

The Parade
by Phillip W. Weiss

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Characters

Private Hans-Jurgen Heiden – a German prisoner of war

Corporal Frederic Bauer – a German prisoner of war

Sergeant Wilhelm Scheinerman (“The Sarge”) – a German prisoner of war

Colonel Boris Nikolayevich Romachenko – an officer in the Red Army

Lt Col. Ivan Stipanovich Luzintsky – an officer in the Red Army

Major Pavel Pavlovich Stepanikov – an officer in the Red Army

Nadezhda "Nadia" Belukovski – a teenage Russian girl

Katerina "Katya" "Tzilberburg – a teenage Russian girl

Effremya "Effie" Pavlova Stepanikova – a teenage Russian girl

Judge 1 – a judge of the People’s Tribunal

Judge 2 – a judge of the People’s Tribunal

Judge 3 – a judge of the People’s tribunal

Trustee 1 – a prisoner in charge of other prisoners in the gulag

Trustee 2 – a prisoner in charge of other prisoners in the gulag

Russian soldiers, guards, and spectators

This a work of fiction inspired by an actual historical event.

Scene 1

Time: July 16, 1944

Place: The Central Moscow Hippodrome, Moscow, Soviet Union

Sixty thousand German prisoners of war, all recently captured by the Red Army, have been placed in the Central Moscow Hippodrome, a race track which has been converted into a temporary transit camp for POWs. On stage are three of the prisoners. They are Private Hans-Jurgen Heiden, Corporal Frederic Bauer, and Sergeant Wilhelm Scheinerman.

HANS

Where are we?

BAUER

Moscow, you fool.

HANS

I know that. But what is this place?

WILHELM

It looks like a race track.

HANS

A race track? In Moscow. I didn't know the Russians were into horse racing. I love horses.

BAUER

Who cares? To me this place is a dump.

HANS

Looks nice to me.

BAUER

Kid, you are such a dunce, a real fool. Nothing here is worth admiring. Remember, these people are the enemy and they are barbarians.

WILHELM

Who seem to like horse racing? That the Fuhrer never told us.

BAUER

So what? The Mongol hordes liked horses too, and so do the wild Indians in America.

HANS

I know that, Fritz. I realize that we're in a bind.

BAUER

You sure don't like you do. Now we're at the mercy of these Bolshevik scum.

WILHELM

Let's not forget that we are uninvited guests.

BAUER

No way. We invaded to help rid this place of the Bolshevik scourge.

WILHELM

You know, Bauer, I've been in on the Eastern front since 1941 and seen it all. At first I really believed in what the Fuhrer said about the Bolsheviks and the Jews, and I wanted to kill them all. Now, three years and countless battles later I must ask myself: what did we accomplish?

BAUER

Your defeatism nauseates me. We can't give up.

WILHELM

You misunderstand me. I don't want Germany to lose. I want Germany to win. No one hates the commies more than me, but here we are now, abandoned by the Fuhrer, and now stuck in race track in the middle of Moscow. In a strange way I find our situation to be absurd.

BAUER

Well, I don't. No one said it would be easy.

WILHELM

The Fuhrer promised that it would over in six weeks, that the Russians were a bunch of pushovers. That was three years ago.

HANS

Three years ago I was in the Hitler Youth Corps practicing how to march.

WILHELM

They were training you to be a soldier. You just didn't know it. In America they have a similar group. They call it the Boy Scouts. They go around wearing uniforms and saluting and pledging allegiance and all that other stuff that goes along with being in the military.

BAUER

Three years ago I was working in a factory, as a sheet metal worker. Because of the that I was exempted me from military service.

WILHELM

The fatherland could not spare your services. You had a very important job.

BAUER

I did. I worked in a ball bearing factory located outside of Hamburg. I fabricated casings for the ball bearings that were then installed in tanks.

WILHELM

Hamburg's a wonderful city. I had a lot of friends there. of course, I don't even want to think what it looks like now.

BAUER

What the Brits and American did to Hamburg is a crime, and they call us murderers? They carpet bombed the entire city. Now the place is in shambles.

HANS

But didn't the Fuhrer promised to wipe out London?

BAUER

Yes, but that's because the Brits bombed Berlin. They started it.

HANS

I liked Hamburg too. I went there with my school to a big art museum. They had a lot of really nice paintings.

BAUER

I'm sure the place is now a pile of rubble thanks to the Americans and Brits.

WILHELM

Look, my sister and nieces got bombed out in Cologne. I don't like it, but that's war. But we did our share of bombing too, right?

BAUER

The Fuhrer said they started it.

WILHELM

To hell with what the Fuhrer says. I believed everything he said too. I believed that he would restore Germany to her rightful place of greatness. I was glad when they went after the Jews. I believed that the Jews had stabbed us in the back. This is what Hitler said AND I BELIEVED HIM! I had faith in him. I was unemployed, my life was in shambles, I felt hopelessness and Hitler came along and gave me a job, restored my hope in the future and made me feel proud to be German. But now I have second thoughts.

BAUER

You're saying that only because we're captives.

WILHELM

Maybe I am. All I know is that I haven't seen my wife and kids in since 1942, and may not see them ever again.

HANS

Don't talk like that, Sarge. It scares me.

BAUER

See what all your talk does? it scares people.

WILHELM

Fritz, sometimes I wonder if you have a brain inside that head of yours.

HANS

Ha! That's funny.

BAUER

You know, Sarge, there is no need to get insulting.

WILHELM

I didn't mean to insult you. I meant exactly what I said. Do you have a brain inside that skull of yours?

HANS

Hey, Fritz, were you ever in the Hitler Youth?

BAUER

No. I was in the Nazi German Students' League. That was for boys attending college.

WILHELM

I was a coal miner before I joined the army.

BAUER

We can still win this war.

HANS

You really think so?

BAUER

I wouldn't have said it if I didn't believe it.

WILHELM

It's so nice knowing that I am serving with someone who is so honest, and so dumb.

BAUER

Stop being so condescending, Sarge. We're all in this together.

WILHELM

Thanks to the Fuhrer.

HANS

Don't you think the Fuhrer cares?

WILHELM

I used to think he did.

BAUER

Used to? Like he doesn't care now?

WILHELM

Gentlemen, our own generals sent us into battle with no air support and almost no artillery and with little food, so I ask you: do YOU think they care?

BAUER

I was talking about the Fuhrer.

WILHELM

Fuhrer. Generals. All the same. They left us out to dry like laundry in the win.

HANS

I didn't think the Eastern front would be as bad as this.

WILHELM

Stalingrad didn't clue you in?

HANS

We lost a battle. So what?

WILHELM

That shows how little you really know. I was one of the last troops to get out of Stalingrad before the Sixth Army got trapped, What a mess. The weather was freezing, it was below zero every day and we were issued no winter clothing. I'm lucky I didn't die from frost bite. The air force tried to airlift supplies to us, but most of the time they missed the target. That did nothing to improve morale.

BAUER

We'll regroup and show these Russkies who's the boss. No way they can defeat us.

WILHELM

I said that too, until Stalingrad.

BAUER

Come on, Sarge, can the dejection.

WILHELM

Are you blind? Do you not see where we are? Do you not wonder how we got to this place?

BAUER

No, I don't. I was drafted into the army and sent with my unit to the eastern Front. I let others do the wondering.

WILHELM

Like I said before, I have to wonder if you have a brain in your noggin.

HANS

What do you think the Russkies are going to do with us?

BAUER

How do I know?

WILHELM

Why don't you ask the guard?

HANS

I would but I don't think he speaks German.

WILHELM

And you don't speak Russian, so it would be a perfect match.

BAUER

Very funny, Sarge. You have a real sense of humor.

WILHELM

You think so?

BAUER

I was being sarcastic.

HANS

I don't like the way they got us cooped up like this. It makes me feel a little nervous.

BAUER

It makes me feel a lot nervous. Dumping us in a race track, of all places. It's as if the Russkies are trying to mock us.

WILHELM

For us the war is over. There's nothing more to be nervous about.

HANS

I hope the Russians don't lynch us.

WILHELM

You've been watching too many American movies. The Americans lynch. The Russians shoot. Big difference.

HANS

That doesn't make me feel any better.

WILHELM

Stop your worrying. if they were going to murder us, they would have done it already.

HANS

I wonder what my mother must be thinking. She must be worried sick about me.

WILHELM

No sense getting worked up over that. We got to try to keep up appearances. Show these Bolsheviks that we're still soldiers.

BAUER

I really wonder how much longer this war can go on.

HANS

I do too.

WILHELM

I don't even want to think about it and would thank you guys if you'd just shut up. We're in a pickle and we're at the mercy of the Reds. We have to save our strength for what lies ahead.

BAUER

Look, Sarge, we invaded their country ...

HANS

I thought we went in to liberate it.

BAUER

Hell no, boy. Hitler wanted to conquer and exterminate these people ...

WILHELM

Shush! Not so loud.

BAUER

They don't know German, so I can say whatever I want.

WILHELM

Just keep it down. Don't attract attention.

BAUER

Attract attention? In this mob? I could scream heil Hitler and nobody would care.

HANS

Come on. Don't be stupid. Listen to the Sarge.

BAUER

I did listen to the Sarge. That's why I'm here. I wanted to continue fighting, but not the Sarge. Up went the white flag and the next thing I know I'm being dragged out of our dugout by two Russians guys who then kicked me in the ass when I didn't move fast enough.

HANS

At least they didn't shoot you.

WILHELM

Listen, corporal, we were surrounded, outnumbered, outgunned and out maneuvered. It was either surrender or die for nothing. If it weren't for me we'd all be dead. So much for gratitude.

HANS

I didn't like giving up either, but Sarge, you were right.

BAUER

I'd rather die on the battlefield.

WILHELM

What battlefield? We were hiding in a stinking cellar in some disgusting putrid dump. It smelled like shit. We were defending shit.

HANS

You think Hitler made a mistake invading Russia?

WILHELM

I'm no general, but it didn't take much brains to understand that it would take more than a few weeks to defeat Russia.

BAUER

It's so easy to second guess.

WILHELM

I'm not second guess anyone. I thought we could win too. We went in with a huge army but it wasn't enough.

BAUER

So what? Australia is a big country too. What's your point?

WILHELM

Don't bite off more than you can chew.

BAUER

Sour grapes.

WILHELM

I'm just talking facts.

BAUER

You're talking defeatism. And it is YOU who better watch what you say. SS guys are in here with us too.

HANS

I don't want to mess with those guys.

BAUER

I don't either. The war is still going on.

WILHELM

Don't worry about the SS. Don't worry about anything. Just keep calm and see what happens.

HANS

I'm having a hard time keeping calm.

BAUER

Boy, what I would give for a shot of schnapps.

WILHELM

I'd settle for a hot bowl of real soup, not the slop they feed us here, and a fresh loaf of bread.

BAUER

Thanks for reminding me that we haven't eaten for almost two days.

WILHELM

That's right, we haven't. So, stop blabbering. It just wastes energy and make you feel hungrier.

HANS

What a mess. You think we're going to come out of this alive?

BAUER

Stop whining like a baby.

WILHELM

You ask a very good question, which unfortunately I cannot answer. That's really up to our Russian hosts.

HANS

Now I'm feeling hungry.

BAUER

You have the Sarge to thank for that.

HANS

Thanks, Sarge.

WILHELM

My pleasure, Hans.

End of scene 1

Scene 2

Time: the same as scene 1

Place: A room. At the entrance is a sign that reads: Office of the Commissar for Enemy Prisoners of War. Onstage are three men: Colonel Boris Nikolayevich Romachenko, commandant and two staff officers, Lt Col. Ivan Stipanovich Luzintsky and Major Pavel Pavlovich Stepanikov. All three are officers in the Red Army.

IVAN

All the fascists are being assembled.

BORIS

How many are there?

IVAN

About sixty-thousand.

BORIS

About sixty- thousand? I want a precise number. Major, get me a precise number.

PAVEL

Stragglers keep coming in.

BORIS

No excuse. I want a precise number. No guesswork here. The Boss may show up and ask. I don't want to sound like I don't know what I'm doing. This is going to be a big event. Nothings like this has ever been done before, at least not on this scale.

IVAN

Sir, may I ask what it is that we are preparing to do?

BORIS

Something big! Something that will drive home to the Germans once and for all that the war is lost and to stop fighting.

PAVEL

The people are screaming for blood.

IVAN

They are? I haven't heard anyone screaming. Not even the prisoners. They know that they're beat and done for.

PAVEL

Well, something has to be done to teach them a lesson. They had no right to invade our country.

IVAN

Are we going to have this argument again?

PAVEL

Sir, you may out rank me, but still I must speak my mind. These fascist pigs destroyed my home town. They burnt it to the ground and forced my mother and two sisters to flee into the woods. I have no idea if they alive or dead.

IVAN

Look, we all have cause to go out and shoot all these fascists. After how they have brutalized our people and vandalized our country. But to demand their blood is unbecoming a Marxist. We're better than that.

PAVEL

These Nazi pigs took my brother prisoner and killed him. Am I supposed to forget that?

BORIS

Gentlemen, this debate is getting tedious. The fascists will get what they deserve. People's justice will prevail.

PAVEL

I hope so. Luckily my youngest sister was able to escape. My parents got her out in time. Now she's staying with me.

BORIS

Yes, I met her. She's a very nice girl. How old is she again?

PAVEL

Seventeen. She writes poetry.

IVAN

In the middle of the war we're producing poets. What a country.

PAVEL

But sometimes her writing gets on my nerves. All touchy feely stuff. Really corny. I just want to bash the krauts to smithereens. That's the kind of poetry I want to write about. Bash. Smash. Crash. Show them who's boss and get them to beg for mercy.

IVAN

The idea is to get them to stop fighting, not to destroy them.

BORIS

That is true, comrade, but they must be punished for their crimes. On that point there can be no doubt.

PAVEL

You see! the colonel agrees with me.

BORIS

Not so fast. We must act lawfully, guided by the teachings of our great leader Stalin who made our country great. To do otherwise would be to lower ourselves to the level of the enemy.

PAVEL

Sir, we can never stoop so low as that.

BORIS

Oh yes, we could, especially if we lose our discipline.

IVAN

Yes, we must take care to stay disciplined.

PAVEL

Disciplined? With that scum? After all the crimes they've committed?

BORIS

Righteous indignation is for fools. Don't forget that.

PAVEL

But I can't help it.

BORIS

I'm telling you to stop it. You have a job to do. So, do it. Get me an exact count. Higher command is waiting for my report.

IVAN

I find it kind of weird that we putting them in the race track.

PAVEL

We have to put them somewhere. Right?

IVAN

It's just that I find it ironic that a place of entertainment is now being used to intern prisoners. My grandfather was s stable boy. He told me about the time the czar visited the track. He bet some money on a horse and lost.

PAVEL

No surprise there. He was a born loser.

IVAN

According to my grandfather, he was rather nice.

PAVEL

What are you saying? Bring back the czar?

IVAN

You said that, not me.

PAVEL

Stop being so smart. I don't want to hear about the czar or about the good old days or about anything that has to do with the reactionaries who exploited the people and cared only about themselves. My grandparents were serfs. They had it rough. They worked like slaves to pay off their debts. Finally, Stalin put a stop to it. Now the land belongs to the people. No more landlords. And I was able to go to school. I was the first in my family to get an education, and I have Stalin to thank for that.

BORIS

Yes, Stalin is a Great Leader. Because of him we have a lot to be thankful for.

IVAN

I didn't mean to suggest otherwise.

PAVEL

Then don't bring up the czar again, please. The mere mention of him makes me want to go wild.

BORIS

Go wild on your own time, okay? Why can't you two comrades get along?

IVAN

It's just talk, sir.

PAVEL

Which vexes me, and you know it. And to think I thought about introducing you to one of my sisters. What was I thinking?

IVAN

You see, sir! We are friends.

BORIS

Then stop all this idiotic bickering and act like friends. Remember, we are Marxists and so should act as such.

IVAN

Sir, what exactly are we to do with all these prisoners?

BORIS

You will find out soon. Ivan, When I give the order you will form up the guard in the lot outside of the stands. Then I will be making an important announcement.

IVAN

Yes, sir.

End of scene 2

Scene 3

Time: same as the preceding two scenes

Place: a living room in an apartment in Moscow. Three teenage girls are onstage. They are Nadezhda "Nadia" Belukovski, Katerina "Katya" "Tzilberburg and Efremya "Effie" Stepanikova. Effie is Pavel's younger sister.

NADIA

I was walking on Gorki Street when some soldier whistled and gave me a wink.

KATYA

Somebody has to teach these boys better hammers. it will take a lot more than a handsome face to get me to fall in love. I'll tell you that.

NADIA

But they mean no harm. They're just playing.

KATYA

Like hell they are. They want it all, and without having to pay for it. Well, I'm not that easy.

NADIA

I'm not either. But I do like the attention.

KATYA

Let them save their strength for the front. I'm doing my share already.

EFFIE

My brother says that a lot of German prisoners are being assembled at the Hippodrome.

NADIA

I hope they take them somewhere and shoot every one of them. Bastards.

KATYA

I heard that some German men are rather attractive.

NADIA

And I heard that a certain someone in this room has a hearing problem. I say stay with your own kind. We have enough Russian men to choose from.

EFFIE

Men are so complicated.

KATYA

No they're not. They all have one thing on their minds, and it's not food.

NADIA

It's more like dessert. They have such dirty minds. Why just earlier this week I was in the grocery store near Red Square when this guy came up to me and actually pinched me on my rear. I was so embarrassed. Then he asked me to join him for coffee. I told him no.

EFFIE

He liked you. You should have gone with him. At least you would have gotten a free cup of coffee.

NADIA

Maybe I should have gone with him.

KATYA

And maybe not. I think he was just trying to get over on you.

NADIA

I hate talking about boys like this. My brother is in the army and I can't imagine him going around pinching girls and acting like an idiot.

KATYA

He's your brother, so you got to stick up for him. How old is he?

EFFIE

Let's not forget that we must support our boys. Help them feel appreciated,

NADIA

I do appreciate them. A smile and a kiss on the cheek. That's more than enough. I don't want to give them the wrong idea.

EFFIE

I think some of boys are nice. I remember this boy, Basil Semenovskiy. He was nice. He used to walk me home from school. That's was before the war.

What happened to him? KATYA

I heard he got drafted. EFFIE

And? KATYA

That's the last I heard. EFFIE

I hope this war ends soon so I can find a good man, someone who's a factory manager or even a commissar. NADIA

You're aiming kind of high. KATYA

Higher the better. Someone well placed in the party. NADIA

But to get you got to give. KATYA

Then I'll become a factory worker like the girls shown in the posters. NADIA

Your father wouldn't let you do that. EFFIE

He'd love for me to find a man, but all the good ones are away. NADIA

And all the bad ones are married, and drunk. KATYA

EFFIE

Our men are heroes.

NADIA

But they're still men. Look, I know that they are putting their lives on the line to get those krauts to leave. I'm not that dense.

EFFIE

So, you should speak about them with more respect. Don't forget that we all have menfolk who are fighting for us.

NADIA

Why do you always have to be so serious?

EFFIE

That's the way I am. I'm concerned about my family. I don't know if my parents and two sisters are still alive. I'm lucky I got out when I could. We took the brunt of the attack.

KATYA

That's tough. I remember when the Germans were right outside of Moscow. Wow, was I scared.

EFFIE

But men like my brother stopped them dead in their tracks. They have far more important things to do than to chase after girls.

NADIA

Effie, you have a lot to learn about men.

KATYA

I do too. Like how to get a man to buy me dinner and drinks and take me to the theatre.

NADIA

First, you have to learn to act sophisticated, like they do in the movies.

KATYA

That's it! I'll become an actress.

EFFIE

Why can't you two be more serious? We're fighting for our lives and all you can think about is yourselves. That's not fair.

NADIA

Listen, my dear friend, I don't need you or anyone else to remind me about that. I have two cousins in the service. One's in the air force and the other in the navy. And my father is a veteran of the civil war who loves mother Russia more than I can say.

EFFIE

So you know better, yet you go on prattling like a little girl. That's why you keep meeting boys. A real man wants a woman, not a flighty little thing.

NADIA

Oh, I'm not that little, am I?

EFFIE

Yes, you're built nice, but when you open your mouth you sound like a ten-year old child.

KATYA

Since when did you become such an expert on men?

EFFIE

I'm no expert on men. But I know enough not to treat them all of them like dirt.

NADIA

The problem is that you're just too sensitive. And maybe you have a right to be, given all the stuff you've gone through.

KATYA

If it weren't for the war, we'd be going out every night and having a great time. Instead, we have to work and worry. It's not fair.

NADIA

Remember what Professor Luzhinski said in history class? The working class is the vanguard of change and women are now free. I want to be free to do whatever the hell I want. I'm going to be eighteen years old. I may join the army.

KATYA

Then you'll definitely meet men, lots of men.

EFFIE

Have you told your parents?

NADIA

Not yet. But I'm not longer a little girl.

KATYA

I may go with you, to serve my country.

EFFIE

You girls are crazy. All you want to do is meet men.

NADIA

It's better than sitting around and writing all that sappy poetry.

Nadia grabs a book that's on the table.

EFFIE

Hey, put that down. That's private.

NADIA

Not anymore. (*Nadia opens the book.*) Ah, here's a juicy passage.

(Nadia reads aloud)

A summer moon
a warm ocean breeze,
a rolling field
a loving embrace,
so that is life.

KATYA

I think that's sweet.

NADIA

I think it's corny bourgeois hokum. Let me read another passage.
(Nadia reads aloud)

The steel mill burns brightly
 Noise is transformed into music
 Production becomes a symphony
 Work is heroic
 and yet the little rose, merely a bud,
 brings tears of joy in this busy, burly world.

KATYA

Wow, Effie I didn't know that you were such a deep thinker.

NADIA

(*To Kayta*) And I didn't know that you are such a dunce. She writes about feelings. Feelings are bourgeois. They are decadent and silly. They contribute nothing to society. That's what we were taught in school. Right? (*To Effie*) Yet, you waste your time writing this rubbish when you should be devoting all your talent to writing slogans and pamphlets and stories about workers and not about flowers or a warm ocean breeze.

EFFIE

I write what is in my heart.

NADIA

Whatever you say, my dear friend. You are a day dreamer in a time when daydreaming is not in vogue. I want to have fun, now! I don't want to go around always feeling down. Comrade Stalin has repeatedly said that women and men are equal. So if it is okay for a man to fool around then I want to fool around too. I don't want to become an old lady like my mother.

KATYA

Let's go to the movies. I heard there's a new comedy playing. I could use some laughs.

NADIA

I love comedies. I can't stand the moody stuff. Remember the last movie we saw? I hated it. A factory worker who falls in love with the manager of the factory who is a woman and wants nothing to do with him. What a dumb story.

EFFIE

I liked the movie. He was willing to do anything to get her to notice him. He really loved her.

KATYA

But it only gave him pain. Love is like candy. It tastes sweet but makes you sick.

EFFIE

Love makes you sick because it overwhelms us and changes us.

NADIA

Effie, where is all that junk in your head coming from?

EFFIE

I don't know. I think about my family and the war and everything and it all seems so nasty. I dream about my parents every night.

KATYA

When the war is over, you'll be able to find out about them.

EFFIE

That's what I'm afraid of. Finding out.

NADIA

Those dirty, rotten Nazi pigs! May they all rot in hell.

EFFIE

I wish I could say amen.

End of scene 3

Scene 4

Place: The Hippodrome.

Time: One hour later.

Scene: Boris is about to address a company of soldiers who are standing at ease. Also on stage are Ivan and Igor.

BORIS

Are all the men assembled?

IVAN

Yes, sir. All are present.

BORIS

Good. Call the men to attention.

IVAN

Major, call the men to attention.

PAVEL

Yes, sir. *(faces the men)* Atten-HUT! *(The soldiers snap to attention. Boris faces the soldiers)*

BORIS

Gentlemen. As you know we have been assembling thousands of German prisoners who were captured by the Red Army in battle. You may be wondering why this is happening. I will explain. This massive assembly of prisoners is part of the war effort. I have been ordered to process and guard these prisoners with our lives, orders that I now personally pass on to you. Each and every one of you have been assigned the important task of safeguarding these prisoners and seeing that none escape. The supreme commander of the Red Army has ordered that these prisoners be placed in special camps located in various places outside of Moscow. Transportation is waiting for them at the Kievskaya Train Station. We will march them from the Hippodrome to the station. They will be go on foot. We do not have enough trucks available to transport them, so they will be go on foot through the city, on a route carefully selected to ensure the utmost security. Your job will be to ensure that none of the prisoners escape and to control the crowd. Supreme Command has informed me that much of the city will turn out to for this event. This is a huge operation and one that must go off without a hitch. The whole world will be watching as we send an unmistakable message to Hitler and to the German people that further resistance is useless and to surrender. The parade will commence tomorrow at 9 AM sharp, rain or shine. All the prisoners will be treated in accordance with international law governing the treatment of prisoners. Unlike the enemy, who are barbarians, we treat our prisoners humanely and by doing so bring credit and honor to our country and to our socialist ideals. Perform your duties to the utmost of your ability. Our country is counting on you. That is all. *(Boris turns to Ivan)* You may dismiss the troops.

IVAN
(To Pavel)

Dismiss the troops.

PAVEL
(to the troops)

Troops dismissed!

(The troops exit)

BORIS
(to PAVEL)

How many prisoners are there?

PAVEL
Exactly fifty-eight thousand six hundred and forty. sir.

BORIS
Very good. Tens of thousands of them. All fresh from the battlefield. All in our custody and entrusted to our care. Let's not fail in our duty. Our job is daunting. Who ever thought that we would be capturing so many of the Krauts. No in believed that we could knock these Nazis for a loop and chase them down like dog. You know, my dear friends, we didn't ask for this war. We didn't need it and we didn't want it. Now, we must take great care. I am counting on both of you to make it happen. Please don't fail me.

IVAN
We won't, sir.

PAVEL
Sir, will this event be filmed?

BORIS
The High Command has already notified representatives of the West and of the press. All are waiting with great excitement to watch and report on this event to their respective countries. It is too bad that Hitler will not be attending. He would have made a most interesting guest. After all, it is he who started all of this when he decided to try to destroy us. Now the whole world will witness the might of the Soviet Union, the Red Army and the Soviet people, led by our great and all-knowing leader, Comrade Joseph Stalin. Now, comrades, get to work.

End of scene 4

Scene 5

Time: Night

Place: Pavel's Apartment. Ivan and Pavel are out of uniform. They are standing over a table looking at a map of Moscow.

IVAN

This will be a big operation.

PAVEL

No big deal. Just a bunch of krauts being moved. That's all.

IVAN

That's not all. The whole world will be watching. I'm don't like it. Too much fanfare.

PAVEL

Who cares who's watching? We have to teach these Germans a lesson. They wanted Moscow. Now, they're here, with us serving as their tour guides. They should be paying us for our services.

IVAN

Stop being so emotional. We have a job to do, so let's do it with a clear head.

PAVEL

I don't need to remind you that we are at war and that we didn't start it. These fascists are just a bunch of pigs. They deserve no consideration at all. In fact, they are lucky that we let them live.

IVAN

I have heard of all of this before. We must take care not to take drastic measures.

PAVEL

Oh, really? As if the krauts haven't already done that?

IVAN

We can talk about that later. Right now, let's decide where we will post guards.

PAVEL

Obviously, along the entire route. Especially at the Krimsky Bridge and Culture Park.

IVAN

That's good. Now, who will be guarding prisoners?

PAVEL

I have already assigned a team of soldiers who will be escorting the fascists on horseback. They will be armed and ready for action at the slightest hint of trouble.

IVAN

Let's hope there isn't any.

PAVEL

For their sake, not ours.

Effie enters.

EFFIE

Good evening, comrades.

PAVEL

Effie, I asked you not to interrupt us. We are in the middle of important state business and we cannot be interrupted.

IVAN

Oh, no, young lady. It's okay. We were just talking.

EFFIE

I know what you're talking about. It's tomorrow's parade. I heard the news at school.

IVAN

Could you please introduce me to this young lady?

PAVEL

This is my sister, Effie. She is staying with me. She managed to escape from the occupied area.

IVAN

I think I remember having met you briefly about four years ago when I was stationed outside of Kiev.

EFFIE

That's where I'm from. My father worked as a factory technician at the army base.

IVAN

Well, you have certainly grown up.

EFFIE

Thank you. And you are nice too.

PAVEL

Why don't you go back to your room? We have work to do.

EFFIE

That's my brother for you. Always needs to be working. Such an important person.

PAVEL

I'm just doing my job.

EFFIE

If it weren't for him, I don't know how I would have survived.

PAVEL

You're my sister. I could not refuse you. What would our parents have said?

IVAN

Yes, I know about your family. Igor has told me.

EFFIE

Maybe I should have never left.

PAVEL

Not true at all. You had to leave. Somebody had to get out.

EFFIE

Yes, I know that.

IVAN

My family is safe in the Urals.

EFFIE

I'm glad to hear that. That must make things a lot easier for you knowing that they are alive.

IVAN

It was just the luck of geography that spared them.

EFFIE

What are you doing?

PAVEL

You will find out tomorrow.

IVAN

No. It's okay, comrade. She should know. We are planning security measures for tomorrow's event.

EFFIE

Security measures? Aren't they already under guard?

IVAN

Yes, they are, but when they are moved, it will require that guards be posted along the route to protect the prisoners from the public.

EFFIE

Oh, I see. May I share my thoughts about this?

IVAN

Please do.

EFFIE

To me, the purpose of this parade is to put these prisoners on display in order to humiliate them.

PAVEL

Comrade, my sister doesn't know what she is talking about.

IVAN

No. I think she does. You may continue.

EFFIE

Thank you. To me, it would be better just to get them out of here as quickly as possible and be done with it.

PAVEL

I must disagree with my sister, who shouldn't even be in this room with us. She forgets that it is the krauts who have terrorized our family and millions of others. She forgets that these prisoners are the enemy who have sworn to obey Hitler, who has vowed to exterminate us. She forgets that this parade is necessary to send a message to both our enemies and friends not to trifle with the Soviet Union.

EFFIE

No. You are wrong. I do realize all those things you said.

PAVEL

Yet, you want to coddle the very people who have done us so much harm. Outrageous.

IVAN

Your brother has a point. The Germans invaded us and they show no signs of wanting to leave without a fight.

EFFIE

I know exactly what happened. I was there. I watched the Germans enter our town after our army had fled, leaving us totally unprotected.

PAVEL

You had no idea of what you were seeing. You were just a little girl.

EFFIE

No. I was old enough to understand exactly what was happening. I remember hearing in school how the Germans would never harm us and not to worry. Comrade Stalin had everything under control. Then one day the Germans arrived and took over everything. We were on our own. At night, two German soldiers barged into our house. They ordered us out. It was terrible. I had no idea what they wanted. They beat my father, our father, and dragged him out of the house by his feet. They threatened to do the same to my two sisters and to me. I thought they were going to kill us. All the while I am wondering where are our troops? Why are they not here protecting us? It was rough.

IVAN

My dear young lady, you have been through a lot.

PAVEL

Yes, you have, and don't I know it. That's why I cannot understand why you are so concerned about these krauts. If anybody should be calling for their blood it should be you.

EFFIE

These Nazis have done horrible things. But they were practically invited in. We were left to fend for ourselves.

PAVEL

Comrade, please understand that my sister is still a minor and her comments should not be taken seriously.

EFFIE

No, Pavel, I am right. We did nothing to stop them. They charged in, took over, our army gone, trashed everything, drove our family into hiding, while we feared for our lives. That was three years ago. I'm lucky that I'm still alive. How will putting these prisoners on display bring back our parents and my sisters? How will that stop the war? Maybe we need to exercise a little compassion.

PAVEL

Compassion? For a bunch of Nazi murderers? You got to be kidding. Where in the name of Marx are you getting these ideas from? Who has been feeding you all this sentimentalist crap?

EFFIE

Older brother, I love you. You took me in just like a good brother should. I don't want to make trouble for you. I don't want you to be angry at me, but I can't help the way I feel. Jesus said do unto others as you would like them to do unto you.

IVAN

I haven't heard that in a long time. But, my dear young lady, you must know of course that such religious teachings are banned by the government.

PAVEL

Please don't report this, I beg you. (*to Effie*) Where did you learn this garbage? Tell me at once.

IVAN

There is no need to become alarmed. Your sister is merely stating an opinion. That is all.

PAVEL

Comrade: let me assure you that we do not possess any seditious material.

IVAN

Who's saying anything about sedition? But, my dear young lady, you must be more careful in your choice of words.

PAVEL

No, comrade, it is more than that Religion is reactionary hokum that is based on myths that have no place in our society. Our grandparents believed in that junk and where did it take them? Nowhere. Now, I learn that my own sister had been infected with this claptrap. Now, Effie, I want to know: where did you learn that passage?

EFFIE

Is that really so important? The fact is that I know it, and know other passages as well. They bring me a comfort and help me get through the day.

PAVEL

Effie, you listen to me. You are to end your involvement with this infatuation of yours immediately. Maybe it's better if I not know the source of this infection.

IVAN

Effie, as a senior commander in the Red Army and a lifelong member of the Communist party, I rejected the teachings of religion a long time ago. My own parents were devout Christians. They used to pray every day. They sang praises to God and donated to the church. They had faith but it was based on nothing. It took the revolution to finally free them but by that time it was too late. My father soon succumbed to consumption and my mother had a stroke and soon after died.

EFFIE

Such a pity. I am truly sorry to hear that, comrade. I can tell that you are a good man. I just don't see how marching these Germans through the streets is going to accomplish anything. Jesus taught us to forgive.

PAVEL

Forgive our enemies? For what they have done? Have you gone crazy? (to Ivan) You see why we must suppress these ideas? You see how dangerous they are? They sow the seeds of defeatism.

EFFIE

What are you talking about? How can forgiveness be anything but good? Saint Paul said that love never fails.

IVAN

Effie, that is a beautiful teaching, but the Nazis don't deserve it. They laugh at it and see it as a sign of weakness, something to exploit.

PAVEL

Let me remind you that you want us to love an army of cut throat murderers who barged into our land, killed our people and terrified our country. That is crazy talk. Maybe you are sick and should be seen by a doctor.

IVAN

Yes. I know a good one, He's a personal friend of mine. I could set up an appointment.

EFFIE

No, I am not crazy. I know exactly what I am saying. There is no use in us harboring hatred for those men. That will accomplish nothing. Into of mocking them, welcome them with open arms. Greet them as fellow workers who have been misled. Isn't that a better way?

IVAN

I wish we could do that, Effie, but that would convey a message to the world that might be misunderstood to mean that we are not serious about what we are doing. That all the fighting and bloodshed has been for nothing, that all we needed to do was meet the enemy with warm smiles and everything would have been fine. Now, you don't want us to send out such a message, do you?

PAVEL

My dear sister, I must insist that you stop these rantings at once.

EFFIE

My dear brother, I love you, but I cannot stop what is natural. Jesus is in all of us. He preordained everything. I read it in the book, and it is the word of God.

PAVEL

You mean the Bible is still in our libraries?

EFFIE

No. After I fled from our home an old peasant gave me her book and asked me to safeguard it. The Germans had ransacked her house and it was the only thing she saved. She couldn't bear the thought of the book being burned. So, I took the book, kept it and read it. It's here in the apartment.

PAVEL

All this time you had that book and didn't tell me?

EFFIE

For what? I was reading, not preaching. I wasn't showboating, wasn't doing anything except learning the word. But now I can no longer remain silent.

IVAN

Effie, this is serious business. If anyone ever suspects that you are harboring such thoughts, and even worse spreading them, we could all land in hot water.

EFFIE

What am I saying that is so awful?

IVAN

It's not so much what you are saying, but rather that the authorities could conclude that you are part of a larger clandestine organization, one that is against the revolution and the state. That is treason and is a capital offense. Do you know the meaning of the term capital offense?

EFFIE

Yes, I do. It means death.

PAVEL

That's right, and that's all the more reason why I must insist, even beg, that you get rid of that book, put your faith in the state and stop worrying about a bunch of Nazis who would just as soon see you dead.

EFFIE

I can't do that.

PAVEL

Don't make me go into your room and search for that book.

EFFIE

Don't bother. It's under the mattress. But trashing it won't change anything. It's all in my head.

PAVEL

Which I want to help you keep.

IVAN

Perhaps we need to take a brief break from this discussion. Could you prepare us some coffee?

EFFIE

I would be happy to. How would you like it?

IVAN

Black with sugar.

PAVEL

Make mine with cream, no sugar.

EFFIE

Okay. (*Effie exits.*)

IVAN

This is a surprising development.

PAVEL

Let me assure you that I had no idea what Effie was doing.

IVAN

I believe you, Pavel. But at least we now know.

PAVEL

I just don't understand how my own sister could buy into such superstitious rubbish. The entire story is so ridiculous that only the most ignorant and stupid could ever believe it.

IVAN

Man has been pre-occupied with religion since the dawn of civilization. So, it does not surprise me that its still around today.

PAVEL

I just don't know how any modern person can waste their time on something so transparently false. Marx taught us that religion is the opiate of the people.

IVAN

There's your answer. It makes people feel good.

PAVEL

But it is based on myth.

IVAN

That has nothing to do with anything. Feelings have nothing to do with facts. They are entirely subjective. Your sister has the feeling. I don't know how to stop her without implicating ourselves. Right now, she is your responsibility.

PAVEL

If I had known about this earlier I would have intervened. I'll talk with her.

IVAN

Yes, talk with her. In the meantime, we have work to do. We have a big day ahead of us tomorrow.

Effie enters. She is carrying three cups of coffee on a tray.

EFFIE

Coffee's ready.

End of scene 5

Scene 6

Time: The next day

Place: Gorki Street. The German prisoners are marching down the street. They are loosely formed up in groups of three hundred. Three of the prisoners are Hans, Bauer and Wilhelm. They are marching together.

HANS

I didn't know that Moscow was such a big city.

BAUER

Now you know.

WILHELM

Now I know too. I heard that it was big, but not this big.

HANS

Look at all the people.

SPECTATORS

(Off stage)

Animals ... pigs ... fascist dogs ... Nazi freaks ... Superior nothings ... Rot in hell ... We'll fix you but good ... Die, Nazis, die!

BAUER

I don't want to look at them. It's enough just to hear them.

WILHELM

Just keep looking ahead. That's all we can do.

BAUER

If only these people understood that we came to liberate them.

HANS

And that we're not really all that bad.

WILHELM

How dumb can you guys be? These people hate us. Do you understand that? Hate us. If it weren't for the guards, they'd be ripping us to shreds.

RUSSIAN GUARD

(Off stage)

You guys there! Shut your mouths or I'll shut them for you.

WILHELM

Lower your voices.

HANS

You'd think they'd shoot us in public?

WILHELM

I don't know what they would do.

BAUER

I have no doubt about it.

HANS

Where do you think we're heading?

BAUER

Nowhere good, that's for sure. Man, I am hungrier now than ever. That slop they fed us wasn't even fit for hogs.

WILHELM

Be glad that they fed us anything.

HANS

I'm hungry too.

WILHELM

The more you keep talking about it the worse it gets. Think about something else.

HANS

I'm trying to.

BAUER

I'm thinking about home.

WILHELM

Good. Keep thinking, but keep your thoughts to yourself. That way you can think more freely.

SPECTATORS

(Off-stage)

Goose-stepping freaks ... bastards ... sons of bitches ... capitalist stooges ... brainless twerps ... running dogs ... baby killers.

HANS

I didn't do anything to these people.

WILHELM

Yes, you did, the moment you set foot in Mother Russia.

HANS

But we were ordered to.

BAUER

That's right. Ordered.

WILHELM

And we obeyed, and now here we are. Somewhere and somehow something went wrong.

BAUER

Yeah, like we were abandoned by our officers who split the first sign of trouble.

HANS

That's right. I remember seeing a couple of generals hot tailing it like their butts were on fire.

BAUER

And we, like fools, didn't go with them.

WILHELM

That would have been stupid. When the generals flee, that's called retreat. When the soldiers flee that's called desertion. They would have had us shot.

BAUER

Just like what's going to happen to us today.

WILHELM

You don't know that.

HANS

Maybe I should start praying.

BAUER

They taught you that in Hitler Youth?

HANS

I was taught that at home.

BAUER

Great. Prayers. I guess it can't hurt. Put in the good word for me, for what it's worth.

HANS

I will. Not just for you but for all of us.

WILHELM

The Fuhrer would not be too happy to find out that his soldiers are praying, but not to him.

BAUER

I never put much store in religion. I thought it was all a bunch of malarkey.

HANS

It's not malarkey.

BAUER

Whatever you say. If you believe, fine. But don't expect any miracles.

WILHELM

It's a miracle that we're still alive.

BAUER

They got to be keeping us alive for some reason.

WILHELM

Maybe they don't want to kill us.

BAUER

Bolsheviks? Are you kidding? Their entire program is based on murder. First they kill you then they steal your property, or do it the other way around. Whatever way, the result is still the same. You are dead.

RUSSIAN GUARD

(Off stage)

I told you guys to shut up. Don't make me say it again.

WILHELM

Yes, sir. We didn't hear you the last time. *(to Bauer and Hans)* Guys, let's stop talking and just march.

Effie enters the stage. She marches alongside Hans, Bauer and Wilhelm. She is holding a bag filled with bread. She takes out the bread and starts handing it to the three men.

EFFIE

Here. Take this. Not all Russians hate you. I don't hate you. I forgive you. God forgives you. Repent. I will pray for you.

RUSSIAN GUARD

(Off stage)

Grab that woman!

A Russian guard enters and forcibly yanks Effie off the stage.

HANS

What was that about?

BAUER

I guess our prayers were answered.

WILHELM

Like manna from heaven, even if we are marching straight to hell. I hope they're not too rough on the girl.

The three men continue marching in silence as they eat the bread.

End of scene 6

Scene 7

Time: One week later

Place: A room in the People's Hall of Justice.

On stage are Effie and Pavel and three persons dressed in judicial robes and who are seated behind a desk. They are Peoples' Judges 1, 2 and 3.

JUDGE 2

Comrade Effremya Pavlova Stepanikova, you are charged with consorting with the enemy during time of war, creating a public disturbance, and the spreading of false and seditious statements. How do you plead?

EFFIE

I pray for all of you. In the name of Jesus, I absolve you of your sins.

JUDGE 2

Comrade, under section 4, paragraph 5, subsection T of the Peoples' Judicial Act of 1931, you are required to enter a plea.

EFFIE

Plea? For what? I have nothing to plead for.

JUDGE 3

Comrade, do not mock this court. Displaying disrespect for the Peoples' judicial process is a serious offense.

JUDGE 1

Perhaps the comrade needs a little more time to consider her reply.

JUDGE 2

There is nothing to consider. She must enter a plea, guilty or not guilty.

EFFIE

Guilty of what? What have I done (*to Pavel*) What are they talking about?

JUDGE 1

The Peoples' Security Service submitted a report on your activities. You were detained and now face adjudication.

EFFIE

Arraignment? Adjudication? What are these words?

PAVEL

Effie, answer the court.

EFFIE

What am I to say?

PAVEL

Guilty or not guilty.

JUDGE 2

Comrade, this court has many cases in its docket and if you do not reply soon, we will enter a plea for you. We must move your case forward quickly.

PAVEL

Your honors, with your permission, please let me speak with my sister.

JUDGE 2

Please identify yourself.

PAVEL

I am Pavel Pavlovich Stepanikov. I am a major in the Red Army. I am the comrade's older brother.

JUDGE 1

Your request is highly unusual. However, in the interest of justice, the court will grant you your request. However, make it brief.

PAVEL

Effie, how could you do what you did?

EFFIE

What did I do that was so terrible?

PAVEL

You broke through security and gave aid to the enemy, and got me into trouble too.

EFFIE

I was obeying the teachings of the one who rules the world.

JUDGE 3

Are you finished yet?

PAVEL

Soon your honor.

JUDGE 3

Make it quick. We must move this case forward.

PAVEL

Please, Effie, cooperate with the court. I'm sure that if you do, they will show you leniency.

JUDGE 3

Time is up. Now, comrade, please enter a plea.

EFFIE

If I plead not guilty, then what happens?

JUDGE 2

We will conduct a trial.

EFFIE

And if I plead guilty?

JUDGE 1

The court will require that you confess to your crimes and in return for sparing the state the expense of a trial, may order a reduced sentence.

PAVEL

Take the latter. Plead guilty and get this over with.

EFFIE

But if I plead guilty I will not be telling the truth.

JUDGE 2

The court is waiting.

EFFIE

Not guilty.

JUDGE 1

Let the record show that the comrade pleaded not guilty.

JUDGE 2

Pursuant to Peoples' Judicial Regulation 23-47, section 18, paragraph 4B, subsection 327, this court will now convene a trial. Further, pursuant to section 23, paragraph 97, subsection G of the aforementioned regulation, this court will now assign itself the dual roles of prosecutor and adjudicator.

PAVEL

Your honor, that is outrageous. That is an obvious conflict of interest.

JUDGE 3

Are you questioning the competency of this court to adjudicate this matter fairly and impartially?

PAVEL

No, your honor. I was just making a point of inquiry regarding the rules of the court. If the court is prosecuting this case, then how can the court possibly rule against itself?

JUDGE 2

Comrade Major, what are you insinuating? That you wish to return to the old corrupt methods of dispensing justice, methods that were nothing but a sham? Under the old system justice was bought. Those with money could easily buy their way out of trouble. After the revolution, all that bourgeois pseudo-legal mumbo-jumbo was abolished and replaced with a system that ensures the speedy and efficient dispensation of justice uncorrupted by outside influence.

PAVEL

But is it fair to the defense?

JUDGE 2

Of course it is fair. How dare you even question the integrity of this court. What do you take us for? Political hacks? Cronies on the take? Bourgeois sycophants corrupted and oiled up by money? No, comrade, that decadent time is gone, and to that this court says good riddance. Comrade Major, the court wishes to remind you that these proceedings will be conducted in accordance with all applicable laws, rules, and regulations pursuant to the operation of the people's courts, and that the decision of this court shall be final and not subject to appeal. With that stipulated, the comrade still has the right to withdraw her not guilty plea and save the state needless expense. However, once the trial commences, she will forfeit that right. So, comrade, do you wish to withdraw the not guilty plea?

EFFIE

You mean, change my not guilty plea to guilty?

JUDGE 1

That is correct. The court awaits your reply.

PAVEL

You can still change your mind.

EFFIE

Why? I have done nothing wrong.

PAVEL

You have broken the law.

EFFIE

That is man's law. I obeyed a higher law that commands forgiveness.

JUDGE 3

So, comrade, do you wish to change your plea?

EFFIE

No. I am not guilty of anything.

JUDGE 1

Let the trial commence. It is so ordered.

JUDGE 2

Comrade, according to an official report submitted by the state security police, during an official military operation, namely the movement of German prisoners of war through the city of Moscow, you broke through the security cordon, ignored orders from the guards to stop, consorted with one or more enemy prisoners, made seditious statements, and provided said prisoners with tangible aid in the form of food, which could have been used to conceal weapons.

PAVEL

May I see copy of the report?

JUDGE 1

Request denied. Comrade defendant has been informed of the content of the report. To provide a copy would be redundant and a waste of time and in violation of applicable law governing the management of classified information.

JUDGE 3

Further, under Section 2178, subsection 63, paragraph 7, item G, of the People's Law Governing the Rules of Evidence, all reports and documents generated by the State Security Service are presumed to be complete and accurate and not subject to review.

PAVEL

However, on behalf of my sister, who is not well versed in matters of the law, I again ask that my sister be provided a copy of the report.

JUDGE 2

And again your request is denied. According to Section 2196, subsection 96, paragraph P, item K, of the aforementioned People's Law Governing the Rule of Evidence, all records of the Peoples' Security Service are top secret and are not open for review.

PAVEL

Then, could we at least be provided the name of the officer who filed the report?

JUDGE 1

Request denied. Pursuant to Section 4, paragraph G, subsection 2 of State Security Rules and Regulations, as amended in 1934, the identity of state security agents is classified information, the disclosure of which is strictly prohibited.

JUDGE 3

Comrade Defendant, first, did you do what the report alleges?

EFFIE

I forgot what the report alleges.

PAVEL

Your honor, this is why we need a copy of the report.

JUDGE 2

Your obstructionist tactics are trying the patience of this court and will not be tolerated.

EFFIE

But, your honor, I honestly cannot remember what the reports said. Could you please repeat what it said?

JUDGE 1

Request denied. Now, Comrade defendant, tell us in your own words what you did to cause you to be arrested?

EFFIE

I did nothing.

JUDGE 2

What do you mean, nothing?

EFFIE

Nothing.

JUDGE 3

You must have done something. Otherwise this case would not have come to the attention of this court.

EFFIE

I didn't do anything wrong.

JUDGE 2

So, you did not break through a security cordon?

EFFIE

What is a security cordon?

JUDGE 3

And you did not ignore orders to stop?

EFFIE

I was not so ordered by the one who reigns from above.

JUDGE 1

And you did not consort with German prisoners?

EFFIE

Consort? What does that mean?

JUDGE 1

Comrade defendant, I must demand that you stop wasting the court's time. You know exactly what this court is asking you about and you know exactly what you did. If you persist in this charade, the consequences for you, and for the Comrade Major as well, could be severe.

PAVEL

No way! I had nothing to do with it. I wasn't even with her.

EFFIE

Your honor, I admit I was arrested, but I did nothing wrong.

JUDGE 2

One way or another, this court will get to the bottom of this. The evidence shows that you were the ring leader of a spy network that infiltrated the highest echelons of the Red Army for the purpose of fomenting counter-revolution.

JUDGE 3

Using the cover of the parade, you cleverly contacted your German operatives in the parade, conveying to them classified military information.

PAVEL

But your honor, she is just a girl and the Germans were heavily guarded.

JUDGE 1

Not so heavily guarded that she could not make contact with her co-conspirators. The Secret State Security Service must always maintain the highest level of vigilance, especially now during war. It is their sacred duty.

EFFIE

Your honors, you are mistaken. I acted alone, in obedience to the teachings found in the good book.

JUDGE 3

There is only one good book, the Communist Manifesto, and only one Great Teacher, Comrade Stalin, who is the source of all wisdom and understanding. Do you understand that?

EFFIE

Comrade Stalin is a great leader, but an even greater leader, the one who sacrificed his life for all of us, compelled me to act.

JUDGE 2

To give aid to the enemy? The very enemy that killed our people, pillaged our towns and terrified the entire nation?

EFFIE

Yes, even to them. For to forgive is divine. We must love our enemy.

PAVEL

Your honors, my sister is highly impressionable and does not know what she is saying.

EFFIE

That is not so. I know exactly what I am saying and know exactly what I did. My actions were ordained from above.

JUDGE 1

Where did you learn such rubbish?

EFFIE

It is not rubbish.

JUDGE 2

It is the rantings of a foolish and dangerous person who cannot be trusted.

PAVEL

I appeal to the court to be lenient.

EFFIE

I don't care what you do to me. My ways are set. I am on a mission for the Lord. It is HE who commands me.

JUDGE 3

Let me ask you this: did you learn any of this stuff in school?

EFFIE

No. It was divine inspiration.

PAVEL

You see. She is obviously delirious.

EFFIE

Yes, I am. Delirious with joy knowing that I am doing what the Lord commands. Whoa to all who ignore his message for He is everywhere and the source of all truth.

JUDGE 1

Stop this seditious prattling at once. Your comments violate Section 18, paragraph 3, subsection A, item 14 of the People's Act Prohibiting All Religious Propaganda, enacted in 1931 and amended in 1938.

EFFIE

Men govern men, but the Lord governs all. He is the supreme authority and the light.

JUDGE 2

This is going much too far. You and your brother are part of a nest of spies and must be punished in accordance with the law.

EFFIE

But I told you, my brother had nothing to do with this. I acted alone.

PAVEL

Comrade judges, I did everything I could to stop my sister.

JUDGE 3

Everything?

JUDGE 1

If you did everything, then why is she still alive?

PAVEL

I don't understand the question.

JUDGE 2

Section 176, subsection 45, paragraph R, item 97 of the People's Family Loyalty Act of 1928 authorizes all family members to report all suspicious behavior, including that of immediate family members, if they have probable cause to believe that such behavior poses a threat to the security of the state. You violated that law.

PAVEL

That law is unfair and barbaric.

JUDGE 3

That comment constitutes seditious slander against the state. Pursuant to Section 2100, paragraph K, section 456 of the People's Law Outlawing Unauthorized Public Statements, all statements that impugn the motives of the state are strictly prohibited. Perhaps this court should expand this inquiry to include the Red Army. Who knows how many other officers are harboring these same criminal thoughts. Any action or utterance that erodes public confidence in the legitimacy of the state poses a direct threat to the survival of the state and must be suppressed at once.

EFFIE

My brother is a loyal member of the Red Army and has served his country faithfully.

JUDGE 2

Comrade defendant, your comments are self-serving, out of order and divert attention away from the facts of your case.

EFFIE

I was only defending my brother whose motives are as pure as snow.

JUDGE 3

The evidence indicates otherwise.

JUDGE 1

Section 23, subsection 98, paragraph R, subparagraph 183, of the People's Law Governing the Operations of Special Security Tribunals mandates this court to investigate any and all suspicious activities involving possible attempts to compromise state security. You could not have acted without the active support of traitorous elements within the ranks of the Red Army.

EFFIE

Please, your honors, I acted alone.

JUDGE 2

That is impossible. You conspired with others to foment discord. The court directs you to reveal the identities of the officials with whom you conspired.

EFFIE

I conspired with no one except the one who sits at the right of the Lord, who created the world and commands me to act.

JUDGE 3

Oh, so you do admit that you were part of a conspiracy.

EFFIE

Yes. But it was with a the one who reigns above.

JUDGE 3

Is that his code name?

EFFIE

He has no name.

JUDGE 2

So you cannot tell us his actual name?

EFFIE

He is known by many names.

JUDGE 1

Many names? How wide is this nest of conspirators?

EFFIE

He is here with us and everywhere. He was with me when I acted and is with me right now as I speak.

JUDGE 2

We do not see him. Point him out to us.

EFFIE

I cannot.

JUDGE 3

Then you are misleading this court. Your evasiveness violates Section 76, paragraph 234, subsection 16, subparagraph H of the People's Law Outlawing Misleading Statements which strictly prohibits any statements that deliberately impede the efficient operation of the courts.

EFFIE

Of course you cannot see him, because you are blind to the truth.

JUDGE 1

This court is not blind.

EFFIE

But you are for if you were not you would see him.

JUDGE 2

You speak in riddles but this court has no time for riddles.

EFFIE

I speak plainly but you will not listen.

JUDGE 3

Such impudence.

JUDGE 2

You mentioned something about truth. What is the truth?

EFFIE

It is that which is written in the Good Book.

JUDGE 3

Pursuant to section 126, paragraph 9, subsection 18, subparagraph K of the People's Law Prohibiting the Publication of Unlawful Books, all books not specifically approved by the state are banned.

PAVEL

You cite all these laws yet provide us with no copies of what it is you are citing.

JUDGE 1

The court has no legal obligation to share anything with the defendant or her associates.

JUDGE 2

Does the comrade defendant have anything else to say, or any new evidence to submit in her defense, before this court passes sentence?

EFFIE

I did nothing wrong. The Germans are our fellow human beings and we must show them compassion. I know what they have done and how hurtful have been their actions, but they were under the influence of the Evil One. To display them like freaks violates the sacred commandments brought down from Sinai and the message of love delivered by the messiah in his Sermon on the Mount. For he taught us to pray: Our father, who art in heaven hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come and thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us, and lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. Love thy neighbor as thyself would want to be loved and give succor to those who suffer. I believe in love and forgiveness and forgive you for what you are about to do.

PAVEL

I ask the court not to judge my sister harshly for she knows not what she was doing. As for me, do with me what you will. In these matters you have the final authority.

JUDGE 3

Comrade defendant, this court finds you guilty of all charges and hereby sentences you to ten years' protective segregation at a facility to be determined by the People's Office for Education and Enlightenment. As for your co-conspirator, Major Pavel Pavlovich Stepanikov, his case will be referred to the Red Army for further adjudication in a manner to be determined by his commanders, with periodic inquiry by the court into the status of his case, especially in regard to the discovery of evidence exposing the source of security leaks within the Red Army. This court hereby declares this case closed. So ordered. Next case.

End of scene 6

Scene 7

Time: 3 years later

Place: The Peoples' Center for Scientific Research and the Advancement of Knowledge. Despite its fancy title, the center is an urban gulag located just a few blocks from the Kremlin in Moscow. Everyone inside the building are inmates, including the managers. There are no guards posted anywhere inside the building. The inmates literarily run the prison. Onstage are three inmates. They are Hans, Bauer and Wilhelm. All three are sitting in front of machinery that they have been assigned to operate.

HANS

I have no idea how to operate this machine.

BAUER

It's just a bunch of junk, like everything else in this country.

WILHELM

It could be worse.

BAUER

Listen, I just want to bet out of here. For three years we've been trapped here. Does anyone even know that we're alive?

WILHELM

Yes. You know that you're alive and Hans and I know that your alive, so cut your griping. You're not alone. Be thankful for that.

BAUER

Thankful for what? For the past three years of my life being wasted? For getting stuck in this god-forsaken place fighting for guy who winds up killing himself and leaving us in the lurch?

HANS

I hope my parents are okay. I think about them all the time. I hope they're not too worried about me.

WILHELM

Listen, guys, so far we've lucked out. We're still alive. If that camp they sent us to in Siberia didn't kill us, then nothing will.

BAUER

I wonder why they transferred us here.

WILHELM

Who knows and who cares? No sense trying to figure it out. Maybe they thought that us being German we'd make good machine operators.

HANS

I wouldn't know a gearbox from a tool box.

WILHELM

Well, don't tell them that.

BAUER

Yeah, then they might shoot you for lying.

HANS

I thought Russia was supposed to be a workers' paradise.

BAUER

It is, if you're not a worker. Conditions in this country are bad. I saw how the people lived when I was paroled to work in this factory in town. The town was an out and out dump. I think we're probably better off in prison. Nobody in this country has money.

WILHELM

Who cares? Our job is to survive and hope for the best.

HANS

I do hope for the best, but it doesn't help.

WILHELM

I know that, Hans.

BAUER

I feel like I'm buried alive. At least they're not working us to death.

HANS

I wonder where they got this machinery from.

BAUER

Let's see. It says here: Made in Germany. No surprise there. Now I know why they transferred us here. German machines, German prisoners, German know how, except that we don't know how. How did the Russians ever win this war?

HANS

Did they really win?

BAUER

That's what they told us, right?

WILHELM

Stop prattling on. Germany lost the war and you know it. You heard the guards celebrating.

BAUER

It's hard to imagine Germany without Hitler.

WILHELM

It's hard for me to now imagine that Germany even had a Hitler.

BAUER

Hey, he meant well.

HANS

How do you know that?

BAUER

Because he wanted to make Germany great again.

WILHELM

Instead he destroyed it. Such a beautiful country too.

HANS

Especially the Black Forest area where I grew up.

BAUER

I stayed in a hotel there once. We had a lot of fun.

HANS

It seems like such a long time ago.

WILHELM

Time is relative. Here it means nothing.

BAUER

What kind of country dumps you in prison and then leaves you to rot?

WILHELM

Germany had its dumping grounds too.

HANS

You mean, like for garbage?

WILHELM

In a manner of speaking, yes.

HANS

You must dispose of garbage somehow. Right?

WILHELM

That's right. Now I'm going to tell you guys something, but before I do, you must vow that what I am about to reveal to you, you will keep secret. If you agree, say I swear it.

HANS

I swear it.

BAUER

I swear it.

WILHELM

I was a guard in a concentration camp.

HANS

In a concentration camp? You mean, those places really existed?

WILHELM

Yes, they did.

BAUER

I didn't believe they existed either. I heard stories about those camps, but I thought they were just propaganda whipped up by the enemy.

WILHELM

Well, it wasn't propaganda. If the Russians find out about my background, I'll be shot faster than you can blink your eyes.

BAUER

And they'll probably shoot us as well. Why'd you have wait three years to tell us?

WILHELM

Just in case the Russians do some checking up. At least you'll know why they're arresting me.

BAUER

Is there anything we need to know about you?

WILHELM

Yes, that I don't like nosy people.

HANS

That leaves me out.

WILHELM

Let's keep it that way.

HANS

When's chow time?

BAUER

Don't you mean slop time?

HANS

Okay. Slop time. Sarge, how was the food in the camps?

WILHELM

For the guards okay; for the inmates, real swill, stuff that would make you puke.

HANS

Didn't that bother you that they were being fed crap?

BAUER

They deserved it. They were the traitors and saboteurs who stabbed Germany in the back after the first war. They got what was coming to them.

WILHELM

Except many of those traitors and saboteurs were not adults. There were a lot of young kids in there too. Even babies. It was awful. After a while I couldn't take it. I started having nightmares. That's when I joined the army.

HANS

In the Hitler Youth we were told nothing about this. It was all fun and games and learning how to be a soldier.

BAUER

What's wrong with that? We're talking this way because we lost and because we're stuck here, maybe forever. If Germany lost, it was Hitler's fault. He misled us.

WILHELM

We let him mislead us. So, we have only ourselves to blame.

HANS

I didn't do anything wrong. I was just a kid.

WILHELM

The innocence of youth.

HANS

Just because I'm young doesn't mean I'm stupid. I'm going through exactly what you're going through. I think the Russians are playing with us. They're using us as tools. They keep us alive to make a point, what that is I don't know. I've been interrogated many times. I don't know what they're after. I've told them everything I know, which isn't much. I don't bear any grudges against the Russians. In fact, I respect them. The food could be better and the accommodations more comfortable, but I'm surviving and believe that all this is part of some larger plan that I can't even begin to understand.

BAUER

Wow! Hans, when did you become a philosopher?

HANS

Now you're making fun of me.

BAUER

Don't give me an attitude. I can still knock you on your ass.

HANS

Knock me on my ass? That's the best you can say?

WILHELM

Hans, you are finally growing up. Congratulations.

HANS

I grew up a long time ago. You just didn't notice it.

BAUER

I don't like being around a smart aleck, which is what you've become. Why don't you keep your mouth shut? It's hard enough having to wake up every morning in a dungeon without having to deal with a sourpuss like you.

HANS

I didn't ask to be here either.

WILHELM

Both of you, stop this bickering! We got to stick together. It's a matter of survival.

Effie enters. She is pushing a cart. The cart contains a large bowl that is filled with a brackish liquid mix that approximates a soup. Next to the bowl is a bag filled with mold-covered bread.

Meal time. **EFFIE**

Where's the guy who brings us food? **BAUER**

How should I know? **EFFIE**

Where did you learn German? **BAUER**

In school. **EFFIE**

Your German is good. **WILHELM**

Thank you. **EFFIE**

WILHELM
Wait a minute. Don't I know you from somewhere? *(To Bauer)* Remember while we were being marched through Moscow a girl ran over to us and gave us bread? *(To Effie)* You're that girl! Unbelievable! What are you doing here?

Serving my time. **EFFIE**

For what? **WILHELM**

EFFIE
Giving aid to the enemy.

BAUER
Because you gave us bread?

EFFIE
I don't want to discuss it.

WILHELM
What's your name?

EFFIE
Inmate number 2385467.

BAUER
Please don't play with us. Now what's your name?

EFFIE
Effie.

BAUER
Thank you, Effie. I'm Bauer and this is Sergeant Wilhelm, and this is Hans.
We are the three men that you helped.

HANS
Hello, Effie.

WILHELM
I still can't believe it. For the past three years I was hoping to meet you again so I could express my thanks to you for what you did. It was a decent and courageous act.

EFFIE
That got me into a lot of trouble.

WILHELM

That's too bad. I hope you have no regrets.

HANS

We didn't ask for your help.

EFFIE

I know that.

BAUER

As you can see, we are not monsters.

EFFIE

I never said you were.

BAUER

But your country says we are.

EFFIE

To me, you're inmates. Just like me.

WILHELM

But we have never been convicted of any crime.

EFFIE

You invaded my country and murdered my people, which are crimes.

BAUER

I personally did not murder anyone.

EFFIE

You were the enemy.

WILHELM

What became of Hitler?

EFFIE

Hitler is dead. He killed himself. You didn't know that?

BAUER

We heard rumors that he died but we've been cut off from the news.

EFFIE

Now you know. Does that change anything?

HANS

When will we get out of here?

EFFIE

How should I know?

WILHELM

How's the food here?

EFFIE

I just got here, so I can't tell you.

BAUER

Looks like the same swill that they dished out in Siberia.

EFFIE

You were in Siberia?

HANS

How do we know that you're not a spy?

WILHELM

Are you?

EFFIE

No, I'm not. Like I said, I'm an inmate.

WILHELM

Well, we don't want to get you in trouble.

EFFIE

No trouble. I will pray for you.

HANS

We don't need your damn prayers.

EFFIE

Yes, you do. You have much to atone for.

HANS

Save your preaching for a church.

EFFIE

Churches are banned.

HANS

You helped us three years ago. Thank you, now serve us that slop and get out of here.

WILHELM

Hans, please. She helped us.

HANS

Meanwhile we're still here.

BAUER

Why'd you do it, Effie?

EFFIE

I was commanded to, by the Lord.

BAUER

But we were the enemy.

EFFIE

What I did I was compelled to do. The Good Book teaches us to forgive those who transgress against us.

WILHELM

Even those who commit murder?

EFFIE

Yes.

BAUER

Here we are in this god-forsaken country that mocks religion and we come across a religious fanatic. I find this all of this to be grotesque.

HANS

Maybe it was meant to be.

EFFIE

So, you believe too.

HANS

I didn't say that, and don't put words in my mouth. I'm just one of those German soldiers that trashed your country, and baby, I'd do it again if ordered to. I have no use for you people, for your system and for your country, which is a dump.

BAUER

That's right, missy.

EFFIE

I will pray for you.

BAUER

Maybe you should save yourself first.

HANS

Yeah, save yourself and leave us alone. You're just trouble. You did something that got yourself busted. Thank you for helping us three years ago. Now dish out that mud and leave us be.

EFFIE

May the Lord look after you and comfort you in your time of need.

WILHELM

And the same to you too. Your kindness will not be forgotten.

EFFIE

I know. I'm reminded of it every waking moment of my life and even in my sleep.

Effie gives each man a tin bowl, serves fills their bowls with soup, then exits. The three men eat their food in silence.

End of scene 7.

Scene 8

Time: Next day

Place: a stairway. Hans and Effie meet on the stairway landing.

HANS

Hello.

EFFIE

Good day. Where are you going?

HANS

To the eighth floor. What about you?

EFFIE

To the kitchen. That's where I'm assigned.

HANS

Are you the cook?

EFFIE

No, just the server.

HANS

Do you eat what you serve?

EFFIE

Yes.

HANS

The food stinks.

EFFIE

I know that.

HANS

You Russians really have it in for us.

EFFIE

I don't have it in for you. I forgive you for your transgressions.

HANS

Stop judging us.

EFFIE

I was sent here to do the work of the Lord.

HANS

Funny hearing that from a Bolshevik.

EFFIE

I'm not a Bolshevik.

HANS

But shouldn't you be more careful as to what you say?

EFFIE

My life is not my own to live. I live for a higher purpose.

HANS

I don't believe you for a second. I think you're a spy whose been sent here to monitor us. How can you not hate us?

EFFIE

To hate would violate the teachings of the one who is the king over all of us. Yet I do not blame you for doubting me. That is the work of the devil, the same devil that made you invade my country, kill millions of people and terrorize the entire world. To this day I do not know if my parents and my two sisters and my brother are still alive. It would be easy to blame you and denounce you and heap abuse on you and even physically attack you, but that would be wrong. I would be succumbing to the same devil that clutched your country by the throat and now is doing the same to mine.

HANS

Very well said and well-rehearsed. You got your lines down pat.

EFFIE

Think what you want.

HANS

I think you're a mental case. I knew someone like you in the Hitler Youth. He used to go around preaching to everyone until he was taken away.

EFFIE

I was taken away too.

WILHELM

What happened to you after they took you away?

EFFIE

I was put on trial and sentenced to ten years of confinement.

WILHELM

For giving us bread?

EFFIE

Yes.

HANS

You're lucky they didn't execute you.

EFFIE

Those matters are beyond my control. Right now, I just do my job.

HANS

How old are you?

EFFIE

Twenty.

HANS

I'm twenty-one.

EFFIE

That's nice to know.

HANS

You really don't hate me?

EFFIE

No, I really don't hate you. That will not bring back my family.

HANS

In Germany we were taught that all Russians were degenerates and drunks.

EFFIE

In my school we were taught that all Germans were racists and murderers.

HANS

You know, for a long time I had no idea what was going on. Then suddenly I saw the light and from that moment I changed.

EFFIE

I saw the light too. Maybe we both saw the same light.

HANS

Yes, maybe. I hope to leave this place alive.

EFFIE

I do too.

HANS

Let me look at your hands. *(Effie shows Hans her hands. He takes her hands in his.)* You have soft hands. I like that.

EFFIE

Thank you.

Hans pulls Effie to him. They embrace and kiss.

HANS

Now we're friends.

EFFIE

The Lord works in mysterious ways.

Two women enter. They are trustees.

TRUSTEE 1

What's going on here?

EFFIE

We were just talking.

TRUSTEE 2

That looked like more than just talk to me.

HANS

We ran into each other by accident. Nothing happened.

TRUSTEE 1

You let us be the judge of that.

TRUSTEE 2

Let me remind you that this institution is not a social club and that fraternization is strictly prohibited. What is your name?

EFFIE

Effremya.

TRUSTEE 1

And your name?

HANS

Hans.

You are German. TRUSTEE 2

Yes. HANS

Yes ... madam. TRUSTEE 2

Yes, madam. HANS

That's better. TRUSTEE 2

So, what were you two talking about? TRUSTEE 1

About the food. HANS

What about the food? TRUSTEE 1

How wonderful it is. HANS

Don't lie to us, kraut. We know the food here stinks, so don't play us for fools. So, what were you talking about? TRUSTEE 2

Life. EFFIE

Life? In here? What life? TRUSTEE 1

EFFIE

The life that is founded on love.

TRUSTEE 2

Wait a minute. Are you the religious fanatic we have heard about? The one who goes around praying for everyone?

EFFIE

I don't know.

TRUSTEE 1

Girlly, in this place all the prayers in the world won't get you out of here.

EFFIE

The purpose of prayer is to cleanse the soul.

TRUSTEE 2

I'd rather take a nice hot shower. That's cleansing enough for me. What about you, kraut? You into this religious stuff too?

HANS

No, madam.

TRUSTEE 1

She wasn't trying to recruit you?

HANS

No.

TRUSTEE 2

Maybe you were trying to teach her some stuff of your own. You are a rather handsome looking young man. Maybe you can give me some lessons.

HANS

Madam, we were just talking.

EFFIE

The Lord will protect us.

TRUSTEE 1

I'm afraid that train left the station a long time ago. We know that because we're the station masters. *(to Effie)* Now, turn around. You are under arrest for consorting with the enemy. *Trustee 1 grabs Effie's arms, and places hand cuffs on her.*

HANS

Stop! It was not her fault.

TRUSTEE 2

As for you, we will deal with you later. Now, go about your business.

Trustees 1 and 2 drag Effie off the stage, Hans is alone.

Scene 8

Time: 4 years later

Place: Same as scene 6

On stage are Hans, Bauer and Wilhelm

HANS

Do you know what day it is today?

BAUER

I don't know and I don't care.

WILHELM

We must keep our minds sharp.

HANS

We still have minds?

BAUER

These damn Bolsheviks have taken everything from us.

WILHELM

Except our memory.

BAUER

I'm not so sure about that.

HANS

How long have we been here?

BAUER

Seven damn years. Seven years lost from my life.

WILHELM

Don't lose hope, Bauer.

HANS

What is hope?

BAUER

Listen to us. We've become philosophers.

HANS

What's a philosopher?

BAUER

Some two-bit know it all who thinks he knows how people should live.

HANS

I just want out of here. You hear? OUT OF HERE! That's my philosophy.

WILHELM

We're still alive. That's what counts.

BAUER

If you want to call this living. That damn Hitler. look what he did to us.

WILHELM

You mean what we did to ourselves.

BAUER

We were just following orders. Why can't the Bolsheviks accept that?

WILHELM

Because they're just following orders too.

HANS

Everybody follows orders. Meanwhile not everybody gets placed in a cage.

BAUER

Oh shut up, the both of you. You sicken me.

Effie and Trustee 1 and Trustee 2 enter.

TRUSTEE 1

Ah, my German friends. Sorry to interrupt your pleasant conversation, but it is now dinner time.

WILHELM

To what do we owe the pleasure of your company, madam?

TRUSTEE 2

We want to check on the progress you have made in your re-education. The three of you, such splendid examples of Aryan masculinity.

TRUSTEE 1

I read somewhere that all you Nazis believed that all us Russians are, what's the word, untermensch.

WILHELM

We're not Nazis, madam.

TRUSTEE 2

Oh, yes you are. No need denying it. (*to Trustee 1*). I see already that you require more re-education.

BAUER

We're educated enough, madam. Thank you anyway.

TRUSTEE 1

Save us your empty expressions of gratitude. We're here doing our jobs.

BAUER

Jobs? What are you talking about? You're stuck here too.

TRUSTEE 1

Oh, no, my dear Nazi friend. We choose to stay here in order to serve the people.

TRUSTEE 2

That's right, and the people have assigned us the task of supervising your re-education. Is that not correct, comrade Effremya?

EFFIE

Yes, comrade trustee, it is correct.

TRUSTEE 1

And did we not teach you well, during your one-year in solitary confinement?

EFFIE

Yes, comrade trustee, you taught me well.

TRUSTEE 2

And you, young man, how goes it?

HANS

Madam Trustee, you know that I hate it here and that Effie and I did nothing wrong.

TRUSTEE 2

Nazi fool. For four years you've been spouting that ridiculous lie. Perhaps you need another year at hard labor.

WILHELM

Please let me remind you that we are prisoners of war and have certain rights.

TRUSTEE 1

Incorrect. According to Article 194, section 15, paragraph 287, subsection 18, subparagraph K of the People's Statute Governing the Prosecution of War Crimes, the moment you invaded the Soviet Union you forfeited your rights.

BAUER

When will we be released?

TRUSTEE 2

When you have repaid your debt.

WILHELM

But we were never convicted of anything.

TRUSTEE 1

How do you know that?

WILHELM

Because we never went before a judge.

TRUSTEE 2

You were indicted, tried and convicted in absentia.

WILHELM

But that's not fair. We have a right to be heard.

TRUSTEE 1

Pursuant to Section 23, subsection 89, paragraph 765, subparagraph L, item 187 of the People's Statute Governing the Right to Due Process as amended in 1943, your case was reviewed and heard by the People's Tribunal. Your presence was not necessary. It would not have changed anything. In fact, it probably would have made matters worse for you.

HANS

You are wicked, evil people.

TRUSTEE 1

And you can talk? You who served Hitler?

HANS

So what? I can still talk.

TRUSTEE 2

Such insolence.

EFFIE

Love will conquer all.

TRUSTEE 1

Love is romantic garbage that distorts rational thought. It has no place in modern society and must be destroyed.

EFFIE

The Lord loves you.

TRUSTEE 1

Will you ever learn?

EFFIE

I follow the Great One, as one of his disciples.

TRUSTEE 2

How dare you say that? That is sedition!

EFFIE

For he died in the fulfillment of prophesy in order to save the world.

TRUSTEE 1

As so will you too. Unless you repent for your sins.

EFFIE

So be it.

HANS

Effie, you don't know what you're saying.

EFFIE

I love you, Hans.

HANS

I love you too.

TRUSTEE 1

So, you two are in love. How charming.

TRUSTEE 2

However, let us remind you that according to Article 7, section 6, paragraph 3, subsection 19, subparagraph Q, item 15, of the People's Statute Governing the Operation of Institutes of Enlightenment and Re-education, social intimacy of any kind is strictly prohibited and is a capital offense. However, Comrade Effremya, in your case we have been willing to make an exception and grant you leniency if you would be willing to publicly renounce your beliefs and admit your guilt.

TRUSTEE 1

Well, are you?

WILHELM

Don't do it. (*to Trustees*) Punish me instead.

TRUSTEE 2

You! A martyr? Don't make us laugh. You're a Nazi.

BAUER

Do it! It doesn't matter. Nobody will know. We're all going to die here anyway.

HANS

I don't want you to die, not on my account.

EFFIE

But love is the way to salvation. Don't you understand? That is why I gave you bread. It was out of love. How can I deny that now?

HANS

I couldn't live knowing that I sent you to your death.

TRUSTEE 2

What is it with you Nazis? All of a sudden you're all so caring and altruistic. (*to Effie*) Do you honestly think he is worth dying for? The scum that was part of the horde that destroyed your family?

WILHELM

Effie, you can't trust them.

TRUSTEE 1

You are beginning to irritate us. One more outburst and I will silence you for good.

TRUSTEE 2

Well, comrade, it's been four years and we're still waiting for your answer. All you have to do is confess, and this process will end. But make it snappy. You're not the only guest in this house.

EFFIE

Comrade trustees, do with me what you want.

TRUSTEE 1

And stop trying to put this on us. You cavorted with the enemy, gave them aid, comforted them and even said you loved them. Now you decide what you want to do.

EFFIE

The ways of the Lord are shrouded in mystery.

TRUSTEE 2

All nonsense. Nothing but talk. Why can't you admit that?

EFFIE

I am guided by a higher power. I will not defend it or explain it because I cannot.

TRUSTEE 1

You are a disgrace to the people and to our state. While the state cares for you and nurtures you, you go around spreading lies which erode public morale and aids our enemies. (*to the three men*) Meaning you.

EFFIE

The Great One Above is the source of all salvation. I am merely the messenger.

HANS

I believe in you, Effie. I truly do.

TRUSTEE 2
Are you willing to prove it?

HANS
Yes.

TRUSTEE 1
Then execute her.

HANS
That would be murder.

TRUSTEE 2
You Germans murdered millions of Russians. What's one more dead Russian?

HANS
I thought the war is over.

TRUSTEE 1
This has nothing to do with the war. If you love her, you will you send her to her maker. Here: take my dagger. (*Trustee 1 gives Hans her bayonet*). One quick thrust in chest and it will be done.

WILHELM
Don't do it. They're just playing with you.

TRUSTEE 2
This is no game.

BAUER
Bolshevik pigs. (*to Hans*) Give me the knife. I'll do it.

TRUSTEE 1
No. Hans and Effie are in love. It is between the two of them to settle this matter.

HANS
(to Effie)

What do you want me to do?

EFFIE

The Lord created me, comforts me, and gives me hope.

TRUSTEE 2

Well, Nazi. We're waiting.

*Hans slowly raises the dagger over his head and points it directly at Effie.
Effie screams.*

End of scene 8

Scene 9

Time: The present

Place: a classroom at a university. The professor is lecturing a class. Everyone on stage bear striking resemblances to the characters in the story.

PROFESSOR

On July 17, 1944, the Soviet Red Army paraded sixty-thousand German prisoners of war through the streets of Moscow. These soldiers, which included nineteen generals, were part of Hitler's army that invaded the Soviet Union in 1941. They were captured in a battle that took place in western Russia around the same time that the Allies were invading northern France. They were put on display as proof of the power and supremacy of the Red Army and Soviet Union, which ironically no longer exist. The Soviet authorities filmed this parade. At one point the camera shows a young woman, just a girl in fact, whose identity is still unknown, leaving the crowd of spectators and running into the procession and giving a few of the prisoners what appeared to be pieces of bread. The fate of the girl and the men who were the beneficiaries of her kindness is unknown. What we do know is that most of the prisoners did not survive internment. Whether they deserved to die I will not say. I am not here to judge. Suffice it to say, however, that the Nazis started the war for which the German military and the German people paid a heavy price. But what that girl did took an incredible amount of courage. Maybe her goodwill was misplaced on those who did not deserve it, or maybe she had lost her mind and was acting out some bizarre and pathetic fantasy, or maybe she was using the prisoners to make a political point, but whatever her motivation the essential humanity of her act remains intact. It came at a moment in time when such acts were considered treason and showed that despite all the barbarity, cruelty, brutality, injustice, and oppression that is part of human history, there is still room for compassion and hope for humanity, which means us.

STUDENTS

Amen.

The end

