



**S ★ NCTUARY**

**by  
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#### CAST OF CHARACTERS

ARCHBISHOP NICHOLAS MUELLER: 50's. Powerful Archbishop, who protects the Catholic Church, and his secret, at all costs.  
FATHER MICHAEL CAPEK: 30's. Devoted assistant to Mueller.  
EMIL JAEGER: 20's. German architect opposes his role in designing the Dachau death camp.  
LEAH GINSBERG: 20's. Emil's defiant pregnant Jewish lover, and a Resistance member.  
MAJOR JOSEF VOGEL: 40's. Relentless, yet ailing, Gestapo officer who hunts Emil.  
KARL BURGMULLER: 50's. Resistance member who runs a safe house.  
PETER (Voice only): Resistance group leader.  
SOPHIE MAYER: 20's, Flirty Gestapo secretary.

LOCATION & TIME: Frauenkirsch Cathedral, Munich, April 1941

## ACT I, SCENE 1

BLACKOUT. Fade Up. A church bell rings and fades. A garden with a café table and three chairs. Potted plants on stands suggest a garden.

ARCHBISHOP MUELLER enters, taking slow, dignified strides. FATHER CAPEK follows him like an eager puppy holding a newspaper. MUELLER strolls to a stand; and sniffs a rose. He takes a pair of clippers, sniffing and cutting flowers.

MUELLER

My roses are growing beautifully. It may be their best year.

CAPEK

Absolutely, Your Excellency. Here's the morning newspaper.

MUELLER

What's your favorite flower?

CAPEK

I've never thought about it.

MUELLER

Perhaps the Gardenia with its heavenly scent, or the perfect orchid. Take up gardening. It'll bring you closer to God.

Capek steps closer, holding up the newspaper. Mueller ignores it.

MUELLER

I know what it says without reading it. Germany invaded Yugoslavia and Greece. Great Britain is under siege. What's not printed - war is imminent with Russia.

CAPEK

Maybe America could come to Europe's aid.

MUELLER

The United States will decide after the war who is its ally.

CAPEK

Perhaps Britain could defeat Germany, saving the Church.

MUELLER

We can't depend upon Great Britain after Dunkirk, or France since it signed the armistice with Germany. The Church is on its own. But His Holiness says we will remain neutral.

CAPEK

If Russia defeats Germany?

Mueller freezes and stops clipping.

MUELLER

Russia would destroy us.

CAPEK

I pray this war ends soon.

Mueller starts clipping flowers.

MUELLER

It's not how a war works. Speaking of soon, when do I meet with our guest?

CAPEK

Mr. Jaeger is waiting in the lobby. He visited here twice this week. He insists it's urgent.

MUELLER

Jaeger? I recall he restored St. Michael's Church last year.

CAPEK

He's a gifted architect.

MUELLER

Bring him in.

Capek exits. Mueller takes the flowers, pours water in a vase, and arranges a bouquet. Capek returns with EMIL JAEGER, clutching a roll of drawings.

CAPEK

Your Excellency, Mr. Emil Jaeger.

Capek steps back. Mueller smiles, but Emil doesn't return it.

MUELLER

Hello Emil. You did an excellent job rebuilding the chapel.

EMIL

Thank you, Your Excellency.

MUELLER

Tell me what's so urgent. Do we need your God-given talents again?

Mueller gestures to the table. He sits, and Capek sits beside him. Emil sits opposite.

EMIL

Architecture has always been my dream. In a few years, I've designed schools, hospitals, and spaces for the living. Work that makes me proud.

MUELLER

But remember the sin of pride.

EMIL

I'm a German and a Catholic, but not a soldier. The firm I work for received a new contract with the Inspectorate of the Concentration Camps, the I.K.L. for...Dachau.

MUELLER

Emil, you have my blessings on your career. I have a busy day. Goodbye.

Mueller stands, and Capek stands.

EMIL

This work ... I can't... won't do it.

MUELLER

That's between you and your boss, not the Church.

Mueller turns to step away.

EMIL

I won't build a death camp to murder Jews.

Mueller stops and turns. His eyes narrow on Emil. Capek stiffens, and his eyes widen.

MUELLER

Father Capek, bring us some coffee.

Capek exits. Mueller slowly walks.

MUELLER

I assume you've been to confession.

EMIL

On Saturday.

MUELLER

Tell me what you confessed.

EMIL

That's between God and ---

MUELLER

Tell me.

EMIL

I cursed many times, taking the Lord's name and envying a colleague's success.

MUELLER

Did you mention your work?

EMIL

No.

MUELLER

Good. You confessed, a nice gesture, but a waste of time.

EMIL

I should confess all sins to God.

MUELLER

Don't lecture me on sin. Father Capek said you came here several times this week. Why?

EMIL

I prayed for guidance.

MUELLER

You prayed for courage, thinking this was heroic.

EMIL

It's necessary.

MUELLER

I decide what's necessary here. God knows your sins before you confess.

EMIL

It brings me feel closer to our Lord.

MUELLER

True, but faith shouldn't be misused.

EMIL

This work is an abomination to my faith and God.

MUELLER

There are many ways to misuse faith. I know better than you.

EMIL

Your Excellency, I need your help. Look at these plans.

Emil holds up rolled drawings.  
Capek enters with a coffee tray and  
puts it on the table.

MUELLER

Ah, our coffee. Try it with cinnamon.

Capek sprinkles it in the cups.  
Mueller sits and stirs his cup.  
Capek copies him. They sip in  
unison. Emil sits but doesn't  
drink.

MUELLER

You're troubled by your work, but the Church seeks peace with  
all countries, including Germany.

EMIL

England signed a peace accord with Germany, but it was  
broken.

MUELLER

Twenty million Catholics live here. Millions around the  
world. The Fürher won't bother the Catholic Church because of  
the 1933 Concordat between Germany and the Vatican. It's not  
in his interest.

Mueller sips his coffee, and Capek  
sips too. Emil ignores his cup.

EMIL

I don't believe it.

MUELLER

The Holy Father believes it. I believe it. Father Capek  
believes it, too.

CAPEK

Absolutely, Your Excellency.

MUELLER

Emil, believe it.

Mueller eyes Emil; then stands and strolls around again.

MUELLER

You can see I love to garden. I was born on a farm about fifty miles away. Are you a farmer's son, too?

EMIL

No. My father was a fireman. We lived in Berlin.

MUELLER

A city boy. Your family must be proud. Tell me about them.

EMIL

My father died during a rescue years ago. Mama was a teacher but died from a heart attack last year. I'm the only child with a few relatives in Berlin. I moved to Munich to work.

MUELLER

You must have close friends, and perhaps a young lady.

EMIL

Work takes most of my time.

MUELLER

I see. (Beat.) Farming taught me duty and obedience. Emil, imagine the Church is a farm. We must follow the Holy Father's orders to plant the crops and care for them. It's our sacred duty to bring in the harvest. Son, this is not the time for passionate action, but of careful restraint. Your parents would understand.

(Mueller sits. He and Capek sip their coffee.)

Your coffee is getting cold.

EMIL

(Slides his cup away.)

The Third Reich shows no careful restraint with its death camp plans.

MUELLER

The Catholic Church has outlasted governments for centuries. Restrain takes time.



EMIL

How much time? Synagogues are being closed in Germany and its occupied countries.

MUELLER

The German policy says they deported no baptized Jews - a triumph of the Concordat. The agreement implies no moral approval by the Church of the Third Reich's actions.

EMIL

When a Jew is baptized as a Catholic, he must renounce his faith. Jews are arrested and sent to prisons and camps now. It'll increase when more camps are built.

MUELLER

Reichführer Himmler told me the Jews were not baptized or committed treason. So, the Church can't protect them.

Emil lays the plans on the ground.  
Mueller puts his cup down and walks  
away. Emil kneels on the plans to  
point.

EMIL

Dachau is ten miles away. It's the model for future camps.

Capek stands to look. He sees  
Mueller's glare and sits gulping  
his coffee. Emil gets the flowers  
from the vase. He drops a flower on  
each building, describing it.

EMIL

Here is the Disinfection barrack. This building houses the gas chamber to kill prisoners, and the new Barrack X is a crematorium with four ovens to burn their bodies. Over there are Blocks, Twenty-six and Twenty-eight, called the Priest Barracks. They are imprisoned for helping Jews and resisting the Reich. Oh, what a lovely garden is growing on God's earth at Dachau!

MUELLER

You arrogant ass. Don't desecrate my church and garden.

EMIL

How can the Catholic Church do nothing to save its priests? They must feel abandoned.

MUELLER

They are my brothers. You don't know how we feel. Father Capek, carefully pick up my flowers.

CAPEK

Absolutely, Your Excellency.

Capek gets the vase, puts the flowers in it, and puts the vase on the table.

EMIL

His Holiness must denounce this horror. Murder is the ultimate sin.

MUELLER

Aim your anger at Germany, not the Church.

EMIL

Your Excellency, please forgive me.

MUELLER

I'll think about it.

EMIL

I only want to serve God.

MUELLER

You're not alone. Father Capek, inform Emil of my recent actions.

CAPEK

(Stands.)

Last week, His Excellency sent two baptized Jews to Sweden. They received new passports and a trip to England.

(Sits.)

MUELLER

Some convents let resistance members set up small radio transmitters to broadcast secret messages. Nations want his papal approval, and he's cordial to all, but courtesy is not approval.

EMIL

Courtesy is useless in war.

(Speaks in a polite tone.)

Excuse me while I murder your family. Sorry for the mess. Don't clean it up, there's more to come.

MUELLER

Don't mock me or the Church.

EMIL

I'm trying to make my point.

MUELLER

You refuse to hear mine. Emil, your firm has a government contract making this visit treason.

EMIL

It's my moral duty to disobey.

MUELLER

The sin of disobedience is the road to martyrdom.

EMIL

While anyone who stays silent enables murder.

MUELLER

(Shows his hands to Emil.)

Look at my hands. I've blessed newborns and comforted the dying with them. Are these the hands of a murderer?

EMIL

No. What purpose does the Third Reich serve to the Church?

MUELLER

Listen, Germany is the only protection we have if Russia wins the war. The Church must survive to do God's work.

EMIL

Then the Jews are sacrificed to save the Catholics?

MUELLER

Enough.

EMIL

Tell me what to do.

MUELLER

Obey.

Emil falls to his knees. Mueller sighs; and helps him stand.

MUELLER

I know you're a good man. God knows it, and Father Capek knows it.

CAPEK

Absolutely, Your Excellency.

MUELLER

Son, your duty is to God. Make Peace with your work, but never discuss your thoughts about it with anyone again.

(MORE)

## MUELLER (CONT'D)

(He makes the sign of the  
cross.)

In the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.  
Amen.

Mueller extends his hand. Emil  
looks at the gold ring, eyes  
Mueller and then he kisses it.

## ACT I, SCENE 2

FRAUENKIRCHE CATHEDRAL CONFERENCE  
ROOM -

A conference table with chairs.  
Another table with a water pitcher,  
glasses, and a phone. Capek enters  
with the vase and rolled plans. He  
puts the plans on the table with  
the newspaper, partly hiding it. He  
puts the vase on the table beside  
the phone. It rings as he turns  
away. He answers it.

CAPEK

Yes? He's in his apartment. Alright. I'll speak with him.

Several Beats. MAJOR JOSEF VOGEL  
enters. He gives the Nazi salute,  
clicking his heels.

VOGEL

Heil Hitler. I'm Major Vogel of the Gestapo's Central  
Command.

CAPEK

Hello, I'm Father Capek.

VOGEL

I need to speak with Archbishop Mueller.

CAPEK

His Excellency is in a meeting.

VOGEL

Then I'll wait for him.

CAPEK

It could be a while. Maybe I can help you.

VOGEL

(Coughs and reads from a  
notepad.)

My staff saw a young man outside the cathedral earlier today.  
He caught our attention when he paced for several minutes  
before entering. He seemed nervous and carried a roll of  
paper. Did you see him?

Capek stiffens but stays calm. He  
takes a step back to the table  
trying to hide the plans from view.

CAPEK

People come here to pray, and find comfort.

VOGEL

I know, but did you see him?

CAPEK

There are many people in and out all day.

VOGEL

Father, did you see him?

Capek shrugs his shoulders.

VOGEL

Yes or no.

CAPEK

Describe him.

VOGEL

Age about 25, thin build, business suit, and rolled paper.

CAPEK

I recall several young couples and a few men. I think one  
carried a folded newspaper. We get a large crowd in the  
morning for prayer service.

VOGEL

The Gestapo watches many buildings because spies and traitors  
are everywhere. This man rushed out later but had no papers.  
Perhaps he had a meeting here.

CAPEK

He could have left them in a pew. You can go check.

Capek gestures to the exit.

VOGEL

I did, but found no papers. His nervousness was out of the  
ordinary.

CAPEK

War is out of the ordinary under God's law. Murder is the  
ultimate sin. We offer a refuge of peace and security.

(MORE)

CAPEK (CONT'D)

Leave your number with the clerk, and I'll call you if I find any paper.

VOGEL

I'll wait for the Archbishop.

CAPEK fakes a memory lapse.

CAPEK

Oh, excuse me. It's been a busy morning. Now, I do recall a man submitting a report.

VOGEL

A report? A rolled report, hm. His Name?

CAPEK

Jaeger, I think.

VOGEL

(Writes in notepad.)

First name?

CAPEK

Eric or Emil.

VOGEL

Which one?

CAPEK

Emil.

VOGEL

Why he was here?

CAPEK

Jaeger spoke with His Excellency.

Vogel coughs again and looks away.  
Capek glances at the plans.

VOGEL

What did they discuss?

CAPEK

Major, a cup of coffee may soothe your cough.

VOGEL

No.

CAPEK

Perhaps fresh strudel with tea and honey. Come with me.

Capek takes Vogel's arm to lead,  
but he resists.

VOGEL

No, thank you. One moment.

(Vogel reads his notes. Capek  
steps back to block the  
plans' view.)

I was asking about Jaeger's visit.

CAPEK

I almost forgot it. Jaeger is an architect. Occasionally he  
does work for the church. He made a routine inspection of St.  
Michael's Church.

VOGEL

(Writes in the notepad.)

When was the work done?

CAPEK

Sometime last year.

VOGEL

Why was he here today?

CAPEK

He submitted his inspection report.

VOGEL

The report probably included architectural plans. That roll  
of paper. They must still be here.

CAPEK

(Sniffs the air.)

Smell that strudel. It's heavenly. Let's get it while it's  
fresh.

VOGEL

I have a few more questions.

(Vogel glances about the  
room. He peers around Capek -  
a glimpse of the plans.  
Points at them.)

Are those Jaeger's plans?

CAPEK

What? Oh, them.



VOGEL

I'm interested in architecture, I'd like to see them.

Vogel steps to the table. Capek  
steps up to stop him. Mueller  
enters.

CAPEK

Your Excellency, the meeting ended early. Major Vogel of the  
Gestapo just arrived.

Mueller eyes Capek and reads the  
fear on his face. Mueller smiles  
and nods at Vogel.

VOGEL

Good day. I'm here ---

CAPEK

I told the Major about Jaeger's visit for the chapel's work.

VOGEL

(To Mueller.)

I need to know why Jaeger was here.

MUELLER

Is there a problem with his visit?

VOGEL

I don't know.

MUELLER

As Father Capek said, it was work done at the chapel.

VOGEL

Go on.

Mueller motions for Vogel to  
follow.

MUELLER

First, let me show you something unique. These are roses I  
grow in a garden behind the Cathedral.

VOGEL

They're nice. About his visit.

MUELLER

This one is a hybrid. No other garden in Munich grows them.  
Please, come see it.

Mueller distracts Vogel. He leans to smell the roses. Mueller motions with one hand for Capek to stand in front of the plans. He steps back.

VOGEL

Very nice. Now, about Jaeger's visit.

MUELLER

Emil Jaeger was the project architect for the restoration of St. Michael's Church.

VOGEL

What did he discuss with you?

MUELLER

He found a new problem.

VOGEL

What?

MUELLER

A crack in the foundation.

VOGEL

(Writes a note.)

A serious problem?

MUELLER

Not at the moment.

VOGEL

(Writes another note.)

Did he seem nervous to you?

MUELLER

No.

VOGEL

It's all I need for now. I may return with more questions.

MUELLER

There isn't anything else to tell.

VOGEL

Someone always remembers something.

(Glances at Capek.)

Before I go, I'll take a look at the plans.

Capek stiffens. Mueller smiles and puts his hand on Vogel's shoulder turning him away from Capek.

MUELLER

Major Vogel, a small crack in a wall isn't worth your valuable time.

VOGEL

I have the time.

MUELLER

But I don't. Father Capek, return the plans to Emil. He forgot them.

CAPEK

Absolutely, Your Excellency.

VOGEL

I'd like to see them.

Vogel coughs repeatedly. Capek gets the plans and quickly exits.

MUELLER

Major, that's a terrible cough. Please sit.

VOGEL

No, it will pass.

MUELLER

You should see a doctor.

Vogel takes a handkerchief from his pocket, wipes his mouth, and puts it away.

VOGEL

I have.

MUELLER

Come to Mass on Sunday, and I'll say a special prayer for you.

VOGEL

I'm not Catholic.

MUELLER

Would you like to convert? It's easier than you think.

No. VOGEL  
  
 Do you pray? MUELLER  
  
 My wife prayed. VOGEL  
(Vogel's voice trails off.)  
  
 Bring her to meet me. Here, give her one of my roses. MUELLER  
(Takes a rose from the vase. Hands  
it to Vogel.)  
  
 She died several years ago. VOGEL  
  
 Oh. I'm sorry. May she rest in peace. Any children? MUELLER  
  
 No. VOGEL  
  
 May God bless you with children someday, Major Vogel. MUELLER  
  
 Josef. VOGEL  
  
 Josef. In Hebrew, your name means God will increase. MUELLER  
  
 I hope so. VOGEL  
  
 I'll pray for your health to improve. MUELLER  
  
 As you wish, Heil Hitler. VOGEL  
  
Vogel gives the Nazi salute and  
exits.  
  
 As you wish, God bless you. MUELLER  
  
Mueller sighs deeply.

## ACT I, SCENE 3

## APARTMENT Interior -

A small room with simple necessities. LEAH GINSBURG sits at the table reading a note, then writes on another piece of paper. She finishes writing and folds both papers. She goes to the sofa, tucks the papers inside a pocket, and bundles the clothes with a belt. EMIL enters. He carries a paper parcel and flops on the sofa. She sits beside him, stroking his hair, and kisses him, but he pulls away.

LEAH

(Concerned and Loud.)

Emil, what happened?

EMIL

Leah, be quiet. The landlady thinks I live alone. No one must know you're here. This is the laundry.

Hands her the package. Leah puts it aside. Gives him another bundle.

LEAH

Take these clothes to the laundry tomorrow.

EMIL

I go almost every day.

LEAH

So you look nice at work. You're an important architect.

EMIL

No, I'm not.

LEAH

What's wrong?

EMIL

It's the new work assignment. The production schedules are tight. I don't know if I can do it. Maybe I should resign.

LEAH

Why?

EMIL

(Stands, walks away.)

I could do other work, designing homes again. Working on my own won't pay as much---

LEAH

No one will hire you if you leave government work now.

EMIL

This work is beyond my abilities. I can't do it.

LEAH

(Stands and goes to Emil.)

But your God-given talents as an architect. You love it.

EMIL

God-given. I'm sick of hearing it. Why did God give me the talent to do this work?

LEAH

After the war, you'll return to create your best work.

EMIL

I want to believe it.

LEAH

You've never talked like this.

EMIL

I never imagined I would feel this way.

LEAH

Maybe some music will relax you.

Leah turns on the radio, and a waltz plays.

EMIL

No music.

(Shuts the radio off.)

It's played to soothe German soldiers at camps. It sounds like death. Leah, I'm sorry to be angry with you.

LEAH

I like your anger.

EMIL

You're the only one.

LEAH

Never lose it. I haven't lost mine.

EMIL

I'll find a way to get you and the baby out of Munich.

LEAH

You stay, I stay.

EMIL

You must think I'm a coward for wanting to quit my job.

LEAH

No. We have another purpose.

EMIL

What?

LEAH

Survival. The Resistance taught me to survive. I should have done more... I should have. Three words that enable murder.

EMIL

You risked your life decoding messages. It's more than other people. We have limits on what we can do. I know it now.

LEAH

Enough talk about the war. Come and eat.

They walk to the table. Emil pours wine into a cup. He sniffs the air.

EMIL

Something smells wonderful.

LEAH

(Uncovers a dish.)

Cinnamon rolls for dessert. You love cinnamon.

EMIL

Not anymore.

Emil slides it away. She looks at him, then puts two plates on the table. They sit and eat. Several Beats. A knock at the door. Startled, they rise.

EMIL

Hide in the bedroom.

They kiss. Another knock. Leah disappears. Emil exits, several Beats, and then he reenters with Capek.

EMIL

Father Capek, I'm surprised to see you again.

CAPEK

You forgot the plans. They almost fell into the wrong hands.

EMIL

I wasn't thinking when I left.

CAPEK

You didn't think at all.

Capek sits on the sofa and motions for Emil to sit too. Capek turns on the radio. Another waltz plays.

CAPEK

I love waltzes, don't you? The music will drown out our talk. Your visit today was foolish and dangerous. The Gestapo watches all the buildings. Your nervous pacing drew their attention. Did you tell anyone at work about your opposition to the camp?

EMIL

No.

CAPEK

Written notes or sent letters?

EMIL

No.

CAPEK

Good. Major Vogel from the Gestapo arrived after you left, asking questions. His Excellency said you only discussed the Church's repair work. We hope he believed it, for a while.

EMIL

I'll repeat the story if they ask.

CAPEK

If? Vogel will find you, torture and kill you after confessing. His Excellency and the Church are in danger.



EMIL

I'm sorry.

Capek stands and walks around the room. He stops at the table.

CAPEK

I see two cups and plates.

EMIL

Leftovers from breakfast.

Capek picks up a cup, sniffs it, and sips.

CAPEK

You drink wine for breakfast. You are a good Catholic. A Munich citizen who made a generous donation to the Church was going to Sweden tomorrow. But last night he died in a car accident. Tragedy is another name for opportunity. His new Swedish passport can be issued to another man.

Capek pours more wine, drains the cup, and puts it down. He goes to Emil.

CAPEK

His Excellency is sure a talented architect can begin a new life in England or America. In exchange, you vow silence forever.

EMIL

No, I won't leave. It's the coward's way.

CAPEK

It's the only way. Vogel will discover your treason, then torture you to reveal collaborators.

EMIL

There are none.

CAPEK

He won't believe it. I don't. Someone, or something, besides your guilty Catholic conscience, compelled you to protest.

EMIL

I did it alone.

CAPEK

Then you can disappear easily. In war, accidents leave victims in the morgues and some bodies are unclaimed. You have no family here, so I'll identify your remains.

(A noise from the bedroom startles him.)

What's that?

EMIL

The cat in the bedroom knocked over a lamp.

CAPEK

We're leaving now. Get your coat.

EMIL

I must pack my clothes.

CAPEK

(Tosses Emil his coat.)

You're packed. It must look like you died in an accident.

EMIL

I won't leave Germany.

The noise reoccurs, louder.

CAPEK

That's no cat. Show me who you're hiding.

Emil exits and returns with Leah.

LEAH

I felt dizzy and fell against the table.

EMIL

It's all right. Father Capek, she's Leah Ginsberg.

CAPEK

A Jew?

EMIL

She's carrying my baby.

CAPEK

A pregnant Jew?

EMIL

She worked in the Resistance movement.

CAPEK

A pregnant Jew who worked for the Resistance. What a mess.

LEAH

Don't speak like that to Emil.

CAPEK

Fraulein, I'm Father Michael Capek, assistant to His Excellency, Archbishop Nicholas Mueller.

LEAH

You can't come into our home insulting us.

CAPEK

Tell her what you've done.

LEAH

I love Emil regardless of his actions.

CAPEK

That's your misfortune.

LEAH

Get out.

EMIL

Father, she's innocent.

CAPEK

In war, everyone is guilty of something. There's no innocence, only luck. Today yours is as bad as mine. Once Major Vogel---

LEAH

Vogel?

CAPEK

You've heard of him?

LEAH

He's known by the Underground. Emil, how do you know Vogel?

EMIL

Leah, there's nothing to worry about.

CAPEK

Leah, there's everything to worry about.

EMIL

There's so much I can't tell you.

LEAH

I know more than you realize.

EMIL

Father Capek, I'll leave Germany with Leah.

CAPEK

There's only one passport. She complicates it. Let me think.

(He goes to a window, lost in  
the view.)

My favorite city. Munich is Germany, everything that's good  
about... Shit. Vogel just drove up. Is there another way out?

EMIL

Down the back stairs to the alley, but where will we go?

## ACT I, SCENE 4

FRAUENKIRCHE CATHEDRAL CONFERENCE  
ROOM -

CAPEK enters with EMIL and LEAH.

CAPEK

It's dangerous to bring you here, but I had no choice.

EMIL

He found me quickly.

LEAH

Vogel's Gestapo and he's hunting you.

EMIL

We must get out of Munich.

LEAH

How long can we stay here?

CAPEK

I told the staff we were having a private meeting. No one will bother us for several hours.

EMIL

Leah, it could separate us for a while.

LEAH

I won't leave you.

CAPEK

His Excellency is completing his prayers. I'll tell him what's happened. Don't leave this room.

Capek rushes out.

LEAH

Emil, I don't feel well.

Emil guides her to a chair.

EMIL

We'll leave after I speak with the Archbishop.

LEAH

What does he have to do with the Gestapo?

EMIL  
It's a mistake.

LEAH  
You're lying.

EMIL  
Yes.

LEAH  
When you're sleeping, I've studied your work plans about Dachau. It's the reason you want to resign.

EMIL  
You're ashamed of me.

LEAH  
Never.

EMIL  
I'm ashamed of myself.

LEAH  
Tell me what happened today.

EMIL  
I told His Excellency about my work and showed him the preliminary plans of Dachau.

LEAH  
Why?

EMIL  
So he could convince the Holy Father to stop it.

LEAH  
Was he convinced?

EMIL  
No.

LEAH  
Of course not.

EMIL  
It was necessary.

LEAH  
It was foolish. The Archbishop will protect the Church, not you, and not the Jews. You risked our lives.

EMIL

You risked everything working with the Jewish Partisan Group.

LEAH

Working with people who trained us to think, plan, and survive.

EMIL

I thought you'd understand.

LEAH

I do, but you changed everything.

EMIL

Apathy changed everything. Hate changed everything. Greed changed everything. Leah, the war changed everything, not me. The changes to the camp took shape on paper created in the minds of architects I admire. Fine men with families, who treated me like a son. These decent men taught me to love designing spaces for the living. That's the company's motto, we design living spaces. Leah, I had to do something, because none of them objected. Just another government project with walls and a roof. Every day we met at the conference table sipping our coffee and discussing the layout of the camp. (In jovial voices) Hans, instead of a playground for children, we put ovens to burn their little bodies. Oh yes, Gunter and homes over there. Nein, that's for a mass grave. Oh, I forgot. Good idea.

LEAH

You should have told me.

EMIL

I should have forced you to hide with the resistance group in the country. Perhaps you'd be out of Germany.

LEAH

Jews are hunted like animals. I'm safer with you.

EMIL

Vogel is after me. You can escape. I'll join you later.

LEAH

You're wrong, the Gestapo knows about me.

EMIL

How?

LEAH

I still do work for the resistance group.

EMIL

Impossible. You left them when I found you.

LEAH

Resistance always finds a way.

EMIL

You promised not to leave our apartment. It's too risky.

LEAH

I went out only a few times and used the back streets. I knew a resistance member who worked in a laundry. I slipped a coded note in the laundry asking to help. He sent intercepted German messages hidden in our laundry for me to decode. You returned my translation in the next pile of clothes.

EMIL

It explains all the trips to the laundry.

LEAH

I've never spoken of my underground work. Once I worked for---

Capek enters, interrupting them.

CAPEK

His Excellency will join us soon.

EMIL

Do you think he can help?

CAPEK

He's an influential man. Perhaps he can make an arrangement.

LEAH

I shouldn't be here.

CAPEK

You're a child of God in need. Leah, you can be baptized as a Catholic. Then your child will have a Catholic birth certificate. The Church can give you both more protection.

LEAH

I was born a Jew and will die one. My baby is Jewish. I won't renounce my faith.

CAPEK

Think about saving your child.

LEAH

I am. Living a lie is not salvation.



Mueller enters.

MUELLER

Emil, I didn't expect to see you again. My instructions were simple. Father Capek was to get you out of Germany immediately. Then I was told about a complication.

LEAH

Me.

MUELLER

You are Fraulein Leah Ginsberg. I'm Archbishop Nicholas Mueller. When are you due?

EMIL

Our baby.

MUELLER

Of course, proud Papa.

LEAH

In about four months.

MUELLER

Rest as much as you can. Now, about this problem. Father Capek should not have brought you here. I will give you a meal and a little money. Hopefully, you can escape into the forest. If you're captured, I'll deny the Dachau plans. Vogel only knows we discussed the repair work. That is what you will say, Emil.

EMIL

Yes, Your Excellency

MUELLER

If you had talked to me about your work, I would have told your boss to re-assign you for more Church projects. It was an easy solution to your problem. Instead, you bring chaos, treason, and the Gestapo.

EMIL

That easy solution fixed your problem, not mine. I'd still know about Dachau.

MUELLER

Sometimes we must live with solutions we hate.

EMIL

Help get Leah out of Munich. I don't care what the Gestapo do to me.

LEAH  
I care. Josef will...

EMIL  
Josef?

Leah stops talking.

MUELLER  
She means Major Josef Vogel. He's the Gestapo officer chasing you. Do you know him?

LEAH  
I've...know Of him.

MUELLER  
Father Capek said you worked with the resistance.

LEAH  
I did what I could.

MUELLER  
You did it well.

LEAH  
How do you know?

MUELLER  
You survived. What do you know about Vogel? Anything you tell me is helpful.

The phone rings. Capek answers it.

CAPEK  
Yes...one moment. Your Excellency, Major Vogel returned.

MUELLER  
Just as I feared, only faster.  
(To Leah.)  
What do you think I should do?

Leah looks at him, then shrugs her shoulders.

MUELLER  
Not the answer I expected.

EMIL  
I beg you, help her escape.

LEAH

No, we stay...

Leah cradles her belly and cries out. Pain flashes across her face.

EMIL

Leah, take it easy. Don't get upset.

LEAH

We stay together, promise me.

EMIL

I promise.

Leah's pain eases. Mueller gently takes her hand.

MUELLER

My doctor will check on you before you leave.

LEAH

Thank you for helping us.

MUELLER

I'll do what I can for all of you.

LEAH

Then I'll tell you everything I know about Vogel.

CAPEK

(Holds up the phone.)

Your Excellency?

MUELLER

(Beat. To Capek.)

Tell him to come back tomorrow. I'm hearing a confession.

Capek speaks on the phone. Mueller steps closer to Leah.

END OF ACT 1

## ACT II, SCENE 1

FLASHBACK TO FIVE MONTHS BEFORE -  
DARK STAGE. SPOTLIGHT UP.

Leah walks slowly onto the stage  
and looks around. She wears a coat  
and inches into the spotlight.  
PETER's voice startles her, but he  
is not seen. He speaks with a  
slight Polish accent.

PETER

Leah Ginsberg?

Leah is startled and looks around.

LEAH

Who is it? I can't see you.

PETER

Don't look. You won't see my face. Call me, Peter.

LEAH

Yes, Peter.

PETER

We're a Jewish Partisan Group of Resistance fighters. Do you  
know about us?

LEAH

A little.

PETER

People I trust said I can trust you. I checked on your life  
and it's clean.

LEAH

My reputation doesn't do me any good. I'm only known as a  
Jew.

Peter

What was your last job?

LEAH

I was a loan clerk in a bank for three years and was almost  
promoted to head clerk. Until Jews were fired from every job.

Peter

You have useful skills, so we'll train you.

LEAH

As a spy? I've never done anything like it.

PETER

We know your parents are in the Warsaw Ghetto.

LEAH

You've seen them, talked to them. How are they?

PETER

Calm down. I haven't seen them, but they're surviving.

LEAH

Can you get them out?

PETER

It's not the reason for our meeting.

LEAH

I'll do anything to free them.

PETER

Are you fluent in German and Polish?

LEAH

Yes.

PETER

We need someone with translation skills.

LEAH

If I help, will my parents be freed?

PETER

Perhaps. First, realize how dangerous this work is for you.

LEAH

I'm a Jew in Europe. That's dangerous enough.

PETER

Then you will join us?

LEAH

Yes.

PETER

Good. From now on, your name is Leah Hartmann. You will live in a safe house with one of our operatives, Karl Burgmuller, as his niece.

(MORE)

PETER (CONT'D)

Rose, his late wife, was known in social circles among German officers and their wives, including Commandant Josef Vogel. He's your target. Let me hear you speak German.

LEAH

Der das Schlechte nicht ertragen kann, wird das Gute nicht sehen

PETER

Clean with virtually no Polish accent. Karl will introduce you to Vogel. He needs a new translator, one fluent in German and Polish. There's no guarantee he'll hire you but make yourself...valuable.

LEAH

What do I do if hired?

PETER

Perform each task perfectly. Prove to Vogel that he can trust you. Be aware of every detail, whom he meets, and try to hear names and dates. Make no written notes. Memorize everything. Report it to me and no one else, not even Karl. Secrecy is vital. It protects us in case one is caught.

LEAH

If I'm not hired?

PETER

Make yourself valuable to him in...another way. Tell me if you can't do this work.

LEAH

I'll do it. Can you give my parents a message?

PETER

Maybe, but I won't say you're working with us.

LEAH

I love them and want to be with them.

PETER

You're better off with us. At least you're free.

LEAH

Free like a caged animal.

PETER

I'll teach you to use your cage. Other than Karl, you'll be alone. It's the tough part.

LEAH

My loneliness can't compare to my parents.

PETER

Focus on the work. Karl will give you a packet with your new history. Memorize the details about your life, then burn it. Your code name is Shoresh. I'll call you only by this name.

LEAH

Shoresh is Hebrew for root.

PETER

Yes, like the roots of a tree that hold it in place. Where did you learn that German phrase?

LEAH

My parents said it often: Der das Schlechte nicht ertragen kann, wird das Gute nicht sehen. He that can't endure the bad, will not live to see the good.

Leah walks off as the spotlight fades. LIGHTS UP on a living room set, a sofa, and a small table. Leah enters with KARL BURGMULLER, a stately older gentleman, casually - dressed. His quick smile hides a quicker mind.

KARL

Leah, have you memorized the information on your new life?

LEAH

Yes, then destroyed the documents.

KARL

Here's a test. Where were you born?

LEAH

In Krakow.

KARL

Your father's profession?

LEAH

He was a civil engineer until he died a few years ago from a job accident. Mama is a teacher, and I worked in a bakery.

KARL

You've learned well. Save the rest for Vogel. Let him ask the questions. Don't offer information or you'll appear too eager. It may make him suspicious.

LEAH

I understand...Uncle...Karl.

KARL

No, no, more relaxed. Remember, you're my niece, so speak naturally, Uncle Karl. You see, smooth, relaxed.

LEAH

Peter didn't tell me about you, Uncle Karl.

KARL

That's better. It protects us. We can't reveal what we don't know. Rose and I knew somehow we had to fight, but what could two old people do against the German Army? More than you think. So, through a connection, we offered our home to resistance members. Peter trained us. He's a very brave man.

LEAH

Unlike the cowards of the Third Reich who murder. I hate them.

KARL

Don't hate. It clouds your judgment. Keep your emotions calm. Learn your enemy's ways and use what you learn against them. Knowledge is the most powerful weapon.

(Gives her a handkerchief.)

My Rose said a lady always carries a handkerchief.

LEAH

Perhaps Vogel won't like me.

KARL

Then he doesn't have a pulse. Remember, Vogel has a keen sense. He notices every detail, but don't mention his wife. He's still sensitive about her death.

LEAH

I'll remember.

Karl takes out a ring and shows it to Leah.

LEAH

What a lovely ring.

KARL

It was Rose's, and now it is for you.

LEAH

A gift, how kind.



KARL

A weapon, how deadly. When you open the secret top...

(Opens the top and a small capsule falls into his hand.)

Cyanide. Bite on it to release the poison. Practice with a grain of rice as the pill. Leah, only you will know when it's time to use it, if ever.

(Karl puts the ring on Leah's finger and kisses her hand.)

LEAH

Thank you, Uncle Karl. I couldn't do this without you.

KARL

We do this for others.

(A doorbell rings. To Leah.)

Are you ready?

Leah nods yes. Karl exits. The men's hearty voices echo as the friends meet. They enter laughing and engaged in friendly chatter.

KARL

It's a pleasure to have you in our home again. Oh, I said our. It's still difficult to believe Rose is gone.

VOGEL

She left us too soon.

KARL

Let me introduce my niece, Leah Hartmann.

VOGEL

Fraulein Hartmann, it is my...pleasure.

LEAH

(Replies in German.)

Es ist mir eine Ehre, Sie kennenzulernen, commandant

VOGEL

Perfect. Your German is perfect.

LEAH

Thank you. My mother taught me.

KARL

Leah is visiting for a while. It's her first visit since childhood.

LEAH

I was born in Krakow. Do you know it?

VOGEL

Yes, but I don't recall asking.

KARL

She's a bit nervous about meeting an important man.

VOGEL

No need to apologize. I know your birth city. My wife and I spent our honeymoon there years ago.

KARL

Tonight we only speak of good times to come. First, a toast.

Karl fills three glasses with wine  
gives one to Leah and Vogel, and  
takes one. They toast and drink.  
Then the ring of a bell.

KARL

The cook in the kitchen must need me. I'll return soon.

Karl smiles and exits. Vogel  
motions for Leah to sit. He stands.

VOGEL

What do you think of Munich?

LEAH

It's a very beautiful city.

VOGEL

The forest is lovely for hikes, but right now we're having trouble with resistance groups hiding in the woods.

LEAH

I didn't know.

VOGEL

Don't go hiking alone until we capture them. They travel like rats and come into the city to steal and create chaos.

LEAH

I'll remember.

VOGEL

In safer times, my wife and I took picnics in the woods...(Voice trails off.) Karl told me all about you.

LEAH

I hope not. It's fun to have a few secrets.

VOGEL

A woman of mystery makes the best dinner guest. Why are you in Munich?

LEAH

Since Uncle Karl is alone now, I'm helping him.

VOGEL

That's kind of you.

LEAH

Family is everything.

VOGEL

I agree.

(Sits beside her.)

I'm trying to recall a lovely park in Krakow by the university. Help me with its name.

Leah sips her wine and then wipes her mouth with the handkerchief.

LEAH

The Botanical Garden of Jagiellonian University is not far from Old Town.

VOGEL

It has many beautiful greenhouses.

LEAH

The Palm Greenhouse was my favorite. Those colorful tropical flowers and trees are in the middle of Poland. The garden is stunning in the spring, especially when the Magnolia trees are blooming.

VOGEL

You're good with details.

LEAH

Thank you, commandant.

VOGEL

Karl said you're interested in working for me as a secretary and translator.

LEAH

It'd be an honor to work for you and the Third Reich.

VOGEL

You've done office work?

LEAH

Sometimes I helped my father at the engineering office when a secretary was ill. Filing reports and typing. I learned quickly and enjoyed it.

VOGEL

This job is more than filing. I need a good translator and secretary. Someone with a head for details. Still interested?

LEAH

Yes, I could do the work.

VOGEL

You seem sure of yourself, but it's not arrogance, more confidence.

LEAH

As you say, commandant.

VOGEL

And you're agreeable.

LEAH

I try.

Vogel stands and walks a few steps away thinking. Turns back to Leah.

VOGEL

You could do the job with training. Come to my office tomorrow morning.

LEAH

Thank you very much, commandant.

Vogel raises his glass to Leah. She stands and they clink glasses, sipping and looking at each other. Then Vogel notices her ring.

VOGEL

That's a beautiful ring.

Leah is stunned but stays calm.

LEAH

Yes, it's a gift from Uncle Karl. It belonged to Aunt Rose.

VOGEL

Let me see it.

Vogel reaches for her hand to  
examine the ring, but Karl enters.

KARL

Let's all come to dinner.

Leah quickly pulls her hand away  
from Vogel.

KARL

Wonderful, you are getting acquainted.

LEAH

Yes, Uncle Karl, everything is wonderful.

Karl gestures toward the dining  
room and exits. Vogel offers his  
arm and Leah takes it as they exit.

## ACT II, SCENE 2

VOGEL'S OFFICE -

An office with a desk, files, binders, and several chairs. Vogel enters followed by Leah.

VOGEL

I've needed a translator and secretary for several months. You came to Munich at the right time.

LEAH

I won't disappoint you.

VOGEL

You'll handle my memos, correspondence, and filing. I have a specific system. My last secretary was an idiot. Learn fast.

LEAH

I'll try.

VOGEL

Try? I need results. The effort is worthless if you don't achieve results. I like people driven towards a goal. Do you have one?

LEAH

Yes.

VOGEL

What is it?

LEAH

A personal one.

VOGEL

I recall you're good at keeping secrets.

LEAH

Yes.

VOGEL

I demand secrecy. Keep information confidential. Make no notes. Remember every detail. Do you understand?

LEAH

Yes, Peter...(Stops, and fakes a cough.)

VOGEL  
What?

LEAH  
Excuse me.

VOGEL  
Oh. Last night I tested you.

LEAH  
I noticed.

VOGEL  
You impressed me, and you are Karl's niece.

LEAH  
I'm grateful for this opportunity.

VOGEL  
It's not gratitude. Any mistakes reflect upon me. Perform your duties accurately and thoroughly.

LEAH  
I understand.

VOGEL  
Major Kolbe's secretary, Sophie, will train you on office procedures. I have an appointment. Learn quickly because the war won't wait for you.

LEAH  
Yes, commandant.

Vogel exits. Leah goes to the desk and starts glancing at papers. Then SOPHIE MAYER enters. She is well-dressed, beautifully groomed; glamorous for a secretary.

SOPHIE  
Are you Vogel's new secretary?

LEAH  
(Startled but calms herself.)  
Yes. I'm getting accustomed to the office, tidying his desk.

SOPHIE  
Did he ask you to do it?

LEAH  
No.

SOPHIE  
Then don't. Only do what Vogel tells you.

LEAH  
Oh.

SOPHIE  
I'm here to train you.

Sophie looks at Leah and shakes her head.

LEAH  
Is something wrong?

SOPHIE  
No. You remind me of someone.

LEAH  
Who?

SOPHIE  
Never mind. I'm Sophie Mayer, Commandant Kolbe's secretary.

LEAH  
I'm Leah Hartmann.

Leah extends her hand, but Sophie ignores it.

SOPHIE  
You're the new translator, so you'll be instantly popular.

LEAH  
I'll do the best job for Commandant Vogel.

SOPHIE  
He's not the only one. Keep your eyes open to see which commandants get promoted and need secretaries. You could move up.

LEAH  
It's a new and exciting job.

SOPHIE  
No, it's old and dull.



Oh. LEAH

My honesty shocks you. SOPHIE

No. LEAH

It's a job when jobs are few. The work is serious at times, but not difficult. Don't make mistakes, especially for Vogel. SOPHIE

He told me. LEAH

I trained his last secretary, a stupid, fat bore. She smelled of cinnamon. I couldn't stand her. SOPHIE

I'll try not to be like her. LEAH

You're not. SOPHIE  
(Sniffs Leah)

No cinnamon. LEAH

But a scent of fear. I smell it, and so will Vogel. Sophie

Oh. Sophie, how many secretaries work on this floor? Leah

Four. You won't work often with them since their commandants work on different projects. We'll work together. SOPHIE

How many departments are in this building? LEAH

You ask many questions on your first day. SOPHIE  
(Looks at Leah intensely.)

Commandant Vogel told me to learn quickly. The more I know about the work, the better I'll do my job. LEAH

SOPHIE

You're one of those secretaries.

LEAH

What type?

SOPHIE

The type that's eager to please, willing to work late, and put the job before her life. But I prefer to only know what I need to know. When you know more, then you work more. I need time with my friends, and I have many friends.

LEAH

Oh. I understand.

SOPHIE

(Gives Leah the once over  
twice.)

No, you don't. It's been two weeks since I've had a decent fuck, longer since a great one. My honesty does shock you.

LEAH

Yes.

SOPHIE

Good. Let's get started. I'll explain Vogel's system.

(Opens a binder.)

All memos are logged according to the subject. P-I-T-S, personnel, intelligence, training, and supply. Pits.

LEAH

That's clever.

SOPHIE

That's Vogel.

Sophie chuckles a little.

LEAH

What funny?

SOPHIE

Never mind.

LEAH

Tell me.

SOPHIE

I see why he hired you. You look like his late wife.

LEAH

He needs a new translator and secretary.

SOPHIE

Yes, and he also hired one who resembles her.

LEAH

That's why he hesitated when we met.

SOPHIE

Seeing a woman that resembles your dead wife would stop any man.

LEAH

What was she like?

SOPHIE

Frau Vogel was the woman every man wanted, and every woman wanted to be.

LEAH

I'm flattered.

SOPHIE

He hired you, not me.

LEAH

What happened to her?

SOPHIE

She died suddenly from some illness.

LEAH

At dinner he briefly mentioned her.

SOPHIE

(Shocked.)

You had dinner with Commandant Vogel?

LEAH

My Uncle Karl introduced us last night. Their wives were good friends. We talked about Krakow and my previous work, then he offered me this job.

SOPHIE

What else did you do to get hired?

Sophie locks eyes with Leah.

LEAH

Only dinner. Does my honesty shock you?

SOPHIE

Pits. Back to work.

Sophie flips through the binder as Leah smiles a little.

LIGHTS DOWN.

ACT II, SCENE 3

LIVING ROOM - LEAH and KARL sit on the sofa.

KARL

After several weeks, you've gained Vogel's trust. You're doing well.

LEAH

Better than I expected.

KARL

You get along with the other staff, too.

LEAH

Vogel's staff gives me memos to type, but I mostly work for him.

KARL

Stay close to him.

LEAH

I'm a bit concerned about Sophie, Commandant Kolbe's secretary. She trained me.

KARL

Why?

LEAH

She's pushy and direct.

KARL

She's a different type of secretary.

LEAH

Oh, Sophie is different. She said I looked like Vogel's wife.

KARL

Do you think she's suspicious of you?

LEAH

Sophie's suspicious of everyone.

KARL

Watch what you say and do with her. Be respectful but careful. Perhaps she's jealous since you're new.

LEAH

Uncle Karl---

KARL

You see, natural, relaxed.

LEAH

Tell me about Vogel's wife.

KARL

Helene Vogel was a very fine lady. Cultured and intelligent. Rose and I liked her, although we're trained not to like our targets. She and Rose spent time together shopping, attending shows, and planning parties.

LEAH

(In a mocking, pleasant tone.)

Just two German ladies out for lunch, then off to see a show, or buy a new gown to wear to the next Kristallnacht.

KARL

No, Leah. My Rose didn't enjoy her life. She risked befriending Helene to get information. I feared every time she went out, afraid she'd say or do the wrong thing. Sometimes one word, or action, betrays you. Rose was ready to take that Cyanide pill. We sacrificed everything to stay in Munich instead of escaping because the fight is here. When your assignment ends, you'll leave. I'll be here working with the next agent. Waiting to join Rose.

LEAH

Uncle Karl, I'm so sorry.

KARL

You asked if you resemble Helene. You do.

LEAH

Peter didn't tell me.

KARL

We hoped Vogel would tell you. Then you'd be surprised, adding to your charm. Perhaps he'd see you in a personal way, trust you more, and tell you secrets he wouldn't tell a secretary.

LEAH

Was I recruited because I look like her?

KARL

In war, everyone is a weapon.

LEAH

Tell me about Helene, so I'll use this weapon against him.

KARL

Helene Vogel was not snobby like other military wives, nor fat. She always had a handkerchief and ran it through her fingers in a playful way. She had a subtle beauty, not too much makeup, and was very witty. Her nature was pleasant and charming, but fragile. She became ill easily.

LEAH

She sounds lovely.

KARL

Helene and Josef made an ideal couple. Both married later in life, yet they acted like teenagers. They seemed to live in another place and time.

LEAH

What happened to her?

KARL

She died from a stroke caused by her pregnancy. The strain was too much.

LEAH

How sad.

KARL

I never knew anyone cry like Josef. Then Rose died, and he comforted me. But never reveal you know about her.

LEAH

I'm good at keeping secrets.

KARL

Tell me about him as a boss.

LEAH

Efficient, organized, and hardworking, but he visited a doctor this week. It's the second appointment in two weeks.

KARL

I've never known him to be ill.

LEAH

Vogel has a cough too. Sometimes I hear him coughing when his office door is closed.

KARL

Odd. Tell every detail to Peter, regardless of how small.

LEAH

It's not important.

KARL

You noticed it. Tell Peter. Don't protect Vogel.

LEAH

I'm not. It's just a cough.

KARL

I like Josef, but he is a German officer. Don't forget it.

LEAH

I don't forget anything. My new job is to remember.

KARL

No, your only job is to survive.

Karl kisses Leah on the forehead  
and exits.

Lights down. Spotlight up. Leah  
steps into it.

PETER

All commandants will receive stationery this week with a new watermark. It'll be easier to spot a forged document to catch spies. We can issue memos with the new watermark paper, so they appear official. We have limited time to use it before they change it again.

LEAH

How many sheets?

PETER

Two. Commandants only receive fifty sheets at a time. Taking more may draw suspicion. Shores, I tell you what you need to know, in case you are---

LEAH

Captured.

PETER

You've thought about it.

LEAH

I try not to.

PETER

If you are in a difficult situation, talk your way out of it. Think quickly and stay calm.

LEAH

Uncle Karl gave me the ring.

PETER

It's the last option.

LEAH

When I'm stressed, I imagine something happier, like seeing my parents again.

PETER

We all imagine life before the war. I see a lot of me in you. One day you could give the orders.

LEAH

Then you would be---

PETER

Don't worry about me, just bring the stationery. How are you getting on with the staff?

LEAH

I assist them occasionally, but Sophie, the secretary who trained me, said I resemble Vogel's wife. Uncle Karl said it was the reason I was recruited. You should have told me.

PETER

I tell you what you need to know. Watch, listen, stay calm and lie. Shores, you're doing well. I speak about you to my commanders. You've impressed us.



LEAH

You and Uncle Karl taught me.

PETER

We've played our part, but you're taking the risk. Anything else you've noticed in the office or with Vogel's behavior?

LEAH

Vogel's behavior?

PETER

You see him daily, so you'd notice changes, even small ones.

LEAH

(Beat.)

No changes.

## ACT II, SCENE 4

## VOGEL'S OFFICE -

Leah enters, goes to his desk and looks through papers, opens a drawer. Takes out some stationery, and removes several sheets, then returns the paper to the drawer. She puts the paper in a folder as Sophie enters.

SOPHIE

What are you doing?

LEAH

Commandant Vogel asked me to find a memo.

SOPHIE

You shouldn't be looking through his desk.

LEAH

It's my job.

Leah starts to walk out but Sophie blocks her.

SOPHIE

Give me the folder.

LEAH

It's a secret memo.

SOPHIE

I can read any memo in this office.

LEAH

No, you can't.

SOPHIE

There's something about you that's not right. I felt it.

LEAH

I felt the same about you.

SOPHIE

Resembling Vogel's wife is---

LEAH

Excuse me.

Leah steps forward but Sophie nudges her back.

SOPHIE

Now I catch you in his office with a secret memo.

LEAH

You're right, there is something about me.

SOPHIE

My instincts never fail. What is it?

LEAH

My refusal to fuck the other commandants, like you.

SOPHIE

I serve the Third Reich---

LEAH

Between your legs, on your knees---

Angry, Sophie steps closer, inches from Leah.

SOPHIE

I should report you.

LEAH

But you won't. You want to get me fired to get this job, but I'm here to stay.

Leah tries again to walk past Sophie, who pushes her back.

SOPHIE

Who are you? What are you?

LEAH

I'm Leah Hartmann, but you're not the commandant.

Vogel enters.

VOGEL

I am.

SOPHIE

Commandant, she shouldn't be looking through your desk. I must report this to---

VOGEL

To me and no one else. Return to your work.

SOPHIE

Let me speak with you alone to tell you everything I know about her.

VOGEL

Return to your office.

Sophie is stunned. She glares at Leah and then exits. Vogel walks to Leah, holds out his hand, and she gives him the folder. Vogel opens it and pulls out the stationery.

VOGEL

Blank stationery?

LEAH

I want to write a letter to my mother about my new job.

VOGEL

Use ordinary office paper.

LEAH

I thought it would look nice on the good paper.

VOGEL

This paper is for official business. Buy good paper for your private letters.

LEAH

I'm sorry, commandant.

Vogel coughs repeatedly.

LEAH

Your cough is worse.

Vogel searches his pockets for a handkerchief. Leah offers her. He takes it and wipes his mouth.

VOGEL

Return to work.

Leah turns to leave and takes a step.

VOGEL

Wait. Come here.

Leah stops, turns, and walks back to him. Vogel opens his coat, reaches inside, and pulls out a wallet. He removes the cash and gives it to her.

VOGEL

Buy some good stationery.

LEAH

I can't take it.

VOGEL

It's an order. Use the rest as you want.

Leah reaches for the money as Vogel grasps her hand.

VOGEL

Blank official stationery sells on the black market. Do you know what I could do, should do?

LEAH

Commandant, I need the extra money for food. My salary and Uncle Karl's pension are barely enough for us.

VOGEL

Rose left everything to Karl when she died.

LEAH

She left all her debt. Aunt Rose was a wonderful woman, but she spent it on jewelry and dresses for parties. He sold those things, and when the money was gone, he asked my mother to let me come to Munich. It's why he asked you to hire me. I'm sorry.

Vogel looks at the handkerchief and folds it, then returns it to her.

VOGEL

Never betray me again.

LIGHTS FADE. Vogel exits. SPOTLIGHT UP. Leah steps into it.

PETER

Where is the stationery?

LEAH

Vogel caught me, but I talked my way out. Nothing will happen.

PETER

How do you know?

LEAH

I know. Peter, I was surprised at how easy it was to lie.

PETER

Shoresh, you saved your life to fight another day. Here is a new assignment. We are planning an attack on the Gestapo in early December.

LEAH

It's the start of the holiday season.

PETER

The Nazis kill year-round. General Wolff, Gestapo Commandant for the Ninth Army is coming to Munich. He and his wife will host a party at a hotel. We can seriously damage the German command with an attack on them.

LEAH

What is my order?

PETER

Act shocked and supportive when it happens. It's an excellent time to hear information because officers will be reassigned when Wolff is dead. You may work for another Commandant.

LEAH

Oh.

PETER

Yes?

LEAH

It's nothing.

PETER

Your nothing is always something.

LEAH

I know how Vogel likes the work done in the office. He trusts me. I'd have to start again with a new commandant.

PETER

Vogel likes you.

LEAH

No.

PETER

He caught you with the stationery but didn't punish you.

LEAH

Vogel knows he can't replace me. It's business with him, not personal.

PETER

Then you like him.

LEAH

It's impossible.

PETER

It's unfortunate, not impossible. Shoresh, remember Vogel is the enemy.

LEAH

I remember everything.

SPOTLIGHT FADES. LIGHTS UP as Vogel enters the office and sits behind the desk. Leah walks to the desk and sits in front of it. She takes a pad ready for dictation.

VOGEL

A memo to Nuremberg, Gestapo Headquarters, Attention Colonel Schwitzer, regarding Operation Black Cross ...

Vogel studies her as she writes. He stops and leans forward. Leah looks up.

LEAH

Yes, commandant.

VOGEL

You seem different.

LEAH

I don't know what you mean.

VOGEL

There's something unusual about you.

LEAH

I dress the same and comb my hair. Tell me and I'll change it.

VOGEL

Just different. Back to the letter. Attention Colonel Schwitzer, regarding Operation Black Cross, which is planned to attack the ...

Vogel looks at her, again. She looks up.

LEAH

Yes?

VOGEL

It must be your new promotion.

LEAH

Promotion?

VOGEL

You're re-classified Level Two secretary with a pay increase. It'll help with food and ... stationery.

Vogel hands Leah the memo.

LEAH

It doesn't say if I stay or go to another office.

VOGEL

You can stay as my secretary at the modest increase, or I'll speak with Commandant Kruger. He needs a new secretary and was promoted to colonel. You'd earn more working for him.

LEAH

I thought you couldn't replace me.

VOGEL

If it's a better opportunity for you, take the job with Kruger. I'll find another secretary, but not Sophie.

LEAH

I'll stay. You helped Uncle Karl after Rose died. He's grateful for your kindness.

VOGEL

Don't stay out of loyalty.



LEAH

I'm staying out of respect.

VOGEL

As you wish.

(Looks at his watch.)

You can leave early to get ready for the party.

LEAH

What party?

VOGEL

I'm invited to General Wolff's party at the hotel at the last moment. Colonel Schwitzer is in Nuremberg ill. I'll need your translation skills since the General's wife is Polish.

LEAH

I have errands.

VOGEL

No errands are more important than the General's party. I'll pick you up at seven. That's all.

LEAH

What about this letter for Operation Black Cross?

VOGEL

I'll finish it tomorrow.

LEAH

It's better to complete it now.

(Reads from her notepad.)

You stopped at "which is planned to attack the ..."

VOGEL

Tomorrow is fine.

LEAH

I don't like leaving work undone.

VOGEL

But I do?

LEAH

Oh, no. I didn't mean that.

Vogel picks up a file and starts to read it.

Leah stands to go, takes a few steps, pauses, and takes the handkerchief from her pocket. She turns back to Vogel.

LEAH

May we have drinks before the party?

VOGEL

We'll have them when we arrive.

LEAH

I mean alone.

(Slowly pulls the handkerchief through her fingers.)

To celebrate my promotion at your home...before the party... so I can thank you.

LIGHTS DOWN. Vogel exits. SPOTLIGHT UP. Leah steps into it.

PETER

The bombing killed Wolff and wounded two officers. The Third Reich must reassign staff. It's a blow to their organization.

LEAH

It's a great victory for us.

PETER

I was told you attended the party with Vogel. Why, Shores?

LEAH

At the last moment, I had to join him as a translator. He started dictating a letter about a new mission, Operation Black Cross. I asked him to finish it, but he wanted to complete it later. I didn't know if we would survive the attack. But we arrived a few minutes after the explosion.

PETER

Tell me about this mission.

LEAH

Operation Black Cross is a military campaign, a major change against England.

PETER

Where? When?

LEAH

I don't know. That's all Vogel told me.

PETER

You must find out about it.

LEAH

There's confusion in the office since Wolff's death. Vogel's consumed with the reorganization.

PETER

I need dates, times, names. Get the information I don't care how. Shoresh, do whatever it takes.

LEAH

I did.

PETER

Do it again.

Leah sighs. (Several Beats.) Leah turns to walk away as Sophie enters from the shadows. Leah is shocked and stops. Sophie slowly walks into the spotlight, smiles, and chuckles - she caught a rat in a trap. She stops in front of Leah. Sophie kisses Leah. Her smile is replaced with a look of hate. She slaps Leah.

SOPHIE

I knew it. Just needed to follow you to find out what you are hiding, Shoresh. I can smell a spy, especially a Jew.

(Chuckles and sniffs the air.)

You stink of fear, Kike.

LEAH

I took a shortcut home through this alley. I didn't hear anyone talking. Sophie, you have no proof of anything.

SOPHIE

The Gestapo doesn't need proof. My word is enough.

LEAH

It didn't convince Vogel today. He believed me, not you.

SOPHIE

Kike bitch.

Sophie lunges at Leah, but she quickly opens the ring's top and tosses the Cyanide pill into Sophie's mouth. She gags. Leah makes her chew and swallow. They struggle.

LEAH

Go ahead, fight. The poison will work faster.  
(Sniffs the air.)  
Who smells like fear now?

The women struggle. Leah forces Sophie to the ground, straddling her. Sophie tries to scream but Leah covers her mouth with one hand and strangles her with the other. Sophie's struggle lessens.

SPOTLIGHT TO HALF, about fifteen seconds to denote time passes. Sophie's body goes limp.

SPOTLIGHT TO FULL. PETER steps out of the shadows. He's close to the spotlight, but his face is hidden.

PETER

Shoresh, she's dead.  
(Peter's voice stuns Leah. She climbs off Sophie's body, turns, and steps to him. Peter puts up his hand.)  
Stop. You can't see me.

LEAH

(Stops.)  
Why didn't you help me?

PETER

You didn't need it.

LEAH

You've made me into one of them.

PETER

The war made you a killer, not me. I'll get rid of her body. You go to work tomorrow as usual.

LEAH

People will ask about Sophie. She'll be missed.

PETER

In war, people disappear. Say you don't know about her life since you're just co-workers. Go before someone comes.

LEAH

Peter, I can't do this work anymore.

PETER

Shoresh, stay calm, think, lie, survive.

## ACT II, SCENE 5

FRAUENKIRCHE CATHEDRAL CONFERENCE  
ROOM -

Leah sits beside Emil and Capek.  
Mueller slowly paces.

LEAH

When Sophie didn't show up at work, the officers questioned the secretaries. I said that I didn't know about her life. They searched for her, alive or dead, but never found her. After a week, everyone assumed Sophie ran away with a boyfriend. No one in the department missed her.

MUELLER

And Vogel?

LEAH

We became lovers.

MUELLER

What else?

LEAH

I learned about Operation Black Cross and told Peter. It was a lie the Gestapo planted to catch resistance members, especially him. Peter escaped, but I didn't hear from him. Then I learned my parents died in the Ghetto. Karl begged me to stay, but I hid with other members in the forest, abandoned homes, and even churches. I learned to decode messages.

EMIL

I found Leah hiding in a school basement I was renovating.

LEAH

The others fled, but I didn't care what happened to me.

MUELLER

You're carrying Vogel's child.

EMIL

It's my baby.

MUELLER

Don't be a fool. Leah, that's why you left.

LEAH

Josef wanted to marry me.

EMIL

Do you love him?

Leah

Everything I did was to free my parents.

MUELLER

We're not in the same nightmare. What does any of it have to do with the Church?

Vogel suddenly barges in.

VOGEL

Your Excellency, excuse the interruption ...

(Sees Leah.)

Leah, Leah.

Vogel approaches Leah, but Emil blocks him.

EMIL

Touch her and I'll kill you.

MUELLER

Emil, don't become what you hate.

(To Vogel.)

Major Vogel, we have a dilemma.

Vogel coughs severely.

MUELLER

Josef, you're very ill.

Vogel starts to recover.

VOGEL

Leah, why did you leave?

EMIL

Say nothing to him.

LEAH

You'd have known I'm a Jew.

VOGEL

I decide who's a Jew.

EMIL

Today, I'm one.

VOGEL  
You're only a traitor.

LEAH  
So is my baby.

VOGEL  
Is it mine?

Vogel coughs again. Mueller guides  
him to a chair.

MUELLER  
Father Capek, call my doctor.

EMIL  
Let him die.

VOGEL  
I am. It's cancer.

Leah gets closer to him, but Emil  
protests.

EMIL  
He's a murderer like all of them.

LEAH  
Josef, there must be a way to help you.

VOGEL  
Come back with me.

EMIL  
Your Excellency, we wish to stay here with God.

VOGEL  
You'll see him soon.

MUELLER  
Emil, what did you say?

EMIL  
We seek sanctuary.

MUELLER  
Do you know what you are asking?

EMIL  
Yes, Your Excellency.



VOGEL

Come with me. Leah, you'll be safe, I promise.

MUELLER

Major Vogel, Emil has requested sanctuary.

VOGEL

I don't care.

MUELLER

I do. As a priest, I must grant it.

VOGEL

No more church nonsense.

MUELLER

Silence. The Church deserves respect. I deserve respect. It's the word of God, Matthew Twenty-Five, Thirty-Five, "For I was hungry and you gave me food; I was thirsty, and you gave me a drink; I was a stranger and you gave me shelter."

VOGEL

I'm arresting them for treason.

Vogel steps forward. Emil shields Leah.

EMIL

Help us.

MUELLER

(Blocks Vogel.)

In the name of God, stop. Sanctuary is granted to those who fear persecution and injustice from a government. They have the protection of the Holy Catholic Church.

VOGEL

The laws of the Third Reich order me.

MUELLER

Your laws have no power here.

VOGEL

Don't interfere with my duty.

MUELLER

How dare you interfere with mine.

VOGEL

Leah, I'll let Jaeger go. I only want you and the baby.

EMIL

It's my child.

VOGEL

I don't care. Come with me.

Vogel reaches for Leah, but Emil pushes him away.

LEAH

I can't.

VOGEL

Shoresh, I love you. Come with me.

LEAH

How did you know?

VOGEL

It doesn't matter. I'll protect you. Karl is safe too. You're my family now.

EMIL

He's lying.

VOGEL

I only have a little time left. Then you will be free to do anything.

EMIL

How many Jews begged for their lives before you killed them?

VOGEL

I'm not one of them. I was never one of them. I only want my family.

Vogel coughs severely and falls to his knees. Leah kneels beside him. Vogel clutches her hand and slowly regains his composure. She holds him.

LEAH

Josef, I do love you, but I can't go.

Vogel looks at Emil and Mueller. He slowly regains his military composure.

He brushes his uniform and stiffens  
as if the creases penetrate his  
body. Vogel steps to Mueller.

VOGEL

Hand them over, and I'll tell Reichführer Himmeler of your  
cooperation. He will thank you, and the Church. Perhaps the  
Führer may thank you.

MUELLER

No.

VOGEL

They will be a burden for you.

MUELLER

No.

VOGEL

You're making it more difficult than necessary.

MUELLER

I decide what's necessary here.

VOGEL

A man who commits treason is an enemy of the Third Reich.  
Anyone who aids him is a part of that crime. Can the Catholic  
Church afford to be an enemy of Germany?

MUELLER

There are twenty million Catholics in Germany. The government  
can't afford to be our enemy.

VOGEL

Are you threatening the Reich?

MUELLER

Major Vogel ... Josef, I don't threaten, occasionally warn,  
and often remind, like I do now.

VOGEL

A priest's authority can be overruled by a higher church  
power. But, you're no ordinary priest. The Pope is the only  
Church authority that can overrule you.

MUELLER

If he overrules me, it can take days or weeks, if ever. His  
Holiness is very busy. I won't press him for a decision.

VOGEL

I'll make them examples of useless defiance. The request to the Vatican will come directly from Reichfuhrer Himmler. It won't take long. You and your staff can perform your duties, but I'll post guards outside.

MUELLER

You underestimate the Holy Father. He must overrule my decision. His Holiness and I have a deep friendship of many years. We were ordained together. We're brothers.

VOGEL

Perhaps you underestimate him. Pope Pius XII has a friendship of many years with the Third Reich.

Vogel looks at Leah, then exits.  
Capek, Emil, and Leah exit. LIGHTS  
DOWN and SPOTLIGHT UP. Mueller  
steps into it facing the audience;  
the congregation. The sound of  
voices and murmurs from a restless  
crowd. Mueller holds up his hands  
to quiet them.

MUELLER

Please, please, everyone, stay calm. The Gestapo is guarding the cathedral now, but you are safe in God's house. Take your seats and I'll explain.

The murmurs lessen to silence.

Two children of God requested sanctuary from German persecution. I granted it. The Gestapo is trying to get my order reversed by the Holy Father. Let them try to change the word of God. In this dangerous time, faith compels action. We are swept up in a tidal wave of war when misery engulfs us. We must fight by finding sanctuary in our faith. Entering this great cathedral invokes awe at the majesty of its architecture and the God-given talents of its builders. You ask, if God loves us, why do some endure unbearable horror while others live unscathed? I don't have an answer, but as Paul told the Corinthians, we must "plow in hope". I'm sorry for not telling you this before. Please forgive me. Like you, I struggle, I fail, and I fear, and I've sinned. But hope exists. Find your sanctuary in knowing who you are during this horrible time and who you will become when it ends. In the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, amen.

SPOTLIGHT DOWN and LIGHTS UP.  
Mueller turns and walks away as  
Capek reenters. He goes to Mueller.

CAPEK

Your Excellency, our parishioners feel reassured after your talk. But soldiers are posted at the entrances to check everyone. There's no way to get Emil and Leah out.

Emil renters.

MUELLER

How is Leah feeling?

EMIL

She ate and was resting in a room down the hall. A doctor examined her and said she was well for now.

MUELLER

Good. (To Capek.) Where is Vogel?

CAPEK

He returned to his office.

MUELLER

Emil, you must convince Leah to be baptized. I can grant her, and the baby, more protection.

EMIL

She won't renounce her faith.

Vogel enters. Mueller goes to him.

MUELLER

(Knocks on a table.)

Knock before you enter. This is still my church. There's no decision yet. I told you it would take days or weeks. We'll contact you, if necessary.

Mueller waves him off, but Vogel steps forward.

VOGEL

If sanctuary is granted, they will be prisoners here.

MUELLER

Better than Dachau.

VOGEL

You risk too much protecting traitors.

MUELLER

I'm protecting children of God fighting evil. It's what you risk that concerns me more.

VOGEL

What?

MUELLER

Damnation. Josef, you're not Catholic, but I'll hear your confession, so God can forgive your sins. Then you can join your wife for eternity. My son, it's your only salvation.

VOGEL

Don't play your Catholic games with me.

MUELLER

Salvation is not a game. You said that you are not like the others. Josef, prove it. Don't die a murderer.

Mueller puts his hand on Vogel's shoulders. He starts to tear up, almost breaks but stiffens and steps away.

VOGEL

No, no.

MUELLER

I'm trying to save your soul from hell.

VOGEL

Let's see who ends up there first.

Leah enters. Vogel sees her but turns away. Emil goes to her and leads her to a chair.

MUELLER

Leah, how do you feel?

LEAH

Stronger. The doctor and nuns made me comfortable.

VOGEL

Don't get too comfortable. You're only here a while.

LEAH

Josef, spare us. I beg you.

(Vogel keeps his back to her.)

Listen to me. The resistance planned the attack on Wollf's party. I knew about it and made us arrive late to avoid the bombing. It saved our lives.

VOGEL

You should have let us die.

LEAH

Every life has value.

VOGEL

Even Sophie?

(Chuckles.)

LEAH

Josef, I killed Sophie when she discovered I was a spy.

Shocked, Vogel turns to Leah. He smiles a little.

VOGEL

Vielen Dank.

(Beat. His smile disappears.)

The phone rings. Mueller nods at Capek to answer it.

CAPEK

Yes? Your Excellency, it's the Vatican.

Capek hands Mueller the phone and steps back. Mueller crosses himself.

MUELLER

Yes, Your Holiness. Of course. I understand, Your Grace. Thank you, Holy Father. (Beat.) Sanctuary is denied.

VOGEL

In the name of the Third Reich, you're both under arrest.

Mueller grabs Leah.

MUELLER

Leah, do you believe in God, the Father Almighty, Creator of Heaven and Earth?

Leah is scared and confused. Capek steps to her.

CAPEK

Say, "I do believe."

No, I can't. LEAH

You must. EMIL

No, no. LEAH

Stop it. You're under arrest. VOGEL

Say it. CAPEK

I'm wasting time. VOGEL

Silence, you bastard. Leah, it will save your life and the baby. Say it. MUELLER

Step aside. VOGEL  
(Pulls out a revolver.)

Mueller ignores him and steps to Leah.

I beg you. Do you believe in God, the Father Almighty, Creator of Heaven and Earth? MUELLER

I do believe. LEAH  
(Shaky Voice.)

Step aside, priest. VOGEL  
(Points the gun at Mueller.)

Muller turns to confront him. Vogel lowers the gun. He returns to Leah.

Do you believe in Jesus Christ? MUELLER

I do believe. LEAH  
(Slower and Firmer Voice.)



MUELLER

Do you believe in Jesus Christ, His only Son our Lord, who was born and who suffered?

LEAH

Yes, I do believe.

MUELLER

Do you believe in the Holy Ghost, the Holy Catholic Church, the communion of Saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and life everlasting?

LEAH

I do believe.

Mueller makes the sign of the cross on her forehead. Capek and Emil cross themselves.

MUELLER

I baptize you in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Leah Ginsberg is now baptized as a Catholic and protected by the Holy Catholic Church.

VOGEL

Fuck you, priest. I'll kill them here.

Vogel raises his gun. Emil pushes Leah behind him. Capek steps back. Mueller lunges and pushes Vogel offstage. A struggle...then the bang of two shots. A long pause. Mueller re-enters holding the gun.

MUELLER

(To Capek.)

I acted alone. You had no part in it. They had no part in it.

CAPEK

No, no, no.

EMIL

The Gestapo will throw you in Dachau with your priests.

MUELLER

I didn't expect the Holy Father to overrule me...not my brother. Father Capek, disguise them as staff. Go to the basement, on the North wall is a small door to a tunnel to a warehouse a block away. Go to the airport and take the midnight flight to Stockholm. The bishop will give you passports to England. Go before the guards come.

I won't leave you. CAPEK

Michael, obey. MUELLER

You must come with us. EMIL

My place is here. MUELLER

I won't leave you. LEAH  
 (Leah grabs at Mueller, and  
 his cloak opens, revealing a  
 silver chain with a medal.)

Star of David?

Forget you saw it. MUELLER

Why do you wear it? LEAH

I'm a Jew. MUELLER

Impossible. Leah

My parents let a Catholic family adopt me before they died in  
 a pogrom. MUELLER

Leah freezes. Unbelievable. A Beat.

Escape with us. You don't owe the Church anything. LEAH

I must join my brothers at Dachau. Go now. MUELLER

Nicholas, come with me... LEAH

Call me, Peter. GO! MUELLER  
 (Voice changes to Peter)

Capek and Emil pull a shocked Leah.  
They rush out.

LIGHTS DOWN. SPOTLIGHT UP.

Moonlight. Sound of crickets.  
Mueller strolls, and smells the  
air. Goes to a rosebush and pulls  
one off. Sniffs it deeply. The  
moonlight turns red and flickers of  
flames appear on the stage.

MUELLER

What a beautiful night in the garden. Yes, this is the best  
year for my roses. Forgive me, Father, for I have sinned.

Mueller kneels surrounded by his  
roses and covers his eyes with his  
right hand. He recites SHEMA in  
Hebrew. The flames slowly consume  
him.

MUELLER

Shema, Israel  
Ascem Elohenv  
Ascem Ecchad  
Shema, Israel  
Ascem Elohenv  
Ascem Ecchad  
Baruch Scem Kevod

Translation:

Hear O Israel, the Lord is our God,  
the Lord is one. And as for you,  
you shall love the Lord your God  
with all your heart, with all your  
soul, and with all your strength.

THE FLAMES FADE WITH THE LIGHTS.

THE END.

2024 reviews from writers/directors - New Play Exchange site.

Brenton Kniess

"With sharp dramatic action, complete characters, and an  
intriguing premise, Val Valdez has all the elements for a  
thrilling theatrical experience. The construction of this  
play is mesmerizing and captivating.

Valdez does a remarkable job of writing a story worth telling. Sanctuary is a play that demands to be staged."

Morey Norkin

"Wow! Although a fictional story set during the holocaust, knowing the truth of the horrors and the many acts of bravery that occurred makes this story all the more compelling. Val Valdez does an extraordinary job of layering intrigue upon intrigue all the way up to the stunning conclusion. I highly recommend this for reading and staging. It's too good and important not to be seen."

Barry Smoot

"Sanctuary is a vital, important work. It is an intense WWII thriller, but at the same time, much more than that. Valdez offers us the complete package—crisp, believable dialogue, fully-drawn characters, a compelling plot line, and a twist that drives the story to a gripping and emotional ending. This is great storytelling, important not just for what it says about the horrors of our history, but the idea that standing up for your beliefs is as essential now as ever. Highly recommended. Beautiful writing."

Darrin Friedman

"Val Valdez has written a compelling story and a gripping play that takes you on a journey of the horrors of the past. I am a Jew. Reading a play about the holocaust is difficult. "Sanctuary" is beautiful, poignant, and delicate in execution and leaves you shocked until the end. I am blown away by this effort and believe this is a MUST-read for anyone who wants to read about the human condition when pushed to the brink. This is absolutely exquisite work. I highly recommend it."

#### STAGE READINGS

2024 New Play Festival, Temple Civic Theatre, Temple, TX  
 2018 Stageplays Theatre Company, New York City, NY  
 2016 William Inge Theatre Festival, Independence, KS  
 2015 Step II Dance & Theatre Center, Levittown, PA  
 2014 Southend Playwriting Competition, Essex, England