

Time: 1946 (more or less)

Place: The Big City

The stage is demarcated by various levels and areas representing the different interior and exterior locations indicated in the play. Foremost of these is John Kara's office which is dominated by his desk. A window frame is seen. While there are indications of the sounds of knocking on doors throughout the script, actual doors on stage are not necessary. Overall, there should be a sense of simplicity and abstraction - even a cubistic feel - to the set.

The actors not appearing in a particular scene, can be visible to the audience - waiting, ready, in chairs to the side of the playing area.

A projection reads "MONASTERY".

Elias Kara, a novice, is looking at his brother John, who stands in the entrance way of the room.

JOHN

Tell your Father Superior we only need a few days.

ELIAS

Of course, your friend is hurt. There really is no choice. Besides our Abbot is a saintly man. He understands.... Why don't you come into my room?

JOHN

It's too small. There's barely enough room for you.

ELIAS

Are you hungry? There's bread and cherry jam. You like cherry jam. I remember. We make it here ourselves....

JOHN

Nothing. Nothing.... All right, some tea...and your cherry jam.

ELIAS

Thank you. (Slight pause.) I know this is strange to say, considering the circumstances...but I'm happy you're here. It's been so long.

JOHN

Yeah. Good to see you again too, little brother.

(Elias exits. John gingerly enters the room and sits. He closes his eyes. Lights fade out except for a spot on Kara. A second, dim pool of light opens up to reveal Katrina Ivanovna aiming a gun at the Filipino Man. She fires, but the sound is muffled, distant, echoing. The word "HIGANTI" is projected on the screen. Lights out on Katrina and the dead man. The dead man's face briefly appears on the screen. Elias has re-entered with a tray of food. Lights return to previous levels.)

ELIAS

I've been thinking of you a lot lately.

JOHN

Look, Elias, we don't belong here.

ELIAS

No less than me. I haven't taken my final vows yet.

JOHN

At least ask me why. Why I've brought a beautiful woman and a man with a bullet in his back into your holy monastery.

ELIAS

I don't need to know. You're in trouble and you're my brother.

JOHN

I never wanted you in this pen and here I am myself. Just stop looking at me. That's why they got them screens. So you don't have to look into the priest's eyes when you confess.... I don't know why I'm making such a fuss. I guess I just need to talk...to someone I trust.... It happened one night. Like any cheap dime story. It happened too many nights.

(Crossfade. John Kara lights a cigarette and walks over to his office. Elias remains in half-light throughout, as he continues to listen to John's confession.)

JOHN

Thirteen days ago, there was a murder. You can't stop murders.

GHOST

John.

JOHN

I don't believe in ghosts. I only believe in the truth.

GHOST

I'm dead, John.

JOHN

Yeah, I know a knife hole in the jugular when I see one. The cops found your body in a dirty alley in Southside.

GHOST

You gave up on me.

JOHN

Don't blame me for your problems. You were crooked. You got what you deserved.

GHOST

We were cops together.

JOHN

I quit the Force, Justin. Three years ago.

GHOST

How many times did I save your life?

JOHN

Four or five.

GHOST

Yeah, who's counting. We were only partners for thirteen years.

JOHN

Yeah, like a marriage. Like a rotten marriage.

GHOST

Cancer takes time. Especially for a big rat.

JOHN

What is it - heaven doesn't want you and hell is full?

GHOST

There's always room in hell, John.... You haven't been saying your prayers. And you're the one who has to set things straight.

(Ghost exits.)

JOHN

Of course, I think there's something wrong - something wrong with my head. I'm seeing the ghost of Justin O'Neill. A dead cop who had been on the take. I owed too much to Justin. A man's partner is forever. Everyone knows that. For him, I had turned my head, looked the other way. But I couldn't go on being a cop and not turn him in. So I stopped being a cop.... He never forgave me for that. And I never forgave him. (A knock on the door.) Come in.

(A beautiful woman in a tight, red dress enters - she always wears red, accented by black accessories. Immediately, she crosses to Kara and shakes his hand as she speaks. She then sits without waiting to be offered a seat. However she has far too much energy to stay seated for long.)

KATRINA

Good afternoon Mr. Kara. My name is Katrina Ivanovna. (pronounced: Ee-van-ov-na)
I need to hire you.

JOHN

I like the sound of those words.