

TIMES LIKE THESE

BY

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CAST: META WOLFF
OSCAR WEISS**

SET. AN APARTMENT IN BERLIN 1930

ACT ONE

SCENE 1

OSCAR AND META IN SILHOUETTE FACING EACH OTHER. META IS HOLDING A BOUQUET OF ROSES. OSCAR IS KNEELING BEFORE HER. OSCAR IS APPLAUDING.

OSKAR

DID YOU HEAR THEM? THEY ALL CRIED OUT FOR YOU. YOU WERE WONDERFUL “META! META! BRAVO! BRAVO!” AND YOU EATING IT UP.

META

YOU WERE WONDERFUL TOO.

OSKAR

(MIMICKING HER)

“YOU WERE WONDERFUL TOO.” I HATE IT WHEN YOU’RE GENEROUS.

META CLUTCHES HER FLOWERS TO HER BREAST AND PEERS DOWN AT OSKAR.

META

OH, GET UP.

OSKAR

I WON’T GET UP UNTIL YOU ADMIT HOW BRILLIANT YOU WERE.

META

OH, STOP IT, OSKAR. (SHE LOOKS DOWN AT HIM. OSKAR REMAINS IN PLACE ON HIS KNEES. THEN FINALLY SHE SHOUTS...) YES! YES! I WAS BRILLIANT!

THEY LAUGH. LIGHTS OUT.

SCENE 2

OSKAR IS PACING AND WORKING ON HIS LINES FROM “WOYZECK.”

OSKAR

“YET, IF A WANDERER, LEANING ON THE STREAM OF TIME...”

META (OS)

(CORRECTING HIM)

“WANDERER,” OSKAR. WHAT SOUND IN THE WORD GIVES IT ITS MEANING?

OSKAR

“WAN.”

META (OS)

YES, “WAAAAANN...”

OSKAR

“WAAAAANN...”

META (OS)

“WAAAAAANN...”

OSKAR

“WAAAAAANN...”

META (OS)

IT IS HIS LONGING.

OSKAR

“WAAAAAANN...”

META (OS)

AND THEN THE SOUND OF HIS FEET, “...DERER...”

OSKAR

“...DERER...”

META (OS)

YES, BUT A LIGHT TOUCH OF THE TONGUE,

OSKAR

“...DERER.”

META (OS)

THE WORD IS SO ELEGANT.

OSKAR

“YET, IF THE WAANNDERER, LEANING BY THE STREAM OF TIME, IN HIS GODLY...”

META (OS)

“...GAWDLY...”

OSKAR

“...GAWDLY WISDOM ASKETH AND ANSWERETH HIMSELF...”

META (OS)

SNAP THOSE WORDS.

OSKAR

“...ASKETH AND ANSWERETH HIMSELF: WHAT IS MAN?”

META

“WHAT IS MAN?”

OSKAR

“WHAT IS MAN? VERILY I SAY UNTO YOU...”

META (OS)

THINK THE WORDS THROUGH AS YOU SAY THEM, THEY ARE NOT COMPLETE UNTIL THE LAST LINE.

OSKAR

“ON WHAT WOULD THE FARMER, THE BARREL MAKER, THE COBBLER, THE DOCTOR LIVE, IF GOD HAD NOT CREATED MAN?”

META (OS)

YES, OSKAR, NOW DIG IN.

OSKAR

“YET, IF A WANDERER, LEANING BY THE STREAM OF TIME, IN HIS GODLY WISDOM ASKETH AND ANSWERETH HIMSELF: WHAT IS MAN? WHAT IS MAN? VERILY I SAY UNTO YOU, ON WHAT WOULD THE FARMER, THE BARREL MAKER, THE COBBLER, THE DOCTOR LIVE, IF GOD HAD NOT CREATED MAN? FROM WHAT WOULD THE TAILOR LIVE IF SHAME WAS NOT IMPLANTED IN MAN, FROM WHAT WOULD THE SOLDIER LIVE IF MAN DID NOT COME EQUIPPED WITH THE NEED TO SLAUGHTER HIMSELF? THEREFORE, DOUBT NOT, YES, YES, IT IS LOVELY AND FINE, YET EVERYTHING ON EARTH IS EVIL, EVEN MONEY ROTTS. IN CONCLUSION, MY BELOVED ONES, LET US NOW PISS ON A CROSS SO THAT A JEW WILL DIE.”

META ENTERS, BEAUTIFUL AND RADIANT. SHE APPLAUDS HIM AS THE LIGHTS FADE.

SCENE 3

META ON THE TELEPHONE. SHE IS IN HER KIMONO. SHE IS CRADLING THE PHONE ON HER NECK WHILE FILING HER FINGERNAILS.

META

YOU KNOW PERFECTLY WELL THAT I’M TOO OLD TO PLAY KATE. - YOU DRIVE ME CRAZY, HANS. YOU ARE SUCH A CHARMER - (OSKAR ENTERS, DRYING HIS HAIR. HE IS PEEVED.) OH, DO YOU? WELL, IF I PLAY KATE, THEN I THINK OSKAR SHOULD PLAY PETRUCHIO. (OSKAR WAVES FOR HER TO STOP.) - WHY NOT? I THINK HE’S PERFECT FOR THE PART. - (SHE LAUGHS)

META (CONT.)

YES, YES, HE DID TAME ME.- I AM TAMED, I TELL YOU, I AM TAMED.- (OSKAR TURNS HIS BACK ON HER AND LEAVES THE ROOM, ONLY TO RETURN AND GLARE AT HER.) NO, YOU AREN’T THE TAMING KIND. - WHAT ARE YOU? HMMM, DO YOU REALLY WANT ME TO SAY? (OSKAR BEGINS ANGRILY PACING.) YOU’RE A BUREAUCRAT. - HOW HAVE I INSULTED YOU? A TRUE GERMAN SHOULD TAKE THAT AS A COMPLIMENT. - (OSKAR STANDS OVER META.) LISTEN, OSKAR SEEMS TO BE CHOMPING AT THE BIT, I’VE GOT TO TEND TO HIS NEEDS. IT IS MY WIFELY DUTY. - DON’T WORRY ABOUT IT. - YES, REHEARSAL IN TWO WEEKS. KATE, MY GOD, I HOPE THERE IS ENOUGH MAKEUP. - OH, STOP, YOU’RE MAKING ME ILL. GO TO BED; DRINK A GLASS OF HOT MILK. TSCHÜSS.

META

WHAT’S WRONG WITH YOU?

OSKAR

I DON’T LIKE THAT MAN.

META

THERE’S NOTHING TO DISLIKE ABOUT HIM THAT IS WHY THERE IS NOTHING TO LIKE.

OSKAR

YES, HE'S LIKE A PIECE OF PAPER, YOU CAN WRITE ON HIM ANYTHING YOU WANT TO WRITE AND IT WILL BE THERE FOR EVERYONE TO SEE. BE CAREFUL WHAT YOU SAY TO THAT GUY. IN TIMES LIKE THESE HANS JOHST CAN BE A VERY DANGEROUS MAN.

META

YOU'RE EXAGGERATING, OSKAR. HE'S JUST A LITTLE MAN WITH A NAME IN FRONT OF HIS DESK. HANS SAYS THAT THINGS COULD GO MUCH BETTER FOR THEATER ARTISTS, ESPECIALLY FOR ACTORS. GOD KNOWS THE UNION IS DOING NOTHING FOR US. HE SAID THAT THERE COULD BE SPECIAL A CHAMBER FOR ACTORS WHERE UNTALENTED NOVICES COULDN'T GET IN.

OSKAR

YOU MEAN THE JEWS?

META

WHAT DO THE JEWS HAVE TO DO WITH IT?

OSKAR

JEWS, INTELLECTUALS, FOREIGNERS. WHO'S GOING TO PAY FOR ALL THIS? WHAT DO WE HAVE TO DO IN RETURN? WE WOULD HAVE TO PLAY FOLK ART, FOLK ART, META.

META

WHAT DO YOU MEAN?

OSKAR

POLKA THEATER!

META

THAT'S NOT POSSIBLE, THIS IS BERLIN.

OSKAR

GOETHE, SCHILLER, SHAKESPEARE, OH YES, BUT WITH CHANGES.

META

WHAT'S WRONG WITH SHAKESPEARE? I COULD DO WITH MORE SHAKESPEARE, AND GOETHE AND SCHILLER. THERE IS A LOT OF SELF-INDULGENT CRAP OUT THERE.

OSKAR

YES, AND HANS JOHST.

META

IMPOSSIBLE, HE'S A TERRIBLE PLAYWRIGHT.

OSKAR

(PRETENDING TO TEAR HIS SHIRT OPEN)

YES, EXPRESSIONIST SAUERKRAUT!

META

IS IT BECAUSE HE WAS MY LOVER?

OSKAR

NO, IT'S BECAUSE YOU COULD FUCK SOMEBODY WITH SO LITTLE TALENT!

META

MY DEAR, DEAREST OSKAR, IT IS YOU I LOVE, ONLY YOU. (SHE PUTS HER ARMS AROUND HIS NECK AND SINGS.)

DU, DU, LIEGTS MIR AM HERTZEN
DU, DU, LIEGTS MIR AM SINN
DU, DU, MACHTS MIR VIEL SCHMERZEN
WEISS NICHT WIE GUT ICH DIR BIN.

META (CONT.)

(THE LIGHTS BEGIN TO FADE AS SHE SINGS THE CHORUS.)

JA, JA, JA, JA

WEISS NICHT WIE GUT ICH DIR BIN.

THEY KISS AS THE LIGHTS OUT.

SCENE 4

THE LIGHTS RISE JUST AS META IS ENTERING IN A HUFF. OSKAR IS BEHIND HER.

META

I DON'T UNDERSTAND WHY THEY HAD TO POSTPONE THE REHEARSAL. IT'S UNHEARD OF. CASTING PROBLEMS? WHAT DOES THAT MEAN? WELL, SAY SOMETHING, OSKAR. WHAT DO YOU THINK? YOU MUST HAVE SOME OPINION.

OSKAR

I WOULDN'T WORRY ABOUT IT, YOU'RE JOB IS SECURE.

META

OF COURSE, MY JOB IS SECURE, WHY WOULDN'T IT BE? AND SO IS YOURS, BUT I THINK HE SHOULD HAVE CAST YOU AS PETRUCHIO.

OSKAR

I'M PERFECTLY FINE WITH MY ROLE.

META

THAT'S YOUR PROBLEM. YOU'RE AFRAID OF SUCCESS. YOU COULD HAVE DONE THAT ROLE; YOU COULD HAVE STEPPED UP INTO THAT ROLE, YET YOU HUNG BACK. I SWEAR YOU SHRINK EVERY TIME YOU GET UP ON THAT STAGE. YOU MUST FOCUS. YOU MUST BE SHARP AS A STILETTO.

OSKAR

I HATE THAT JOHST; I DON'T WANT WORK FOR HIM.

META

SOME OF US DON'T HAVE THE LUXURY OF PICKING AND CHOOSING OUR DIRECTORS.

OSKAR

WHO SAYS HE'S A DIRECTOR?

META

THE PRUSSIAN STATE THEATER! YOU ARE IN THE FINEST THEATER IN ALL OF GERMANY, OSKAR. THIS IS YOUR CHANCE.

OSKAR

I DON'T HAVE YOUR TALENT.

META

YOU DON'T HAVE MY WILL.

OSKAR

I WISH IT WERE A MATTER OF WILL. YOU AND MARIANNE HOPPE AND GRÜDEGENS, I CAN'T STAND NEAR YOU WITHOUT BEING TERRIFIED, WITHOUT SHAKING, WITHOUT BEING FAT. AND HIM, THAT JOHST, THAT SMIRK.

META

HE JUST WANTS TO SEE IF YOU CAN STAND ON YOUR OWN TWO FEET.

OSKAR

ARE YOU PICKING ON ME?

META

THERE ARE ALWAYS CHALLENGES AND THEY'RE NOT ALWAYS PRETTY, IN FACT, MOST OF THE TIME THEY'RE UGLY AS SIN, UGLY AS HANS JOHST. AND THEY'RE NOT ALWAYS FAIR, MOST OF THE TIME THEY'RE NOT. THERE IS ALWAYS SOME LITTLE THING, SOME LOATHSOME LITTLE THING THAT WILL GET YOU IN THE END, THAT YOU STAVE OFF FROM MOMENT TO MOMENT. FROM BREATH TO BREATH YOU LIVE, NOW, NOW, NOW YOU LIVE JUST IN THE NICK OF TIME. THAT'S ACTING. THAT'S ALL IT IS. THERE IS NO MYSTERY. (SHE CROSSES TO THE D.S. WINDOW AND LOOKS OUT) YOU MUST FIND THAT THING, THAT LOATHSOME LITTLE THING.

META BEGINS CRYING. OSKAR CROSSES TO HER.

OSKAR

MY DEAR, WHAT'S THE MATTER?

META

WILL HE BECOME KING?

OSKAR
WHO?

META
THAT LITTLE AUSTRIAN?

OSKAR
(CHUCKLES)
YOU MEAN, HITLER? NO, HE'S CHANCELLOR.

META
(TASTING THE WORD)
"CHANCELLOR..." IF I REMEMBER MY HIGH SCHOOL LATIN, ITS
"CANCELLERIUS." ISN'T THAT RIGHT?

OSKAR
I CAN'T REMEMBER MY HIGH SCHOOL LATIN.

META
OH, BUT YOU SHOULD. YOU MUST ALWAYS REMEMBER THE ROOTS OF
YOUR WORDS, THEIR PRIMAL MEANINGS, THE EGGS IN THEM THAT
HATCH ON YOUR TONGUE WHEN YOU SPEAK ON STAGE.
"CANCELLERIUS," IS THE ROOT OF CHANCELLOR. IT MEANS,
"DOORKEEPER."

OSKAR
BELLHOP, YOU MEAN. ARE YOU OKAY?

META
I'M A JEW.

THE LIGHTS FADE.

SCENE 5

META IS SITTING ON THE COUCH. OSCAR ENTERS. HE IS IN A HUFF.

OSKAR
META? ARE YOU ALL RIGHT?

META
(QUIETLY)
SHHHHH, RELAX. SIT DOWN.

OSKAR
SMARMY, BASTARD, PRACTICALLY LICKED MY FACE.

META
(QUIETLY)
DID YOU GET PETRUCHIO?

OSKAR

YES.

META

MARIANNE GOT KATE?

OSKAR

YES.

META

SHE'S GOOD.

OSKAR

THAT SMILE, THAT SNEAKY SMILE, THOSE SNAKE EYES. GOD, I HATE THAT MAN, THAT LITTLE SMILING MAN. DID HE CALL YOU?

META

No.

OSKAR

OF COURSE NOT. META, WHY DIDN'T YOU TELL ME?

META

IS IT IMPORTANT?

OSKAR

NOT TO ME.

META

MY GRANDFATHER BELONGED TO A REFORM SYNAGOGUE THAT WAS EXTREMELY LIBERAL, SO HE DIDN'T PROTEST WHEN MY FATHER BECAME A PROTESTANT AND I WAS RAISED AS A PROTESTANT TOO. I'VE NEVER THOUGHT OF MYSELF AS A JEW. I'VE NEVER KNOWN ANYTHING JEWISH. I ABHOR RELIGION. AT BEST IT'S A KINKY RELATIONSHIP TO ONES FATHER. AND BUDDHA, A RICH BOY WHO GAVE UP HIS EGO BECAUSE HE COULDN'T TAKE REALITY. I CAN'T ADMIRE THAT. I'M NOT A HUMANIST EITHER. I'M NOT THAT NOSEY, NOR THAT INTERESTED. I'M NOT EVEN AN ATHEIST. IT'S A NONE-ISSUE. I'M AM ACTRESS. THAT'S ALL I AM. I LIKE TO BE NOTICED. I LIKE TO BE PRAISED. I HAVE A BIG EGO. ANYWAY, PEOPLE KNOWING I'M JEWISH WOULDN'T DO ME ANY GOOD.

OSKAR

DIDN'T YOU REGISTER YOURSELF AS JEWISH?

META

No, WHY SHOULD I? I'M GERMAN.

OSKAR

HE CAN'T FIRE YOU, THAT SMILING LITTLE UNCTUOUS MAN CAN'T FIRE YOU. YOU'RE THE BEST ACTRESS IN THAT THEATER.

META

THAT SEEMS TO BE DEBATABLE.

OSKAR

WHAT ARE WE GOING TO DO?

META

YOU'VE GOT TO TAKE CARE OF US FOR A WHILE, OSKAR, UNTIL WE CAN GET OUT OF HERE.

OSKAR

GET OUT OF HERE?

META

YES.

OSKAR

YES, OF COURSE.

LIGHTS OUT.

SCENE 6

THERE IS A FLICKERING LIGHT D.S. META APPEARS AND LOOKS OUT. OSKAR APPEARS BEHIND HER.

META

A FIRE. WHERE?

OSKAR

THE PARLIAMENT.

META

OH, MY GOD. TURN ON THE RADIO AND SEE IF THERE'S ANYTHING ABOUT IT.

OSKAR TURNS ON THE RADIO. THE MUSIC TO WAGNER'S "TANNHAUSER OVERTURE" COMES ON. OSKAR RETURNS TO META AND LOOKS OUT. A SONG IS HEARD ON THE STREET. IT GROWS LOUDER.
AND THEY WON'T EVER LET GO

META

CAN YOU HEAR THAT? TURN OFF THE RADIO.

OSKAR TURNS THE RADIO OFF. THE SONG IS THE HORST WESSEL LIED.

META

WHAT IS THAT SONG? I HEAR IT EVERY DAY.

OSKAR

IT'S THE HORST WESSEL SONG. HE WAS A NAZI HERO WHO WAS SHOT IN THE FACE BY A COMMIE. HE WROTE IT. A MARTYR FOR THE NAZI CAUSE.

META

IT'S BIG AND DUMB LIKE A ZOMBIE. IT FEELS NO PAIN, HAS NO REFLECTION, CANNOT BE STOPPED. (SUDDENLY SHE CAN'T STAND UP.) OSKAR, HOLD ME, I'M FALLING. I'M FALLING.

META SINKS INTO HIS ARMS AS THE LIGHTS FADE AND THE HORST WESSEL SONG GROWS LOUDER.

SCENE 7

META IS SITTING ON A CHAIR BY THE RADIO, EXPRESSIONLESS. SHE IS IN HER KIMONO. SHE IS LISTENING TO THE RADIO.

VOICE ON THE RADIO

A FEW DAYS AGO, GERMANY WAS ASTONISHED BY THE NEWS OF ARSON IN THE PARLIAMENT. THE RINGLEADER IS A JEW COMMUNIST. A BLOODY UPRISING WAS SUPPOSED TO BEGIN THROUGHOUT GERMANY. THE BURNING OF THE PARLIAMENT WAS TO BE THE SIGNAL FOR THE ATTACK.

OSKAR ENTERS. HE IS WEARING HIS WINTER COAT. THE VOICE ON THE RADIO CONTINUES THROUGH THEIR DIALOGUE.

OSKAR

HOW ARE YOU?

META

FINE.

VOICE ON THE RADIO

THE JEWS DID NOT SUCCEED IN CARRYING OUT THEIR TREACHEROUS SCHEME. THE NATIONAL SOCIALIST MINISTER GÖRING PUT A HALT TO THEIR PLANS.

OSKAR

WHAT ARE YOU LISTENING TO?

META

THE NEWS.

VOICE ON THE RADIO

BUT THE JEW WILL FIND NEW INTRIGUES AND CRIMES, WILL NOT REST UNTIL A NEW ATTACK ON GERMANY IS READY. THE JEW IS GUILTY...

OSKAR TURNS THE RADIO OFF.

OSKAR

WHY DO YOU LISTEN TO THAT CRAP? (HE TAKES OFF HIS COAT.) BERNARD HAS LEFT. SO HAS SOPHIE. HECTOR, OTTO, FRANZ, PAULA. THERE ARE A LOT OF NEW FACES. JOSHT, HE SMILES ALL THE TIME, SAYS "THE AIR IS CLEAR NOW. WE WILL BE A FAMILY." I THINK MOST OF THE NEW ONES ARE EMBARRASSED. MARIANNE SAYS NOTHING.

SHE SMILES, SHE KEEPS TO HERSELF. SHE DOES HER WORK. AND GUSTAV, HE JUST PRANCES ABOUT AS USUAL. HE GREETES THE NEW ONES WITH BIG FAT, HOT HANDSHAKES. HE CAME UP TO ME, CLAPPED ME ON THE SHOULDER AND SAID, "CONGRATULATIONS. SEE, IT'S NOT SO BAD." HE AND JOHST, THEY SHOULD BE HUSBAND AND WIFE. (NOTICES A BOOK ON THE TABLE.) WHAT'S THIS? "GOEBBELS ON HORST WESSEL," WHY ARE YOU READING THIS CRAP?

META

(GAZING OUT THE WINDOW)

ALL THESE FLAGS, I'VE NEVER SEEN SO MANY FLAGS. IT'S LIKE A BIG CELEBRATION. WHAT ARE THESE FLAGS? ARE THESE THE FLAGS OF MY COUNTRY? A FLAG SHOULD BE LIKE THE HOLY HOST HIDDEN IN THE CROSS UNDER GLASS THAT A PRIEST HOLDS ABOVE HIM WHEN HE IS DOING MASS. WHEN THERE IS WAR THE FLAGS WILL FLY OUT OF IT, BUT THESE, WHAT ARE THEY?

OSKAR

WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT? YOU'VE NEVER BEEN TO A CATHOLIC MASS.

META

YES, I HAVE. I LIKED IT. IT WAS VERY THEATRICAL. IT WAS LIKE MAGIC, THEY TURNED A PIECE OF BREAD INTO GOD. DO YOU THINK THEY DID IT?

OSCAR

WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT?

META

DESTROY THE PARLIAMENT BUILDING?

OSCAR

WHO?

META

THE JEWS?

OSCAR

NO.

META

WHO THEN?

OSCAR

THE COMMUNISTS.

META

PERHAPS.

OSCAR LOOKS AT HER.

OSCAR

THE NAZIS? OH META, YOU CAN'T BE SERIOUS.

META

NO ONE WOULD BELIEVE THEY'D ACTUALLY DO IT. ONLY A CRAZY PERSON WOULD BELIEVE SUCH A THING.

OSCAR

YOU HAVEN'T DRESSED.

META

THERE IS A CATASTROPHE. A BUILDING HAS BEEN DESTROYED. PEOPLE HAVE BEEN KILLED. EVERYONE IS RUNNING AROUND IN TERROR. THEY DON'T KNOW WHERE TO HIDE, WHAT WILL HAPPEN NEXT. THIS GUY COMES ALONG COMES ALONG WHO WASN'T REALLY LIKED THAT MUCH BEFORE, BUT NOW, HE'S THERE IN THE ASHES OF DISASTER, IN THE STILL SMOLDERING FIRES, NAMING THE PEOPLE WHO DID IT, PROMISING TO PUNISH THEM. YOU'D RALLY AROUND THAT MAN.

OSCAR

META, YOU HAVEN'T LEFT THE APARTMENT.

META

I NEVER WANTED TO THINK ABOUT POLITICS. I TOOK IT FOR GRANTED THAT CIVILIZED PEOPLE WOULD ACT IN GOOD TASTE. NOW EVERYTHING I KNOW HAS BEEN TURNED AROUND. NOTHING IS THE SAME. I USED TO THINK THERE WERE CRAZY PEOPLE AND SANE PEOPLE, BUT NOW I KNOW THAT WE ARE ALL CRAZY.

META (CONT.)

HOW ELSE WOULD ONE EXPLAIN IT? THAT LITTLE SCREAMING MAN IS OUR LEADER. I'LL TELL YOU SOMETHING ELSE, GUYS LIKE HIM, ONCE THEY'RE IN OFFICE THEY NEVER LET GO.

OSCAR

I KNOW YOU'RE FRIGHTENED, BUT THIS FOOLISHNESS, IT WON'T LAST LONG, IT CAN'T.

META

WHY NOT?

OSKAR

BECAUSE THIS IS GERMANY.

META

OH, YES, OF COURSE, YES, I DIDN'T THINK OF THAT.

THE LIGHTS CROSSFADE TO...

SCENE 8

META IS STILL IN HER KIMONO. SHE IS DIALING THE TELEPHONE.

META

HELLO? HELLO, MARIANNE? THIS IS META. – YES. - OH, I’M FINE. HOW ARE YOU? I’M NOT INTERRUPTING ANYTHING AM I? I JUST WANTED TO SAY “HELLO.” - YES, I’M SURE IT WON’T LAST. - I’M GLAD IT’S YOU. I THINK YOU SHOULD HAVE PLAYED KATE ALL ALONG. - OH, PLEASE. THAT’S ONE THING I’M NOT VAIN ABOUT, MY AGE. - (LAUGHS) WELL, PERHAPS I AM. - OH, DON’T PLEASE, IT’S ALL RIGHT. I DIDN’T CALL FOR SYMPATHY. HOW IS OSKAR DOING? - OH, THAT’S SO GOOD TO HEAR. TAKE CARE OF HIM WILL YOU? WHAT I MEAN IS THAT HE’S NOT TERRIBLY CONFIDENT AROUND YOU. YOU UNDERSTAND. - YES. YES, HE SHOULD PIPE UP MORE. PERHAPS SOME GOOD WILL COME OUT OF THIS, A CHANCE FOR HIM TO STRETCH. - PLANS? WELL, EVERYTHING’S HAPPENED SO QUICKLY, I HAVEN’T CAUGHT MY BREATH. YES, I THINK I WILL BE PLANNING SOMETHING. – YES, I HEARD THAT AND FRANZ TOO. – OH, TO PARIS. – HMM, HE SPEAKS FRENCH DOES HE? – OH, PAULA, TO AMSTERDAM. WHAT IS SHE GOING TO DO? – I’M SURE SHE’LL FIND SOMETHING. WELL, I GUESS I SHOULD THINK ABOUT THAT. BEING MARRIED IS A LITTLE COMPLICATED... IT’S PROBABLY NOT GOOD FOR ME TO BE SPEAKING WITH YOU. I MEAN, HAS IT GOTTEN THAT BAD? I’M SORRY, WHAT A STUPID WAY TO SAY IT, BUT I’M VERY CURIOUS ABOUT IT, LIKE LIFTING A ROCK TO SEE WHAT KIND

META (CONT.)

OF BUGS ARE UNDER IT. (LAUGHS.) I’M SORRY, IT’S JUST SO BURLESQUE ISN’T IT ALL? I MEAN THE FLAGS. IT’S A MIRACLE THE BIRDS CAN FLY WITH ALL THAT CLOTH IN THE AIR. – OH, I’M SORRY. YES, YOU HAVE TO LEARN LINES. I GET ABSOLUTELY INCENSED WHEN SOMEONE INTERRUPTS ME WHEN I’M LEARNING LINES. - OH, YES, I’LL CALL. I’LL TELL YOU WHAT’S HAPPENING AS SOON AS I FIND OUT. MAKE SURE GUSTAV DOESN’T FLAIL AROUND HIM TOO MUCH, OSKAR GETS NERVOUS AS A CAT WHEN PEOPLE FLING THEIR ARMS ABOUT. AND HOW IS JOHST? – OH, YES, PLEASE, I WON’T HOLD YOU, BUT HE IS TREATING HIM WELL? GOOD, GOOD, THAT’S GOOD TO HEAR, OH, YES, OF COURSE, WELL, TSCHÜSS.

MARIANNE HAS HUNG UP. META STILL HOLDS THE RECEIVER TO HER EAR. SHE WHISPERS INTO THE RECEIVER AS THE LIGHTS FADE...

META

GO TO HELL, YOU BLOND BITCH, GO TO HELL, GO TO HELL, GO TO HELL...

SCENE 9

OSKAR IS RECITING LINES FROM “TAMING OF THE SHREW.” THEY ARE HOLDING SCRIPTS. META IS STILL IN HER KIMONO.

OSKAR AS PETRUCHIO

COME ON, I’ GOD’S NAME; ONCE MORE TOWARD OUR FATHER’S.
GOOD LORD, HOW BRIGHT AND GOODLY SHINES THE MOON!

META STOPS HIM.

META

**LET ME PLAY HIM AND YOU PLAY HER. NOT PETRUCHIO, NAZI
PETRUCHIO.**

**OSCAR KNEELS. META PERFORMS PETRUCHIO WITH A COLD, HOMICIDAL INTENSITY,
STRUTTING AROUND OSCAR LIKE A NAZI.**

META AS PETRUCHIO SHRIEKS AT THE IMAGINARY SERVANT.

META AS PETRUCHIO

**COME ON, I' GOD'S NAME; ONCE MORE TOWARD OUR FATHER'S!!
(STEELY) GOOD LORD, HOW BRIGHT AND GOODLY SHINES THE MOON.**

OSKAR AS KATHARINA

THE MOON! THE SUN: IT IS NOT MOONLIGHT NOW.

META AS PETRUCHIO

I SAY IT IS THE MOON THAT SHINES SO BRIGHT.

OSKAR AS KATHARINA

I KNOW IT IS THE SUN THAT SHINES SO BRIGHT.

SHE GRABS OSCAR BY THE BACK OF THE HAIR. OSCAR IS A BIT SURPRISED.

META AS PETRUCHIO

**NOW, BY MY MOTHER'S SON, AND THAT'S MYSELF,
IT SHALL BE MOON, OR STAR, OR WHAT I LIST,
OR ERE I JOURNEY TO YOUR FATHER'S HOUSE.
GO ON, AND FETCH OUR HORSES BACK AGAIN.
EVERMORE CROSS'D AND CROSS'D; NOTHING BUT CROSS'D!**

OSKAR AS KATHARINA

**FORWARD, I PRAY, SINCE WE HAVE COME SO FAR,
AND BE IT MOON, OR SUN, OR WHAT YOU PLEASE:
AN IF YOU PLEASE TO CALL IT A RUSH-CANDLE,
HENCEFORTH I VOW IT SHALL BE SO FOR ME.**

META AS PETRUCHIO

I SAY IT IS THE MOON.

OSKAR AS KATHARINA

I KNOW IT IS THE MOON.

META AS PETRUCHIO

NAY, THEN YOU LIE: IT IS THE BLESSED SUN.

OSKAR AS KATHARINA

**THEN, GOD BE BLESS'D, IT IS THE BLESSED SUN:
BUT SUN IT IS NOT, WHEN YOU SAY IT IS NOT.**

META

(AS HERSELF)

THE BEST PLACE FOR THE WOMAN TO SERVE HER PEOPLE IS IN THE HOME, IN THE MARRIAGE, IN MOTHERHOOD. THIS IS HER HIGHEST MISSION. THIS IS WHAT KATE MUST UNDERSTAND. THIS IS WHAT PETRUCHIO UNDERSTANDS. HE MUST SET THE EXAMPLE OF GERMAN MANHOOD, FOR THE LESS GERMAN MEN ARE WILLING TO ACT AS MEN IN PUBLIC LIFE, THE MORE WOMEN SUCCUMB TO THE TEMPTATION TO FILL THE ROLE OF THE MAN. SO HE MUST TAME HER AND ONCE TAMED, SHE WILL NATURALLY UNDERSTAND WHAT HER TASK IS AS A WOMAN.

OSKAR

THAT'S A PILE OF SHIT!

META

OH, IS IT?

META KNEELS BEFORE OSKAR. SHE MEWS WITH DESIRE AND ADORATION.

META AS KATHARINA

“THY HUSBAND IS THY LORD, THY LIFE, THY KEEPER,
 THY HEAD, THY SOVEREIGN; ONE THAT CARES FOR THEE,
 AND FOR THY MAINTENANCE COMMITS HIS BODY
 TO PAINFUL LABOUR BOTH BY SEA AND LAND.

OSKAR

THAT'S COMPLETELY SKEWED.

META

YOU HAVE TO THINK LIKE THEY THINK. AN ACTOR OBEYS THE DIRECTOR.

OSKAR

I CAN'T STAND THAT JOSHT.

META

YOU ARE AN ARYAN. THE WORLD EMBRACES YOU AND ABHORS ME. THINK OF IT. WHAT IS THE LOGIC, THE SEQUENCE OF PARTICULARS, THE SENSE INFORMATION OF EACH SUBSEQUENT STEP IN THE CHAIN OF EXPERIENCES THAT LEAD YOU TO BELIEVE THAT YOU ARE SUPERIOR TO ME? WHERE IS THAT UGLY MAGGOT IN THE DARK OF YOUR BRAIN? YOU MUST FIND THE FAULT TO FIND THE POWER. ONLY THEN CAN YOU BELIEVE IT AND LET IT SPEAK THROUGH YOU BEYOND MORALITY. WHEN THE MAGGOT IN THE DARK HAS WALKED OUT OF YOUR HEAD AND STANDS NAKED ON STAGE FOR ALL TO SEE THEN THEY WILL CRY, “HE IS MAGIC!” IF YOU KEEP THINKING YOU'RE A “GOOD BOY” THEN YOU ARE NOT WORTHY OF BEING AN ACTOR. THINK OF IT, ALL YOU HAVE TO DO IS GET RID OF ME. OH, WHAT A RELIEF IT WOULD BE. IT'S ONLY GOING TO GET HARDER. I'M THE UNWANTED DOG IN YOUR HOUSE, THE ONE THAT SHITS ON THE RUG, THAT HOWLS IN THE NIGHT AND KEEPS THE NEIGHBORS AWAKE. THINK OF IT.

DOESN'T IT TEMPT YOU TO THROW ME OUT ON THE STREET FOR THE
DOG CATCHER?

OSKAR

No, META, NO!

META

THEN START THINKING OF IT. YOU MUST BE THAT RUTHLESS TO BE
THAT ARYAN PETRUCHIO GOEBBELS' WANTS YOU TO BE.

OSKAR

I DON'T KNOW WHAT JOHST WANTS. HE'S THE DIRECTOR, NOT
GOEBBELS.

META

(LAUGHS)

JOSHT WANTS WHAT GOEBBELS WANTS, HE JUST DOESN'T HAVE THE
BALLS NOR THE TALENT TO KNOW WHAT IT IS. YOUR JOB IS TO SHOW
IT TO HIM SO HE CAN TAKE CREDIT FOR IT. THAT'S WHAT EVERY
DIRECTOR DOES. NOW, MY DEAR, LET'S BEGIN AGAIN, BUT WITH
MAGIC.

LIGHTS OUT.

SCENE 10

META IS ON THE TELEPHONE. SHE IS STILL WEARING HER KIMONO.

META

EDGAR, I MUST GET OUT OF HERE. CAN YOU HELP ME? – NO, OSKAR
DOESN'T KNOW. I DON'T WANT TO TELL HIM. IT WOULD DESTROY HIS
FOCUS AND HE NEEDS HIS FOCUS. HE NEEDS A LOT OF WORK, BUT I
THINK HE CAN DO IT IF HE APPLIES HIMSELF. I'M GOING TO BE HIS
CRUTCH UNTIL OPENING NIGHT, BUT THEN AFTER THAT I MUST GO.
OH, PLEASE, CAN YOU HELP ME? I'M SO TERRIFIED. - PALESTINE? I
DON'T THINK I'D LIKE THE WEATHER. - CONSTANTINOPLE? - SOUTH
AFRICA? – AMERICA? YES, THAT WOULD BE NICE, BUT IT'S AWFULLY
FAR FROM OSKAR. – OF COURSE, OF COURSE, I CAN'T BE PICKY. BUT
COULDN'T YOU FIND SOME PLACE CLOSER, LIKE PARIS? - YES, ONCE
I'M OUT OF HERE I CAN GO OTHER PLACES. AT LEAST, I USED TO BE
ABLE...UNTIL I BECAME A...(SHE BREAKS DOWN IN TEARS.) I DON'T
WANT TO LEAVE MY CITY. I'M FROM BERLIN. I WAS BORN IN BERLIN. -
I'M SORRY, PLEASE, PLEASE FORGIVE ME. – (SHE RECOVERS.)
SWITZERLAND? DO YOU REALLY THINK THERE MIGHT BE A
POSSIBILITY? – YES, I KNOW SEVERAL THEATER DIRECTORS THERE.
GOD, I CAN'T BELIEVE I'M EVEN CONSIDERING THIS. THINGS HAVE
HAPPENED SO QUICKLY, WITHOUT TRANSITION, THEY KEEP HITTING
YOU AND BEFORE YOU CAN RECOVER, THEY HIT YOU AGAIN. I CAN'T
GO TO THE THEATER ANY MORE, I CAN'T EVEN ATTEND MY OWN
HUSBAND'S PERFORMANCES. CAN'T THEY MAKE AN EXCEPTION IN MY

CASE? I WON'T TELL ANYBODY I'M A JEW. – I'M SORRY, I'M SORRY,
EDGAR. PLEASE DON'T HANG UP. I KNOW WHAT A RISK

META (CONT.)

YOU'RE TAKING BY HELPING ME. – YES, I HAVE TALKED TOO LONG ON
THE PHONE. – YES, I'LL WATCH MY PHONE USE. – (THE LIGHTS BEGIN
TO FADE.) I WON'T CALL YOU, BUT YOU'LL CALL ME SOON, WON'T
YOU? YES, YES, I WILL, YES,
ANYWHERE, YES, ANYWHERE, I'LL GO THERE, (THE LIGHTS HAVE
FADED TO BLACK. META CONTINUES IN DARKNESS.) I'LL GO THERE, I
WILL, I'LL GO...

SCENE 11

OSKAR IS PACING. META IS IN THE BATHROOM.

META (OS)

HOW LONG WILL IT TAKE TO GET THIS IDENTITY CARD?

OSKAR

IT MIGHT TAKE A LITTLE WHILE. I'LL BE WITH YOU, BUT WE REALLY
MUST GET GOING.

META ENTERS. SHE IS IN AN ELEGANT HAT AND SCARF.

META

DO I LOOK ALL RIGHT?

OSKAR

YOU LOOK BEAUTIFUL. BUT TAKE THE SCARF OFF AND CHANGE YOUR
HAT.

META

WHY?

OSKAR

YOU'RE A LITTLE OVERDRESSED.

META

DO I LOOK LIKE A JEW?

OSKAR

NO, YOU LOOK LIKE A DIVA. EVERYONE IS DRESSING DOWN RIGHT
NOW. EVERYONE IS TRYING TO BE INVISIBLE.

META EXITS INTO THE BEDROOM.

META (OS)

I'LL HAVE A PEDIGREE. I'M A COMPLETE JEW.

OSKAR

HURRY, META, PLEASE.

META ENTERS. SHE HAS A SIMPLER HAT AND THE SCARF IS GONE.

META

DO I LOOK LIKE A JEW?

OSKAR

I DON'T KNOW WHAT A JEW LOOKS LIKE.

META

OF COURSE, YOU DO. BIG NOSE, BIG EARS, BIG LIPS, SHIFTY EYES.

OSKAR

WELL, MAYBE THE EARS.

META

REALLY, DO YOU THINK SO?

OSKAR

DON'T BE SILLY. COME ON, LET'S GET THIS OVER WITH.

META STARTS FOR THE DOOR, THEN STAGGERS AND HOLDS HERSELF UP.

META

I CAN'T, I CAN'T GO. (SHE GOES TO THE FLOOR.) I HAVEN'T GONE OUT ON THE STREETS FOR DAYS AND NOW I HAVE TO GO TO THE POLICE. WHAT WILL THEY DO TO ME?

OSKAR

THEY WON'T DO ANYTHING. I'LL BE WITH YOU.

META

BECAUSE YOU'LL STOP THEM? BECAUSE YOU'RE AN ARYAN? HELL, YOU CAN'T EVEN ACT!

OSKAR TURNS AWAY FROM HER.

META

I'M SORRY, I DIDN'T MEAN THAT. I'M JUST TERRIFIED. WILL THEY HURT ME? WILL THEY SCREAM AT ME? WILL THEY SPIT AT ME? PLEASE FORGIVE ME, I NEED YOU.

SHE FALLS TO HER KNEES.

OSCAR

(SHOUTING)

NO, I'M NOT A GOOD ACTOR! I KNOW IT! WHAT DO YOU THINK IT'S LIKE? YOU'VE NEVER NEEDED ME. YOU'RE ALWAYS THE

OSCAR (CONT.)

BOSS. YOU CAN'T STAND IT THAT I CAN HELP YOU. DON'T START BELIEVING THAT SHIT. I'LL KILL ANYONE WHO TOUCHES YOU. YOU ARE WITH ME. FOR ONCE I'M USEFUL. LET ME BE USEFUL, META. STAND ON YOUR FEET. YOU CAN'T SHOW ANY WEAKNESS. THEY'RE ANIMALS. IF THEY SENSE A WEAKNESS THEY'LL ATTACK. STAND UP FOR CHRIST'S SAKE. THINK ABOUT IT, YOU'VE

STOOD ON THE STAGE FOR THOUSANDS TO SEE, THE MOST SOPHISTICATED PEOPLE IN ALL OF EUROPE. THESE ARE BEERHALL IDIOTS. THEY ARE DOGS. THEY WILL COWER IF YOU STAND STRAIGHT AND TALL. YOU ARE MAGIC, META. YOU CAN MAKE YOURSELF INVISIBLE WITH A THOUGHT. YOU'RE ALWAYS YELLING AT ME TO CONCENTRATE, WELL, IT'S YOUR TURN NOW. CONCENTRATE. STAND UP, GODDAMN IT. (HE KNEELS TO AND TAKES HER IN HIS ARMS AND KISSES HER.) YOU'VE GOT TO LAST THIS OUT. IT CAN'T LAST FOREVER, IT'S TOO INSANE. THINGS HAVE TO CHANGE, MY DARLING. THEY WILL. YOU'LL SEE, IT WON'T BE SO BAD. BREATHE. BREATHE. BREATHE. (HE PULLS HER TO HER FEET.) YES, THAT'S IT. NOW, LET'S GO.

THE LIGHTS FADE.

SCENE 12

META IS WEARING A PLAIN BATHROBE. SHE IS TYING OSKAR'S TIE.

META

MANY ACTORS CLOWN AROUND IN THE DRESSING ROOM: THEY POKE AND MIMIC EACH OTHER. THEY QUACK LIKE DUCKS AND BARK LIKE DOGS. ON THE SURFACE IT ALL LOOKS QUITE HARMLESS, AS IF THEY'RE SIMPLY DOING IT TO RELIEVE TENSION AND OIL THE JOINTS, BUT DON'T LET IT FOOL YOU. WHEN ACTORS PRETEND THAT OUT OF HUMILITY THEY SHOULD MAKE LIGHT OF THEIR WORK THEY ARE REALLY SAYING, "DON'T EXCEL' BE ONE OF THE GANG, BE LIKE US." DON'T DO IT. BE RESPECTFUL; TREAT THEM WITH DIGNITY. WATCH OUT FOR GUSTAV. HE'LL TEST YOU EVERY MOMENT. NO ONE WILL NOTICE IT BUT YOU. HE'LL DELAY HIS LINES, POUNCE ON YOURS, SMILE AT YOU UNEXPECTEDLY. HE'LL TRY TO WARE OUT DOWN – STAND YOUR GROUND. WATCH HIM. SEE HIM. SOUL TO SOUL – MEET HIM WITHOUT DECORATION AND HE WILL COME TO YOU LIKE A CAT CHASING A STRING; HE WON'T BE ABLE TO STOP HIMSELF. HE IS TOO CURIOUS AND HE'S JUST TOO GOOD. YOU LOOK VERY NICE, MY LOVE.

OSKAR

I'M TERRIFIED.

META

GOOD. YOUR TERROR IS YOUR STALLION. RIDE IT WELL.

OSKAR

OH, META, I WISH YOU WOULD COME WITH ME, AT LEAST TO THE THEATER.

META

I'M SURE YOU DO. (SHE MAKES THE GERMAN EXPRESSION OF "GOOD LUCK," A RAPID SPITTING GESTURE.) "TEU, TEU, TEU." (SHE DIRECTS HIM TO THE DOOR.) I'LL BE HERE, WAITING FOR YOU.

OSKAR

META...

META

SHHH, GO; DO.

SHE PUSHES HIM OUT OF THE DOOR. WHEN OSKAR IS GONE SHE TAKES HER BATHROBE OFF. SHE IS FULLY DRESSED BENEATH IT. SHE BRUSHES HER HAIR. STRAIGHTENS HER CLOTHES, THEN EXITS INTO THE BEDROOM AND RE-ENTERS WITH A SUITCASE. SHE PUTS IT BY THE EASY CHAIR NEXT TO THE TELEPHONE AND SITS.

THE PHONE RINGS. META GRABS THE PHONE.

META

HELLO? – YES. - YES. OH, MY GOD, YES, THANK YOU. – MIDNIGHT?
I'VE GOT TO WAIT FOR OSKAR. I'LL BE THERE. – YES, I UNDERSTAND.

SHE HANGS UP. SHE BEGINS PACING. THE LIGHTS SHIFT. THE DOOR OPENS AND OSKAR ENTERS. META TURNS TO HIM. OSKAR STANDS THERE, CRESTFALLEN.

META

WHAT?

OSKAR LOOKS AT HER, THEN BREAKS INTO A LAUGH. HE CAN BARELY CONTAIN HIMSELF.

META

THEY LOVED YOU?

SHE FLINGS HER ARMS AROUND HIM.

OSKAR

A STANDING OVATION! IT WASN'T JUST FOR MARIANNE, IT WAS FOR ME. THEY CALLED OUT FOR ME BUT THEY DIDN'T KNOW MY NAME, I SWEAR IT.

META

I KNEW IT, I KNEW IT WOULD HAPPEN. YOU'VE WORKED SO HARD YOU DESERVE IT.

OSKAR

I'VE NEVER KNOWN SUCH A FEELING. I KNOW I SHOULDN'T INDULGE IN IT.

META

YES, INDULGE IT, INDULGE IT. IF THE AUDIENCE WANTS TO GIVE YOU LOVE LET THEM GIVE IT.

OSKAR

OH, MY META, I COULDN'T HAVE DONE IT WITHOUT YOU. YOU SHOULD HAVE SEEN JOHST, HE WAS DROOLING. I WANTED TO SLUG HIM, THAT GRINNING LITTLE GARGOYLE. I WANTED TO PUMMEL HIM! DO YOU

KNOW WHAT HE SAID JUST BEFORE I WENT ON? "WE'RE COUNTING ON YOU. GOEBBELS IS IN THE AUDIENCE." AND THE GREAT GUSTAV GRÜNDGENS. HE KNELT TO ME AND KISSED MY HAND.

META

YES, NEXT HE'LL BE TRYING TO GET YOU IN HIS BED.

OSKAR

AND THEN, BACKSTAGE (HE ENACTS GOEBBELS WITH HIS SMALL STATURE AND HIS LIMP.) THAT HIDEOUS LITTLE MAN, GOEBBELS SHOOK MY HAND AND CLAPPED ME ON THE BACK AND SAID, "CONGRATULATIONS, I'LL BE KEEPING AN EYE ON YOU." CAN YOU BELIEVE THAT? I DIDN'T KNOW WHETHER TO BE GLAD OR SHIT MY PANTS. (HE SEES META'S SUITCASE.) WHAT'S GOING ON?

META

I'VE FOUND PASSAGE TO SWITZERLAND. ISN'T IT INCREDIBLE, SWITZERLAND? I WON'T BE FAR FROM YOU.

OSKAR

WHY DIDN'T YOU TELL ME?

META

DOES IT MATTER? YOU'RE ON YOUR FEET. IT WILL BE JUST FOR A LITTLE WHILE. LIKE YOU SAID, IT WON'T LAST FOREVER.

OSKAR

YES, OF COURSE, WHEN DO YOU HAVE TO GO?

META

IMMEDIATELY. I ONLY HAVE A FEW MINUTES. NOW KISS ME, OSKAR, AND LET ME GO.

META KISSES HIM.

OSKAR

WHERE DO I WRITE YOU?

META

BASEL, AT THE THEATER SUISS IN CARE OF THE DIRECTOR, KURT JÖRGER. NOW I MUST GO.

OSKAR

WHAT AM I GOING TO DO WITHOUT YOU? YOU SHOULD HAVE TOLD ME. YOU SHOULD HAVE WARNED ME.

META

I COULDN'T HAVE DONE IT IF I HAD TOLD YOU.

OSKAR

PLEASE!

META

OSKAR, I MUST GO. THIS IS MY LAST CHANCE!

OSKAR

YES, YES, I UNDERSTAND.

META

DO YOU? OH, PLEASE UNDERSTAND?

OSKAR

YOU COULD HAVE TOLD ME. MY GOD, WHAT AM I GOING TO DO? I'M SORRY, I UNDERSTAND, I DO. GO, META, GO, HURRY!

SHE PAUSES AND LOOKS AT HIM. HE PUSHES HER TOWARD THE DOOR.

OSKAR

(SCREAMING)

GET OUT! GET OUT OF HERE!

HE SHOVES HER OUT OF THE ROOM AND CLOSSES THE DOOR AND BREAKS DOWN IN TEARS. THERE IS A MOMENT WHEN OSCAR IS BY HIMSELF, THEN, META FLINGS OPEN THE DOOR AND FLIES INTO HIS ARMS.

META

I CAN'T. I CAN'T.

THE LIGHTS CROSSFADE...

SCENE 13

THERE IS A FLICKERING LIGHT D.S. META IS STANDING THERE LOOKING AT IT. THE RADIO IS ON AND A VOICE IS SPEAKING OVER IT. THE ACTION AND LINES CONTINUE WHILE THE ANNOUNCER SPEAKS.

VOICE ON THE RADIO

THE JEW, HERSCHEL GRYNSZPAN BRUTALLY MURDERED THIRD SECRETARY ERNST VON RATH IN PARIS. THROUGHOUT GERMANY THERE HAS BEEN A SPONTANEOUS OUTBURST OF INDIGNATION.

OSKAR BURSTS INTO THE ROOM.

OSKAR

OH, MY GOD, YOU'RE SAFE. THEY STOPPED THE REHEARSAL.

META SHUSHES HIM. OSKAR CROSSES TO META AND STANDS BEHIND HER. THE LIGHTS DIM AS THE VOICE ON THE RADIO CONTINUES.

VOICE ON THE RADIO

SEVENTY-SIX SYNAGOGUES DEMOLISHED. AND SEVENTY-FIVE HUNDRED STORES RUINED IN THE REICH. ACCORDING TO REPORTS, ONE HUNDRED AND FIFTY JEWS WERE ARRESTED BY YESTERDAY AFTERNOON. SO MUCH GLASS FILLS THE STREETS THAT THE GERMAN PEOPLE HAVE NAMED THIS NIGHT CRYSTAL NIGHT. ALL TOGETHER THERE ARE ONE HUNDRED AND ONE SYNAGOGUES DESTROYED BY

FIRE. (WHILE THE NAMES OF THE GERMAN CITIES ARE SPOKEN THE HORST WESSEL SONG IS HEARD.) SYNAGOGUES WERE DESTROYED IN BERLIN, LEIPZIG, DRESDEN, LINZ, MUNICH, BADEN, NUREMBERG, HANOVER, BREMEN, HAMBURG, (THE LIGHTS FADE TO DARKNESS.) MUNSTER, ESSEN, DÜSSELDORF, BRUNSWICK, BONN, MANNHEIM, SAARBRUCKEN...

SCENE 14

IN THE DARKNESS THERE IS THE SOUND OF THE ROOM BEING TORN UP.

SCENE 15

THE LIGHTS RISE. THE LIVING ROOM IS IN SHAMBLES. OSKAR ENTERS. META IS NOT IN THE LIVING ROOM.

META? OSKAR

HE GOES INTO THE BEDROOM.

META? OSKAR (OS)

HE COMES OUT OF THE BEDROOM. HE IS FRANTIC.

META? OSKAR

HE SEES A CARD ON THE TABLE. HE GRABS THE PHONE AND DIALS THE NUMBER.

OSKAR
(ON THE TELEPHONE.)
SECURITY POLICE, PLEASE. SECURITY POLICE? YES, THIS IS OSKAR WEISS.

LIGHTS OUT.

SCENE 16

THE LIGHTS RISE ON OSKAR PICKING UP. META IS STANDING IN THE MIDDLE OF THE ROOM. SHE IS IN A KIND OF BRITTLE, VIGILANT SHOCK. SHE DOESN'T MOVE FROM THE CENTER OF THE ROOM AND ONLY SHIFTS HER EYES AND HEAD TO ENACT EACH CHARACTER AS SHE RELIVES HER EXPERIENCE.

META
"DO YOU HAVE ANY WEAPONS?" THEY MADE ME LOOK FOR WEAPONS.
DO YOU HAVE ANY WEAPONS?

No. OSKAR

META

YES, YOU DO, YOU HAVE A STAGE SWORD.

OSKAR

MY EPEE? IT'S ANCIENT. IT HAS BANDAGE ON THE TIP.

META

HE SAID, "WHAT'S THIS?" I SAID IT WAS A STAGE SWORD. "A WHAT SWORD?" I SAID, A STAGE SWORD. "WHAT'S A STAGE SWORD?" I TOLD HIM THAT IT WAS TO PRACTICE FIGHTING SCENES, BUT IT WASN'T DANGEROUS. EVERY ACTOR HAS ONE. "IS THIS YOURS?" "NO, IT'S MY HUSBAND'S." HOW

META (CONT.)

STUPID, I SHOULD HAVE SAID IT WAS MINE. "SO YOUR HUSBAND IS AN ACTOR? YOU HAVE SCRIPTS, YOU'RE AN ACTOR, SO WHERE IS YOURS?" "MY WHAT?" "YOUR SWORD!" I TOLD HIM THAT I DIDN'T KNOW. I DIDN'T DO SWORD-PLAY ANYMORE. I MUST HAVE JUST, WHAT THE HELL DID I DO WITH IT ANYWAY? "I LOST IT," I TOLD HIM. THEY SEARCHED THE HOUSE FOR HOURS. I ASKED THE BIG ONE TO BE CAREFUL, PLEASE. HE STARTED THROWING THINGS AROUND. "CHEAP JEW GARBAGE!" THE ANIMAL HAD MUSTARD ON HIS CHEST. THEY TORE EVERYTHING UP. THEY TOOK MY SCRIPTS, ALL OF THE PLAYS THAT I HAVE DONE WITH ALL THE NOTES IN THEM. I ASKED THEM WHAT POSSIBLE IMPORTANCE DO THEY HAVE? THERE WAS THIS LITTLER ONE, BUT NOT SMALL BECAUSE HE WAS TOO MUSCULAR; HE WAS THE MORE DANGEROUS OF THE TWO AND THEY WERE DANGEROUS. MY GOD, I HAD NEVER IMAGINED ANY TWO PEOPLE SO DANGEROUS, SO VIOLENT, SO FREE TO DO ANYTHING. THIS LITTLER ONE SAID, "UP UNTIL NOW YOU LOOKED OKAY, BUT THIS HOSTILE ATTITUDE; IT MAKES YOU WONDER WHAT DOES SHE HAVE TO HIDE?" I SAID THAT THEY WEREN'T IMPORTANT, THEY WERE JUST PERSONAL. THEN THE BIG ONE SCREAMED AT ME. "YOU UGLY JEW SOW, DO YOU THINK I'D WANT ANYTHING PERSONAL FROM YOU." AND THEN HE SAID, "TAKE HER TO THE STATION. THEY'VE GOT GUILLOTINES THERE, ELECTRICAL ONES THAT CHOP OFF HEADS ELECTRICALLY". THEY TOOK ME THERE. THEY WALKED ON EITHER SIDE OF ME SO THAT ALL THE NEIGHBORS COULD SEE. WHEN WE GOT TO THE POLICE STATION I HAD TO SIT...FOR HOURS, OSKAR. THEN AN OLD MAN WITH A PARTY BADGE CAME AND GOT ME. HE SAID, AND HE SAID IT ALMOST IN A WHISPER, "DON'T WORRY, HONEY, THEY DO THIS TO EVERYBODY." HE LED ME DOWN A HALLWAY AND TO AN OFFICE WITH A TIDY LITTLE MAN, AND THIS MAN WAS ACTUALLY LITTLE, BUT PERFECTLY PROPORTIONED. HE SAID, "HELLO, I'M DIETRICK DIETER. META WOLFF, GOD, I KNOW YOU! YOU ARE FANTASTIC! HOW COULD YOU BE A JEW? WELL, THIS IS VERY UNFORTUNATE. DON'T WORRY ABOUT IT." HE LOOKED AT MY FILE. IT WAS VERY BIG. HOW CAN THEY KNOW SO MUCH ABOUT ME? WHY WOULD THEY EVEN BE INTERESTED? HE SAID, "AH, YOUR HUSBAND IS AN ARYAN. OSKAR WEISS? I DON'T KNOW HIM. IT SAYS HERE HE'S AN ACTOR." "TAMING OF THE SHREW," I SAID. "AH," HE SAID, "I DIDN'T SEE THAT ONE." HE STAMPED MY PAPERS. HE SAID, "THIS INCONVENIENCE SHOULD NEVER HAPPEN AGAIN. MY GOD, MISS

WOLF, IT IS AN HONOR TO HAVE MET YOU.” I LOVED IT, OSKAR, NOW THAT I AM THROUGH IT. I AM THROUGH IT, AREN’T I? (SHE NOTICES THAT THE RADIO IS GONE. SHE SUDDENLY SCREAMS.) THEY TOOK MY RADIO!

OSKAR

I’LL GET IT BACK

SHE ATTACKS HIM. HE RESTRAINS HER.

META

BECAUSE YOU’RE SUPERIOR! YOU LOOK JUST LIKE THEM!

OSKAR

I DON’T LOOK LIKE ANYBODY. META, IT’S OSKAR. IT’S JUST ME.

LIGHTS OUT.

SCENE 17

THERE IS MUSIC ON THE RADIO. IT IS A KIND OF JUMPY TUNE SUNG BY ZAHAR LEANDER. META IS IN A HOUSECOAT. SHE’S DOING A STRANGE DANCE TO THE MUSIC. AT THE CLOSE OF THE SONG OSKAR ENTERS WITH A BAG OF GROCERIES. HE PUTS THEM ON THE TABLE.

OSKAR
(SOFTLY)

META?

META DOESN’T ANSWER.

OSKAR

META?

SHE IGNORES HIM.

META

I HAVE NEW TEETH.

OSCAR

NEW TEETH?

META

YES, YOU REMEMBER THAT ARYAN DENTIST YOU COULDN’T GET FOR ME AND MY TEETH WERE SO SORE THEY WERE FALLING OUT. I HAD MAGGOTS IN MY MOUTH. I WENT TO A JEWISH DENTIST. HE WAS ABLE TO PUT IN A NEW SET. HE GOT THEM FROM THE CEMETERY. SEE, LOOK A FINE SET.

META SHOWS HER TEETH. OSKAR LOOKS AT HER TEETH.

OSKAR

META, THESE ARE YOUR TEETH. HE DIDN'T PUT ANY TEETH INTO YOUR MOUTH. (OSKAR GRABS META AND HOLDS HER IN HIS ARMS.) MY DARLING. MY DARLING.

THE LIGHTS FADE. THERE IS THE SOUND OF RAIN

SCENE 18

THE RAIN CONTINUES. A MELANCHOLY VOCAL OF THE PERIOD IS ON THE RADIO (ZARAH LEANDER - ICE STEH'IM REGEN.'). META IS ALONE, SITTING BY THE WINDOW, CAREFUL NOT TO BE SEEN. SHE IS WEARING A HOUSE COAT.

META

PEOPLE ARE MISSING FROM THE STREETS. THEY'VE GONE AWAY OR HAVE DISAPPEARED. AND IT'S SO STRANGE. NO ONE SAYS ANYTHING ABOUT IT, BUT I KNOW THEY NOTICE IT TOO. (SHE CROSSES BEHIND THE COUCH.) AND IN THE JEWISH CEMETERY THERE ARE SO MANY FRESH PLOTS. I CAN'T WALK IN THE PARK, ONLY IN THE JEWISH CEMETERY. (SHE SMOOTHS THE PILLOWS, THEN LAYS HER HEAD ON THEM.) I LOOK AT THE GRASS THERE, AT THOSE FRESH GRAVES AND I HAVE THIS LONGING TO REST, TO GET IT OVER WITH. BUT THEN I SEE THESE JEWS STROLLING AMONG THE GRAVESTONES AND I BEGIN TO HATE THEM FOR THEIR RESIGNATION TO IT ALL. (SHE RISES.) I'VE NEVER REALLY KNOWN HATE UNTIL NOW. AND I CAN UNDERSTAND HOW CIVILIZED PEOPLE WOULD BE RESIGNED TO DEATH RATHER THAN BE FILLED WITH SO MUCH HATE. IT IS CRUSHING, THIS HATE. ONE HAS TO CONSTANTLY BE REMINDED TO HATE, BUT IT KEEPS ME ALIVE.

THE LIGHTS SHIFT.

SCENE 19

MUSIC ON THE RADIO. OSKAR LIGHTS A MATCH AND TOUCHES IT TO A CANDLE ON THE DINING TABLE. META IS SITTING AT THE TABLE, SUBDUED, OBSERVANT. OSKAR POURS WINE INTO HER GLASS. HE IS TRYING DESPERATELY TO MAKE CONTACT WITH HER.

OSKAR

THINGS ARE CHANGING, MY DARLING. COME ON, DRINK. GUSTAV HAS TAKEN OVER THE THEATER. HE KNOWS ABOUT YOU AND THE PROBLEMS WE HAVE HAD. HE SAID HE WOULD DO EVERYTHING TO HELP US. HE IS A HORRIBLE MAN IN SOME WAYS BUT YOU MUST ADMIT HE IS TALENTED. HE ADMIRES YOU. HE HAD ME INTO HIS OFFICE. HE ASKED ME ABOUT YOU.

OSCAR (CONT.)

HE SAID, (OSKAR DOES AN IMPERSONATION OF GRÜNDGENS) "MY DEAR POOR META, I'LL DO ANYTHING FOR HER. SHE'S A GENIUS. SHE MUST BE PROTECTED." HE'S GOTTEN US FOOD. LOOK, FRENCH WINE. HE SAID, "SHE MUST NOT LOSE HOPE. I AM DISGUSTED, REVOLTED BY WHAT IS HAPPENING, BUT WHAT CAN WE DO, WHAT CAN ANY OF US DO BUT SURVIVE THIS MADNESS? IT CAN'T LAST FOREVER. ALL WE CAN DO IS TAKE

CARE OF OUR OWN.” (HE KNEELS BESIDE HER.) META, PLEASE SNAP OUT OF THIS. YOU’RE KILLING ME. (HE SPREADS HER HAIR FROM HER FACE.) LISTEN, MY DARLING, I’M GOING TO PLAY HAMLET!

META SLOWLY RAISES HER EYES TO HIS. SHE LOOKS AT HIM FOR AWHILE, THEN...

YOU’RE WHAT? META

I’M GOING TO PLAY HAMLET. OSKAR

SHE GAZES AT HIM. SLOWLY A LAUGH ISSUES FROM HER.

YES, ISN’T IT HILARIOUS? OSKAR

META BEGINS TO LAUGH IN EARNEST, SHE LAUGHS AND LAUGHS. OSKAR JOINS HER IN HER LAUGHTER.

OSKAR
ISN’T IT FUNNY? (META LAUGHS) WELL, IT’S NOT THAT FUNNY. DON’T YOU SEE, I NEED HELP. YOU’VE GOT TO HELP ME. (HE SHOUTS.)
HELP! HELP! HELP! OH, MY DARLING. MY DARLING, DON’T YOU SEE, WE’VE GOT WORK TO DO.

META CONTINUES LAUGHING

WHO’S PLAYING OPHELIA? META

MARIANNE. OSKAR

META
SHE’S PERFECT; HIGH CHEEKBONES, BLOND HAIR, A LITTLE ON THE SEVERE SIDE, GOOD HIPS FOR BIRTHING AND TOTALLY HARMLESS. SHE WILL SIMPLY “GO MAD.”

OSKAR
AND I SUPPOSE THAT YOU FEEL THAT WAY ABOUT ME?

WHAT WAY? META

LIKE I’M SOME HESSIAN OX? OSKAR

META LOOKS AT HIM AND LAUGHS.

META
YES, YES, YOU ARE, AREN’T YOU?

OSKAR LAUGHS.

OSKAR

YES, I AM, DIDN'T YOU KNOW? I'M A MEMBER OF THE MASTER RACE,
THE HESSIAN OX RACE.

OSKAR

(HE PICKS UP META'S GLASS OF WINE AND BRINGS IT TO HER LIPS.)
META PLEASE, DRINK. IT'S GOOD. GUSTAV CAN GET US MORE. GUSTAV
WANTS YOU TO HELP ME.

META

YOU? YOU'RE BEYOND HELP.

OSKAR

I KNOW, I KNOW.

META RISES.

META

IS PAMELA WEDEKIND STILL IN THE COMPANY?

OSKAR

YES.

META

MARIANNE IS A SUPERB ACTRESS BUT A BETTER CHOICE, A MORE
DELINEATED ONE WOULD BE PAMELA WEDEKIND, THAT BLACK HAIR,
THAT PALE WHITE SKIN, THOSE ICE-BLUE EYES. AND SHE'S MAD. SHE
HAS THAT SHRILL UPPER REGISTER LIKE SOME TERRIBLE ADDENDUM,
SOMETHING SHE CAN SIMPLY UNPACK AND THROW ON A BED. AND
SHE IS RELENTLESS AS A TICK. SHE'S A STALKER. ONCE HAMLET
GETS HER ATTENTION
HE'S A GONER. SHE'LL LURK AND SKULK ABOUT, APPEAR OUT OF
NOWHERE.

OSKAR

AND WHAT ABOUT ME?

SHE LOOKS AT HIM MYSTERIOUSLY.

META

IF I COULD RUN THAT COMPANY AND MAKE THAT PLAY FOR THIS
PLACE, IN THESE TIMES, FOR THESE PEOPLE, I WOULD MAKE A
HAMLET THAT WOULD PULL THE DEVIL RIGHT OUT OF ITS BOTTLE,
EXPOSE THE MAGGOT ON A DARK STAGE UNDER A BRIGHT WHITE
LIGHT AND MAKE THE GERMANS EAT IT WHOLE. "ELSNORE," WITH
ITS RACE OF OLD ARISTOCRATES, A CASTLE FULL OF ZOMBIES, VENOM
PUMPED BY THEIR ROTTING HEARTS; UTTERLY BEAUTIFUL DEAD
OPHELIA FLOATING THROUGH DARK HALLS. GOD, IT MAKES YOU WANT
TO VOMIT BLOOD. OH, OSCAR, THINK ABOUT IT. WOULDN'T IT BE FUN.

RIGHT FROM THIS ROOM WE COULD GIVE THEM A SHOW AND IT MIGHT JUST BE POSSIBLE.

OSKAR

WHAT DO YOU MEAN?

META

IF I KNOW GUSTAV HE'LL TRY TO GET AWAY WITH ANYTHING HE CAN. HE'S A DIFFERENT KIND OF SNEAK FROM "THE SMILER", MR. JOSHT. THE SMILER CHEATS EVERYBODY BUT HIS MASTERS. GUSTAV IS A UBIQUITOUS CHEAT AND HE'S CREATIVE. HIS ONLY PROBLEM IS WHICH DEVIL TO SERVE.

OSKAR

WHAT DO YOU MEAN?

META

GOEBBELS OR GÖRING? GOEBBELS NEVER LIKED ME VERY MUCH. HE DIDN'T LIKE MY EDGE BUT GÖRING LOVED ME AS HE LOVES GUSTAV. GOEBBELS IS A SNEAKY LITTLE PURITAN, GÖRING IS BACCHUS. HAVEN'T YOU SEEN THEM SNAP AT EACH OTHERS ANKELS? GOEBBELS IS THE MINISTER OF CULTURE, BY RIGHTS HE SHOULD BE IN CHARGE OF THE PRUSSIAN STATE THEATER, BUT IT IS GÖRING'S PLAYTHING AND HITLER DOESN'T WANT TO GET INVOLVED. GUSTAV HAS TO DECIDE WHETHER HE WILL SERVE GOEBBELS OR GÖRING. WHEN HE CAST MARIANNE AS OPHILIA HE WAS THINKING GOEBBELS, BUT IF HE RECASTS HER WITH PAMELA WEDEKIND HE WILL BE THINKING GÖRING. AND GÖRING IS EVER SO MUCH MORE FUN. LISTEN, MY DARLING, WITH A LITTLE INGENUITY, LIKE GOYA WE CAN PAINT THE NAZI FAMILY ROYAL.

OSKAR

THIS IS A VERY DANGEROUS GAME.

META

DANGEROUS? HAVE YOU LOOKED OUTSIDE LATELY? LISTEN, DARLING, IT'S A GERMAN THING (SHE PUTS HER FOREHEAD AGAINST HIS FOREHEAD.) NOBODY TAKES US SERIOUSLY UNLESS WE HAVE A WAR.

LIGHTS OUT.

ACT TWO

SCENE 20

THE LIGHTS RISE ON OSKAR ASLEEP IN THE EASY CHAIR. THERE IS A ROSE IN A VASE ON THE TABLE. META ENTERS SILENTLY. SHE HAS DISGUISED HERSELF AS A MAN. SHE HAS ONE OF OSCAR'S OVERCOATS AND IS WEARING ONE OF HIS FEDORAS. SHE BENDS OVER OSCAR AND LOOKS AT HIM. OSCAR SNAPS AWAKE WITH A START.

OSKAR

META, WHERE HAVE YOU BEEN? IT'S PAST THE CURFEW.

SHE TAKES OFF HER COAT AND HANGS IT UP AS SHE SPEAKS.

META

I WENT TO MY FIRST "JEWISH THING." IT WAS A READING BY HANS HEINZ EWERS, A BANNED WRITER. IT'S FUNNY, HE'S BANNED FOR GERMANS BUT HE ISN'T BANNED FOR JEWS. HE'S AN OLD MAN NOW LIVING WITH A HALF JEW ARCHITECT. HE'S A HOMOSEXUAL. HE HAS A FACE LIKE A SKULL. HE WROTE A BOOK ABOUT HORST WESSEL.

OSKAR

MY DARLING, DARLING META, I NEVER WANT YOU TO DO THIS AGAIN. I WAITED UP FOR THREE HOURS. YOU COULD HAVE BEEN SHOT.

META

I'VE GOT THE MODEL FOR HAMLET. HORST WESSEL.

OSKAR

WHO? THE NAZI HERO?

META

HERO? DO YOU KNOW WHAT HE REALLY WAS? HANS EWERS TOLD ME THE REAL STORY OF HORST WESSEL. (PLAYING WITH A GERMAN ACCENT.) "I THOUGHT HE MIGHT HAVE BEEN A BAVARIAN BOY MAKING A SONG TO GERMANY WHEN THEY BRING THE COWS DOWN FROM THE MOUNTAINS, WREATHED WITH FLOWERS: LUNG SOUP AND BEER, GIRLS IN DIRNDLS WITH EDELWEISS IN THEIR HAIR, FATHERS IN LEATHER SHORTS BRINGING DOWN THE CHEESE FOR THE MAY FEST." DO YOU KNOW WHO HORST WESSEL REALLY WAS? HE WAS A PIMP AND HIS WIFE WAS A PROSTITUTE AND HE WAS KILLED IN A JEALOUS RAGE BY A GANGSTER NAMED "ALI". ISN'T IT PERFECT, FOR OUR PLAY, THAT IS, FOR THAT CASTLE IN ELSINORE?

OSKAR

WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT?

META

HAMLET IS HORST WESSEL. OPHELIA IS ERNA JAENICKE.

OSKAR

WHO?

META

ERNA JAENICKE, HORST WESSEL'S "WOMAN," THE PROSTITUTE. PAMELA WEDEKIND HAS TO PLAY OPHELIA.

OSKAR CROSSES TO THE ROSE AND PLUCKS IT FROM THE VASE.

OSKAR

I HAVE A LITTLE FLOWER.

META

YES?

OSKAR

HER NAME IS PAMELA WEDEKIND.

META

GUSTAV WENT FOR IT! HOW DID MARIANNE TAKE IT?

OSKAR

AS WELL AS CAN BE EXPECTED, SHE'S A TROOPER.

META

(SMILES IRONICALLY)

YES, SHE IS. DID YOU BEGIN WORKING WITH PAMELA?

OSKAR

IMMEDIATELY. GUSTAV DID IT WITH SUCH SPEED THAT IT SEEMED PAMELA HAD ALWAYS BEEN IN THE ROLE.

META

WHAT DID YOU THINK OF HER?

OSKAR

OF PAMELA? SHE WAS TERRIFYING! HONESTLY, YOU WERE ABSOLUTELY RIGHT. I COULD TELL SOME OF THE CAST WAS A LITTLE TAKEN ABACK BUT THEY DIDN'T SAY ANYTHING.

META

OF COURSE, THEY'RE GOOD GERMANS. WHAT DID GUSTAV THINK?

OSKAR

GUSTAV RAN TO THE LOBBY WHERE THERE WERE ROSES, PICKED ONE OUT AND GAVE IT TO ME. HE SAID, "IT'S FOR YOUR DEAR WIFE." THEN HE WINKED AT ME, META. HE WINKED. "I THINK YOUR SUGGESTION WAS A STROKE OF GENIUS. LET ME KNOW IF YOU HAVE ANY MORE SUGGESTIONS. KEEP THEM BETWEEN YOU AND ME, ALRIGHT? I'M REALLY INTERESTED TO SEE WHAT YOU AND HAMLET COME UP WITH."

META KISSES THE ROSE. LIGHTS OUT.

SCENE 21

OSKAR IS STANDING IN HIS UNDERWEAR. THEY ARE THE 301S KIND AND HE LOOKS A BIT RIDICULOUS IN THEM. HE IS IRRITATED.

OSKAR

I DON'T LIKE THIS.

META ENTERS WITH AN SA UNIFORM. SHE LAYS IT ON THE COUCH AND BEGINS CIRCLING OSKAR, WATCHING HIM WITH A CERTAIN SEXUAL CURIOSITY.

META

I DO. YOU'VE GOT TO DRESS FOR THE ROLE.

OSKAR

CAN'T I PUT MY COSTUME ON AT THE THEATRE?

META

PUT ON THE SHIRT. (SHE HANDS IT TO HIM)

OSKAR

YOU'RE IMPOSSIBLE.

META

PERHAPS. OSKAR, YOU MUST STOP FEELING LIKE THE GOOD GUY.

OSKAR

I DON'T FEEL LIKE A GOOD GUY, GOD DAMN IT.

META

YES YOU DO!

OSKAR

NO, I DON'T.

META

YES YOU DO. I CAN SEE IT IN YOUR EYES. THEY'RE FULL OF APOLOGIES, LIKE SOME SNEAKY LITTLE PUPPY. (META REACTS TO OSKAR'S LOOK.) THAT'S BETTER.

OSKAR

WHAT? IS THE SNEAKY LITTLE PUPPY GONE?

META

A BIT. NOW THE PANTS.(SHE HANDS THEM TO HIM AND THEN KNEELS IN FRONT OF HIM, WATCHING HIM CLOSELY) THIS IS GOOD.

OSKAR

(BUTTONING HIS PANTS)

ARE YOU SURE YOU WANT ME TO BUTTON THESE?

META

I WANT YOU TO LOOK THIS PART. I WANT YOU TO FEEL THIS PART. I WANT YOU TO FEEL WHAT IT IS LIKE TO WEAR THIS UNIFORM ON THE STREETS OF THE THIRD REICH.

OSKAR CONTINUES TO PUT ON HIS SA UNIFORM.

META

NOW THE BOOTS.

OSKAR
IS THIS A GAME?

META
THIS IS NO GAME. (SHE HANDS HIM THE HAT) I WANT TO SEE HIM

OSKAR
WHO?

META
HORST WESSEL

OSKAR
HORST WESSEL IS DEAD

META
No, he's not. He's not dead.

META, FINISHED DRESSING HIM, SLIPS THE SWASTIKA ARMBAND ON HIM. OSKAR LOOKS EMBARRASSED. SHE POINTS AT HIM AND BEGINS LAUGHING. SHE THEN STARTS CRYING, CROSSES AWAY AND AS OSKAR REACHES FOR HER THE LIGHTS FADE TO BLACK.

SCENES 22

OSKAR IS PACING IN HIS S.A. UNIFORM. META IS ON THE COUCH WATCHING HIM.

OSKAR
I CAN'T SEEM TO CONCENTRATE. I'M WATCHING MYSELF DOING THE ROLE LIKE A PUPPET. IT'S AS IF I WERE SEPARATED FROM MY BODY, THAT MY BODY IS WORKING INDEPENDENTLY OF ME. I'M NOT SAYING MY LINES, "IT'S" SAYING THEM. I LOOK AT THE ACTORS. I CAN SEE THEM MOUTHING THEIR WORDS. THE SLIVA ON THEIR TONGUES. IT SEEMS SO SILLY THAT I'M STANDING THERE. I REALIZE THAT I COULD RUIN EVERYTHING IN A SINGLE MOMENT. I COULD JUST WALK OFF STAGE AND LEAVE THEM STANDING THERE, OR WORSE, I COULD DO SOMETHING CRAZY, LIKE LICKING OPHELIA'S FACE; OR I COULD SLAP HER, OR STRANGLE HER. PERHAPS A MURDERER FEELS THAT WAY, NOT OUT OF CONTROL BUT BEING "TAKEN OVER". THEN I COME TO MY SENSES; I'M SUDDENLY IN MY BODY AGAIN AND I DON'T KNOW WHERE I AM, DON'T KNOW MY LINES. OH GOD, META IT HAPPENED TONIGHT IN REHEARSAL. I WAS JUST LOOKING AT THEM AND I DIDN'T KNOW WHAT I WAS DOING. I FELT SO SMALL, LIKE A STUPID DROOLING CHILD.

META
YOU'RE AFRAID OF YOUR POTENTIAL.

OSCAR
WHAT POTENTIAL.

META

HE'S SITTING IN THE BACK OF YOUR HEAD WATCHING ME, HORST WESSEL, CAN YOU SEE HIM? CAN YOU FEEL HIM?

OSCAR

HORST WESSEL?

META

IS HE LOOKING AT ME? IS HE LOOKING AT ME?

OSCAR'S FACE BEGINS TO CHANGE. AS HE GAZES AT META HIS FACE HARDENS AND AT THE SAME TIME BECOMES AROUSED.

OSCAR

YES.

META

WHAT IS HE SEEING?

OSCAR

HE DOESN'T KNOW, YOU'RE JUST AN OBJECT.

META

WHAT DOES HE WANT TO DO?

OSCAR

I DON'T KNOW.

META

COME ON, WHAT DOES HE REALLY WANT TO DO?

OSCAR

HE WANTS TO BREAK YOUR NECK.

META APPROACHES OSCAR SEDUCTIVELY. SHE EXPOSES HER THROAT.

META

COME ON, DO IT, BREAK MY NECK. SAY YOUR LINES AND BREAK MY NECK.

OSCAR IS HORST WESSEL, TENDER IN HIS HUNGER TO KILL, SWEET IN HIS RUTHLESS NEED, EFFICIENT IN BRUTAL ACT, CUNNING IN HIS SEDUCTION. AS OSCAR SPEAKS AT HE FIRST PLACES HIS HANDS ON HER HEAD AS IF TO SIMPLY SNAP HER NECK, THEN SLIDS HIS FINGERS OVER THE SOFT WARM SKIN OF HER THROAT AND BEGINS STRANGLING HER. META BEGINS TO SINK TO THE FLOOR. AS SHE CHOKES OSCAR FLICKS HIS TONGUE AGAINST HERS. SHE GOES TO THE FLOOR.

OSCAR AS HAMLET

GET THEE TO A NUNNERY: WHY WOULDST THOU BE A BREEDER OF SINNERS? I AM MYSELF INDIFFERENT HONEST; BUT YET I COULD ACCUSE ME OF SUCH THINGS THAT IT

OSCAR AS HAMLET (CONT.)

WERE BETTER MY MOTHER HAD NOT BORNE ME: I AM VERY

PROUD, REVENGEFUL, AMBITIOUS, WITH MORE OFFENCES AT MY BECK THAN I HAVE THOUGHTS TO PUT THEM IN, IMAGINATION TO GIVE THEM SHAPE, OR TIME TO ACT THEM IN. WHAT SHOULD SUCH FELLOWS AS I DO CRAWLING BETWEEN EARTH AND HEAVEN? WE ARE ARRANT KNAVES, ALL; BELIEVE NONE OF US. GO THY WAYS TO A NUNNERY.

META THROWS HER LEGS AROUND HIM AND KISSES HIM PASSIONATELY.

LIGHTS OUT

SCENE 23

META IS IN SHADOW. OSKAR IS BY THE WINDOW. HE IS DRESSED IN HIS S.A. UNIFORM. HE IS ON ONE KNEE IN A HEROIC POSE SURVEYING THE SCENE BELOW HIS WINDOW. THERE IS A FLICKERING OF TORCHES AND THE SOUND OF MARCHING FEET.

META

TELL ME WHAT YOU KNOW.

OSKAR

(WITH GROWING INTENSITY)

FIRST THE ELECTION WITHOUT A MANDATE:
 THEN THE CATASTROPHE:
 THE ENEMY, THEN THE SCAPEGOAT.
 INDIGNATION FOLLOWS EMERGENCY.
 FEAR TURNS TO ANGER, ANGER TO REVENGE.
 THE OBJECTIVE IS TO CREATE A STATE OF CONTINUOUS EMERGENCY.
 WHEN THE STATE OF EMERGENCY IS OVER WE CAN AFFORD TO QUESTION. IT IS NEVER OVER.
 IN THE TERROR OF CONFUSION WE MUST SEEK SOLIDARITY, FIND OUR BASIC VALUES.
 WE CLEAN UP OUR STREETS,
 ENLIST OUR NEIGHBORS AS INFORMERS.
 "THIS SHALL NOT HAPPEN AGAIN. WE WILL STRIKE BACK."
 FORTINBRAS HAS TAKEN POLAND AND NOW HE'S TAKING DENMARK.
 HE CLEARS THE CASTLE IN ELSINORE OF VERMIN.
 THE CHARLATAN IS VANQUISHED.
 HIS SLUT MOTHER DRINKS POISON LIKE HONEY.
 THE HOT HEAD IS EASILY SLAIN.
 THE DOTTERING COUNCILOR IS RUN THROUGH.
 THE VIRGIN WHORE GOES MAD WITH HEAT AND COOLS HER LUST BY DROWNING.
 THE WOULD-BE KING MEETS HIS JUSTICE AT HIS NEPHEW'S BLADE.
 THE GOOD AND LOYAL FRIEND REMAINS,

OSCAR (CONT.)

BUT FORTINBRAS WILL HAVE NONE OF IT:
 AT HIS SIGNAL, HE TOO IS KILLED.
 ALL ARE SLAUGHTERED.
 THE BLOOD IS WASHED FROM THE WALLS AND FLOORS;
 THE DANISH COURT DISINFECTED:
 HITLER IS MARCHING ON CZECHOSLOVAKIA. IT HAS BEGUN.

OSCAR MAKES THE HITLER SALUTE. META STEPS DOWNSTAGE.

ARE YOU READY? META

OSKAR RISES.

YES. OSKAR

LET'S OPEN OUR PLAY. META

SCENE 24/25

META IS PACING.

VOICE ON RADIO

THE GODDESS OF HISTORY LOOKED DOWN TO EARTH. GERMAN TROOPS ENTERED BOHEMIA AND MORAVIA, AND WITH BREATHLESS EXCITEMENT THE GERMAN PEOPLE AND THE WHOLE WORLD SAW THE FÜHRER TAKE UP RESIDENCE IN THE CASTLE OF PRAGUE...

OSKAR IS HEARD UNLOCKING THE DOOR. META RUNS AND TURNS THE RADIO OFF. OSKAR ENTERS. HE IS STILL IN THE S.A. UNIFORM. HE GAZES AT HER, SHE AT HIM. HE CROSSES TO HER. HE TAKES HER INTO HIS ARMS AND KISSES HER.

LIGHTS CROSSFADE TO ANOTHER LOOK.

META, SITTING. OSKAR IS IN THE PROCESS OF PERFORMING FOR HER AS THE LIGHTS RISE. HE QUOTES FROM FORTINBRAS IN HITLER'S VOICE.

OSKAR AS FORTINBRAS

"SPEAK LOUDLY FOR HIM.
TAKE UP THE BODIES: SUCH A SIGHT AS THIS
BECOMES THE FIELD, BUT HERE SHOWS MUCH AMISS.
GO, BID THE SOLDIERS SHOOT."

OSCAR BREAKS CHARACTER AND ENTHUSIASTICALLY RELATES THE EVENTS.

OSCAR (CONT.)

AND THEN THE SOLDIERS SHOOT HORATIO AND ALL THE COURT. IT'S A BLOOD-BATH. EVERYONE IS WRITHING ON THE GROUND. THE CANNONS BLAST AND THE CURTAIN FALLS AND THEN...SILENCE. (HE PAUSES AND WAITS, THEN...) THE CURTAIN RISES FOR THE CURTAIN CALL AND...(HE PAUSES AND WAITS, THEN...) SILENCE. META, YOU'VE NEVER HEARD SUCH A SILENCE. I LOOKED OUT AT THEM; THEIR FACES WERE ALL AGOG. THEY WERE IN SHOCK. IT WAS AS IF THEY HAD INGESTED SOME HUGE ESCULENT PIG THAT HAD FAIRLY RIFLED THROUGH THEM. I TELL YOU, I'VE NEVER SEEN SO MANY SATISFIED GERMANS IN MY LIFE. THEN MIRACLE OF MIRACLES; SPONTANEOUSLY, IN UNISON, THEY BEGAN TO SING THE HORST WESSEL SONG, TEARS STREAMING FROM THEIR EYES.

HE BEGINS SINGING THE HORST WESSEL SONG. THE PHONE RINGS. META AND OSKAR START. THEY WATCH THE PHONE IN DREAD AS IT CONTINUES TO RING. OSKAR LOOKS AT META THEN CROSSES AND ANSWERS IT.

OSKAR

HELLO? (HE LOOKS AT META) YES, GUSTAV? – OH, YES. – OH, THANK YOU SO MUCH. – IS THAT SO? – YOU THINK SO? – HE IS? AND THAT IS GOOD? – GOOD. WHEN? – YOU’LL LET ME KNOW, WON’T YOU? – THANK YOU. GOODBYE.

OSKAR HANGS THE PHONE UP. HE LOOKS AT META IN APPREHENSION.

META

YES?

OSKAR

GUSTAV CONGRATULATED ME. HE WANTED TO EXTEND HIS COMPLIMENTS TO MY (INDICATING META.) “HAMLET”. HE SAID DOCTOR* LIMP WAS NOT SO HAPPY. HE SAID THAT MR.* DIAMOND WAS NOT IN ATTENDANCE BUT HE WAS SURE TO COME WHEN THE WORD GOT OUT. THAT HE WOULD LET ME KNOW WHEN HE CAME.

META

DOCTOR LIMP?

OSKAR

GOEBBELS.

META

GOEBBELS WAS NOT HAPPY.

OSKAR

MR. DIAMOND...

META

GÖRING? WASN’T THERE?

HE TAKES HER IN HIS ARMS.

OSKAR

HE’S COMING. YOU WANTED WAR, MY DARLING. WE HAVE ONE.

SCENE 26

META IS ASLEEP ON THE EASY CHAIR. SHE SNAPS AWAKE, DISORIENTED. SHE CROSSES TO THE SIDE OF THE WINDOW AND CAUTIOUSLY LOOKS OUT. SHE LOOKS AT HER WATCH. SHE PACES. THE PHONE RINGS. SHE WATCHES IT IN APPREHENSION. SHE WAITS FOR IT TO STOP RINGING BUT IT DOES NOT. SLOWLY SHE CROSSES TO IT, WAITING FOR IT TO STOP RINGING. THEN, IMPULSIVELY SHE SNATCHES UP THE RECEIVER.

META

HELLO? (NO ANSWER.) HELLO? (SHE WAITS.) IS SOMEONE THERE?
(NO ANSWER. SHE HANGS UP.) MY GOD, WHAT HAVE I DONE?

SHE LOOKS AT THE RECIEVER IN DREAD AS IF SOMETHING WAS HIDING IN IT, THEN SLOWLY PLACES IT IN ITS CRADLE. SHE SITS THEN FALLS ASLEEP.

THE DOOR OPENS. OSKAR ENTERS. HIS CLOTHES ARE IN DISARRAY. HIS FACE IS BRUISED.

OSCAR

META?

META

MY GOD, OSKAR, WHERE HAVE YOU BEEN?

OSKAR

ARE YOU OKAY? I'M SORRY, I'VE GOT TO HURRY. IT'S ALMOST CURTAIN TIME.

OSCAR EXITS INTO THE BATHROOM.

META

WHAT'S HAPPENED TO YOU?

OSKAR (OS)

THE BRUISES LOOK GOOD! IT WAS EVEN BETTER, META. IT WAS INCREDIBLE. YOU SHOULD HAVE SEEN IT. THEY HAD TO CLOSE THE CURTAIN ON THE APPLAUSE. THEY JUST WOULDN'T STOP. IT THOUGHT THE THEATER WOULD EXPLODE.

META

NEVER MIND THAT, YOU WERE GONE ALL NIGHT AND DAY.

OSKAR (OS)

I NO SOONER LEFT THE STAGE THAN TWO MEN GRABBED ME BY THE ARMS AND PULLED ME OUT OF THE THEATER TO GESTAPO HEADQUARTERS. OH MY GOD, I HAD THE SCARIEST NIGHT OF MY LIFE. THE GESTAPO BOYS ROUGHED ME UP; CALLED ME FAGGOT, JEW-FUCKER, BOLSHEVIST, TRAITOR; THEY RAN OUT OF NAMES. THEY WERE REALLY PISSED. I THOUGHT THEY WERE GONNA KILL ME. THEN SOME BIGWIG IN A LEATHER SUIT CAME IN, I SWEAR, META, IT WAS LEATHER. HE TOOK ONE OF THEM ASIDE AND WHISPERED FRANTICALLY AT HIM. THEY UNTIED ME, BUT BEFORE THEY DID ONE OF THEM SLUGGED ME IN THE FACE. THE GUY SAID, "THIS IS FROM HERR GOEBBELS SO THAT YOU'LL LOOK GOOD FOR PRIME MINISTER GÖRING." (OSCAR ENTERS FROM THE BATHROOM.) I'M SO INSPIRED." GOEBBELS WAS TRYING TO STOP THE SHOW BUT GÖRING INTERVENED. IT IS A MIRACLE, IT IS MAGIC. THEY'RE FIGHTING EACH OTHER, META. AND WE LITTLE ACTORS, NO YOU, META, YOU'RE DOING IT. I'VE GOT TO GO. PRIME MINISTER GÖRING IS COMING TONIGHT. WISH ME WELL.

OSKAR STARTS FOR THE DOOR.

META

OSKAR.

OSKAR

(IMPATIENT, LOOKING AT HIS WATCH)

YES?

META

I ANSWERED THE PHONE.

OSCAR TAKES ON THAT HORST WESSEL LOOK AGAIN. HE BECOMES COLD, PINS HER WITH AN ICY GLARAE.

OSKAR

YOU WHAT?

META

I ANSWERED THE PHONE.

OSKAR

HOW COULD YOU BE SO STUPID!

META

I DIDN'T KNOW WHERE YOU WERE. YOU WERE OUT ALL NIGHT.

OSKAR

DID ANYONE ANSWER?

META

No.

OSKAR

OF COURSE NOT. IF THE PHONE RINGS AGAIN, DON'T ANSWER IT NO MATTER WHAT HAPPENS. DO YOU UNDERSTAND ME. NOW WAIT HERE. I'M GOING TO KILL TONIGHT. I'M GOING TO BURN THE HOUSE DOWN WITH MY PERFORMANCE!

HE EXITS. META GAZES AT THE DOOR IN AMAZEMENT.

SCENE 27

OFF STAGE IN THE DARK OSKAR IS HEARD LOUDLY SINGING THE HORST WESSEL SONG. HE IS DRUNK. THE LIGHTS RISE AS META APPROACHES THE DOOR CAUTIOUSLY. HE KNOCKS ON THE DOOR. META STEPS BACK. HE KNOCKS AGAIN. SILENCE. OSKAR UNLOCKS THE DOOR AND SPRINGS IN. META GIVES A STARTLED SHOUT. HE'S WEARING HIS S.A. UNIFORM. HE HAS A ROSE AND AN OPEN BOTTLE OF WINE FROM WHICH HE'S BEEN DRINKING.

OSKAR

MY DARLING! (HE DROPS TO ONE KNEE AND THRUSTS THE ROSE TO HER WITH HIS HEAD BOWED.) FROM THE PRIME MINISTER OF PRUSSIA, FOUNDER OF THE GERMAN AIRFORCE, CREATOR OF THE

GESTAPO, REICHMARSHAL, PRESIDENT OF THE REICHSTAG,
CHAIRMAN OF THE COUNCIL FOR DEFENSE OF THE REICH.

SHE STANDS BACK AND LOOKS AT HIM IRRITATED BY HIS CARELESSNESS.

META

YOU'RE DRUNK.

OSKAR REMAINS KNEELING WITH THE ROSE EXTENDED.

OSKAR

IS THAT WHAT I AM? YES, THAT'S WHAT I AM, A VICTORIOUS DRUNK!
(REALIZING THAT SHE'S NOT GOING TO TAKE THE ROSE, HE STANDS
AND THROWS THE ROSE ON THE TABLE.)

OSCAR (CONT.)

AREN'T YOU HAPPY TO SEE ME? DON'T YOU WANT TO KNOW HOW IT
WENT?

META

YOU MET GÖRING?

OSKAR

NONE OTHER.

META

YOU TOLD HIM ABOUT ME?

OSKAR

I DIDN'T HAVE TO, HE KNEW WHO YOU WERE.

META

HE KNEW I WAS YOUR WIFE?

OSKAR

HE KNEW FROM DIETRICH DIETER.

META

DIETRICH DIETER?

OSKAR

THE LITTLE MAN AT GESTAPO HEADQUARTERS. HE WAS THERE TOO.
HE WANTED TO GET CLOSE TO GÖRING. HE CLICKED HIS HEELS AND
INTRODUCED HIMSELF. "HERR PRIME MINISTER, YOUR HAMLET IS
NONE OTHER THAN THE HUSBAND OF THE FAMOUS META WOLFF. SHE
WAS IN MY OFFICE ONLY A FEW MONTHS AGO."

META

OH, GOD, THEN GÖRING KNOWS I'M A JEW.

OSKAR

DON'T WORRY, MY DARLING. EVERYTHING IS GOING TO BE ALL RIGHT. GÖRING IS GOING TO TAKE CARE OF US. HE LOVES US. HE LOVED MY HAMLET. HE LOVED EVERYTHING ABOUT IT. HE GRABBED ME BY THE HAND AND ALMOST BROKE IT WITH ENTHUSIASM. HE'S HUGE, META, ENORMOUS.

OSCAR LAUGHS. META LAUGHS MOCKINGLY.

META

YES, FAT WITH JEWISH CORPSES.

OSKAR

DON'T BE A SPOIL-SPORT. WE ARE VICTORIOUS! (HE DRINKS FROM THE WINE BOTTLE.) CZECH WINE. FROM THE FRONT.

META

"THE FRONT." WHAT ARE YOU DOING, OSKAR?

OSKAR

I'M CELEBRATING, IF YOU LET ME. COME ON, DRINK WITH ME, DRINK WITH ME, MY LOVE. GUSTAV TOOK US INTO HIS OFFICE, GÖRING AND ME. CAN YOU BELIEVE IT? HE HAD A SKY-BLUE UNIFORM WITH HUGE LAPELS AND TEN POUNDS OF MEDALS. HE HAD THIS FRENCH AFTERSHAVE. THERE WERE FOUR SS MEN WITH HIM EVERYWHERE HE WENT. HE LOVES GUSTAV. HE PUT HIS ARM AROUND HIM. EVERY TIME HE LOOKED AT ME HE LAUGHED. HE SAT AND LOOKED AT ME AND LAUGHED AND SLAPPED HIS KNEE. HE WASN'T A BAD GUY, YOU KNOW, FOR A KILLER. GUSTAV TOLD ME HE HAS FOUR CASTLES. HE HAS A PET LION THAT HE TAKES WITH HIM EVERYWHERE AND THAT HE CALMS HIMSELF BY IMMERSING HIS HANDS IN A FISH BOWL FULL OF DIAMONDS. CAN YOU BELIEVE THAT?

META

DIAMONDS STOLEN FROM JEWS.

OSKAR

(LAUGHING)

WHERE ELSE WOULD HE GET THEM? LISTEN, MY DARLING. I DON'T APPROVE OF THE GUY BUT IF YOU'RE GOING TO HAVE SOMEBODY ON YOUR SIDE HE'S THE NEXT BEST THING TO HITLER.

META LAUGHS INCREDULOUSLY.

META

I CAN'T BELIEVE YOU'RE SAYING THESE THINGS?

OSKAR

(ROARING)

WHY NOT, YOU'RE THE ONE WHO DID IT!

META

QUIET DOWN.

OSKAR APPROACHES HER. SHE AVOIDS HIM. HE LAUGHS AND FEIGNS SURPRISE. HE GOES ONE WAY, SHE GOES ANOTHER. THIS GOES ON FOR A BIT, THEN HE GRABS HER AND TRIES TO SIT HER ON HIS LAP.

OSKAR

COME ON, MY DARLING, COME AND SIT WITH ME. DRINK TO OUR SUCCESS.

SHE RESISTS. HE THROWS HER ON TO THE COUCH.

OSKAR

FUCKING JEW BITCH! I DO EVERYTHING FOR YOU. I GO OUT ON STAGE AND I DO EVERYTHING YOU SAY. I GO TO GUSTAV AND RISK TELLING HIM HOW TO DIRECT THE PLAY. (HE DROPS TO HIS KNEES NEXT TO HER. SHE COVERS HER FACE WITH HER HANDS.) I'M SORRY. I'M SO SORRY. I'M ACTING LIKE THEM, AREN'T I? (HE PUTS HIS FACE IN HIS HANDS AND CRIES.) IT'S BEEN SO HARD, SO FRIGHTENING. I'M SORRY I CALLED YOU A JEW.

OSKAR CRIES. META WATCHES HIM. FINALLY, OSKAR'S TEARS SUBSIDE. HE SITS THERE IN SILENCE.

OSKAR

I NEVER MENTIONED YOU, META, I SWEAR IT. I WOULDN'T BE THAT CARELESS. GÖRING KNEW YOU. HE LOVES YOU. (HE GOES TO THE ROSE AND THEN CRAWLS TO META ON HIS HANDS AND KNEES.) WHEN GÖRING LEFT HE PLUCKED A ROSE FROM A VASE IN GUSTAV'S OFFICE AND GAVE IT TO ME. (HE HOLDS THE ROSE OUT TO HER.) HE TOLD ME THAT YOU WERE THE FINEST ACTRESS IN ALL OF GERMANY, IN ALL OF GERMANY, META. GÖRING SAID THAT.

META TAKES THE ROSE.

META

(WITH A CERTAIN SURRENDER)

AND THAT IS MY DEATH SENTENCE.

OSKAR

NO, NO, IT'S NOT. WHEN HE LEFT, HE DREW GUSTAV ASIDE AND SPOKE WITH HIM. GUSTAV WAS EXCITED. HE TOLD ME THAT GÖRING TOLD GOEBBELS TO KEEP HIS HANDS OFF OF THE PRODUCTION OR ELSE HE WOULD TELL THE FÜHRER ABOUT A CERTAIN MISTRESS GOEBBELS IS KEEPING. GUSTAV SAID THAT WHILE THE STAND OFF LASTS WE MUST GET YOU TO SWITZERLAND, SWITZERLAND, MY DARLING.

META

(QUIETLY)

WHILE THE "STAND OFF LASTS." YES, MY DEAR, WHILE IT LASTS. I'M GOING TO THE PERFORMANCE TOMORROW NIGHT.

OSKAR

YOU CAN'T DO THAT.

META

I MUST DO THAT.

OSKAR

BUT IF PEOPLE SEE YOU. GOEBBELS HAS SPIES EVERYWHERE.

META

IT DOESN'T MATTER ANYMORE, OSKAR.

OSKAR

DON'T THINK THAT WAY. IT'S JUST THE BEGINNING. WE'LL GET YOU TO SWITZERLAND.

META

YES, OF COURSE.

THE LIGHTS FADE.

SCENE 28

OSKAR IS IN HIS S.A. UNIFORM. HE HIS NERVOUSLY PACING.

META (OS)

I WANT TO GO BY MYSELF. I WANT TO TAKE A TAXI. I'M GOING TO GET OUT A FEW BLOCKS FROM THE THEATER AND LOOK AT THE SHOPS.

OSKAR

I DON'T WANT YOU TO DO THIS. IT IS AGAINST THE LAW.

META (OS)

WHOSE LAW?

OSKAR

YOU KNOW VERY WELL WHOSE LAW IT IS.

META (OS)

DON'T NAG, I KNOW WHAT I'M DOING. YOU'RE GOING TO BE LATE. THAT'S NOT ONLY CARELESS, BUT IT'S DISCOURTEOUS TO THE STAGE MANAGER. WHO IS THE STAGE MANAGER?

OSKAR

GEORG.

META (OS)

GEORG, HE'S HELD ON? WELL, HE'S A BEAR WHEN HE'S CROSSED. GET ALONG.

OSKAR

I CAN'T STAND THIS, META, REALLY, I DON'T THINK YOU SHOULD DO THIS.

META (OS)

WHERE IS THE TICKET?

OSKAR

ON THE DRESSER. SO IS THE MONEY. YOU SHOULDN'T BE GOING ALONE.

META (OS)

I WANT TO TASTE THINGS. I WANT TO FEEL THE STREET AS A HUMAN BEING. I WANT TO CLIMB OUT OF MY HOLE AND SEE THE LIGHTS OF THE CITY AT NIGHT. I MIGHT GET SOME PASTRY AT KOPPELS. THEN I'M GOING TO SIT AT A SIDEWALK CAFÉ AND DRINK A GLASS OF RIESLING. I WANT TO SEE THE FASHIONS. I ONLY LOOK AT THEM FROM MY WINDOW. I WANT TO SEE THE WOMEN PARADING DOWN THE STREET ON A SPRING NIGHT. I WANT TO HEAR THEIR SHOES CLACKING ON THE SIDEWALK. I WANT TO SMELL THE TREES BLOOMING. I WANT TO SEE GENTLEMEN OPEN DOORS FOR LADIES. PERHAPS ONE WILL OPEN A DOOR FOR ME. I HAVEN'T BEEN OUT PAST NINE FOR EVER SO LONG. I WANT TO BE A PART OF GERMANY'S NEW PROSPERITY. I'M GOING TO WATCH MY HUSBAND'S TRIUMPH. I'M GOING TO MEET EVERYONE BACKSTAGE. NOW GET ALONG, YOU'LL BE LATE.

OSKAR

META...

META

GO, GO. I'LL BE FINE. I'LL MEET YOU BACKSTAGE.

OSKAR EXITS. META SINGS AS THE LIGHTS FADE.

SCENE 29

OSKAR ENTERS AND OPENS THE DOOR FOR META. META SWEEPS INTO THE ROOM IN ALL HER DIVA GLORY. SHE IS WEARING A BLOND WIG WITH BRAIDS ENCIRCLING HER HEAD. SHE IS ECSTATIC.

META

I CAN'T BELIEVE IT! IT WAS EVEN MORE THAN I EXPECTED. THOSE JOWLY SERVANTS OF THE REICH, WEeping AND

META (CONT.)

GRINNING, WINKING AT EACH OTHER AND THE STAGE WINKING BACK AT THEM LIKE ONE GREAT EYE, THE CURTAIN SLAMMING DOWN AND THEN UP AGAIN MIDST TEARS OF RAGE-THE HORST WESSEL SONG AND YOU STANDING THERE WITH YOUR "HITLER SALUTE." FRANZ WEBER COVERED WITH BLOOD, TAKING A BOW. I ALMOST CHOKED. I THOUGHT HE WOULD BREAK INTO LAUGHTER RIGHT THERE IN THE CURTAIN CALL: ALL OF THEM, THEY WERE PRACTICALLY AIRBORNE. (SHE RUNS TO OSKAR AND EMBRACES HIM) OH, OSKAR EVEN IF I

NEVER SEE ANOTHER NIGHT I WILL HAVE THIS ONE FIXED IN MY EYES FOR ALL ETERNITY. THANK YOU, MY DEAR! AT FIRST THEY DIDN'T RECOGNIZE ME. THEY THOUGHT SOME GRAND DUCHESS WAS PAYING THEM TRIBUTE. KITTY STENGEL CAME UP TO ME AND SHE GAZED AT ME AS IF I WERE A MUMMY UNDER GLASS AND THEN SHE RECOGNIZED ME. I NEVER HEARD ANYONE SHOUT IN A WHISPER BEFORE AND ALL OF THEM, THEY SUDDENLY RECOGNIZED ME. AND THEY CROWDED AROUND ME. "OH META, META," AND THEN "SHHH, SHHH." THEY KISSED ME IN ALL OF THEIR POWDER AND MAKEUP AND STAGE BLOOD.

SHE BEGINS CRYING. OSKAR GOES TO HER AND STROKES HER HAIR.

OSKAR

IT WAS GOOD, WASN'T IT?

META

THEY WERE SO HAPPY TO SEE ME. MARIANNE SLIPPED HER HAND IN MINE AND SHE WHISPERED IN MY EAR, "OH, MY BRAVE DARLING, BE CAREFUL, PLEASE." ONLY PAMELA WEDEKIND STOOD APART. SHE WATCHED ME. HER EYES WERE ENDLESS. IT MADE MY HAIR STAND ON END. SHE SAID, "HEIL HITLER, HONEY." (META LAUGHS. SHE TURNS TO OSKAR) AND YOU, YOU, MY LOVE, I'M SO PROUD OF YOU. YOU WERE PRACTICALLY HOWLING ON THAT STAGE.

OSKAR

YOU WILL BE ON THE STAGE AGAIN IN SWITZERLAND.

META

I CAN'T EVEN DREAM OF IT. GOD, DO YOU THINK...? OSKAR, I WANT TO BE ON STAGE AGAIN. IT'S BEEN SO LONG. I KNOW SO MUCH MORE. WAIT. (SHE RUNS INTO THE OTHER ROOM.) (OS) I KEPT THEM. (SHE ENTERS WITH A BOUQUET OF DRIED ROSES.) REMEMBER? IT WAS THE LAST TIME I WAS ON STAGE.

THE PHONE RINGS.

OSKAR PICKS UP THE RECIEVER. META BEGINS MURMURING.

META

NO. NO. NO...

OSKAR TURNS AND SMILES AT META.

OSKAR

YES, GUSTAV? (AS HE LISTENS THE SMILE SLOWLY VANISHES FROM HIS FACE.) ARE YOU SERIOUS? - (OSKAR LISTENS FOR A LONG WHILE, THEN CRIES OUT...) WHY DID YOU DO THAT? (OSKAR TURNS FROM META.) I CAN'T UNDERSTAND YOU. - THAT'S ABSURD. I WON'T DO THAT. - GO TO HELL, YOU BASTARD! DON'T HANG UP.

OSKAR STANDS WITH THE DEAD RECEIVER TO HIS EAR THEN SLOWLY, HE HANGS IT UP.

OSKAR

(QUIETLY)

THE PLAY IS CANCELLED.

META SINKS TO THE CHAIR, HER ROSES STILL IN HER ARMS.

META

GOEBBELS AND GÖRING...THEY'VE MADE UP?

OSKAR

GUSTAV SAID THAT GÖRING THOUGHT THE SHOW WAS TOO EXCITING.

META

WHAT ELSE? WHAT ELSE?

OSKAR

GÖRING PRACTICALLY FIRED HIM, THEN AND THERE.

META

HE TURNED ME IN.

OSKAR

GUSTAV TOLD HIM THAT IT WASN'T HIS IDEA.

META

THAT IT WAS MINE.

OSKAR

HE SAID HE WAS "SORRY". HE SAID WE SHOULD LEAVE IMMEDIATELY.
HE BEGAN SOBBING AND HUNG UP.

META

WHERE CAN WE GO?

OSKAR

I DON'T KNOW. WE'LL JUST GO.

HE STARTS FOR THE BEDROOM.

META

STOP, OSKAR. WHAT ELSE DID HE SAY?

OSKAR

IT DOESN'T MATTER.

META

YES, IT DOES. TELL ME.

OSKAR

I CAN STILL STAY IN THE COMPANY.

META

IF YOU LET ME GO.

OSKAR TAKES META IN HIS ARMS. META HOLDS THE DRIED ROSES AS SHE EMBRACES HIM.

OSKAR

I WON'T LET YOU GO. WHERE EVER YOU GO, I GO. WE'RE IN THIS TOGETHER. THE GESTAPO COULD COME AT ANY MOMENT. WE'VE GOT TO HURRY.

OSKAR EXITS INTO THE BEDROOM

META

THERE'S NO WHERE TO RUN. FORTINBRAS IS ON THE MOVE AND THE NATION IS MOVING WITH HIM. THE PLAY WAS IN THE AUDIENCE LONG BEFORE IT WAS ON THE STAGE. OH, GERMANY, MY GERMANY, YOU GO TO MEET YOUR DESTINY.

OSKAR(OS)

WE'LL TAKE ONE SUITCASE. WE'LL TAKE THE TRAM WEST TO THE FINAL STOP. WE'LL GO ON FOOT...

META

THERE'S NO WHERE TO GO, MY DARLING.

OSKAR (OS)

I WON'T LET THEM TAKE YOU TO A CONCENTRATION CAMP.

META

I WON'T LET THEM EITHER.

OSKAR (OS)

WHAT ARE WE GOING TO DO?

META

"I"...

OSKAR (OS)

NO, "WE."

META

I DON'T WANT TO BE HERE ANY MORE.

OSKAR ENTERS.

OSKAR

WHAT DO YOU WANT TO DO?

META

I WANT TO BE IN THIS MOMENT FOREVER WITH YOU.

OSKAR

THAT'S WHAT I WANT TOO. DO YOU THINK I WANT TO GO ON WITHOUT YOU; IN THIS PLACE; IN THESE TIMES? I WATCHED THEM, META, THESE IMPORTANT ACTORS OF THE PRUSSIAN STATE THEATER. THEY

LOOKED AT YOU WITH SUCH SYMPATHY AND HUNGER. THEY ENVIED YOU, POOR SLAVES. THEY LIVE IN SILENT IMMIGRATION. I DON'T HAVE POISON. I DON'T HAVE A GUN. BUT WE HAVE GAS. (THEY GAZE AT EACH OTHER.) YES, META, YES.

META GIVES THE DRIED ROSES TO OSKAR THEN REMOVES THE BLOND WIG. THE LIGHTS FADE.

SCENE 30

IN THE DARKNESS THERE IS THE SOUND OF HISSING GAS. THE LIGHTS RISE ON OSKAR AND META LINING THE DOOR AND THE WINDOW WITH SHEETS.

OSKAR

GET ME ANOTHER SHEET. HURRY.

META EXITS INTO THE BEDROOM AND THEN ENTERS WITH A SHEET AND A PILLOW. SHE THROWS THE SHEET OVER OSKAR AND THEN BEGINS HITTING HIM WITH THE PILLOW. OSKAR, LOOKING LIKE A GHOST, GRABS HER AND PULLS HER TO THE FLOOR. HE KISSES HER THROUGH THE SHEET. SHE STRUGGLES FREE AND RUNS.

META

I'M OUT OF BREATH.

OSKAR STANDS IN HIS SHEET, THEN PULLS IT OFF.

OSKAR

WE CAN STOP THIS, META.

META

NO, WE CAN'T, NOT UNLESS YOU WANT THE GESTAPO TO CHOP OUR HEADS OFF WITH ELECTRIC GUILLOTINES. (SHE LAUGHS.) THAT'S GERMAN EFFICIENCY FOR YOU. I FEEL FAINT. DO YOU?

OSKAR CHECKS HIMSELF.

OSKAR

I DON'T KNOW.

THEY LOOK AT EACH OTHER AND LAUGH. META SINKS TO THE FLOOR. OSKAR GOES TO HER AND SITS.

OSKAR

ARE YOU ALL RIGHT?

META

(LAUGHS)

NO, AM I SUPPOSED TO BE? OH, GOD, I'M FRIGHTENED. (SHE GRABS HIM.) I DON'T WANT YOU TO DIE.

HE KISSES HER.

OSKAR

BY GOD, I AM FAINT.

META

OH, OSKAR...

OSKAR WRAPS THE SHEET AROUND HER AND CRADLES HER IN HIS ARMS.

META

ARE WE WHO WE ARE? WHO ARE WE? ARE WE OUR ACTIONS? DO WE HAVE A CHOICE, OR ARE WE DRIVEN TO DO WHAT WE DO? WHAT I DO EACH MOMENT IS UNDETERMINED AND YET WHEN I DO IT IT IS THERE FOREVER. THE WORLD IS FULL OF MAGIC. IT IS SO MUCH AROUND US, SO MUCH IN US; THE LIGHT THAT

META (CONT.)

FALLS THROUGH THE WINDOW, THE MOISTURE ON YOUR LIPS, MY HUNGER FOR YOU. IT IS SO CLOSE THAT WE CANNOT SEE IT. WE ARE MAKING OUR MARRIAGE BED.

OSKAR

I LOVE YOU, MY DARLING. IN ALL THE EVIL, THE UGLINESS, I DON'T KNOW WHERE THAT LOVE CAME FROM. I FEEL SO LUCKY TO HAVE MET YOU. NOW WE WILL KNOW NO SEPERATION. THEY CAN DO NOTHING MORE TO US. NOW THEY HAVE ONLY THEMSELVES.

META IS STILL. OSKAR CRIES OUT.

OSKAR

OH, META, MY META! MY META, MY META...

HE LAYS HIS HEAD ON HER BREAST AN MURMURS HER NAME INTO SILENCE. THEN SUDDENLY THERE IS A LOUD POUNDING ON THE DOOR: BAM-BAM-BAM! BAM-BAM-BAM! BAM-BAM-BAM! THE LIGHTS BUMP TO DARKNESS. BAM-BAM-BAM! BAM-BAM-BAM! THEN SILENCE.

THE END