

*Kokoschka is brought in on a stretcher. He is wounded. Reserl knocks on the door.*

**KOKOSCHKA** Who is it?!

**RESERL** Did you call me, Captain?

**KOKOSCHKA** Yes, Reserl, I did. Please come in and close the door behind you.

**RESERL** Anything you say, Captain.

**KOKOSCHKA** Reserl, I called you because I want to ask you a question. Listen carefully, and take your time before you answer. If you say »Yes« now, there will be no way back. – Do you want me to continue or should I stop now, and we'll forget this conversation ever happened?

**RESERL** Go on, Captain. Please go on.

**KOKOSCHKA** Reserl, I am going to disclose to you a very intimate secret now.

**RESERL** Oh! – Is it about the large package that arrived this morning from Munich?

**KOKOSCHKA** Did anyone talk to you about it? Did anybody say anything to you about it? Did Dr. Posse say anything?

**RESERL** No, Captain, no one said anything.

**KOKOSCHKA** Then how did you know it was about the package?

**RESERL** I saw how excited you were when it arrived, Captain.

**KOKOSCHKA** Reserl, I am going to entrust you with an extraordinary task.

**RESERL** Anything you say, Captain.

**KOKOSCHKA** Can I trust you, Reserl? As much as I would trust myself?

**RESERL** You can trust me much more than that, Captain.

**KOKOSCHKA** Really? How is that possible, Reserl?

**RESERL** You do not love yourself as much as... one could love you, Captain.

**KOKOSCHKA** Reserl, I called you because I cannot open that package myself. It contains something very precious, something very valuable, that I've been longing to see for many weeks already, and I could hardly wait for it to arrive, and yet now I'm afraid to look at it. – You're probably thinking I must be crazy.

**RESERL** No, Captain. Those feelings are not strange to me. I experience them every morning, before opening the door of your room to bring you your breakfast.

**KOKOSCHKA** Reserl, do you feel capable of opening the package for me?

**RESERL** You really want ME to open that package?

**KOKOSCHKA** Yes.

**RESERL** Then I will do it.

**KOKOSCHKA** I will close my eyes now, and you will open the package, you will look at it, and then you will tell me precisely what you see.

*Kokoschka closes his eyes. Reserl walks over to the case and starts to untie the ropes, then to tear off the wrapping paper, and finally the naked case appears.*

**RESERL** Are you really sure you want me to open it?

**KOKOSCHKA** Yes, I am. Go on. Open it!

**RESERL** Alright. I'll open it!

*Reserl opens the case and exclaims with horror and disgust.*

**RESERL** Ughghghgh!

**KOKOSCHKA** What is it, Reserl? What's the matter?

**RESERL** What an ugly monster! That's a... Is that supposed to be a woman?

**KOKOSCHKA** Doesn't it look like one?

**RESERL** I'm not sure.

**KOKOSCHKA** Does it look... alive?

**RESERL** No, she looks rotten. It's dreadful!

**KOKOSCHKA** How old is she?

**RESERL** I don't know, Captain. She could be 35 or 40 or... 60 or 70...

**KOKOSCHKA** Describe her to me, please. In every detail. What does her head look like?

**RESERL** She has a big head. A very big head. Big lines.

**KOKOSCHKA** And her neck?

**RESERL** It's thick.

**KOKOSCHKA** And her belly?

**RESERL** Her belly is bulging - like a balloon. And her breasts are... huge. And heavy.

**KOKOSCHKA** Can her mouth be opened?

**RESERL** Yes. Her mouth can be opened. Very wide.

**KOKOSCHKA** And what's inside? Are there teeth, is there a tongue?

**RESERL** Yes, she has a tongue... (*checking it*) but no teeth.

**KOKOSCHKA** What a shame. I was hoping she would have. - Is she dressed or is she... naked?

**RESERL** She is dressed.

**KOKOSCHKA** What does her skin look like? The skin, is it... is it...

**RESERL** It looks very unhealthy. Like some kind of skin disease. It reminds me of a polar-bear skin. I'm afraid it's wrinkled.

**KOKOSCHKA** Can't you be more precise?

**RESERL** Well... It looks like she has fatty deposits under her skin, creating a revolting, irregular unevenness around her hips and buttocks. And the same is true for the skin on her arms and back...

**KOKOSCHKA** Enough, Reserl! Enough... - Now let me ask me one last question, Reserl: What does her face look like? Her face... what's the expression on her face?

**RESERL** Her face is rigid. Severe. It is a travesty of... of a human expression. She seems... she seems to be mocking you.

**KOKOSCHKA** Thank you. Reserl, would you also be willing to undress her now for me?

**RESERL** Yes, of course, Captain.

**KOKOSCHKA** Then, please, do it. And tell me when she's ready.

*Reserl takes off the puppet's dress, supporting it discreetly from behind like a puppeteer. Then she hides behind the doll.*

**RESERL** I'm ready now, Captain. She is... exposed.

*Kokoschka opens his eyes and stares at the doll. Reserl moves the doll in Kokoschka's direction, and opens its arms to him. Kokoschka embraces the doll. Reserl cooperates, manipulating the doll with all the tenderness that she herself feels for Kokoschka. Music. They dance.*