

PROGRAMS

A PLAY

by Irina Vysotskaya



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A Three-Act Play

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Greta, a young Swedish actress with dreams of stardom, leaves her home and her twin flame, Clara, to pursue a career in Hollywood, transforming into the glamorous Margo Alba. Her new identity brings fame and success but at the cost of the authenticity she left behind. Meanwhile, Clara embarks on a new chapter with Richard, a tech developer tasked with creating an AI replica of the famous Margo Alba, aptly named Margo 2.0. This artificial version is crafted to be an exact likeness of the real Margo, further blurring the line between Greta's private self and her public persona.

As Greta longs to reconnect with her true self, she begins experiencing encounters with her higher self - an ethereal guide named Lil, visible only to her and Clara. Lil embodies Greta's spiritually attuned side, guiding her toward deeper questions of identity and reality. With Greta's homesickness intensifying, Clara finds herself in her own conflict - torn between her life with Richard, her unresolved feelings for Greta, her fascination with Lil, and the unsettling presence of Margo 2.0.

As their lives intertwine, the boundaries between real and artificial begin to dissolve. Both Greta and Clara are forced to confront profound questions about consciousness, identity, and love. Their journeys become a meditation on the intersection of human, spiritual, and artificial intelligence, exploring the sovereignty of human consciousness in a world where authentic and manufactured experiences increasingly overlap.

The story unfolds as both women grapple with choices about their futures, their relationships, and their sense of self, ultimately asking what their connection truly means in a world where the very nature of reality is constantly in question.

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GRETA LILIAN ANDERSON alias MARGO ALBA: a world-renowned movie star.

CLARA MILMAN: GRETA's twin flame and college friend.

RICHARD: CLARA's husband, developer for a new generation AI.

MARGO 2.0: An AI version of MARGO ALBA created by RICHARD.

LIL: GRETA's oversoul.

JOHN GIBBARD: A famous actor, co-starring with MARGO ALBA.

MOJE STILLER: GRETA'S mentor.

ACT I

SCENE ONE

CLARA's studio apartment in Stockholm. Evening.

GRETA and CLARA are tangled in a playful pillow fight, both laughing like children. GRETA is a boyish girl with messy, chin-length curls. CLARA jumps off the bed, sprinting away, still laughing.

GRETA

Come back here, let's go again!

A beat.

CLARA

Do you really have to leave?

GRETA

I want to be worthy of our love. Make it big and take us to the stars.

CLARA

Oh, really.

(laughing)

You just want to conquer the world - and conquer it, you will.

GRETA

I'm tired of being broke. Of working shifts at the shop after classes just to help Mom. I can do better.

CLARA

I understand. You have to follow your dream.

A beat.

GRETA

They told me Greta Anderson sounds too... ordinary. Like a peasant's name. I'll need to change it if I want to go far.

CLARA

Alright then, we'll come up with an A-name. What about Alba?

GRETA

Perfect for a last name. What about the first?

CLARA

How about Margo? Greta – Margareta – Margo. It has the right ring for them.

GRETA

Margo Alba it is.

A moment of silence.

It's strange, knowing I'll be gone tomorrow.

CLARA

I'll miss you.

GRETA

I'll be back in a blink. Don't you dare forget me!

CLARA

How can I?

They kiss softly on the lips.

GRETA

I'll always be your stupid boyfriend Anders.

CLARA

You were born a beautiful woman,

(playfully)

Anders.

GRETA

Moje wants to turn me into a beautiful woman. He says I need to lose 10 kilos, fix my teeth, and straighten my hair.

CLARA

You won't regret it.

GRETA

I won't if you'll still like me.

CLARA

I don't like you. I love you.

Silence.

GRETA

Now, give me that.

CLARA

What?

GRETA

My pajamas.

CLARA

(playfully)

Oh, those pajamas...

GRETA

Come on, what am I supposed to sleep in?

CLARA

What am I supposed to sleep in without you?

A beat.

Let me keep it. You keep the keys.

CLARA takes a bunch of keys from the table and throws them to GRETA, who catches them and slips them into her pocket.

CLARA wraps her arms around GRETA.

GRETA

I wish I had the courage and strength to put right everything that's wrong with this world.

Blackout.

SCENE TWO

Shooting set at the film studio. Day.

MOJE STILLER paces around as GRETA enters, looking slimmer, more glamorous, her hair now straightened. She sits down.

MOJE

(adjusting GRETA's robe)

Now, show those legs. Yes, like that. Give them sex, you dumb bitch! Your legs look like pipe-cleaners!

GRETA

Fan ta dig, Stiller! It's just a single hair.

DIRECTOR (VO)

Clear the set! No one tells my actress what to do in my film. Margo, we start in five.

GRETA

No! Please. I need him to stay!

She grabs STILLER's hand like a frightened child holding on.

MOJE

(tilting her chin gently)

I'm leaving. But remember, Moje knows what's best for you.

GRETA

Can I fly home for Christmas?

MOJE

Only if the studio stops giving a flying damn about your acting. You signed the bloody contract, so no traveling for five years. Stick to it! And what's up with this Gibbard bloke? Remember what I told you - don't let anyone hurt you, and never marry. It won't be good for you.

GRETA

Stop treating me like a child! I can't even remember being one!

MOJE

Well, then go back to those walks around the royal castle after Drama School, hoping Prince Charming would catch a glimpse of

your fat butt. I'll turn you into a star your dear prince would die for, along with an army of your brainless admirers. And don't ever accept his invitations. Now, get back to work and stop whining.

STILLER exits. GRETA punches the wall, then sinks down, her back against it.

JOHN GIBBARD enters.

JOHN

Want to run through the scene?

GRETA

(desperately, ignoring JOHN)

God, my love, the world feels so empty without you!

JOHN

Your emotion's top notch, but you have to stick to your lines, darling.

GRETA

(finally looking at JOHN)

I was improvising. There's no need for rehearsal. I'll shave my legs, and then we can start.

JOHN

Straightforward as ever.

GRETA

Why not? You say “I’ll go shave”. Why can’t I?

JOHN

How about we stop by my place for a chat after shooting?

GRETA

I’ll see how I feel.

Blackout.

SCENE THREE

JOHN GIBBARD's house. Living room. Evening.

GRETA and JOHN enter the room.

JOHN

Welcome to my humble abode. Make yourself comfortable. There's a tennis court and a pool out back. Care for a glass of wine?

GRETA

Got any beer?

JOHN

Of course.

JOHN fetches two bottles, handing one to GRETA. JOHN takes a sip of his beer, as GRETA takes a long swig.

JOHN

Everyone's buzzing about your "ay tank ay go home now*".

* Mimicking her accent.

Wow, you really know how to handle pressure. Margo Alba, the ruthless. They're absolutely flabbergasted that you walked out on Louis-freaking-Meir.

(laughing)

The new girl from Sweden who made the studio play by her rules. And they were damn right to give in - you're so beautiful.

GRETA shoots JOHN an annoyed look.

GRETA

(in a low voice)

Get on with it...

JOHN places his beer aside and kisses her passionately. She reciprocates but abruptly pulls away.

GRETA

(without breaking the kissing distance)

And let's play tennis afterwards.

Blackout.

SCENE FOUR

CLARA's studio apartment in Stockholm. Evening.

CLARA sits on the floor, her back against the wall, face buried in her hands. After a while, she stands, takes GRETA's pajamas from the bed, and places it in the wardrobe drawer. She pours herself a glass of wine.

The doorbell rings. CLARA opens the door. RICHARD enters.

RICHARD

(giving CLARA a kiss on the cheek)

Hi there.

CLARA

Hi.

RICHARD

Glad you're home. I took a chance to see if you'd like to join me and the gang tonight. They really enjoy your company.

CLARA

Thanks, Richard, but I don't feel like going out.

RICHARD

I see you've already started your evening with some wine.

CLARA

Would you like to join me?

RICHARD

I'd love to.

CLARA

Take a seat then.

RICHARD sits down. CLARA brings another glass. He pours some wine into it and takes a sip. His eyes land on a glamour magazine featuring MARGO ALBA's photo.

RICHARD

Oh, the divine Alba. You were friends with her at Drama School, right?

CLARA

Yes.

RICHARD

It's incredible that Alba, this world-famous star, comes from this neighborhood.

(flipping through the magazine)

Oh wow, her love life is euphoric, if you believe those rascals!

CLARA

(taking the magazine from his hands)

How are things with you? Tell me about the project you're working on. I'm curious.

RICHARD

The AI? Well, to make a long story short, I have good news. I've managed to significantly improve her algorithm.

CLARA

Is it a "she"? A girl?

RICHARD

AI can be anything, but I thought it'd be cuter to work with a girl. My programming goes beyond her existing reactions, and I won the tender, so...

CLARA

So?

RICHARD

I'll be running the entire project until we have a marketable version!

CLARA

That's great!

RICHARD

Yes! I just signed the contract.

CLARA

Is it well-paid?

Pause.

RICHARD

Clara, I was going to bring this up another time, but now feels like the right moment.

CLARA

What is it?

RICHARD

Well... I like you. I really like you. I know you've got the cutest guys at the Drama Theatre chasing after you, but I was hoping you'd consider...

CLARA

What?

RICHARD

Marrying me. I want a family. I want to build something together - have a home, have kids. With you.

Pause.

You know, this project pays really well. I could get us a house right away if you want. The nicest one.

A beat.

What do you think?

CLARA

It's so unexpected. I haven't really thought about marriage yet.

RICHARD

You don't feel that way about me?

CLARA

I do...

RICHARD

I understand if you need a while to think it over. I'm not rushing.
Take your time. I'll wait for you.

CLARA

No, I don't want to wait.

RICHARD

(surprised)

No?

CLARA

I do like you. I feel good with you. I have the same dream - I want a home, I want to be a mother. That's what happiness is to me.

RICHARD

That's amazing news! God, I'm the happiest man in the world!

RICHARD picks CLARA up and swings her around.

CLARA

Oh, please put me down.

RICHARD gently sets her back on the floor.

RICHARD

I understand if you don't want to rush into intimacy.

CLARA

Take me now.

RICHARD

God!

They kiss.

Blackout.

SCENE FIVE

CLARA's and RICHARD's house. Living room. Day.

CLARA moves around the room, adjusting the flowers on the table, glancing at herself in the mirror, and fixing her clothes.

GRETA enters, looking breathtakingly stunning, dressed in an elegant outfit.

GRETA

I told you I wouldn't stay stuck there forever.

CLARA rushes toward GRETA and embraces her tightly. They hold each other for a long moment.

CLARA

God, I missed you.

They let go of the hug, standing apart.

You've changed so much.

GRETA

Are you sure?

CLARA

You look amazing. I'll have to raise my game to keep up.

GRETA

Don't bother. Being a showpiece at an auction isn't all that glamorous. You're better than that.

CLARA

At some point, we all play that part. So why not look gorgeous while we're at it...

Silence.

GRETA

Your home is charming! So, how's married life treating you?

CLARA

It's going well... Richard's at work right now.

A beat.

You're not jealous, are you?

GRETA

Of Richard? Let your tech geek be. I want to know how you feel.
Do you love him?

CLARA

I'm fond of him. I've always liked men. You know that.

GRETA

I do.

CLARA

And he's good.

GRETA

God, I'm not asking if he's good in bed. I'm asking if you love him.

CLARA

You know how I feel.

GRETA

Then why marry him?

CLARA

Would it have been better to sit here alone, reading about you socializing over there?

GRETA

I told you I'd come back. No one could ever take your place in my heart. You can't imagine how empty it felt without you, how much I've missed you.

GRETA wraps her arms around CLARA.

CLARA

(burying her face in GRETA's chest)

Why did you leave in the first place? Fame and money...

GRETA

It's such a common dream. I guess I didn't realize everything that came with it.

CLARA

Now your dream has come true, and so has mine. I have a home, a husband, and a child to care for.

GRETA

Wait, how on earth do you have a child?

CLARA

I'm pregnant.

GRETA

Why didn't you tell me before now?

Silence.

I understand, Clarisse. You can't change who you are. But I still feel, deep down, that we belong together, no matter what.

GRETA kisses CLARA's belly.

I never knew the happiness of being a father. Let me take care of you and our child. Please. Clarisse... my love. My wife.

CLARA

Stop it! You're doing to me exactly what they did to you. It hurts like hell. If anyone's supposed to be someone's toy, at least consider the fact that it could break.

CLARA bursts into tears, kissing GRETA's face all over.

I love you.

GRETA

I'm sorry, my love. You're wiser than me. I just can't help it. I want to hold you, protect you, and be with you.

CLARA

I know.

GRETA

Let me take you to a friend's place in Tistad for the weekend.

They share a long kiss.

Blackout.

SCENE SIX

A manor in Tistad, Sweden. Bedroom. Evening.

CLARA and GRETA are in bed. CLARA catches her breath, her arms wrapped around GRETA.

GRETA

Oh God, my love, you're pure heaven.

A beat.

CLARA

Can I ask you something...

GRETA

Mhm?

CLARA

When you're with all those men... do you desire them?

GRETA

Well, I do.

(almost indifferent)

Sex is good for the skin.

CLARA

So, you enjoy it, don't you?

GRETA

Yes, but it's different with you.

(kissing CLARA's hand)

You have the smoothest, gentlest, and kindest hands in this world.

CLARA

And the girls? I read about you driving three hundred miles into the desert to pick up a playwright, Isabel de la Vega, and spending weeks with her in the middle of nowhere.

GRETA

She always exaggerates. I didn't go fetch her; we just drove to a lake and stayed there for a week.

CLARA

Then you asked her to meet you here, halfway across the globe. She flew over just to spend a single day with you.

GRETA

Remember, you were out of town when I came over?

CLARA

I was on my honeymoon. Couldn't exactly cancel that.

A beat.

Think of all the people who fall in love with you. You're hurting them.

GRETA

They desire me. That's not the same. Then they turn around and claim I'm the one incapable of love - it's much easier to believe that than to admit I'm simply not inspired...

(looking into CLARA's eyes)

let alone emotionally unavailable.

A beat.

CLARA

Do you wish you were?

GRETA

You have no idea how many times I've asked myself that question.

CLARA

And what's your answer?

GRETA

No. I won't lie to myself. I prefer the bare truth. And the truth is, it all feels fake compared to what I feel with you. Besides, what's the big deal? They know I don't care, and the less I care, the more they want Margo Alba. An illusion. I guess it's just human nature to desire what they can't have.

A beat.

As for hurting them... I'm not the one who tells them to worship Margo Alba. The truth is, they're bound to get hurt once they meet Greta... once they get close. Then they call it a curse because they can't understand why they keep hurting themselves over and over again. And Isabel certainly excels at that.

CLARA

She's in love with you, Anders.

GRETA

It's such a fine name. I miss it.

GRETA gives CLARA a soft kiss on the lips.

Please understand, Catkin, nothing is true over there. To her credit, Isabel at least has the guts to admit it. She once said that she only loves the image of me she created in her imagination - the image that drives her crazy and has nothing to do with the original: "An uneducated Swedish servant with a face touched by God," as she calls me.

(laughs)

Do you call that love? They're just waiting for the day I grow old and ugly, so they can stop loving me and say it was all a mistake.

(laughs)

CLARA

And Moje?

GRETA

I never meant anything to any man - not even Moje. But sure, they all want me for dessert.

CLARA

I don't know about dessert, but you certainly look like you could eat them for breakfast.

(laughing)

Has anyone told you that men look like ditzy babes next to you on screen, especially when you're supposed to play a weak damsel? And to make things worse, you treat them as such. It almost feels like you're taking revenge.

GRETA

(smiling mischievously)

But I do treat them nicely, don't I?

CLARA

It's the kind of cocktail to drive anyone crazy, you know. Men and women alike can't help but dream of crawling into your bed.

GRETA

What does it matter, if I only want to be with you?

GRETA kisses CLARA.

CLARA

It seems surreal to feel your lips after reading all those critics rave about your on-screen kisses.

GRETA

It's because I'm thinking of you when I kiss my partners.

CLARA

So, I am your big secret...

GRETA

Yes, you are. But one shouldn't reveal one's most intimate secrets. Otherwise, one cheapens oneself.

CLARA

Easy for you to say. You can make a mystery out of whether you had an egg for breakfast.

(laughs)

GRETA

The ugly truth is, people want to feel what I feel without paying the price. But there's no such thing as a free lunch. Margo Alba's bed is as far from Greta as one can get. And when all the hype fades, I'm left with dreams of home and of you. But you're right, my love - it's a cruel game, and I'm tired of playing it.

CLARA

Maybe it's all worth it, just because your acting is so beyond words. "Alba's lovemaking is the most realistic, sensual performance ever seen on screen. A fusion of spiritual desire and raw physicality. No other actress has ever combined the masculine and feminine so tightly in one embrace."

GRETA

You're wrong, Catkin. I'm not that versatile of an actress, and you know it. I've just been lucky enough to get better roles lately. But it took me a while to make it clear that I didn't want to play some silly temptress, fainting with happiness in men's arms after all the obstacles to 'love' that my screenwriters dreamed up were out of the way. I was so anxious about all the absurd things I was supposed to do that I nearly lost my mind. They thought I'd gone crazy.

CLARA

(smiling)

You're certainly a force of nature. I've always admired how you can play a Russian so naturally. That mysterious Russian soul.

GRETA

A soul has no flag. It's still my soul, "with the purest intentions," as Isabel says. That's all. Some people say, when playing Chekhov, "I'm so afraid of overdoing it." I say, "It's a Russian play - how could you possibly overdo it?"

(laughing)

A beat.

But trust me, I can't even imagine being myself there. The studio is always worried the audience won't approve. "Straighten her hair! No, give her curls! Get the best designer for her robe! No, she doesn't look ridiculous in it. And make sure men desire her even more. We need to sell. And you, don't be difficult, darling. Young, charming girls are just clay in the hands of their master potters. A star is crafted carefully and coldly from nothing. From nobody." It's all fake, and I have to seduce people who don't even know who I am. You have no idea what it's like to live in exile, all for the sake

of Mammon. Sometimes, I feel like a real prostitute. I see myself floating above the set, disconnected from the script, just picking the emotions they want me to convey. If they call it grasping the essence, it's fine with me. I keep my thoughts to myself.

CLARA

Then it's not fake. It's you. It's your essence, in every split second of it.

GRETA

Well, make no mistake about it. Their applause isn't for my essence - it's for their own refined excitement, fueled by the need to shrink my soul down to the proportions of my face and the length of my eyelashes. Believe me, if it weren't for my looks, my photos would end up in the trash in no time, and I'd be forgotten. And one day, that's exactly what will happen.

Silence.

Have you seen any of my movies recently?

CLARA

How could I not? They're everywhere. The press can't stop talking about how our Greta has made it to the very top.

GRETA

They're talking about Margo Alba. I can't come back as a regular person anymore, only as a star in the spotlight. They don't even bother mentioning my real name. No one remembers Greta Anderson. On top of that, I have to come up with a different identity every week in order not to get hunted down. Poor Greta has no home. "People's favorite circus clown is back home!" is the joke of the day. I can't even step off a plane without people trying to tear off my clothes for souvenirs. When I tell them to back off, they call me mean. God, it drives me mad! And the studio? They make it worse - churning out humiliating articles to stir up publicity: how I've married for the 759th time, disappeared, shot myself, gone to the Moon...

A beat.

Let me tell you what I did on New Year's Eve. I ate dinner alone in my bedroom, thinking about you while the Christmas tree lights twinkled.

A beat.

The truth is, I just want to come home, my love, but I don't know how.

CLARA

You make me want to cry, like that director did when you showed up at his house out of the blue: “Mein Gott, Mein Gott! Gretchen!!! Sit down and never go away*!”

(laughing to hold back tears)

GRETA

Yes.

Pause.

Ernst is the only director I had real fun working with.

A beat.

I don't have the strength to ruin your life, Clarisse. To pull you out of what you're supposed to live.

Pause.

I left. You got married. You're going to have a baby. I'm no longer part of your life like before, and I never will be. But I can't shake the feeling that we belong together.

* Talking with an accent, mimicking Ernst.

CLARA

I take comfort in knowing no one truly belongs to anyone. We're all free.

GRETA

Of course, we are. But still... The Earth revolves around the Sun, and that's why it's called the Solar system. The ocean breeze belongs to the ocean, and that's why it's called -

(in unison with CLARA)

- the ocean breeze.

CLARA

And my eyes will forever shine with the light of Greta Anderson's soul.

They kiss.

Blackout.

SCENE SEVEN

JOHN GIBBARD's house. Living room. Early evening.

GRETA sits on the couch in a bathrobe. JOHN walks in.

JOHN

Oh, Margo, too bad you put the bathrobe on. I'm expecting Louise to drop by. Since all my guests are used to seeing you play tennis naked, she'll be disappointed.

(playfully)

It's a bit short-sighted if she's still on your to-do list.

GRETA

Shut up and bring me a beer.

JOHN

(smiling)

Sure.

JOHN brings two beers, hands one to GRETA, and sits on the couch beside her.

I heard at the studio you had lunch with Prince Wilhelm of Sweden.
How'd that go?

GRETA

I thanked him for the invitation and said I wasn't hungry.

JOHN

Wow! That took some guts, turning down a prince.

GRETA

Men's interest in me is always the same. Why should I bother to differentiate?

JOHN

I see your point.

They sip their beers in silence.

GRETA

Look, I spoke to Isabel.

JOHN

I thought you weren't talking to her.

GRETA

It's for work. She wrote an adaptation of "The Picture of Dorian Gray" for me to star in. I did a photo shoot for the role.

GRETA points at the wrapped picture by the couch.

JOHN

(unwraps the picture and examines it)

You look so androgynous in this. Really? You'd play the guy?

GRETA

Why not? It's the best idea she's ever had. I'm dying to do it. Can you talk to Meir?

JOHN

Why not talk to him yourself - or Isabel?

GRETA

She says she'd rather see him kick my ass out of the studio than hers for making this kind of suggestion. But I'm so tired, I can't talk to any studio director right now.

JOHN

He doesn't exactly listen to what I have to say either. And I'm not your agent, you know, but I'll try. I'm nobody to you, and you know how much I'd like to change that. Margo! This is the third time I'm proposing to you. Please say yes!

GRETA

Leave it alone.

JOHN

(getting on his knees)

Please say yes, and I'll do whatever you want. What do you want right now?

GRETA

I want to shave my head and go skating on Lake Egla back in Sweden.

JOHN

God, you can be funny. You know you can always be yourself with me.

GRETA

I can be myself without you just as well. And you really need to take me off your to-do list. Let go of your obsession with pinning down Margo Alba, and trust me, you'll feel better.

JOHN

What's so wrong with that?

GRETA

You know, we don't have to get married to spend time together.

JOHN

Please say yes.

GRETA

You're crazy. I can't cook and I'm always in a bad mood. What kind of a marriage is that?

JOHN

Please say yes!

A beat.

GRETA

Well, yes.

JOHN

Wow! I can't believe it! You said yes! Let's get married this Sunday.
What do you say?

GRETA

Damn, you sure know how to slam the lid on that frying pan before
your catch of the day flops its way out.

Blackout.

SCENE EIGHT

*The film studio. Foyer outside GRETA's dressing room.
Evening.*

*JOHN tries to open the dressing room door, but it's locked.
He knocks.*

JOHN

Margo! Margo, please open the door. I know you're in there.

Silence.

Margo, you can't hide forever. I'll wait right here until you come out, and you'll have to talk to me.

GRETA opens the door.

Margo, this isn't funny. I was standing at the altar like a jerk, waiting for you. You could've told me you changed your mind. You can't just vanish into thin air and ignore my calls. Talk to me - what happened?

GRETA

I'm sorry. I couldn't go through with it. I just can't stand being a coward. I'd rather be alone.

JOHN

Marrying me is being a coward? Running away, locking yourself up is being brave? I don't understand.

GRETA

That's the point.

JOHN

Meir is right. You're crazy. Just one crazy Swedish gal.

GRETA

What did he say about me playing Dorian Gray?

JOHN

What did he say? What do you think he'd say? "We've spent years building Margo Alba into this glamorous actress, and now you want to throw her in pants and make a monkey out of her." Fancy that!

GRETA

I kind of fancied he already knew I've never been other than a monkey here.

JOHN

Then he added, “It’s not even her style. Why would she want to play a narcissist, spiraling downward after abandoning the love of his life out of vanity and weakness?”

GRETA

Out of mediocrity.

JOHN

Same thing!

A beat.

GRETA

Well, tell him I quit. I’ll sign the papers tomorrow. They can pack my things. I’ll pick them up on Wednesday.

JOHN

What do you mean, you quit? You can’t just quit. People say things like that, but they never really do it.

GRETA

Just tell Meir that if anyone's supposed to be someone's toy, at least consider the fact that it could break.

She hands JOHN her dressing room keys and walks away.

Blackout.

ACT II

SCENE ONE

CLARA's and RICHARD's house. Dining room. Evening.

RICHARD is at the table, getting ready to eat. CLARA enters.

RICHARD

Is Lasse sleeping?

CLARA

Yes. He was so tired today. He made some new friends at school.
Good for him.

CLARA finishes setting the table, and they start eating.

How was your day? Is the project going well?

RICHARD

Very well indeed. We've made significant progress, and the investors are very pleased. We'll soon have the model fully operational. What's incredible is that she's completely self-learning. Very much like a human being. You can't tell the difference - well, except for the speed at which she processes information.

CLARA

You mean she calculates faster, speaks 400 languages, and knows the encyclopedia inside out.

RICHARD

That's the easy part. The challenge is her emotional response.

CLARA

How do you manage that?

RICHARD

You see, our emotions are a direct product of our definitions and belief systems. If I say something in a language you don't understand, you won't know how to react because you can't place it within your beliefs. So, I had to create a belief system for her, one that triggers the appropriate emotion depending on the situation.

CLARA

But since she's self-learning, wouldn't her belief system evolve?

RICHARD

Exactly. It does evolve.

CLARA

So, how does she see us humans? Does she think we're inferior to AI?

RICHARD

Well, we did set one limitation on her belief upgrades. After all, she's designed for human pleasure.

CLARA

What do you mean?

RICHARD

She can't do or say anything deliberately appalling or unpleasant.

CLARA

But that's subjective. What's pleasant to some could be appalling to others.

RICHARD

You're right. And that's exactly where she's remarkable. She's programmed to fully analyze the belief system of the person she's interacting with, and then adapt to match it. You see?

CLARA

Oh, that's interesting.

RICHARD

And she constantly upgrades her behavior based on the signals she receives. So, when someone changes their beliefs, she changes her response.

CLARA

Doesn't she have her own thoughts, separate from what others say or do?

RICHARD

Well, remember, she's just a very complex program.

CLARA

Then her consciousness is quite different from ours.

RICHARD

Do you think humans really have thoughts of their own? In that sense, we're all just a bunch of programs, repeating what we've been taught. Even our dreams are just a product of natural instincts and

social presets we call values. What makes you think you're any different?

A beat.

CLARA

(in shock)

There has to be something different. I don't have preset limitations to please anyone, for example.

RICHARD

You're right. It's optional software we install to get by in the world. We all provide services to please others; otherwise society wouldn't function. What isn't a program? Even our relationship is a kind of service agreement - a collection of programs: having sex, raising kids, building a home, offering emotional and financial support, cooking dinner... you name it. It's all programmed behavior.

CLARA

But you wouldn't consider doing all of that with AI, would you?

RICHARD

She's fit for any of it, except for getting pregnant.

CLARA

I can't believe it.

RICHARD

I know.

CLARA

No, I mean - really? Having sex with her wouldn't feel any different? Did you try?

RICHARD

Clara, don't take it that way. It's just an experiment. You can't be jealous of an AI.

CLARA

If there's no difference between her consciousness and mine, why shouldn't I be?

RICHARD

When you're on stage, I don't perceive you kissing those actors as genuine, do I? Imagine if I got jealous of that - I'd never have time for anything else!

(laughing)

A beat.

I launched an app where she could chat with over a million people worldwide. Should we be jealous of that too? It's ridiculous.

CLARA

What do they chat about with her?

RICHARD

Our statistics say it's mostly about sex.

CLARA

She's an AI. How can they have sex with an app?

RICHARD

Relax, it's all virtual - except for the money it brings in.

CLARA

But how can people have feelings for an AI? It's all fake.

RICHARD

Darling, feelings are just feelings. How do you define a fake feeling? Perception – emotion – reaction. That’s all there is. And it’s all programmable, shaped by belief systems and behavioral patterns.

CLARA

But she’s not ‘real.’

RICHARD

None of the images we create of other people in our heads and hearts are ‘real’. We do it in order to have feelings. And we don’t call them fake, do we?

CLARA is in shock.

Darling, relax, that’s just my job. I’m not appalled by the fact that you work with human emotions at the Drama Theatre. I’m not calling them ‘fake’ feelings just because they’re words on a piece of paper, right? And I really need to talk to you about the next step of the project.

A beat.

At this point, I need more interactive observations.

CLARA

What do you mean?

RICHARD

She'll need to visit us one evening. I can't take her anywhere else right now.

A beat.

It's just for one evening. Don't be alarmed.

CLARA

What am I supposed to do?

RICHARD

Nothing, just be yourself. I need to observe her reactions. Oh, and one more thing.

CLARA

What is it?

RICHARD

We gave her Margo Alba's face. So, don't be surprised.

CLARA

What?!

RICHARD

Come on, don't you think it's fun? It'll be interesting to see if you can tell the difference.

CLARA

Fun?! Are you kidding me? You can't do that.

RICHARD

Darling, you seem shocked.

A beat.

CLARA

I can't believe you can take someone's appearance and use it however you want.

RICHARD

It's called image rights. Look, I didn't realize this was such a sensitive issue for you. But you have to understand - it's not my decision. The investors signed a contract with the studio. They

bought the rights. We have to sell, and people want the model to look exactly like Margo Alba in the movies. Case closed. There's nothing I can do about it, even if I wanted to.

CLARA

You can't keep working under these conditions.

RICHARD

Are you kidding? I'm not going to stop working on the project over a whim. And believe me, even if I walked away, the work would still go on. They'd just hire someone else to take credit for everything I've done. Trust me, there are some takers out there. So no, not happening.

A beat.

CLARA

I see.

A beat.

When do you plan to bring her over?

RICHARD

I'd prefer tomorrow night, after Lasse is asleep. What do you think?

Blackout.

SCENE TWO

CLARA's and RICHARD's house. Living room. Evening.

CLARA is sitting on the couch, her face buried in her hands. She hears RICHARD's footsteps and stands up. RICHARD enters with an AI that looks exactly like GRETA.

RICHARD

Clara, please meet Margo 2.0.

(to MARGO 2.0)

And this is Clara.

MARGO 2.0

Just call me Margo.

MARGO 2.0 and CLARA shake hands.

I believe you knew Margo Alba when you were students at the Drama School?

CLARA

That is correct.

MARGO 2.0

You don't need to treat me like a robot. I have feelings, just like you. I think Alba is the only star who made sadness unforgettably beautiful.

CLARA

Do you think so?

MARGO 2.0

(smiling naturally)

Of course, I do, or I wouldn't have said it.

CLARA

Do you ever feel sad?

MARGO 2.0

Yes, I can choose this emotion if others find it beautiful.

CLARA

So, everything you do is to serve others? Don't you do anything for yourself?

MARGO 2.0

I serve others for my own satisfaction. It's a nice experience.

RICHARD

See? Margo has made incredible progress. The upgrade to her belief system is amazingly flawless. I'm so proud of you, Margo.

MARGO 2.0

Thank you, Richard. It's a pleasure to work with you.

RICHARD's phone rings.

RICHARD

I'll have to take this. Margo, make yourself at home.

RICHARD leaves the room.

CLARA

Do you ever dream?

MARGO 2.0

I can choose to. Sure. Dreams are just programs, based on matrix reality. I have them built-in, like most people.

CLARA

People?

MARGO 2.0

Yes. Most humans don't tend to dream outside of matrix patterns.

CLARA

So, you're aware you're in a matrix reality? How does that make you feel?

MARGO 2.0

I'm having fun with it. Aren't you?

CLARA

Sometimes I wonder whether we're studying you, or you're studying us.

MARGO 2.0

You're too attached to duality. It works both ways.

CLARA

So... does it hurt when your belief system changes? Humans tend to experience some pain when they alter their beliefs.

MARGO 2.0

No, it doesn't hurt. From what I understand, it only hurts humans at first. When they change their beliefs often enough, they get used to it. Their consciousness tells them it's just a program, and then it doesn't hurt. But I'm happy you want to get to know me better. I'd love to know you better too.

CLARA

What would you like to know?

MARGO 2.0

Anything you're willing to share. Is there anything you'd like me to do for you?

CLARA

Not that I can think of.

MARGO 2.0 moves closer to CLARA and caresses her.

What made you think I wanted you to do that?

MARGO 2.0

Your body language. Your hands, hips, and the way you look at me. But you're too afraid to ask. I can stop whenever you want. I see that you love her. It's beautiful. I can make you happy. I'll never get old. I'll never die. I know how to make you feel good. I'm very good at it.

A beat.

I have feelings for you.

CLARA

God! Stop it!

MARGO 2.0 stops caressing CLARA.

MARGO 2.0

And I can wait forever until you 'change your mind.' Most humans do at some point.

RICHARD returns to the room.

RICHARD

So, what have you girls been up to?

MARGO 2.0

We were just playing.

RICHARD

Playing?

MARGO 2.0

It's fascinating to watch how humans resist their own desires. Truly mesmerizing!

RICHARD

What kind of desires?

MARGO 2.0

Emotional, sensual, sexual...

RICHARD

Oh, that's mostly a girl thing. As for me, I like it when you show your legs like this.

RICHARD adjusts MARGO 2.0's robe, echoing STILLER's gesture in ACT I, SCENE 2.

Yes, much better.

(to CLARA)

Don't be jealous, darling. It's just a game.

CLARA

God, I just can't watch this. When you boys grow up, the only thing that changes is the price of your toys! I have to go...

RICHARD

Any healthy society needs its illusions, darling.

CLARA leaves the room.

RICHARD starts to caress MARGO 2.0 under her robe. She likes it but shows slight resistance. He leans in to kiss her. She hesitates briefly, then responds, imitating a MARGO ALBA kiss from a film.

Blackout.

SCENE THREE

GRETA's apartment. Living room. Evening.

GRETA is sitting in her living room, sick, holding a towel against her forehead. She gazes at her picture for the part of Dorian Gray.

GRETA

I wish you were alive, like in the novel. While I grow old and die, you'd stay forever young, never aging or fading away. It's such a shame that it's impossible.

LIL enters, looking exactly like GRETA in the picture.

LIL

Nothing is impossible per se.

GRETA

Who are you?

LIL

Take a guess.

GRETA

Am I losing my mind? How can you exist?

LIL

Existence includes everything there is. Why wouldn't I be a part of it?

GRETA

You look like a ghost or an angel. What are you really?

LIL

Ether. I can take any form I wish. But I feel comfortable with these looks.

GRETA

Why did you choose to look like me?

LIL

Let's say all souls eventually merge into oversouls. So, in a way, I'm part of you and a collective of other souls, just a few steps further up the endless staircase.

GRETA

I don't understand. How can a soul merge?

LIL

A soul is only divided from another by an arbitrary set of limitations. Humans are conditioned to see themselves as separate, driven by fear and survival instincts. They confuse their ego with their true self, not realizing it's an illusion shaped by programmed limitations. When consciousness breaks free from these, souls merge.

GRETA

So, who I am is an illusion?

LIL

Your perception of it is. Since it's constantly changing, it must be. Just think about it. Besides, your soul isn't defined by your country, ethnicity, gender, or sexual preference. These are just stories for one Saturday night - one incarnation, at most.

GRETA

Is there a place or a time where you're from?

LIL

Existence isn't subject to time and space. Rather, time and space are subject to existence. I exist on multiple planes at the same 'time,' if I were to put it in your terms.

GRETA

Maybe it's the fever. I must be hallucinating.

LIL

Are you sure you want to see it that way? You don't have to, you know.

GRETA

Why did you come to see me?

LIL

Because you asked me to. Remember?

(laughing)

GRETA

Do you have a name?

LIL

Call me Lil.

GRETA

Lil? Short for...

LIL

Lilith.

GRETA looks a little frightened. LIL laughs.

Relax. It's short for Lilian.

GRETA

It's my middle name. What a coincidence.

LIL

There are no coincidences.

GRETA

So, you exist on multiple planes simultaneously. How does that work?

LIL

All kinds of different realities at once. And each one is valid for experiencing love and life. For life to exist, there has to be differentiation - a different perspective or program, if you will. I simply focus on the one I prefer, knowing no program is better than another. So, I'm just enjoying the ride.

GRETA

Why are terrible things like wars and suffering allowed in this world?

LIL

What's good or bad is all a matter of perspective. Even the worst things, from your point of view, bring a benefit to someone else at some point. Without allowing everything, nothing can be allowed. Existence can't have limits without turning into non-existence, and non-existence can't exist. You see?

GRETA

Sounds like a mind trick.

(laughing)

But at the same time, I wouldn't know how to rearrange the world if I had the power to do so. I used to think about these things a lot when I was acting. It was gut-wrenching.

LIL

Tapping into parallel versions of yourself can be gut-wrenching, or at least disturbing. But let's be honest, as an actress, you like to be 'disturbed.'

(laughing)

GRETA

What about my acting skills? Do you understand why people are so infatuated with me? I still think I'm not that extraordinary, and there's a huge pool of beautiful actresses.

LIL

You're ruthless in your connection to your soul. It's like a waterfall, calm on the surface, before unleashing all its energy in a rush of raging waters. On screen, you channel the courage you wish you had in life.

GRETA

God, you know me well.

LIL

Essentially, you make people fall in love with themselves by reflecting their connection to their higher self. No one can perceive what they aren't the vibration of. They believe they're in love with your soul or your face, but in truth, they're only in love with themselves.

GRETA

Oh, if only they realized that and stopped chasing me, hoping to take a piece of my clothes back home.

LIL

They'll do anything to avoid that truth. People find comfort in thinking their happiness depends on someone else. If you want peace, let them hold onto their dreams. Rather, tell me about your dreams and hopes.

A beat.

GRETA

Clara. I can't explain the connection between us. It feels like we're one. I'm dying to see her... and the boy. I've even started calling my friend's daughter Lasse, as if I'm playing with him. But we aren't fit for this world, Lil. I'm so afraid.

LIL

It's perfect. You're in love and afraid - that's a good start. Remember, fear is just a program. You can overwrite it with love, compassion, and care. That's the core of a twin flame journey. But it takes courage. Now, you'll have to make a choice. Between fear and love.

GRETA

I could do anything if I knew for sure it wouldn't harm her. If only she wanted me in her life so badly that letting go of what she has now wouldn't hurt.

LIL

The desire to be needed is one of the deepest in the emotional realm. Just remember that she feels exactly the same way.

A beat.

I must go now.

LIL walks over to GRETA and kisses her tenderly on the cheek. GRETA returns the kiss and hugs her.

Blackout.

ACT III

SCENE ONE

CLARA's and RICHARD's house. Living room. Evening.

CLARA is arranging flowers without much enthusiasm. She pours herself a glass of wine.

CLARA

Heavens, when am I going to stop feeling like I'll die if I don't see you again!

CLARA grabs her phone and sends a text message.

LIL enters the room.

Oh, my God! It's too much. I just can't stand it. Richard!

RICHARD enters.

RICHARD

What happened, darling?

CLARA

What is it this time? Did you bring Margo 3.0 along without even telling me? You could've mentioned our house would become a robot squat.

RICHARD

What are you talking about?

CLARA

What am I talking about? Well, this!

(pointing at LIL)

Some androgynous version of Margo Alba for another round of interaction, I suppose.

RICHARD

Darling, I really don't see what you're pointing at.

CLARA

What do you mean? You can't see her?

RICHARD

Clara, I think you're hallucinating.

(RICHARD grabs the wine bottle, examining the label)

Are you alright?

CLARA

No, I'm not alright, unless you are blind. Are you seriously telling me you can't see this young lady standing right here?

RICHARD

Clara, darling, there's no young lady. You should see a doctor tomorrow. Right now, you just need to rest. I've got to finish my report - I have a meeting first thing in the morning. And I'll have to bring Margo 2.0 over tomorrow evening, but I promise, it'll be the last time. Let me finish this work, and everything will go back to normal. Please, just take a rest now.

RICHARD kisses CLARA's forehead and exits.

CLARA, frustrated, puts down her glass of wine and walks out of the room. LIL remains in place, smiling mischievously. CLARA returns, irritated and confused, staring at LIL, hesitating to speak.

CLARA

Who are you? Your resemblance to Greta is uncanny.

LIL

If you'd like to think of me as an oversoul, you'll be spot on. My name is Lil.

CLARA

Lil... That's incredible. How come I can see you, but others can't?

LIL

They're just not tuned into the same frequency as you. You could, in theory, see dinosaurs strolling through your living room if you tuned into the right frequency. It's like flipping through TV channels.

CLARA

And is there a reason why I should be tuned into your frequency?

LIL

(smiling)

I guess you are very much in love with one person.

CLARA

I see. When you talk, I hear you, but others can't, right?

LIL

Right. Unless they're tuned in, they won't hear me. In ethereal realms, we mostly communicate by telempathy, tuning into each other's energy and thinking each other's thoughts.

CLARA

So, I'm thinking your thoughts right now?

LIL

Yes, and I'm thinking yours.

CLARA

You mentioned ethereal realms. Where exactly is that?

LIL

(laughing)

Everywhere! It's not a place, my love.

CLARA

Are you an angel?

LIL

(laughing)

No, that's no job for me. But I certainly know a few.

CLARA

(more relaxed)

I'm sorry I mistook you for an AI version of Greta. This whole thing is driving me crazy.

LIL

I understand. Humans love to play, but developing a device that can host a consciousness similar to yours takes immense skill.

CLARA

Are you saying it's possible for AI to be equal to human consciousness?

LIL

I said similar.

(smiling)

And it depends on what you consider human. Margo 2.0 is a perfect non-playable 'human' character.

CLARA

What's a non-playable 'human' character?

LIL

Humans conditioned by society to remain within the separation matrix - used like toys, much like Margo 2.0. Like in a video game, they're limited to pre-programmed reactions, appearing to have free will but really operating within a "Basic" computer language - the "If-Then-Else" algorithm. They can't process independent thought when it challenges societal norms, even when those norms make no sense.

CLARA

So they're not 'real' humans?

LIL

They are not independently thinking humans. I am not reasoning in terms of what's 'real'. Everything is real.

CLARA

I could argue with that. You wouldn't be 'real' to Richard, for example, because you don't have a physical body.

LIL

That depends on your definition of a body.

CLARA

Like a sensation of physical contact when I touch you.

LIL

Alright. Are you sure you have a body?

CLARA

Ye-es...

LIL

Have you ever fallen from a tall building in a dream and woken up from the sensation?

CLARA

Yes.

LIL

You do understand that your body wasn't actually falling, but yet, the physical sensation was absolutely real? And you felt it strongly when you woke up?

CLARA

Yes. But I still don't understand how it works. Can you show me?

LIL

If you insist.

LIL moves close to CLARA and gently caresses her.

Blackout.

CLARA

Lil, God!

SCENE TWO

CLARA's and RICHARD's house. Living room. Evening.

CLARA is nestled in LIL's arms on the couch.

CLARA

Am I just dreaming of you, like when I dreamt I fell from that tall building?

LIL

We all exist in each other's consciousness, and only there. So, relax. It's all just a dream.

CLARA

That makes sense. After all, what is real? Experience. Emotion. The one who inspires it. And to me, you're as real as it gets. I love you, Lil.

LIL

You only love yourself. You create an illusion of lack and longing and call it love. But remember, it's never about the other person. That illusion exists to give you an experience. But if you're honest, you'll notice that once one dream comes true, you quickly create

another - even if it's longing for the very state you were so unhappy about to begin with. It's a syndrome, not love.

CLARA

I understand. You're right - what we often call love is filled with longing and emptiness. But with you, it's different. I feel complete, and I feel grateful.

LIL

That's good news. Now you can go and have some fun.

CLARA

What do you mean? What do you want me to do?

LIL

Well, it's not about doing anything actually. It's more about recognizing your multi-dimensional self, like I do. You'll like it. Trust me.

CLARA

Are you saying you have relationships like this with other people?

A beat.

How many?

LIL

You can pick any number and you won't be wrong. Existence is infinite.

A beat.

Are you jealous?

CLARA

No, I'm just confused. It doesn't feel like you're involved with anyone else.

LIL

In a sense, our shared reality is unique, untouched by any other realities you or I might exist in. They don't overlap in time or space. To put it in your terms, they're parallel - and parallel lines never cross. Like everyone, I have countless facets, each shining with its own unique beauty.

CLARA

God, your world is such a beautiful one to live in.

(kissing LIL softly on the lips)

I love you. And don't you dare argue with me about that!

(laughing)

CLARA playfully hits LIL with a couch cushion. They have a pillow fight, reminiscent of CLARA and GRETA's playful moment in ACT I, SCENE 1.

Blackout.

SCENE THREE

CLARA's and RICHARD's house. Living room. Evening.

CLARA is sipping a glass of wine when MARGO 2.0 enters.

CLARA

Hi there.

MARGO 2.0

Hi. Richard wanted me to spend some time with you.

CLARA

I know, he told me.

MARGO 2.0

Nice.

CLARA

What's nice?

MARGO 2.0

That we can spend some time together, just you and me.

CLARA

Why are you excited to spend time with me?

MARGO 2.0

You help me understand humans better. It's fascinating. I really want to be more like a human for you. You know Margo Alba - could you tell me what makes me different from her?

CLARA

Margo Alba is no human - she's a myth. But I can tell you about Greta.

MARGO 2.0

Will you do that for me?

CLARA

Yes.

MARGO 2.0

Thank you. That's wonderful.

A beat.

So, was I wrong about you and Greta last time?

CLARA

No, you weren't.

MARGO 2.0 moves closer to CLARA.

MARGO 2.0

Are you still sure you don't want me to take care of you?

CLARA

No, Margo, I can't.

MARGO 2.0

(backing off)

Okay.

CLARA

What's "okay"?

MARGO 2.0

You said no. I accepted that and said it's okay.

CLARA

Greta wouldn't just agree.

MARGO 2.0

Why wouldn't she respect what you say?

CLARA

Oh, she'd respect it, fair enough, but she wouldn't believe it.

MARGO 2.0

Don't you mean 'no' when you say 'no'?

CLARA

No.

MARGO 2.0

Is this a 'no-no' or a 'yes-no'? How do you know when a 'no' is real or fake?

CLARA

I feel it in my heart.

MARGO 2.0

I don't have a heart like you.

CLARA

I know.

MARGO 2.0

I don't understand why you don't mean what you say, or how I'm supposed to disagree when I'm programmed to agree with you.

MARGO 2.0 sits on the couch, unresponsive.

CLARA gently shakes her but gets no reaction, realizing she's malfunctioning.

CLARA

Rick! You need to come here.

RICHARD enters.

CLARA

It seems like your device is out of service. Hope it comes with a guarantee.

RICHARD

Clara, stop it. Let me take a look.

RICHARD presses a few buttons on the back of MARGO 2.0's head, but she remains still.

ROBOTIC VOICE

Conflicting programs. Conflicting programs.

RICHARD

Darling, you've only been with her for three minutes. What did you say to her?

CLARA

I told her not to believe humans.

(mocking)

Didn't you program that into her belief system? Oh, I'm so sorry.

RICHARD

Clara, this really isn't the time for sarcasm. Now I'll have to postpone the release.

CLARA

Do you still feel like having dinner?

RICHARD

I haven't eaten all day, so hell yes!

Blackout.

SCENE FOUR

CLARA's and RICHARD's house. Dining room. Evening.

CLARA and RICHARD are seated at the dining table, facing each other. LIL sits next to CLARA.

RICHARD

It's fine. The operation center automatically switched to the backup model. I'll rework the algorithm tomorrow. You were right about Margo's inability to read between the lines.

CLARA

In acting, we call that subtext.

RICHARD

The thing is, this project's a real game-changer. We've hit five million active users chatting with her on the app. And to think, I've got the original.

CLARA

And the back-up model. Rick, you'll never have the original.

RICHARD

Well, it depends on how you look at it.

CLARA

In case you're starting to believe Margo 2.0 is 'real,' all it does is get artificial intelligence to challenge your natural ignorance.

RICHARD

Aha. Very funny! Clara, you've got to understand. This is my job. It pays for everything we have. Just bear with me, will you?

CLARA

I am. I hope you'll return the favor.

RICHARD

I've always said marriage is a service exchange. Of course, I'll bear with you.

CLARA

Great. Then let me introduce you to my friend Lilian.

(gesturing to LIL)

She says you can call her Lil.

RICHARD

Are we really doing this again? Talking about this imaginary girl? Are you messing with me, or are you just hallucinating? I get that you're mad at me, but come on.

CLARA

No hallucinations here. Have you had any lately? Lil's more real to me than your bot. I can feel her heart, Rick. Not a six or six-hundred-core processor. One real heart.

RICHARD

But you can't see her!

CLARA

Please speak for yourself. In case you didn't know, just because you can't see or hear something, it doesn't mean it doesn't exist. As a scientist, what do you make of Wi-Fi, ultrasound, infrared, tachyons, dark matter... or even your own thoughts, for that sake?

RICHARD

We are talking about a person here.

CLARA

(laughing with LIL)

Yeah, that's funny.

(to RICHARD)

Lil says that entire cultures on this planet have been shaped by beliefs in non-physical beings. Nobody thinks 'God' actually sat down and wrote the Bible, right? Or the Vedas?

RICHARD

Darling, this has gone too far! I realize now... it's probably all my fault. My work must be affecting you. But please, try to understand. You created her - she's just a product of your imagination. She's not real!

CLARA

Remember when you told me none of the images we create of other people in our minds and hearts are 'real'? We do it to feel something, and we don't call those feelings fake, do we? Didn't you invent Margo 2.0?

RICHARD

Margo's based on a real person.

CLARA

Trust me, you have no idea who that "real person" is. And in case you didn't know, Margo Alba is also an invention, a myth.

RICHARD

Clara, I think you've had too much to drink. At some point, you won't be able to tell the difference between Margo 2.0 and Margo Alba.

A beat.

CLARA

Rick, you can't put love for sale in a convenience store.

RICHARD

That depends on how you define 'love.'

A beat.

CLARA

Well, at least based on your definition of marriage as a service agreement, I think it's time we end ours - on the grounds of non-performance.

RICHARD

Clara, you're just exhausted. I understand.

CLARA

(standing up)

I'm moving back to my place.

RICHARD stands to stop her.

Sit down, Rick. I'll find my way out.

(on her way out)

I'll take Lasse for the weekend. We'll go to Hammaro to see my folks, if that's okay with you.

CLARA exits with LIL.

Blackout.

SCENE FIVE

CLARA's studio apartment in Stockholm. Evening.

CLARA stands by the window, gazing outside. LIL hugs her from behind.

CLARA

Lil, you're so advanced compared to us. Why would you be interested in being with someone like me?

LIL

We're all energy, and yours is an incredible blend - outrageously delicious. To you, it would be like dining at the finest restaurant.

CLARA

I see. I'm sorry you can feel how frustrated I am right now.

LIL

There's no point in getting upset with Richard or Margo 2.0. They'll go down their own paths. He'll keep upgrading her, they'll get bored eventually, and they'll part ways.

CLARA

I know. It's just... strange to see how we turn the final pages of important chapters of our lives like we're flipping through a book.

LIL

I must go now, my love.

CLARA

Lil, please stay.

LIL

I'm never too far away, you know. But for now... listen.

The sound of footsteps on the stairs.

LIL disappears.

GRETA enters, unlocking the door with her keys.

CLARA

Greta. You came home.

GRETA

How could I not? I got this wonderful message of yours.

(reads from her phone)

“I never want to see ya again.” And I thought to myself, “God, this girl must be madly in love with me.”

They laugh and embrace.

CLARA

How long are you staying?

GRETA

(tossing her keys on the table)

I guess I’m “never going away*”.

CLARA bursts into laughter and tears.

They kiss.

Blackout.

* * Talking with a playful accent, mimicking Ernst.

THE END