

COMMUNIQUE NUMBER 10

*“But one day perhaps, we’ll find refuge in the true reality.
Meanwhile, can I tell you how much I am against it?”*

Alejandra Pizarnik
Musical Hell

ACT I

SCENE 1.

Evening.

On the top floor of a building.

Windows look onto the city.

Lights flash outside.

Next to a door, HASSAN, an envelope in his hand, and a child in the dark of the doorway.

HASSAN Can you mail this for me?

THE CHILD What is it?

HASSAN Death threats.

THE CHILD Against who?

HASSAN The Minister of Justice.

THE CHILD You think they read them over there?

HASSAN I think a lot more than that.

THE CHILD That they’re afraid?

HASSAN That I’m going to execute them.

THE CHILD What good does that do?

HASSAN Just one night of quiet sleep.

THE CHILD What good is it to shoot at people?

HASSAN It’s the courthouse I want to shoot at.

THE CHILD What good is it to shoot at the courthouse?

HASSAN I don’t always have an answer to your questions.

HASSAN hands him an envelope.

THE CHILD And you give me what in exchange?

HASSAN gives him a bill.

THE CHILD More.

HASSAN When it's done.

THE CHILD takes the envelope and the bill.

THE CHILD If you need me for anything else.

HASSAN I'm going.

THE CHILD Where?

HASSAN To search for my brother.

THE CHILD What good is that if he's dead?

HASSAN Go away.

THE CHILD goes.

SCENE 2.

Night.

Outskirts.

Room of a seedy hotel next to an enormous cemetery.

Clashes in the distance.

An OLD MAN snoozing in a wheelchair, a little radio next to him.

The television hangs on the wall making a crackling sound. No image.

DAMIEN is in the doorway.

Water is running in the bathroom.

DAMIEN Don't yell. Don't call anyone. I'm not one of those guys fighting each other out there. You have nothing to fear. I respect my elders. I don't care about politics.

The OLD MAN doesn't respond.

DAMIEN My place looks onto the cemetery.

He goes to look out the window.

DAMIEN Did you see the patrols?

No reaction.

DAMIEN The patrols?

Silence.

DAMIEN Is that your daughter in there?

Silence.

DAMIEN You don't have to be afraid. I've been here a week. I don't take part in the riots.

ANNE comes out of the bathroom with her hair soaking wet.

ANNE Don't push it, he's out, he had his time, do what I did, take what there is to take here and push off.

She disappears again in the bathroom then comes back with a big bag which she's filled with objects taken from the room.

DAMIEN tries to adjust the picture on the television.

DAMIEN Why doesn't this work?

ANNE I took the remote and the antenna, I'll take the screen next.

DAMIEN They're saying the guy who killed Lakdar did it in self-defense.

ANNE Just like me.

DAMIEN What does that mean?

ANNE That I live in a wasteland, a house without heat, and it'll be winter soon. I grab whatever is lying around. Help me take off these sheets.

ANNE takes the sheets off the bed.

Suddenly the OLD MAN comes out of his drowsiness.

OLD MAN Am I dead?

ANNE Not yet mister.

OLD MAN It's just that I don't feel much anymore.

ANNE It'll come back, mister, it always comes back.

The OLD MAN falls right back into his sleep.

ANNE rolls the sheets into a ball and puts them in her bag.

ANNE He was crossing the street in front of the hotel with his chair and I helped him. At the front desk, he said I was his daughter. Old men, they're the easiest to rob, they cooperate. And you, what do you do?

DAMIEN I work.

ANNE As soon as you came in, I knew right away you had problems.

She tries to take down the television.

DAMIEN turns on the little radio.

Crackling.

RADIO Perimeter 6 is blocked. Perimeter 7 is blocked. Number 8 will be in less than ten minutes.

DAMIEN turns off the radio.

DAMIEN Where are we?

ANNE North Quarter.

Suddenly the OLD MAN comes out of his drowsiness.

OLD MAN I'm dead, yes or no?

ANNE A little patience mister.

The OLD MAN falls right back into his sleep.

ANNE He came here to die. He didn't want to go surrounded by the whimpering of his relatives. He took off from his house and rolled fifteen miles before landing here.

DAMIEN Are the patrols close to the hotel?

ANNE I can't get it by myself.

DAMIEN Where do you have to go to get by the inspectors?

ANNE The main roads are all blocked but I know all the short cuts. Help me and I'll tell you how to get out.

They take the television down from its base.

DAMIEN I can't stay in the city.

ANNE Of course you can't stay there. You'd die of boredom. Everyone locks themselves in, everyone hides. Why be twenty when you could be sixty? That's people's morality! Isn't that true mister?

OLD MAN TELL ME THE TRUTH.

ANNE Shit.

OLD MAN I'm dead, yes or no?

ANNE Not so loud mister, please.

OLD MAN YES OR NO?

ANNE Alive.

They leave with the television. The OLD MAN falls back into his sleep.

ANNE enters again, takes a bedside lamp and leaves.

The lights of the city sweep across the room.

The OLD MAN is alone.

The water continues to run in the bathroom.

SCENE 3.

The same night.

Apartment on the top floor of a building.

Lights flash outside.

The main room is almost empty with a mattress in a corner.

MARLENE stands against the wall with a backpack at her feet.

HASSAN comes out of his mother's room.