



Envelope 0 - Director's notes

Welcome, everybody. We don't have much time left before opening night, gentlemen, so I won't accept any dawdling. I want you excited, I want you ready! You will learn soon that I don't believe in iron cages, in empty rules, in dead railroads! I want you to spill the lifeblood of emotion, the nectar and ambrosia of the muses, I want to see you light the holy fire of acting, I want to feel its heat on my cheeks! I want to drink the juices of theatre dripping from your voices and gestures until they leave me too intoxicated to stand! Do not ask, do not fear, do not doubt, do not hesitate! Be! Just be! I want to hear you vibrate like the very notes that ring at the core of the world!

Before beginning, get on the stage and know that the first exercise awaits you.

The first to draw a card from the deck will become the cat. Yes, you've heard me well, they will be the cat and the rest of you are the mice they will try to catch. The only way to escape the cat, if you're not quicker than them, is to jump into the arms of another mouse, or at least lay your hands on their shoulders. Your strength will be physical contact, intimacy, union, and it will stop the cat from touching you. You can protect each other only when the cat is chasing you, without lingering too long. Be dynamic, not static.

But maybe you do want to be caught after all: It's the only way you will gain the right to draw your own card and become the new cat. But after you've got your card and caught your mouse, don't let yourselves be caught again! You won't get more cards and I want you to be predators, to lord over the stage. You have 15 minutes, followed by a 10-minute break.

Workshop rules

The die is cast, the cord has been cut, the stage is set. But what is the stage? Where does it end? Where did it begin? What are you saying there? That this method is unconventional, that it's anti-academic, that it disregards the paths you've walked? Well, thank me for it!

What paths are you talking about? There is no path, everything begins now. That's how it goes: I describe you the scenes and you bring them to life.

Every scene you will draw a card, and this card will represent the role you play. And since this scene, even if it is the first, is still a scene, you are going to get a card. But since this scene is the first, and no scene came before it, this card will be something unique. This card will be your inspiration, your starting point, your new mould. It will be yourself, the face behind every mask, the body under every costume. It is all you are and all you are going to be, never forget it.

Keep secret this self of yours: Live it and be true to it. Express it and seek that of the companions by your side. This stage is the stage of life and life needs you to see yourselves through other people's eyes.

Go on now, let each of you draw their card, read its deepest meaning, and make it your own. And remember: I see you. I am watching you. I contemplate you. Do not disappoint me.

I love you already.

THE FOOL: Coexistence of contradictions. Distraction from worries.

THE MAGICIAN: Knowledge becoming power. Illusion and wonder.

THE HIGH PRIESTESS: Idea behind form. Truth revealed.

THE EMPRESS: Creation and allure. Primal inspiring force.

THE EMPEROR: Guidance and authority. Enforcement of obedience.

THE HIEROPHANT: Stern solace. Dogmatic truth.

THE LOVERS: Choice and conflict. Harmony of opposites.

THE HERMIT: Silence and contemplation. Solitude and counsel.

THE HANGED MAN: Nullification of self. Search for otherness.

THE DEVIL: Primordial instinct. Destruction of illusions.

THE MOON: Ever-shifting flux. Eternal change and dream.

THE SUN: Source of life and joy. Ability to be loved by all.



Envelope 1 - Director's notes

Well, my dearest thespians! What I want from you is honour and courage! This scene is full of pathos, your characters are on their last legs, they're looking Death in the eye, but their honour still stands tall. I want you to feel them, I want to see them come to life. I want you to learn from their plight, to breathe in their feelings and to allow those feelings to impress in you an unforgettable lesson. Your characters know life is a precious means, not an end. And so will you, once you live through them!

Live your characters, learn from them! This is theatre! And theatre goes well beyond the stage, theatre is life, theatre shapes the actor! Treasure every lesson you learn on stage as you live it, for it is the most precious thing you'll ever have.

Now each draw a card and don the costumes you have. Before getting on stage you will have to agree on some elements, like the setting of the scene, the atmosphere you'll breathe, perhaps even some previous events. How about a sermon from the Divine? Or a knightly duel, perhaps?

Trade prompts and ideas, without forgetting that the more you prepare, the less time you'll have to act. And I am here to assess your worth as actors. Guiding you in my stead will be whoever draws the Monarch's card: They will get the last word on every proposal, they will end every discussion and they will be the first to enter the scene, calling upon the others when they deem fit. Everybody must join in, and everybody must respect authority. Go on, do not disappoint me. You have 30 minutes, followed by a 10-minute break.

SCENE ONE: Medieval castle

The walled city of Hexenhof has been under siege for more than three months. The barbarian hordes swept down from the North, knowing no fatigue nor end to their numbers. Your army is spread thin, your supplies almost gone, your fate dark indeed.

The men of the city have always been proud and indomitable: Their courage fears not overwhelming odds nor omens of death, but in these desperate times it feels harder and harder to keep morale high and believe in the hope of tomorrow. Death seems like the only possible outcome. The sole choice left seems to be between dying like worms or dying like heroes.

Minor Arcana of Swords chart

	2: The Blacksmith
	3: The Merchant
	4: The Jester
	5: The Knight / The Damsel
	6: The Knight / The Damsel
	7: The Knight / The Damsel
	8: The Knight / The Damsel
	PAGE: The Archery Captain
	KNIGHT: The Knight-commander
	QUEEN: The Divine
	KING: The Monarch
	ACE: The Arcanist



Envelope 2 - Director's notes

I want you to be Titans! I want you immense, implacable, immovable! I want to stand before giants, I want to feel puny as I watch you tower over the stage! No fear, no weakness, no doubt can bend your resolve. Your will can challenge gods!

Your destiny is to be great, for your strength, your ambition, your determination know no obstacles and fear no boundaries! Nothing and no-one shall dare stand between you and your goals, a curse upon the fool who tries to cast you down! You will swipe him away by sheer force of will! Because you are immense.

Now each draw a card and don the costumes you have. This time the discussion will flow differently: Your momentum can no longer accept a greater authority, there will be conflict and opposing wills. On one side those who drew the Galactic diplomat and the Terraformer, on the other the Shipowner and the Second mate, with the rest of the crew free to swing between the clashing parties.

To what point are you willing to stand your ground? But beware, the object of your dispute must only be discussed on stage: Behind the curtain, you are only allowed to decide how to frame the scene, with the knowledge that you are taking time away from your portrayal.

When they are ready, the representatives of the two sides must choose which team will first enter the scene and which team will reach them mid-action. All other actors can follow one group or the other onto the stage. This will not bind them to any side of the debate. No limits, no boundaries to your decisions. You have 30 minutes, followed by a 10-minute break.

SCENE TWO: Intergalactic spaceship

The Shalashaska, a transgalactic civilian transport vessel, is travelling towards Sirius B.

Ten years into the journey, with twelve more left before arrival, a message reaches the communications hub. A planetoid suitable for colonisation has been sighted less than a month away from the Shalashaska and the ship is equipped for preliminary terraforming.

Accepting a terraforming mission would by all probability mean forever relinquishing the chance to reach Sirius B or any other civilised planet for that matter. The ship's informal council of the states general is called to discuss this crucial matter.

Minor Arcana of Pentacles chart

2: The Head mechanic
 3: The Medical officer
 4: The Trade unionist
 5: The Passenger liaison
 6: The Passenger liaison
 7: The Passenger liaison
 8: The Passenger liaison
 PAGE: The Terraformer
 KNIGHT: The Shipowner
 QUEEN: The Second mate
 KING: The Commander
 ACE: The Galactic diplomat



Envelope 3 - Director's notes

Are we there, gentlemen? Are we there? I want pathos! I want feeling! I want to cry, unable to hold back the tears, engulfed by the emotion you inspire within me. I want the feelings you bring to the stage to hit me in the face like cannonballs! I want them to be true, I want you to experience them in your deepest self and carve them out of your chest for me to see! I want to see the purest, sheer, utter truth! I want pain, anger, loneliness, despair.

But above all this, with disruptive, disarming force, I want to feel the warmth of true friendship, the radiance of true love! I want them to be true, to be true for you. I want you to love each other, to be brothers, one and the same, to feel like a single thing, united, one clan, one family! Your strength lies in the strength of your bonds.

This is the lesson the stage must teach you today! This is what you must impress upon your soul in scorching, fiery letters by living through your characters. This is what I want to feel you burn in the holy fire of theatre! I want to feel our hearts explode!

Now each draw a card and don the costumes you have. This time I will not be the one to tell you how to conduct the debate: The seed of a troupe has been sown in your hearts and I expect you to act like one from now on.

Think of me as a dearly departed relative, like an impalpable presence to honour through your harmony. Or, if you prefer, as a spectre ready to lay misfortune upon you if you dare stand against one another. You have 30 minutes, followed by a 10-minute break.

SCENE THREE: Circus

Circus is more than a lifestyle, it is a world of its own. They call these the years of the Great Depression, and with good reason. People, fewer and fewer people, come to watch whenever they can. They need to get their minds away from an ever-greier, ever-more-desperate reality.

But they also want to see you, to look inside your lives, to fill their eyes with your horrid visage, for you are the mummies, nomadic, lascivious, deformed and damned. They look at you and feel a little bit better about their sad lives.

To you, tonight is a night of mourning. Your show has ended in tragedy. Sometimes it happens. Zombo the clown was drunk for his number: He was supposed to dive into a vat from a ridiculously tall pole. A heart of gold, old Zombo, but it was buried under jokes and cynicism and drenched in too much alcohol. He missed the vat and crashed into the ground. The audience laughed for five minutes before it dawned on them that none of it was part of the show, that the clown had died for real.

You didn't even get the dignity of tragedy. Even death ends up being just another joke to you. You are outcasts, freaks, prodigies, yes, but ones best savoured from afar. All you have are yourselves, each other. Tomorrow you will go back to eating dirt for a few pennies. But tonight, as you gather around a simple campfire for Zombo's memorial, you cannot help but huddle closer to this queer family, made of brotherly friendships, forged by war and betrayal and desperate, tragic, ridiculous love.

Minor Arcana of Wands Chart

2: The Lion tamer

3: The Clown

4: The Freak

5: The Dancer

6: The Dancer

7: The Dancer

8: The Dancer

PAGE: The Acrobat

KNIGHT: The Equestrian

QUEEN: The Herculean

KING: The Ringmaster

ACE: The Magician

Envelope 4 - Director's notes

Good, gentlemen, back to order now! Back to the scene, everyone on the stage! We are about to rehearse our next scene. A great scene, a masterful scene. Yes, masterful- for it has a lot to teach!

Observation and empathy. These are your most precious gifts. You are a company, you are companions. United, the dearest things you have are each other. Close, like one man, moved by a single will. Together you are an unequivocal concept, a multitude of voices in perfect symphony.

Your power and success depend on your ability to deeply understand those who stand before you. This scene is you, and only you. There is no place, there is no time, there is no background and no perspective. There is only you.

So I want empathy. The purest empathy, empathy born of keen observation and deep understanding. Be your character, be your characters together. I want to see you act in perfect harmony. I want your empathy to become telepathy.

Now be brave and hit the stage!

No cards, no costumes and no discussions. You don't need them anymore. Climb on the stage right now and sit in a circle, at just the right distance from each other. Now close your eyes as one, and let your breathing bind you together. In the Void awaiting you, there is only room for one verb and one sense at a time.

You must become familiar with your inner voice to let it resonate with your companions', to let your guts, not your ears, tell you when your time to speak approaches: If two or more of you talk over each other, they must immediately hold their tongues and return to silence. They will wait for someone else to speak

before trying again, all the while focusing more and more on their own perceptions. Your goal is to count from 1 to 30. Every time two numbers overlap, or appear in the wrong order, the exercise fails and the count must start over.

Do not make fools of yourselves by trying to be clever: Do not shoot numbers like arrows, half-whispered and as quick as you can; let them rise from a common vibration instead, and speak them slowly, breathe them out, with the right pause between each and the next. Yes, let your breaths grow together first, inhale and then exhale as one, vocalise with a letter before beginning to count if you want to.

Let me give you one more incentive. If you manage to reach 30, you will be free to open your eyes and stand on your feet. But of course, you will be entirely deprived of the gift of speech. One sense at a time, remember? Thus you will move silently through the Void, enriched by your new awareness of yourselves. And I shall look upon you, and smile in satisfaction. You have 15 minutes, followed by a 10-minute pause.

SCENE FOUR: The Void

The actors will walk the stage as they please, free to convey their own happiness and to enjoy their harmonious empathy, the synergy born of their common actions.

There are no Minor Arcana of Cups, for the cup is one to fill and there is no better time to let it overflow with everything we have to give.

Envelope 5 - Director's notes

This is the mother of all scenes. Your mother. This scene will give you life, it will deliver you, finally ready for the world.

On my stage you have learnt, burning, shining, scorching absolute truths like fiery seals upon your souls! You have known honour and courage! You have nurtured the greatness of your spirit, titanism! You have tuned the holiest of skills, observation and empathy! You have grasped the real essence of love and friendship!

Now, at last, you will understand who you are, your goal, your fate, your sacred mission! I want you to be divine! Yes, you are gods a wisp away from incarnation, consecrated to the mission of changing the course of the history of this world.

Savour these last moments of clarity, which are your first as well. Remember the truths you met, the lessons you learnt. Above all savour the bonds that tie you together. Savour them fully, discover the bitter sweetness of knowing that your closest friend, the most overwhelming love you have ever known will soon slip through your fingers. Now you know, now you remember, but beyond these walls all memories will be lost.

Savour sublime pain mixed with impatience, the long wait before you meet again and recognise one another. And, together, change everything.

You, forces of conception, you, brushes to paint a new world, you and only you.

Body, voice, team spirit, everything is yours. Climb on the stage and scatter around.

This exercise is split into four phases: At first you will be Gods, then you will be Men, then Children, and finally you will regress even further.

As Gods, choose your pulpit and from there, unmoving, let your voice resound. After each of you has spoken their Oracle, anyone can shout "Men", and Men you will become.

As Men, you are free to move and gather into groups of two or three. Your voice, however, can now only reach out to this small group. Will you mourn your loss of power? Will you wonder about your future? Once again, anyone can shout "Children!" and such you will become, wild and carefree.

As Children, you can run and jump and give your attention to whoever you like, but you can only convey the simplest of ideas. Are you happy? Are you perhaps afraid?

At last, at the climax of your energy, any one of you can crumble to the ground with no warning and lie down, eyes closed, to slowly get in a fetal position. This will be your wordless signal, and the rest of you must do the same. Thus you return to the womb of Space.

If Time allows it, you can slowly extend an arm, then a leg, to once again stand upright and open your eyes to the new world. Unaware, incapable of speech.

You have 15 minutes, with no more pauses to follow. At the end of the exercise, open the next envelope. The last envelope.

This scene is already outlined. Begin.



Envelope 6 - Direction notes

Stop. Stand still. You have spoken, declared, shouted. Now be silent. No more words. Quiet. Climb the stage and form a half-circle, so that you can all see each other and stand still in silence.

Now you know what you are. Who you are. Each of you knows the ancestral power they embody, their archetype. This force has a name you will recognise as your own, once you hear it.

Whoever holds these instructions will call the Major Arcana, one after the other: With each archetype, you will raise your fingers in unison to point to the companion who embodies it. Let none of you teeter in their choice, let none of you change their mind or let the others' ideas force their hand.

When your Arcanum is called, do not hesitate to point to someone else so that your identity is not revealed before the time comes. Sear into your mind the faces of those who recognised you for who you are.

THE FOOL

THE MAGICIAN

THE HIGH PRIESTESS

THE EMPRESS

THE EMPEROR

THE HIEROPHANT

THE HERMIT

THE HANGED MAN

THE DEVIL

THE SUN

THE MOON

THE LOVERS

Now that all Major Arcana have been called, the time has come to unravel their mystery. If none of your companions have recognised you, pointing you out to be the archetype you embody, you must remain on the stage: Your time to step away from timeless shadows, to stop preparing and begin acting in the great stage of life, is yet to come. Otherwise speak your own name aloud, abandon the scene and prepare to listen. Now.

You have expressed your founding principle, the power that moves you, the power you move. You are ready to give a new visage to the world newly torn from primordial chaos, to teach wisdom and virtue, to ignite action and change.

You are the new era. You are the new gods.

Soon you will forget. Your faces, your names, your legacy. Look each other in the eye, all of you. In the world to come you will find one another, and surely you will recognise your companions. United, in flesh and matter, you will bring forth the spirit of the new era. On the stage of the world you will act out your tragedy, the great saga of your deeds. Caress your memories for one last moment, and remember what you have learnt.

The rehearsals are over.

Time to pull back the curtain.

Time to be born!