

# **Ophelia Carries a Crown of Blood**

**By Andrea Miranda**

## OPHELIA CARRIES A CROWN OF BLOOD

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*Suddenly, as her eyelids softly part,  
the river unfurls in a crimson hue.  
Her breath, the essence of ripe apples,  
mingles with the water's embrace,  
while a magnificent tiara  
crowns her head of braided blooms.  
She becomes a slumbering carnival—  
a woman whose breasts  
gracefully shimmer into scales.  
The very air begins to weave wings,  
spinning threads of sword and blood.  
A century drifts like a whisper,  
yet Ophelia,  
you persist  
in your timeless rebirth from the water.*

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### CHARACTER BREAKDOWN

**EMMA:** 20s, female, any ethnicity, lesbian. She has a vibrant emotional range and navigates tumultuous relationships.

**BERNARDA:** 40s, female, any ethnicity, no specified sexuality. BERNARDA is EMMA's and Inés' theater professor.

**INES:** 20s, female, any ethnicity, bisexual. EMMA's best friend.

**OTHER THEATER STUDENTS:** The play includes other theater class students, each contributing unique dynamics and interactions that enhance the overall tension and richness of the story.

*If the text is both bold and in italics, it indicates that it's an excerpt from one of the works: "Hamlet" by William Shakespeare, "Calderón" by Pier Paolo Pasolini, or "HamletMachine" by Heiner Müller.*

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## ACT 1 SCENE I

*The main space is an empty theater. Monday. A university theater in Latin America (or any other location). It's 8 in the morning, and STUDENTS begin to enter the space. They take seats in the front rows. In the center, leaning on the edge of the stage, is a woman a little over 40 years old.*

**BERNARDA.** Good morning!

**JULIA.** Good morning, Professor!

**BERNARDA.** Julia, right?

**JULIA.** Yes.

**BERNARDA.** How could I forget! I still remember the showcase from last semester... Incredible portrayal of Sasha in *Platonov*, and the costume looked divine on you!

**JULIA.** Thank you very much.

**BERNARDA.** *(Smiling.)* You're welcome...

**MARCO.** Hi there, good morning!

**BERNARDA.** Good morning, young man.

**MARCO.** *(Playful, making a bow.)* Ladies...

*Bernarda laughs.*

**BERNARDA.** I hope you enjoyed your vacation.

*Cristiano, Leonardo, and Pablo enter.*

**CRISTIANO.** Good morning!

**JULIA.** Good morning!

**PABLO.** *(While eating a donut with coffee.)* Julia!

*Julia grabs her bag and sits next to Pablo.*

**JULIA.** How lucky we are to have morning classes! I thought you were going to enroll in Luciana's afternoon course.

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**PABLO.** I got permission from work. *(Julia invades Pablo's personal space and opens her mouth. Pablo offers her a piece of his donut.)*

**JULIA.** Mmmm!

**PABLO.** Delicious, right?

**BERNARDA.** Well, it's past 8:10, so let's get started.

**PABLO.** *(To Julia.)* Kiss it.

*Julia plays around a bit while taking another bite of the donut.*

*Emma and Inés enter hurriedly.*

**BERNARDA.** *(Observing them.)* Right on time!

**INÉS.** Sorry, professor. We were on the San Murillo bus, and at this hour, it's impossible to arrive on time.

**BERNARDA.** Don't worry. I'm not a monster, despite what you might have heard about me. *(Some laugh.)* Now then... Good morning! My name is Bernarda Batú, and for all of you who enrolled in the morning acting course, I'll be your professor on Mondays and Wednesdays. Before we begin with the course outline, I'd like us to introduce ourselves. You'll say your name, your age, and one thing that scares you. I'll start. As I mentioned just now, my name is Bernarda. I am... *(smiling.)* let's leave that to each of your imaginations, and I'm afraid of the fluttering of moths. Anyone else?

**JULIA.** Good morning. My name is Julia, I'm 23 years old, and I'm afraid of streetlights when they flicker in the dark.

**PABLO.** Pablo. 26. Balloons.

**LEONARDO.** *(To Pablo.)* Balloons, really?

**PABLO.** Since I was very young. I hate the static sound they make.

**BERNARDA.** Let's continue, please.

**MARCO.** Well, even though everyone already knows my name, I'll introduce myself again. I'm Marco, I'm 26 years old, and I don't like the smell of fresh cement in the cemetery. Feels like I'm being buried alive.

**BERNARDA.** Anyone else?

**EMMA.** My name is Emma, I'm 23 years old, and I'm afraid of the passage of time.

**BERNARDA.** Hmm...

**INÉS.** I'm Inés, I'm 22 years old, and... I think the idea of drowning scares me.

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**BERNARDA.** Pure, virginal!

**CRISTIANO.** What did I miss?

**BERNARDA.** The meaning behind Inés' name.

**CRISTIANO.** (*Sarcastically.*) Perhaps the meaning because—

**BERNARDA.** There's no need to disclose personal matters.

**INÉS.** (*Defensively.*) Personal matters? Cristiano, I'm going to kill you!  
*Cristiano makes a funny face.*

**CRISTIANO.** Well, as Inés just said, my name is Cristiano, I'm 24 years old, and flying cockroaches scare me.

**INÉS.** Clearly...

**CRISTIANO.** What does that mean?

**LEONARDO.** (*Interrupting Cristiano.*) Leonardo, 25 years old, and I'm terrified of sleep paralysis.

*The students make comments and talk among themselves.*

**BERNARDA.** Alright... This semester, we're delving into the world of Classical Theater. Did you all get to see the exams from last period?

**MARCO.** I did.

**JULIA.** Me too...

**EMMA.** Me as well.

**BERNARDA.** And what did you think?

**MARCO.** I loved the scene from Mark Antony and Cleopatra.

**JULIA.** If I had to choose, I think I'd go with Oedipus Rex.

**LEONARDO.** Marcelo is spectacular!

**BERNARDA.** Of course, the students did a magnificent job. I'll assign many of those scenes this semester too. Take five minutes to read through the syllabus, and if you have any questions, write them on the back. (*Bernarda walks around and hands out the course outlines. While doing so, she moves away from the light and breaks the fourth wall, making eye contact with the audience while handing them the paper. To audience members.*) Here you go. Here you go...

*The syllabus reads as follows:*

**JULIA:** Flickering street lights.

**PABLO:** Balloons.

**MARCO:** The smell of fresh cement in the cemetery.

**EMMA:** The passage of time.

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**INÉS:** *Drowning.*

**CRISTIANO:** *Flying cockroaches.*

**LEONARDO:** *Sleep paralysis.*

*(Bernarda approaches the students.)*

**BERNARDA.** We can take our break now. Let's be back in 15 minutes. *The students leave the theater except for Emma and Inés. Bernarda sits in one of the chairs and observes them.*

**INÉS.** *(To Emma, who is lying on the stage.)* Hey, pretty, come here!

**EMMA.** Inés, let me rest.

**INÉS.** Come and rest with me. *(Victimizing herself.)* You don't love me.

**BERNARDA.** *(Intrigued.)* Are you two a couple? *(Inés and Emma look at each other and laugh openly.)*

**INÉS.** No, professor. Emma always rejects me. I wanted to be with her romantically, but we're friends. Oh—and we live together.

**BERNARDA.** I see.

**INÉS.** But Emma is a lesbian, and I'm bisexual.

**EMMA.** Inés, how inappropriate!

**INÉS.** *(Laughing.)* Well, well, I'm going to calm down.

**BERNARDA.** How long have you been living together?

**EMMA.** Not long. About two months or so.

**BERNARDA.** Oh, how beautiful youth is! I remember when I was in my 20s.

**INÉS.** Or not...

**BERNARDA.** Where do you live?

**EMMA.** In San Murillo.

**BERNARDA.** A beautiful neighborhood. Only the two of you live there?

**INÉS.** No. We live with a third friend who also studies theater.

**BERNARDA.** Hmm...

**INÉS.** *(Continuing.)* ... and with Emma's girlfriend. But it's a very large apartment. It has three bedrooms and two bathrooms. *(The students start to enter and take their seats. Emma and Inés also return to their respective places. The students and Bernarda freeze their bodies. We hear the ticking of a clock to represent the passage of time.)*

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**BERNARDA.** Well, if there are no more questions, then we'll see each other on Wednesday. Arrive on time and bring comfortable work clothes.

**CRISTIANO.** When are you going to assign us scenes? It's not clear in the course program.

**BERNARDA.** I think in three or four weeks. It all depends on how we progress in the upcoming lessons.

**JULIA.** Bernarda, may I have a moment?

**BERNARDA.** *(Heading out.)* Of course, come with me to the Arts Faculty, and we can talk on the way. *(The students say goodbye and leave. Only Emma and Inés remain in the space.)*

**EMMA.** What did you think of the first class?

**INÉS.** I don't know. The professor is kind of weird, isn't she?

**EMMA.** She just over-articulates when she speaks and makes a lot of eye contact.

**INÉS.** *(Laughing.)* I know, right?

**EMMA.** See you tonight?

**INÉS.** I don't think so. I have to work at the bar.

**EMMA.** Well, if you come in late, don't wake me up.

**INÉS.** *(Over-articulating.)* I'll—wake—you—up.  
*Both joke a bit and leave the theater.*

## SCENE II

*A background percussion track plays as all the students, dressed in black, move through the theater, following Bernarda's instructions.*

**BERNARDA.** Water. *(As she says the word, each student moves their body as if they are immersed in water. Walking among the students.)*

While continuing what you're doing, associate an emotion with the element you're exploring. You can let your voice out freely. *(The students add emotion and complement their unique movements.)*

Water. *(Some students cry, while others laugh as they continue the exercise.)*

Fire. *(Some students associate the word with anger and begin*

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*to scream, while others start moaning in a sexual manner.)* Excellent, that's it! *(Beat.)* Earth. *(Bernarda moves away from the students and positions herself directly in front of them.)* When I clap my hands, you'll start interacting with each other. *(Bernarda claps her hands. The students observe the person closest to them and begin improvising an intangible scenario, interacting with one another.)* Air. *(She waits.)* Earth. *(She waits.)* Fire. *(She waits.)* Water. *(She waits.)* Fire. Fire. Fire. *(The lights shift from bright to dark, and the music turns eerie.)* Fire. Fire. Fire. *(The students begin to scream and moan louder. Bernarda observes them carefully.)* Now take it to the extreme! *(The students moan even louder, some over others. They start to gather into groups of three or four, getting closer and closer, until, at the center of the space, their movements and sounds simulate an orgy. Excited and almost breathless.)* Exactly, that's it! *(Beat.)* Let's start wrapping up the exercise. *(The students separate and decrease the intensity.)* Water. *(She waits.)* Silence. *(The sweaty and breathless students remain on the floor. Bernarda walks among them again.)* And that's precisely what Classical Theater is about: the transition of emotions alongside the harmony of the text. We feel first, and we let the voice emerge from that feeling. We don't worry so much about the physical actions but rather the images they create. *(Beat.)* Well, see you next time. Come mentally prepared because I'll assign the scenes. *(Excitedly, the students begin to talk among themselves as they prepare to leave the theater.)*

**CRISTIANO.** *(To Emma.)* Excellent, Emma. I'm sure Bernarda will give you the role of Lady Macbeth.

**INÉS.** *(Jokingly.)* That's my character.

**JULIA.** *(Approaching.)* That was intense!

**LEONARDO.** It's Professor Bernarda!

**JULIA.** Did you all see last year's Contemporary Theater exam?

**MARCO.** I didn't see it.

**JULIA.** *(Whispering.)* It was a private showcase, by invitation only. All the students were naked, and the scenes were really heavy.

**PABLO.** That's why I enrolled in Bernarda's course this semester.

**EMMA.** How embarrassing! I could never undress just for a university scene.

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**LEONARDO.** Then you should reconsider wanting to be an actress, dear.

**INÉS.** Sounds exciting!

**LEONARDO.** I would go naked. I don't mind being seen completely. Surely, the feeling must be liberating.

**JULIA.** That's not until next semester!

**PABLO.** Bernarda is daring. I'm sure she'll give us a taste.  
*The students laugh and say goodbye.*

### SCENE III

*In the midst of darkness, EMMA and BERNARDA's voices can be heard.*

**EMMA (voice-over).** Hello, Professor!

**BERNARDA (voice-over).** Call me Bernarda...

**EMMA (voice-over).** Bernarda.

**BERNARDA (voice-over).** The other students are outside.

**EMMA (voice-over).** And why is that?

**BERNARDA (voice-over).** It's such a beautiful morning that I decided to assign scenes in the park. Let's go! *(Beat.)*

**BERNARDA (voice-over).** *(Complimenting Emma.)* You look beautiful today, Emma!

**EMMA (voice-over).** *(Shyly.)* Thank you. Since you said we weren't going to exercise, I decided to wear makeup and put on eyeliner.

**BERNARDA (voice-over).** *(Correcting her initial statement, chuckling at her own remark.)* No, Emma. I've seen you sweaty and lying on the ground, and you're still breathtaking.

**EMMA (voice-over).** *(Awkward pause.)* Thank you very much. *(The lights (greens and yellows) come up, and the sound of nature is heard. Each of the students is in a row motionless and silent. Bernarda and Emma approach them. Upon arrival, Emma positions herself at the corner of the row, and Bernarda stands in front of the students.)*

**BERNARDA.** Cristiano and Inés... Macbeth and Lady Macbeth.  
*(Cristiano and Inés smile and take a step back.)*

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**BERNARDA.** Marco and Leonardo... Oedipus and Creon. (*Marco and Leonardo take a step back.*) Pablo and Emma... Hamlet and Ophelia. (*Pablo and Emma take a step back.*) Julia and Cristiano... Electra and Orestes.

**CRISTIANO.** Two scenes?

**BERNARDA.** (*Smiling.*) Congratulations! (*The lights change, and the sound of nature stops. We listen to the ticking of the clock to represent the passage of time. Suddenly, they are back in the theater, on another day.*) Before we leave... Form a circle around Emma. (*The students robotically turn their bodies. Emma remains in the center.*) Look at her. Isn't she beautiful? (*Beat. To Pablo.*) Don't you think so?

**PABLO.** Yes.

**BERNARDA.** But look at her closely! (*The lights dim, except for a spotlight that illuminates Emma's figure. The students and Bernarda freeze their bodies.*)

**EMMA.** (*Breaking the fourth wall.*) This happened before Easter. At first, I felt flattered, but slowly a cold sweat began to creep down my back. In one of the classes, we were doing an exercise where we had to pretend we were being strangled. (*In a single movement, the students change direction and place their hands on their respective necks, freezing in a horrified expression. Emma break the fourth wall.*) Once "dead," we had to remain on the ground until the exercise was over.

**BERNARDA.** EMMA!

**EMMA.** (*Breaking the fourth wall.*) I was already on the ground. I got up and approached Professor Bernarda.

**BERNARDA.** (*Sitting on the floor, patting the spot beside her.*) Come here! (*Emma sits next to her.*) If you're being strangled, you can't use your own hands as if they were the killer's arms. Your job as an actress is to generate resistance. (*Bernarda gives a small demonstration.*)

**BERNARDA.** Like this!

**EMMA.** I understand.

**BERNARDA.** (*Smiling.*) That's all... (*Emma lies down near Bernarda and remains silent. The students continue frozen with horrified faces.*)

**EMMA.** (*To herself, to the audience.*) And in that moment, I felt them...

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*(Bernarda looks at the audience while gently caressing Emma's back with her hands.)* Her long fingers were like icicles that penetrated my back, delving into the forbidden corners of my soul. I began to breathe inwardly. *(The students exit the space along with Bernarda. Only Emma and Inés remain. The setting changes, and we see a green sofa and a moon-shaped floor lamp. It seems like they're in an apartment's living room.)*

**INÉS.** *(Teasing Emma and imitating Bernarda.)* Everyone, look at Emma... Isn't she beautiful?

**EMMA.** *(Lighting a cigarette.)* Wasn't that incredibly strange?

**INÉS.** *(Being childish.)* Bernarda and Emma are lesbians and like each other!

**EMMA.** But - do you think the other students noticed too?

**INÉS.** Yes, of course! Cristiano looked at me, and we had to hold back our laughter.

**EMMA.** I'm not ready to perform my scene!

**INÉS.** We still have two weeks... *(Inés gets up and grabs a cigarette.)*

**EMMA.** What time do you guys perform?

**INÉS.** 9 am.

**EMMA.** Ours is at 11.

**INÉS.** But we still travel together, right?

**EMMA.** I think so. Pablo and I scheduled rehearsals before our time with Bernarda, so it doesn't change anything.

**INÉS.** Is roomie coming for dinner?

**EMMA.** No. She went to Leonardo's house early.

**INÉS.** That woman is about to have her third abortion...

**EMMA.** Inés!

**INÉS.** And Leonardo just uses her for sex. Poor thing!

**EMMA:** Don't be so harsh; she's our friend!

**INÉS.** I'm not lying. *(Changing the subject.)* I'm off to work. See you later tonight.

**EMMA:** Chao! *(Emma takes out her computer and begins checking her social media. Her Facebook page is open, displaying several unread notifications. She notices a 'like' reaction on one of her photos, given by Bernarda. Emma blushes, feeling a sense of uniqueness as no other*

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*professor had interacted with her profile before. Talking to herself.) Let's see... (Emma enters Bernarda's profile and starts looking at the photos. She scrolls through them over and over until she stops at a particular picture. Simultaneously...)*

**EMMA (voice-over).** I feel something inside, but I can't figure out what it is... It feels heavy and cinnamon-colored, like a little river stone. And the more I feel inside, the less I understand... I must be feeling cinnamon, but what is it? *(She sighs and then closes her computer.)*

### SCENE IV

*Pablo and Emma are rehearsing the scene of Hamlet and Ophelia in the theater. Bernarda has not arrived.*

**PABLO.** *Ha! Ha! Are you honest?*

**EMMA.** *My lord?*

**PABLO.** *Are you fair?*

**EMMA.** *What means your Lordship?*

**PABLO.** *That if you be honest and fair, (your honesty) should admit no discourse to your beauty. (Pablo corners Emma against a wall, then opens his eyes wide and jokingly imitates Bernarda attempting to seduce her with his gaze.)*

**EMMA.** *(Laughing.)* Pablo, don't do that!

**PABLO.** Why not? If you're beautiful— *(Attempts to kiss her. Bernarda enters the theater.)*

**BERNARDA.** Am I interrupting something important?

**PABLO.** No, Professor, we were marking the scene.

**EMMA.** *(To Pablo.)* That's what you get for being an idiot!

**BERNARDA.** I'm ready whenever you are. *(A choreography resembling a form of 'contact' dance unfolds, accompanied by the melodic sound of an accordion. Within these movements, Pablo (playing Hamlet) manipulates Emma's (as Ophelia) body, eliciting responses as she, in turn, interacts by manipulating his body.)* Stop! No, no, and no. I'm going to guide the scene.

**PABLO.** But Bernarda, we've already finished marking everything!

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**BERNARDA.** Wrong. In the play, Hamlet manipulates Ophelia, blatantly rejecting her despite his earlier promises of love. That's the reason behind her eventual descent into madness. Let's try it once more. (*Addressing Emma.*) Keep your gaze lowered. Take timid, small steps. (*Emma re-enters the space. Pablo stands at center stage.*) Lower your chin. (*Emma lowers her chin.*) Even more! (*Emma lowers her chin even more.*) Don't look at him. (*Emma avoids looking at Pablo (Hamlet).*) Keep your eyes on the ground. Do not look up unless he wants you to. (*Emma tries to follow the instruction but becomes nervous and fails.*) I said, the ground! (*Emma does as Bernarda says.*) Stay in the center of the space and do not move. (*Emma remains completely still.*) Run it again. I'll see you next week. (*Pablo says goodbye, and Emma sits in one of the chairs, disheartened. Bernarda follows her.*)

**BERNARDA.** Is something wrong?

**EMMA.** I don't resonate with the character of Ophelia.

**BERNARDA.** (*Gently reclining her head on the chair.*) Emma, did you know that I'm in love with you? (*Beat*) ... I love watching you act. It drives me crazy... (*Emma breaks the fourth wall.*)

**EMMA.** I can't recall the rest of what Bernarda said at that moment. Her words clung to my body like sharp claws. I found myself torn—intimidated, yet oddly intrigued. At the same time, discomfort stirred within me, awakening an unfamiliar and distinct sense of eroticism. I felt like a small fly, surrounded by countless watchful eyes, becoming ever more entangled in her web.

**BERNARDA.** Lady Macbeth would've been a very easy character.

**EMMA.** (*Complaining.*) I hate Ophelia. I hate her! (*Bernarda laughs.*)

**EMMA.** Bernarda, can you help me with the final monologue in the next rehearsal?

**BERNARDA.** I have a better idea... On Wednesday, I'll be waiting for my daughter for an hour after our class. The theater will be available, so we can focus on rehearsing the monologue. Does that fit your schedule?

**EMMA.** Thank you very much.

**BERNARDA.** You're welcome. (*Emma gets up and walks toward the audience. Bernarda reclines in the seat, keeping her eyes fixed on Emma.*)

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**EMMA.** *(To the audience.)* I know she's watching me. I feel her eyes on my back. And now I can't stop thinking about her. *(Conflicted.)* What is it that attracts me so much? I don't understand. Before Bernarda I was in a good relationship, and now... even during intimate moments, thoughts of the professor invade my mind. *(Bernarda exits the space, leaving Emma behind. She watches her go.)* She isn't even a lesbian! She has a daughter and apparently an older boyfriend. Or at least that's what she made us believe... Then why? *(Beat.)* I noticed my sanity slipping away when she began appearing in my dreams...

*Reciting:*

*I perceive you amidst the cascade of falling petals,  
more today than yesterday,  
yet not as vividly as in dreams,  
where your aura lingers deeper.  
Today, fleeting sightings of you  
adorned the cinnamon-kissed silhouettes,  
more than yesterday, less than tomorrow,  
yet slightly more than other days.  
My eyes sought your presence,  
yet yours remained elusive;  
my dreams, my yearnings,  
all ensnared by your essence.  
I see you,  
yet your gaze evades mine...  
It is the norm.*

### SCENE V

*Wednesday. Bernarda sits in one of the front chairs while Julia performs her Electra scene. Cristiano watches from one of the corners of the theater.*

**JULIA.** *Ah, woe is me!  
Ah, hapless me!  
Ah, woe, woe!*

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*Oh, evil journey!*

*Ah, brother dear, to ruin me thou camest!*

*Yea, ruin thou hast brought on me, dear brother!*

*Therefore receive thou me in thy abode*

*Who am no more!*

*That without being I may be with thee*

*Beneath the earth!*

*While yet thou lived among men, twain shared*

*One lot, O brother, equal both to both,*

*But now that thou art dead*

*The lot of death be mine!* (Emma enters the theater and takes a seat in one of the back rows, observing Bernarda. Her hands tremble. She closes her eyes, trying to control her breathing.)

**BERNARDA.** Excellent, both of you are ready! Now you just need to run it through several times before the exam.

**JULIA.** Thank you very much, Professor.

**CRISTIANO.** Thanks!

**BERNARDA.** (Observing Emma.) Hi, Emma, I'll be with you in a minute. I'll go to the bathroom, and then we'll start. (Cristiano says goodbye and hurriedly exits the theater.)

**JULIA.** (Confronting Emma.) Emma, you have to stop.

**EMMA.** What are you talking about?

**JULIA.** Whatever is happening between you and Bernarda.

**EMMA.** Nothing is happening! I just need help with my final monologue, that's all.

**JULIA.** I'd be very careful; others are talking about the relationship you two have.

**EMMA.** (Nervously smiling.) Julia, it's nothing.

**JULIA.** I'm just repeating what I heard in the halls. Consider yourself warned. (Bernarda enters.)

**JULIA.** Goodbye, Bernarda (Staring directly at Emma.) Goodbye, Emma.

**BERNARDA.** (Smiling.) Ready?

**EMMA.** I'm ready. (Emma goes up on stage.)

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**BERNARDA.** Let's begin the scene. I'll play the part of Hamlet this time.

**EMMA.** *(Stopping herself.)* But— *(Nervous, taking a deep but imperceptible breath.)*

**BERNARDA.** Keep your gaze lowered, take timid and small steps.

**EMMA.** *(Starting her scene.)* **Good my lord, how does your Honor for this many a day?**

**BERNARDA.** *(Approaching and starting to act.)* **I humbly thank you, well.**

**EMMA.** *My lord, I have remembrances of yours  
That I have longèd long to redeliver.*

*I pray you now receive them.*

**BERNARDA.** *(Approaching even closer.)* **No, not I. I never gave you aught.**

**EMMA.** *(Awkwardly and unable to see Bernarda.)* **My honored lord,  
you know right well you did,**

*And with them words of so sweet breath composed*

*As made the things richer. Their perfume lost,*

*Take these again, for to the noble mind*

*Rich gifts wax poor when givers prove unkind.*

*There, my lord.*

**BERNARDA.** *(While holding Emma's chin and gazing deeply into her eyes.)* **Ha, ha, are you honest?**

**EMMA.** *(Distracted and unable to react.)* Sorry, Bernarda but... I thought we were going to block the monologue.

**BERNARDA.** Well, I just wanted to help.

**EMMA.** But I'm distracted *(justifying herself.)* it's the character. I don't feel it!

**BERNARDA.** *(Changing the subject.)* Ophelia's monologue is more effective when delivered from the ground. We should focus on using imagery and emotion to navigate the text. In Shakespeare, punctuation marks hold significance; we must always respect the commas and periods. Have you memorized the monologue?

**EMMA.** Not yet...

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**BERNARDA.** Do you have the text? (*Emma runs to fetch her text and, upon returning, kneels on the floor.*)

**EMMA.** Would it be alright if we simply mark the transitions today? (*Beat.*) Without any specific intention behind them?

**BERNARDA.** That's fine. Remember, this is one of the moments when Ophelia can let go of her emotions. That's why containment is so important in the previous moment. What does the text say?

**EMMA.** (*Recalling.*) ***O, what a noble mind is here o'erthrown!  
The courtier's, soldier's, scholar's, eye, tongue,  
Sword -***

**BERNARDA.** Alright. In that case, let's employ imagery for each item Ophelia mentions: the courtier's, soldier's, scholar's, eye, tongue, sword. Visualize them positioned around you - to your left, directly ahead, to your right... Now, show us the sword you reference; let us see it in your hands. When it comes to "And I, of ladies most deject and wretched," that's where Ophelia can break down. You can even strike your chest if you feel compelled to.

**EMMA.** (*Clearly understanding Bernarda's directions.*) Thank you very much, Bernarda.

**BERNARDA.** You're welcome.

**EMMA.** That's all?

**BERNARDA.** That's all. (*Both walk in opposite directions. Emma stops to contemplate Bernarda as she leaves (a habit that's becoming familiar). Then she notices her hands (which are still trembling).*)

**EMMA.** (*Taking out her cell phone and dialing a number.*) Hello? Can you talk? I'm fine... nothing's wrong. Let's get a beer! (*Insisting.*) I'm okay; I just need to talk to someone. (*Beat.*) I'm coming over.

### SCENE VI

*It appears to be nighttime. Illuminated by a dim light, EMMA enters the space holding a pillow in her hand. She places the pillow on the ground and kneels upon it.*

**EMMA.** (*To the audience... to herself.*)

## OPHELIA CARRIES A CROWN OF BLOOD

*One dawn, two dusks, three eves...  
and the initial lash.*

*Through four sunsets, two caresses akin to a kiss,  
weaving gentle touches in the mind's silhouette.*

*Five moonlights later, now three of those strikes.*

*Alas, the direst of the quintet,  
fragile as whispered wings on lavender robes,  
my coronet's blooms lie in wait to infuse thy venom in thoughts.*

*Once the soul is scarred, time sets forth its role.*

*One day, two days, one more, then two more —  
cascading until the third day,*

*where the serpent waits, poised for its prey.*

*It marks the fate of one.*

*For had the gaze wielded a tongue...*

*it would've long impaled thy womb.*

*Ah, what a lament that it cannot be!*

*Duty, an unwavering virtue.*

*Emma observes her arms, full of scars (from distant years), and caresses  
them. She breaks down. She cries inconsolably...*

### **Scene VII**

*It's the day of the Classical Theater exam. Each student wears a costume according to the character assigned at the beginning of the semester. The students are spread out across the space, performing 'contact' choreographies, each simulating the established scenes, accompanied by the sound of an accordion. Bernarda walks around, carefully examining each pair and taking notes in her notebook. The exam ends.*

**LEONARDO.** *(Celebrating.)* Happy closing, everyone!

**INÉS.** *(To Cristiano.)* Did you hear the applause from the audience? They loved our scene.

**CRISTIANO.** *(Excited.)* We were spectacular! *(Inés and Cristiano celebrate.)*

OPHELIA CARRIES A CROWN OF BLOOD

**JULIA.** Where are we going to celebrate?

**LEONARDO.** Let's go to Tintos de Manuel. The afternoon group is heading there too.

**MARCO.** Roger that, Creon! *(Emma and Pablo embrace tenderly.)*

**EMMA.** Thank you.

**PABLO.** To you, my dear... Are you going to Manuel's?

**EMMA.** I'll go for a while. Then I'll head back home because I'm very tired.

**PABLO.** Wait for me. I'll grab a bite and then head there.

**EMMA.** Okay.

**INÉS.** *(To Emma.)* No more Ophelia?

**EMMA.** Not in my damn life!

**JULIA.** Bernarda just told me she has a commitment and won't be able to celebrate with us. *(Emma's heart shrinks.)*

**INÉS.** *(Taking Emma's hand.)* Shall we go, baby?

**EMMA.** *(Shouting, trying to relieve herself as she walks.)* Argh!

**JULIA.** *(Not understanding.)* Okay?

**INÉS.** *(Ignoring Julia.)* Let's go! *(The students converse casually as they leave the space.)*

**END OF ACT 1**

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