

THE OCTOPUS'S GARDEN  
by Stephen Gnojewski

Cast of Characters

BEATRICE

VIVIAN

SAILOR BOBBY

SPIDER PIRATE

OCTOPUS

BUG CREATURES:

ANT

BEE

SNAIL

*Beautiful as the chance meeting on a dissecting table of a sewing machine and an umbrella.*

Isidore Lucien Ducasse, *Les Chants de Maldoror*

Some of the text is borrowed and re-arranged material taken from the notebooks of Richard Foreman – “SEEDS” and “Tex-Roses”.

Setting

A garden playground

Time

Yesterday

SETTING: A garden playground overgrown with a surreal hodgepodge of curiosities.  
(A suggested vocabulary list of images, sounds, and actions follows the text of the play.)

AT RISE: Beatrice and Vivian lounge on a red and white checkered picnic blanket. Beatrice reads from a blank book. Vivian, lying next to her, plucks petals from a flower and tosses them high into the air. Beatrice is dressed in panniers and a corset. She wears a fur wrap and an assortment of pearl necklaces. Her beehive hairdo is embellished with jeweled broaches and a fan of feathers. Vivian wears a tutu and butterfly wings on her back. She dons a large cherry on the top of her head. Her hair is braided and decorated with seashells and flowers.

VIVIAN

(Plucking a petal from a flower) He loves me.

(Plucking a petal) He loves me not.

BEATRICE

Flapdoodle!

(BEATRICE rips a page from out of her book.)

VIVIAN

He loves me.

He loves me not.

BEATRICE

Fiddlesticks!!

(BEATRICE rips another page from out of her book.)

VIVIAN

He loves me.

He loves me.

(Tossing her petals into the air) He loves me!

BEATRICE

Poppycock!!!

(Tearing up the ripped-out pages into teeny tiny bits) There is absolutely no rhyme or reason to any of this gobbledygook!

(BEATRICE tosses the paper pieces high into the air.)

(Sound – Bubbles)

VIVIAN

I met him on the secret rose garden.  
Underneath the Fountain of Tears.  
(Sound – Bell)  
My psychedelic disco sailor...

OCTOPUS

Blessed are the pure in heart.

(The OCTOPUS is only heard; never seen.)

VIVIAN

...he means more than the world to me.

(Sound – Whip)

BEATRICE

Well, I am afraid, my dear, the world is utterly without meaning.

VIVIAN

What in the world do you mean?

BEATRICE

All this nonsense makes absolutely no sense at all. It just doesn't add up.  
Blue + yellow is the same as yellow + blue. Either way, the answer = 8.

VIVIAN

(With a heavy sigh) The questions are always the same questions.  
The answers are always the same answers.

BEATRICE

In addition to this addition, if you add 0 to any amount, 9 times out of tentacles, you figure the figure will remain the same. If someone gives you nothing, you are still you, right?

OCTOPUS

Ask again later

VIVIAN

(Thinking, very hard) Now, let me see...if I have nothing and someone gives me their nothing, then I surely must have something, which is a whole lot of nothing!

BEATRICE

Holding on to nothing is the absurdity of hope.

(Sound – Splash)

VIVIAN

(Angrily) What exactly is your point, Beatrice?

BEATRICE

Something I've never understood.

(Sound – Buzzing)

VIVIAN

Hold on to your forget-me-nots, we have arrived at a most precarious moment. Can you feel it? The very ground we are standing on is teeming with life – both seen and unseen. (Whispering) Why, just beneath the surface, there is something oh-so titillating threatening to break through.

(Sound – Bubbles)

BEATRICE

Holy Jitter Bugs! Here We Go Again!

(Sound – Jackhammering/Construction/Chainsaws)

(BEATRICE and VIVIAN jiggle and shake violently, as if from an earthquake. They come together and hug each other close, while still shaking.)

VIVIAN

Are you diggin' these vibrations?

BEATRICE

All these echoes of ourselves?

VIVIAN

Echoes of ourselves...

BEATRICE

Echoes of ourselves...

(Sound – Fog Horn)

(BEATRICE and VIVIAN break their embrace.)

BEATRICE

Enough with these hysterical diversions. Eat your sandwich before it rots.

VIVIAN

(Throwing a temper tantrum) But, there are bugs, Beatrice, crawling through my thoughts, tunneling through my dreams. Why, a beehive of hopes is buzzing around my brain, right now.

BEATRICE

I bet you think about bees a lot.

VIVIAN

(Licking her fingers) I always think of bees and pollen and honey-clustered thoughts.

OCTOPUS

Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness.

(Sound – Explosion)

BEATRICE

Could there be a more enchanting garden? The sky, so clear with ink. The air, all fragrant with the color four.

VIVIAN

Well, I hate to burst your bubble, but you promised me we were gonna have some fun today.

BEATRICE

A promise I promise is promising.

VIVIAN

Let's play a game, shall we? Ring Around the Rosies? Blind Man's Bluff?

BEATRICE

And what are the rules?

VIVIAN

Rules? Why must we be ruled by rules?

BEATRICE

Rules, Vivian, are what keep us anchored in an ocean of ambiguity. Rules are what tame this garden. Why, without any rules, we would be overcome by a tangle of emotions, gestures, ideas, expressions, etc., etc., etc...

VIVIAN

Well, I reject that root-in-the-ground responsibility!

OCTOPUS

It is certain.

(Sound – Splash)

VIVIAN

Now, stand very still, as still as a statue.

BEATRICE

A virtual impossibility, as time keeps spiraling out before us.

(VIVIAN blindfolds BEATRICE.)

VIVIAN

Close your eyes and count your blessings.

(VIVIAN spins BEATRICE around.)

BEATRICE

1, 2, C, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8...

VIVIAN

Now you see me, now you don't.

(Sound – Explosion)

(Sound – Old Recording Loop of “Don’t Sit Under the Apple Tree”)

(VIVIAN dances.)

BEATRICE

(Still spinning) ...7, 6, 5, 4, C, 2, 1.

(BEATRICE stops spinning.)

Ready or not, here I come!

(VIVIAN and BEATRICE each dance separately. The flowers in the garden spin like whirligigs.)

BEATRICE

(Shouting.) Are you having fun yet?

VIVIAN

(Shouting.) Why, I haven’t had this much fun since we touched tiddlywinks.

BEATRICE

Oh, what rapture!

VIVIAN

Oh, what bliss!

BEATRICE

There *is* more than enough, more than enough for everyone!

OCTOPUS

Flower Power!

(An explosion of glitter pollen bursts from the flowers, as a large oyster shell mysteriously emerges from a trapdoor.)

(Sound – Buzzing)

(BEATRICE and VIVIAN approach the oyster shell cautiously.)

BEATRICE

What is this, here, before us? Hidden in plain sight.

VIVIAN

An oyster shell, of course.

BEATRICE

But there must be some seriously mysterious meaning in this apparent apparition.

VIVIAN

Could it be a clue?

BEATRICE

Or an omen even.

VIVIAN

Jumpin' Jehoshaphats! It's a gift!

(Sound – Applause)

VIVIAN

Ohhh. Can I open it? Please, please, pretty please?

OCTOPUS

Concentrate and ask again

(VIVIAN twirls around.)

VIVIAN

Ohhh. Can I open it? Please, please, pretty please?



BEATRICE

Well, if curiosity is the mother of godliness, then a blessing in disguise must come to those who live in glass houses.

OCTOPUS

Signs point to yes

VIVIAN

Yippee!

(VIVIAN pries open the oyster shell. There is a horrible screeching sound followed by a high-pitched hum. As the oyster shell opens up, a pungent, yellow smoke is released.)

(The Bug Creatures – ANT, BEE, and SNAIL – crawl out of the oyster shell.

(ANT is dressed in a black, rubber diver's suit and wears a dark helmet with a visor. BEE is dressed in a yellow suit jacket with tails. BEE wears gold chains, black leather gloves, a black fez hat, and dark aviator goggles. SNAIL is dressed in a ruffled, tuxedo shirt with a bow tie and parachute pants. SNAIL wears a black ski mask, black boxing gloves, and an overstuffed army backpack.)

(Sound – Jackhammering/Construction/Chainsaws)

(The Bug Creatures menace and tickle BEATRICE and VIVIAN. After molesting VIVIAN, they blindfold her and carry her off stage.)

VIVIAN

My psychedelic disco sailor will save me!

(Sound – Foghorn)

OCTOPUS

Cannot predict now

(BEATRICE continues to roll around in a state of ecstasy. Slowly, she comes to.)

BEATRICE

Holy Return From Oblivion! That was quite unexpected...but thankfully anticipated.  
(Jumping into action) Ready or not, here I come!

(Suddenly, an anchor crashes down from the sky. BEATRICE takes cover under the picnic blanket.)

(SAILOR BOBBY climbs down the anchor singing. He wears an astronaut's bubble-helmet with a life preserver around his neck. His cloths are tattered and torn, revealing tattoos all over his body.)

SAILOR BOBBY

HE CAST AWAY HIS LIFE  
AND IT RETURNED  
LIKE A SUIT OF ARMOR

HE CAST AWAY HIS LOVE  
HE FOUND DROWNED  
AT THE BOTTOM OF THE HARBOR

(BEATRICE pokes her head out from under the blanket.)

BEATRICE

Excuse me. By any chance, are you a psychedelic disco sailor?

OCTOPUS

Reply hazy, try again

SAILOR BOBBY

The possibility has never presented itself more pleasingly.

(Sound – Buzzing)

SAILOR BOBBY

I am Sailor Bobby, of the starship, 'Friendship'.  
8 years ago, my crew and I set sail on a voyage across the stratosphere. Our course was coarse, of course, but the world was our oyster then, with a pearl in every port.

OCTOPUS

Blessed are the peacemakers

SAILOR BOBBY

Through a sea of stars, we sailed, confusing constellations. Until the sky fell in,  
collapsing and colliding, shattering the water, swallowing stars, drowning wishes,  
drowning wishes, drowning...

(SAILOR BOBBY staggers around the stage, collapsing against the oyster shell, sobbing.)

SAILOR BOBBY

Oh, my starship has been stranded, here, in this garden, for 8 long years. And as each wooden plank has rotted away, I have labored to replant each plank with a stronger, sturdier plank. But I fear I shall be marooned here forever in this garden, unable to sail back home, since my restored 'Friendship' is not the original 'Friendship' that I embarked on over 8 long years ago.

HE CAST AWAY HIS LIFE  
AND IT RETURNED  
LIKE A SUIT OF ARMOR

Oh, how my mind keeps running around in this ring of roses, for if I replant my thoughts with newer thoughts, am I still the same sailor that had first set sail 8 long years ago? Or am I now a different sailor, changed by the elements of time and distance.

OCTOPUS

You may reply on it

SAILOR BOBBY

HE CAST AWAY HIS LOVE  
HE FOUND DROWNED  
AT THE BOTTOM OF THE HARBOR

BEATRICE

Now is not the time for such melancholy melodies that will most likely lead down a black hole of doubt, deep inside ourselves.

(Sound – Splash)

A gang of bugs has abducted Vivian.

SAILOR BOBBY

A treasure for the Spider Pirate, no doubt.

(The Bug Creatures – ANT, BEE, and SNAIL – peek their heads out from various places and giggle.)

(The SPIDER PIRATE grapevines across the stage.)

(The SPIDER PIRATE is dressed in a white tuxedo with a white rabbit fur hanging over the shoulder. The SPIDER PIRATE wears a black eye patch and a tall magician's hat. The SPIDER PIRATE smokes a pipe, which blow bubbles. The SPIDER PIRATE dances with four canes. One of the SPIDER PIRATE'S leg is a wooden peg.)

BEATRICE

(Touching herself, erotically) Shiver me timbers!

SAILOR BOBBY

A barnacle on the ark of humanity! But, I am all too aware of his web of linguistic calisthenics.

OCTOPUS

Very Doubtful

BEATRICE

How will we ever navigate through this luscious garden without a map to guide us?

SAILOR BOBBY

Why, a bouquet of opportunities blooms before us, like constellations.

(Sound – Buzzing)

(The BUG CREATURES enter, carrying over-sized playing cards: the 8 of Diamonds, the 8 of Hearts, and the 8 of Stars.)

SAILOR BOBBY

Behold, a multitude of flowers pass through my imagination.

(SAILOR BOBBY places the checkered picnic blanket over the oyster shell.)

(Sound – Drumroll)

(The Bug Creatures exit.)

BEATRICE

Is this still your imagination?

OCTOPUS

Abracadabra

(SAILOR BOBBY whips the picnic blanket away to reveal a large pearl.)

SAILOR BOBBY

Ta-dah! At last. A clue.

BEATRICE

Well, what does it mean?

SAILOR BOBBY

It means, most likely, whatever we want it to mean?

BEATRICE

I would rather not work so hard.

SAILOR BOBBY

Shit! It just flashed — the aroma, the memory, of a kind of essence of a rose – subtle, but very powerful and potent.

BEATRICE

Funny, I am getting that gone-before-it-gets-to-me feeling.

(Sound – Explosion)

SAILOR BOBBY

Quick, let's head into the garden.

BEATRICE

But we already are in the garden.

SAILOR BOBBY

Yes, of course. But suppose I were to propose  
That things taken out of context  
Liberate the deep self.  
Would you believe me?

BEATRICE

If you were to propose  
That things taken out of context  
Liberate the deep self.  
Then I would believe you not.

(BEATRICE faints. SAILOR BOBBY catches her.)

SAILOR BOBBY

Careful, it is rather important to maintain a sense of balance around here. Water is refreshing, true, which is good for flowers, but often they drown from just too much drink.

(Sound – Ping)

BEATRICE

Hurry! We must keep moving forward, forward in a predictable, linear fashion, towards some sensible and oh-so satisfying conclusion.

SAILOR BOBBY

But suppose I were to further propose  
That the only way forward is actually sideways.

(Sound – Explosion)

SAILOR BOBBY

Sideways through a landscape of layers, that we must piece together in order to form our own personal understanding.

BEATRICE

Holy Hieronymous!

You offer me a totally alternative way to exist within this garden.

(Sound – Buzzing)

(The BUG CREATURES enter carrying oversized pieces of fruit:  
Cherry, Orange, Banana)

(Sound – Old Recording Loop of “Don’t Sit Under the Apple  
Tree”)

(SAILOR BOBBY puts the cherry on his head and bounces up and  
down on the orange. BEATRICE puts the banana between her legs  
and gallops around the garden.)

BEATRICE

Whee! My thoughts are growing wild, wild like weeds!

(Sound – Bell)

(BEATRICE dismounts the banana. She grabs her book and begins  
to rip out more blank pages.)

BEATRICE

Quick, we must pull them out, by the root, by the root, to cultivate our experience.

(SAILOR BOBBY bounces up next to BEATRICE.)

SAILOR BOBBY

Excuse me...

But what, precisely, is your relationship with nature?

BEATRICE

She loves me.

She loves me not.

She loves me.

She loves me not... (Continues)

SAILOR BOBBY

So, I see...

Well, it is of no great importance, but I too am an existentialist by nature.

BEATRICE

Can't you see that I am rather indifferent towards your existentialism.

SAILOR BOBBY

Very well. But suppose I were to purpose  
That there is something else going on here  
Which is a second discourse  
That you willfully choose to ignore.  
How would you deal with that?

BEATRICE

If you were to purpose  
That there is something else going on here  
Which is a second discourse  
That I willfully choose to ignore  
Then I would have to deal with that, yes,  
Deep inside myself.

(Sound – Splash)

SAILOR BOBBY

Here, take my hand that is offered in friendship.

BEATRICE

In the imagination?

SAILOR BOBBY

In the imagination of friendship, naturally.

(BEATRICE slaps SAILOR BOBBY hard.)

BEATRICE

Let's just keep our hands to ourselves, now, shall we?

SAILOR BOBBY

Why, you are so clever, the way you twist me around your wrist like wisteria  
Tighter and tighter  
Strangling my free will.

(Sound – Whip)

SAILOR BOBBY

Oh, how I cherish the flower with which you immobilize me. How I worship the way you express openly your feelings in my presence, hiding nothing. We were put here in this Garden, were we not, to enjoy the abundance it affords. Then, let's treat ourselves to the furthest extent!

(SAILOR BOBBY and BEATRICE hold hands and spin around.)

BEATRICE and SAILOR BOBBY

Love me.  
Love me not.  
Love me.  
Love me not.  
Love me.  
Love me.

(Sound – Foghorn)

(SAILOR BOBBY and BEATRICE let go of each other and fall down.)

BEATRICE

We shall never rescue Vivian, now. The trail has gone cold, as cold as a broken heart.

OCTOPUS

Flower Power!

(SAILOR BOBBY jumps into action.)

SAILOR BOBBY

Quick as a wink, make a wish. Make a wish on that falling starfish.

(Sound – Explosion)

SAILOR BOBBY

Are you wishing?

BEATRICE

Oh, I'm wishing... I'm wishing...

SAILOR BOBBY

You just keep on wishing. Don't you ever stop wishing.

BEATRICE

I'm wishing so hard, I'm about to blast off!

SAILOR BOBBY



Into orbit?

BEATRICE

Yes!

SAILOR BOBBY

Into oblivion?

BEATRICE

Yes!

SAILOR BOBBY

Into –

SPIDER PIRATE

Presto!

(An explosion of glitter pollen bursts from the flowers, as a weblike net drops on top of BEATRICE and SAILOR BOBBY.)

(The BUG CREATURES surround their captives. The SPIDER PIRATE enters tap dancing and dragging VIVIAN by a leash. VIVIAN is blindfolded and her hands are bound.)

SPIDER PIRATE

Ennie, meenie, miney, moe...

And pretty little maids all in a row.

(The BUG CREATURES applaud.)

SPIDER PIRATE

It seems this is an appropriate occasion for a Tarantella, don't you think?

(The SPIDER PIRATE dances around the weblike net, as BEATRICE and SAILOR BOBBY struggle to escape.)

SPIDER PIRATE

Tra-la-la-la, tra-la-la-la, tra-la-la-la, tra-la-la-la.

BEATRICE

It's the beginning of the end.

SAILOR BOBBY

Or more like, the end of the beginning.

SPIDER PIRATE

(To VIVIAN) Oh, my precious flower, I shall wrap you up in silky sentiments until you choke and drown on the waves of my love.

BEATRICE

Let her go, or I shall sing!

SPIDER PIRATE

Aha! To see one blindfolded  
Is to be jealous, perhaps  
Thinking they exist  
In some secret real,  
And believing that your own existence  
Is under attack.

(Sound – Bell)

(The BUG CREATURES remove the weblike net and blindfold  
BEATRICE and SAILOR BOBBY.)

SAILOR BOBBY

Now, that you have blindfolded us  
We may prove to have resources  
you could never have imagined  
as your own.

SPIDER PIRATE

I never underestimate a little slight-of-hand misdirection.  
Now, walk the plank!

(Sound – Whip)

(Sound – Old Recording Loop of “Don’t Sit Under the Apple  
Tree”)

(The BUG CREATURES partner with BEATRICE, VIVIAN, and  
SAILOR BOBBY, as they all polka around the room.)

SPIDER PIRATE

Walk!

(Sound – Whip)

Walk!

(Sound – Whip)

Walk!

OCTOPUS

Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness sake

(Sound – Whip)

Drench me! Drench me too, instead.

BEATRICE

You were already ravished.

SAILOR BOBBY

But that was so brief, I don't know if it happened in the real.

BEATRICE

(Sound – Foghorn)

And now for my greatest illusion...

SPIDER PIRATE

(Sound – Applause)

Behold, a rose –

SPIDER PIRATE

(Sound – Buzzing)

Where?

SAILOR BOBBY

Hovering...in a certain space.

SPIDER PIRATE

I see it!

BEATRICE

I see it too!

VIVIAN

Come, clutch that gentle rose, as it vibrates in my hand, being there...

SPIDER PIRATE

(Still blindfolded, VIVIAN and BEATRICE reach out to touch the invisible rose.)

...and vanishing.

SPIDER PIRATE

(Sound – Splash)

(The BUG CREATURES giggle.)

BEATRICE

But what about the invisible rose –

VIVIAN

Yes, what about that rose?

BEATRICE

Or was that just a trick of the imagination?

SPIDER PIRATE

No. Of the past, that too has quite vanished.

SAILOR BOBBY

Funny, I did everything that was supposed to, but I still couldn't see any roses.

(Sound – Foghorn)

BEATRICE

A true pirate could make our blindfolds disappear.

SPIDER PIRATE

Truer words have never been more invisiblized.

BEATRICE

HE CAST AWAY HIS LIFE  
AND IT RETURNED  
LIKE A SUIT OF ARMOR

(Like a snake overcome by a charmer, the SPIDER PIRATE  
bellydances in a trance around his captives.)

HE CAST AWAY HIS LOVE  
HE FOUND DROWNED –

SPIDER PIRATE

Silence!

How dare you try to trick me into a trick with your siren's song.

I will release you, yes, so you may feast on my honey knowledge, but only if you  
unriddle my little riddle:

OCTOPUS

Better not tell you now

SPIDER PIRATE

If I ate an 8...how many days would I be in a daze?

(Sound – Buzzing)

BEATRICE

How many days would you be in a daze, if you ate an 8?

VIVIAN

The questions are always the same questions.

The answers are always the same answers.

BEATRICE

Well, that all depends on what color the 8 was that you ate?

(The SPIDER PIRATE strikes a flamenco pose.)

SPIDER PIRATE

Ackamarackus! That is neither now nor never.

SAILOR BOBBY

And if you started eating the 8 from the top or from the bottom.

(The SPIDER PIRATE strikes another flamenco pose.)

SPIDER PIRATE

Razzmatazz! An upside down 8 is always an 8.

VIVIAN

Oh, I am starving for his juicy, honey knowledge.

BEATRICE

Well, you should have eaten your sandwich, which you had, when you had a chance.

(Sound – Whip)

SAILOR BOBBY

If I ate an 8, how many days would I be in a daze?

BEATRICE

I would say that you would certainly be weak for about a week. Therefore, the answer must be 7.

SPIDER PIRATE

7? No, you, insignificant stars! The answer is 8.

The answer is always 8!

8s! 8s! 8s for all!

## OCTOPUS

Blessed are the merciful

(The BUG CREATURES untie and unblindfold VIVIAN, BEATRICE, and SAILOR BOBBY.)

(Sound – Old Recording Loop of “Don’t Sit Under the Apple Tree”)

(The flowers spin again like whirligigs, as BEATRICE, VIVIAN, SAILOR BOBBY, and The BUG CREATURES all dance the Charleston.)

## SPIDER PIRATE

1, 2, C, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 7, 6, 5, 4, C, 2, 1

Ready or not, here I come! Here I come! Here I come!

Presto!

(Sound – Splash)

(The SPIDER PIRATE disappears in a thick ink cloud of dark smoke.)

(BEATRICE, VIVIAN, SAILOR BOBBY, and The BUG CREATURES all collapse, exhausted from their revelry.)

(Gradually, black lights illuminate the garden with a phosphorescent, ghostly glow.)

(Sound – Buzzing)

## SAILOR BOBBY

Slowly, the sun sinks like an anchor, casting wide its net of night, and a forsaken garden erupts, revealing itself, like a flower unfolding before a crescent moon.

## OCTOPUS

Abracadabra

(The BUG CREATURES massage BEATRICE, VIVIAN, and SAILOR BOBBY’S feet.)

## BEATRICE

Wait a minute. I don't particularly like my feet getting tickled!!

VIVIAN

Strange...I like to be tickled.

(Sound – Whip)

VIVIAN

Ouch!

(Sound – Whip)

SAILOR BOBBY

Ouch!

(Sound – Whip)

BEATRICE

Ouch!

VIVIAN

Hey, I don't remember anguish ever growing here.

(The BUG CREATURES bite BEATRICE, VIVIAN, and  
SAILOR BOBBY'S feet.)

VIVIAN

Beatrice, why do my memories hurt so much? They were such, sweet memories, but now they have bitter fangs that sting my mind, reminding me of the what-could-have-beens just behind happiness. Have I been remembering wrong all along?

OCTOPUS

Blessed are those who mourn

(SAILOR BOBBY, VIVIAN, and BEATRICE stand, and the BUG  
CREATURES scurry away off stage.)

SAILOR BOBBY

We are awake now in a hostile garden  
Full of twisted trees and overgrown egos.

(Sound – Foghorn)

BEATRICE

This is no a garden, my friend. This is a cemetery – a garden of ghosts!

(Sound – Laughter)

Where dreams are buried deep inside graves of enterprise!  
Where majestic trees once stood, a colossal wall now blots out the view!

(ANT, BEE, and SNAIL enter again, marching with high kicks and carrying the over-sized playing cards: the 8 of Diamonds, the 8 of Hearts, and the 8 of Stars. They lined up creating an obstructive barrier between the actors and the audience.)

BEATRICE

Behold! An army of judgement worshipping warships!  
Marching in unnatural unison!  
Marching through time and time again with bloated bladders and critical knives!  
1, 2, C, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8  
Bulldozing imagination, slaughtering souls, and frightening us out of our natural ecstasy!

(Sound – Buzzing)

VIVIAN

A hot fever rots forever in the darkest corners of my mind, as a volcanic virus erupts spreading pestilential suspicion.

SAILOR BOBBY

And over there, off in the distance, gaining momentum, a monstrous mushroom cloud.  
Choking the skies, choking the oceans, with black, indigo ink.  
Black eyes!  
Black holes!  
Black hearts!

(Sound – Whip)

(ANT, BEE, and SNAIL scatter, twirling, twirling, twirling off stage.)

OCTOPUS

Blessed are the meek.

BEATRICE

There must be some escape... some secret passage out of this labyrinth of ideas that leads us back, back to the very beginning.

SAILOR BOBBY

Not in this chronological chaos.

OCTOPUS

Outlook not so good

BEATRICE

Then we are lost, I say. Lost in layers of nuance and false starts.



(Sound – Shattering Glass)

(The BUG CREATURES enter carrying three large apples: a red apple, a green apple, and a golden apple.)

(Sound – Buzzing)

SAILOR BOBBY

Suppose I were to propose  
That there are three possible gardens:  
A garden that blossoms with fragrant memories,  
A garden bursting with the urgencies of now,  
And a third, more visceral garden, where only torment and judgment grows.

BEATRICE

If you were to propose that there are three possible gardens  
Then, I would need to get on your wavelength.

(The BUG CREATURES tip-toe around with the apples.)

SAILOR BOBBY

And suppose I were to further propose that we are walking through these three possible gardens all at the exact same time.

BEATRICE

An impossible challenge, no doubt.

VIVIAN

You are an impossible challenge!

BEATRICE

I am just trying to see things clearly.

VIVIAN

Well, was it your expectation that we would see everything the way that you wanted us to see it?

BEATRICE

It was my expectation, yes, that you would see everything through rose-colored glasses.

(Sound – Explosion)

(VIVIAN grabs the large pearl from BEATRICE. She shakes the pearl and puts it against her forehead.)

VIVIAN

I once saw a psychedelic disco sailor, covered with flowers. I saw blood drip, from the places on his flesh where the flowers hurt. I saw music, transform his face until his skin glowed with a translucent radiance, and his hair quivered like wind casting words through the branches of a tree he clung to, climbing, higher and higher, and his voice was like a rose, and his eyes were like roses - his whole whirling self was a rose.

(VIVIAN hands SAILOR BOBBY the pearl. He shakes the pearl and puts it against his forehead.)

SAILOR BOBBY

I once saw men turning into ships, sailing, evading the responsibility of life on dry land. I saw those ships, twisting sideways, like a body under the blows of love. I saw rivers of love swept under my feet like a history I'd never forgotten, but couldn't keep hold of in my memory, so it swept me out into an ocean of which I was dreaming – without dreams.

(SAILOR BOBBY hands BEATRICE the pearl. She shakes the pearl and puts it against her forehead.)

BEATRICE

I once saw children of God exploring the adventures of one another with wonder. Reaching out for understanding across celestial bodies and touching heaven only to discover the genesis of genius within themselves.

(Worms burst from out of the apples. The worms are the gloved hands of the BUG CREATURES. Startled, BEATRICE drops the pearl, and it shatters.)

BEATRICE

Did we once exist within the universe of a rose? Curling up inside of ourselves like selfish stars. Spinning, swirling...out of control. Overloaded with memories and emotions....and so collapsing inward...leaving behind a black hole from which nothing, not even light, can escape.

OCTOPUS

Blessed are the poor in spirit.

(Sound – Splash)

BEATRICE

Quick! We had better plug up them holes with a couple of those very deep roses that have roots so far down that when you pull them up they say –

OCTOPUS

Flower Power!

(Sound – Laughter.)

BEATRICE

(Frustrated) Is deep understanding  
Even possible here  
in this garden?

SAILOR BOBBY

The seeds of confusion were planted generations ago along with the very first, genuine  
rose.

VIVIAN

But what if we were to look up into an empty sky  
And see letters written by God which said:

OCTOPUS

Abracadabra

VIVIAN

Would our lives change?

BEATRICE

If we were to look up into an empty sky  
And see letters written by God which said:

OCTOPUS

Abracadabra

BEATRICE

Then, yes, our lives would change.  
(Grabbing her book and holding it close to her heart.) They would blossom with the  
flowers of faith and grace once again.

SAILOR BOBBY

We are being challenged, are we not,  
To look up into an empty sky  
and discover in ourselves an equal emptiness

(Sound – Ping)

(BEATRICE falls to her knees praying.)

(Lights gradually fade to black.)

BEATRICE

Oh, please, please, pretty, please...

Do not allow the arrival  
Here, in this garden  
Of that sudden moment of revelation...  
That flowers are only for funerals.

(Sound – Drumroll)

OCTOPUS

Presto!

(Suddenly, the garden is illuminated with a harsh fluorescent light.)

(BEATRICE, SAILOR BOBBY, and VIVIAN are naked.)

(Sound – Buzzing)

VIVIAN

I used to be in a garden, and believe that I still am. What has vanished was a particular kind of rose. An honest, naive rose, so tender and fragile and unaware of its own divinity.

BEATRICE

But what is in a rose, but a second rose, and in that second rose, a third, and a fourth, with more than enough to fill all possibilities of roses in the mind and in the heart that finds it too is layered, petal-like perhaps?

SAILOR BOBBY

Suppose I were to propose  
That this garden exists only  
To hide God from human beings  
Would you believe me?

VIVIAN

I would believe you.  
I would believe you not... (Continued)

BEATRICE

If you were to propose  
That this garden exists only  
To hide God from human beings  
Then I would feel that there was a hole, deep in the very center of my life,  
And I would search, endlessly, across time and space to fill that hole with all the broken petals of light that could be found.

SAILOR BOBBY

HE CAST AWAY HIS LIFE

AND IT RETURNED  
LIKE A SUIT OF ARMOR

HE CAST AWAY HIS LOVE  
HE FOUND DROWNED  
AT THE BOTTOM OF THE HARBOR

BEATRICE

(With determination.) 1, 2, C, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 7, 6, 5, 4, C, 2, 1.  
Ready or not, here I come!

(Fluorescent lights illuminate the audience.)

OCTOPUS

Out! Out! Everybody out!  
It is over. Never to happen the same way again.  
The End! Exit! OUT!

(BEATRICE, VIVIAN and SAILOR BOBBY huddle and hide  
together.)

(Sound – Jackhammering/Construction/Chainsaws)

END OF PLAY

## VOCABULARY OF SYMBOLS

### SOUNDS

- Bells
- Fog horn
- Splash
- Bubbles
- Explosion
- Buzzing
- Whip
- Laughter
- Ping
- Jackhammering/Construction

### IMAGES

- Apples
- Cherries
- Flowers/Roses
- Picnic patterns
- Snakes/Worms
- Starfish
- Bubbles/Balls
- Shells
- Hearts
- Captain's Wheels
- Magician
- Cards
- Rabbits
- Rings
- Arrows
- Letters of the Alphabet: A, B, C, D, R, X

### ACTIONS

- Tip-toeing
- Tremors
- Humping
- Temper tantrums
- Tickling
- Galloping in a circle