces do exist, but they're weak and pitifully organized.

KATE: Not weak, dammit. NOT weak!

Enter THE GUARDS, dressed as orderlies. GUARD I, KNIFE drawn, goes for FRANZ.

GUARD I: Let's finish off those lungs of yours, Frantisek [*FRONTICHECK*]!

KATE: (*Jumps up*) What the devil?!

GUARD I: Close, Miss Hepburn. (*Seizes FRANZ by one arm*) Very close.

GUARD II: I could be close to you, Miss Hepburn. Love your work.

KATE: Ugh. (*To GUARDS*) I'm on to you two. Mr. Kafka: There is a solution.

GUARD I: Your prescription, "Doctor" Hepburn?

KATE: As my parents always say: Look out for the other fellow (*indicates bandaged BODY*).

GUARD II: Yeah, look out for him, he's "a swamp"—as Frantisek always says.

KATE: Look out for the other fellow and care for life.

GUARD I: Oh that's a proper "counter-force." And what about the torture machine?

KATE: We dismantle it. One firm No does it.

FRANZ: You're the fictionist, Miss Hepburn, not I. The torture machine runs of itself—

THE GUARDS: —on fear.

GUARD I: We're not your usual antagonist whom you can win over at the sentimental happy ending.

KATE: But-but...it's so nice to have the man and the woman together at the end....

GUARD II: (*Moving toward KATE*) We could be together, "Kate."

KATE: NO! (*Beat*) Dammit: Mr. Kafka, I *am* going to save you.

The GUARDS guffaw.

KATE: Looking out for other fellow: I am going to get you well and stop your nightmares and spare the world another of your disgusting books. I adore a challenge, and you three are the biggest I know of—here, that is. Come, we're off to the golfcourse.

FRANZ: But, I'm to lecture in an hour. I am one of the "activities."

KATE: Cancel it. Who knows, maybe you'll enjoy yourself—and write a happy autobiography.

FRANZ: Happy? Happy? But, that would negate all my books! All my books have been (*looks at GUARDS*)—have been in the service of the Devil.

GUARD II: Besides, Miss Hepburn, he hates revising.

KATE: Then your books *do* serve as your autobiography and your soul is totally, totally at peace.

FRANZ: Caught out again!

KATE: Come on, Mr. Kafka: Contradict yourself. (*Shakes head*) Boy, is this getting fancy.

GUARD I: Head games.

KATE: Isn't it always? Mr. Kafka, we're waiting....

FRANZ: (*Long beat*) It may be possible—for a man who has conquered his fear, his chaos (*looks at GUARDS*)—to begin to write. Those would be—holy books.

KATE: “Holy books....”! Beautiful! I knew you had it in you, Mr. Kafka. I knew it!

FRANZ: To invent words pungent as corpses....

GUARD I: (*Laughs*) That's in him, too.

KATE: No doubt. (*To GUARDS*) A train needs unloading....

GUARD I: We'll get our man yet. (*Exiting with GUARD II*)

KATE: So will I—(*to self*) I hope....

FRANZ: Such power you have.

KATE places FRANZ' finger on her pulse.

FRANZ: Your pulse: It's racing—like a hummingbird—like mine.

KATE: Acting. Here, drink your milk. I'll have some too. You wear my brains out.

FRANZ: Me getting better: a contradictory, yet wonderful idea.

THEY drink their milk.

FRANZ: But, Miss Hepburn, it's a labyrinth out there.

KATE: We'll just follow the signs, Mr. Kafka. We'll just follow the signs.