

*6 Essential Questions* was first produced by Factory Theatre, Toronto, from March 1–30, 2014, with the following cast and creative team:

Grandmother: Maggie Huculak

Renata: Mina James

Mother: Elizabeth Saunders

Doctor Garbage: Richard Zeppieri

Dramaturge: Iris Turcott

Director: Leah Cherniak

Set and costume design: Victoria Wallace

Lighting design: Arun Srinivasan

Sound design: Thomas Ryder Payne

Projection design: Cylla von Tiedemann and Cameron Davis

Assistant lighting design: Siobhán Sleath

Stage manager: Sarah Miller

Apprentice stage manager: Emily Mewett

Choreographer: Terrill Maguire

Brazilian language/lullabies/accents consultant: Ricardo Sternberg

## characters

Renata: a twenty-six-year-old Canadian doctor

Doctor Garbage: may or may not exist

Mother: painfully visible and alive

Grandmother: may or may not be dead

## invocation

**DOCTOR GARBAGE:** What if, once upon a time . . . Can you see me? . . . What if, once upon a time, a smart but sad little girl lost her mother and couldn't remember how and didn't know where she was? . . . And what if this girl studied until her eyes turned as blue as the sky, and she became a doctor . . . I don't know why we do things; we do things because they are there to do . . . And what if, once upon *this* time, after all these years, she heard a voice . . .

*A purse floats down from the sky. RENATA takes the purse and opens it. A lullaby and her mother's voice come out in a mix of Portuguese and English. She opens and shuts the purse, hearing and then silencing the mother's voice. She then opens the purse fully and listens to the lullaby and the mother's message. A plane ticket is found inside the purse. The purse either follows RENATA or explodes like a bomb.*

**MOTHER:** Angel, angel, my darling, anjo, anjo, *minha bela menina* . . .

**DOCTOR GARBAGE:** . . . a voice that seemed to remember her . . .

**MOTHER:** Your mother waits for you, *minha bela menina* . . .

Look inside, look deep inside—I never left you. Believe me, I'm there, I'm there with you; let your heart go; give it back to me, *minha bela* angel . . .

**LULLABY:** In the street, in the street, there's a forest [Nesta rua, nesta rua, tem um bosque]

That is called, that is called, loneliness [Que se chama, que se chama, Solidão]

Within, within it lives an angel [Dentro dele, dentro dele mora um anjo]

Who stole, who stole my heart [Que roubou, que roubou meu curacao]

If I stole, if I stole your heart [Se eu roubei, se eu roubei seu curacao]

It's because you stole mine [É porque tu roubastes o meu também]

If I stole, if I stole your heart [Se eu roubei, se eu roubei teu curacao]

It's because I love you as well [É porque eu te quero tanto bem]

If the street, if the street was mine [Se esta rue se esta rua fosse minha]

I would, I would have it paved [Eu mandava, eu mandava ladrillar]

With little stones, little stones of diamonds [Com pedrinhas, com pedrinhas de brillante]

For my love, for my love, to pass on by [Para o meu, para o meu amor passar]

**DOCTOR GARBAGE:** So she followed that voice and flew, like a dark cloud, over the ocean . . .

## customs

*RENATA is carrying the purse from the previous scene.*

*DOCTOR GARBAGE is dressed as an Immigration/Customs agent.*

**DOCTOR GARBAGE:** Não lhe damos as boas-vindas ao Brasil.

**RENATA:** English?

**DOCTOR GARBAGE:** Não lhe damos as boas-vindas ao Brasil.

**RENATA:** I'm sorry. *No fala* Portuguese.

**DOCTOR GARBAGE:** I said, "We do not welcome you to Brazil." I said it in Portuguese because Portuguese is the language of Brazil. Not English. Passport.

*He checks RENATA's passport.*

Canadian. No one's from Canada.

*Beat.*

Renata Singh. Purpose of visit to Brazil?

RENATA: . . . Purpose?

DOCTOR GARBAGE: Business? Pleasure? Familia?

RENATA: I don't know—

DOCTOR GARBAGE: —Sex? Drugs? Cirugia plástica? . . .

*Beat.*

You don't know why you're here. That's okay.

*Huge beat.*

Neither does your mother. She's waiting for you, on the other side. She's been waiting since the clouds marched in and took over our country.

*He stamps RENATA's passport and blows a whistle, which wakes the MOTHER and GRANDMOTHER on stage. RENATA takes her passport without registering the exchange. MOTHER discreetly takes the passport from RENATA and puts it in her purse.*

*MOTHER applies red lipstick and then she and GRANDMOTHER greet RENATA as if she has just disembarked from the plane.*