

THE PORNOGRAPHER

A Full-Length Play

By

Kirt Shineman

Contact: Kirt Shineman
8642 W. Paradise Ln.
Peoria, AZ 85382
V/T: 623-930-5666
KA_Shine@MSN.com

© All Rights Reserved, 2011

SYNOPSIS:	2
CAST & CHARACTERS:	2
TIME:	2
SETTING, MUSIC & COSTUMES:	2
ACT I:	3
Overture	3
Scene 1: 1912-Egon in St. Polten Prison	3
Scene 2: Transition to 1908	10
Scene 3: 1908-Life Drawing Studio at the Academy	12
Scene 4: Tatjana's Testimony- One	17
Scene 5: The Prison Cell	17
Scene 6: 1908-Meeting Klimt and Wally	21
Scene 7: The Prison Cell- Professor's Letter	29
Scene 8: 1908- Egon's Studio and Homework	30
Scene 9: The Prison Cell- Day Dreaming	36
Scene 10: 1909- Painting with Klimt and Wally	37
Scene 11: The Court Hearing	46
Scene 12: Tatjana's Testimony- Two	48
ACT II:	49
Scene 1: Tatjana's Testimony- Three	49
Scene 2: The Prison Cell	50
Scene 3: The Trial Part One	56
Scene 4: The Exhibition of 1909	58
Scene 5: Tatjana's Testimony- Four	60
Scene 6: The Trial Part Two	61
Scene 7: 1912- Wally and Egon in Neulengbach	65
Scene 8: The Trial Part Three	74
Scene 9: Tatjana's Testimony- Five	79
Scene 10: The Sentencing to Prison	79
Scene 11: The Bonfire	80
Scene 12: The Prison Cell	84
NOTES TO THE DIRECTOR:	88

SYNOPSIS:

When real-life artist, Egon Schiele, is charged with raping and kidnapping of a young girl, his trial becomes a landmark and his artwork is deemed pornography. Charged with immoral and depraved behavior, Egon fights for his freedom. His ordeal places him, his art and his lifestyle with his girlfriend, Wally, on trial. The court case calls into question Egon's radical upbringing and his development as an artist. Will he be erased or will he draw freely?

CAST & CHARACTERS:

Five to six actors. MEN: 3-4; WOMEN: 2

EGON SCHIELE:	Austrian painter, 16-19 years-old; a latter-day James Dean, muscular, thin, innocent, striking, and sexy.
WALLY (VALERIE) NEUZIL:	Early 30's- model, prostitute, lover, 13 years Egon's senior; she thinks her body is her prop- a modern cougar.
JUDGE:	40's- in a heavy long white wig (double cast)
PROFESSOR GRIEPENKERL:	40's- Vienna Academy professor (double cast)
GUSTAV KLIMT:	Late 40's- famous Austrian painter wears a caftan.
TATJANA VON MOSSING:	Early Teens- naïve, poverty-struck girl with a squash

TIME:

The time swaps between the present 1912 and the past (1908-1912).

SETTING, MUSIC & COSTUMES:

The set is a life-drawing studio working as various locations including: a prison cell, an apartment, an art studio, a living room, a gallery, and a courtroom. Evenly spaced round the platform are six artists' stations; one for each actor. The stations include: a chair, drawing and painting supplies, paper on an easel. The easels, storage boxes, and the chairs are moved for various scenes to help with the locations. Although the actors "exit" the acting area, they move back and forth from the acting area to the easels to watch, draw, and document this portrait of an artist. It is important they see what happens. They change costumes and find props at their stations. Although not necessary, the music should be classical.

ACT I:

(The lights grow with the Vienna Blood Waltz and each actor/artist enters in step with the music. When EGON, fully or semi-nude, enters each artist dances with him in a lush waltz.)

Overture

(As they dance we hear JUDGE gavel off-beat.)

JUDGE *(Off-stage-voice)*

No it's not!

(They dance as JUDGE gavel's against the music.)

JUDGE *(Off-stage-voice)*

Not at all! She's a child!

(They dancing as JUDGE gavel's against the music.)

JUDGE *(Off-stage-voice)*

Quiet! Quiet!! It's not art! It's ugly!!

(The Vienna Blood Waltz comes to a screeching halt. The artists toss EGON into a prison cell.)

Scene 1: 1912-Egon in St. Polten Prison

(The lights suddenly become murky and ghastly. We hear [sound-effect] a cell door slam closed.)

JUDGE *(Off-stage-voice)*

You are charged with immorality and the rape of a minor!

EGON

AHH! You can't!—

JUDGE *(Off-stage-voice)*

You will stay in St. Polten Prison—

EGON

Come on!—

JUDGE *(Off-stage-voice)*

To await your trial—

EGON

How long?

Until the hearing— JUDGE (*Off-stage-voice*)

No! Don't!— EGON

One month— JUDGE (*Off-stage-voice*)

You can't!— EGON

Maybe more! JUDGE (*Off-stage-voice*)

EGON
More! But I told you! I didn't rape her. Open this door! (*He yells out of anger.*)
AHHH! Come on! Restricting an artist like me! That's a crime! (*He takes a deep breath.*) You'll make me lose my mind! Like my father! PLEASE!

(WALLY enters with a blanket, clothes and bread. She sees EGON's cell. She waits. EGON looks weak, but he doesn't see her. She wears clothes like a dream. He's freezing and shaking.)

WALLY
(*Apprehensive*) Damn, Egon. We'd [had] better stalls for our cows.

EGON
Oh, you came. (*His whole attitude becomes stronger.*)

WALLY
It's official! [I said I would.]

EGON
You're a sight.

WALLY
Well of course. You knew I'd come— Where's your clothes?

EGON
The bastards took 'em.

WALLY
(*They hug though the "bars"*) But you're... shaking. (*She pulls out a blanket.*)

EGON

Not any worse than putting a nudist in the Alps.

WALLY

Oh, my god, Egon. Well... get warm. (*She doesn't give him the blanket.*) Oh sweetheart... I'm worried about—

EGON

Hey! I'm fine.

WALLY

Of course. You know I would've been here sooner but—

EGON

The stupid police?

WALLY

They were at the— All over the house—

EGON

Really— Well I'm fine—

WALLY

But... I mean... This? Damn. It's not what I—

EGON

Yeah. It's shitty.

WALLY

On the way here it looks like a downpour's on the... you know... Dark over there.

EGON

Fine.

WALLY

It'll get colder. And rain brings rats. Rats bring disease. And rats hate gettin' wet. They'll join you under that prison bed.

EGON

Then I'll take that...

WALLY

So sorry. (*Hands him a blanket.*) Here.

EGON

From our bed?

WALLY

Your security blankie. You need it. *(There is a clap of thunder.)* Oh damn. Rain.

EGON

Christ. And there's a fuckin' rat.

WALLY

No. That's the rat's shadow. The rat's there.

EGON

(Scared of rats but fakes it) Well good god-damn. Company!

WALLY

Awe, baby. *(Digging through her bag.)* Somewhere in this [bag]—not that—you don't need any make-up, but lot's in here. Aha! *(She pulls out some food and she sees his hands.)* Damn, when's the last time you bathed?

EGON

Before.

WALLY

Your arrest?

EGON

Yeah.

WALLY

Sweetheart, come one. Wash or the rats'll nest in your hair.

EGON

No biggie. Thanks. *(EGON takes the food)* How'd we afford it?

WALLY

I um... Gus sent money. He's worried too. *(As he eats)* Sent nice clean hundred's. Tell by their smell. Dirt free. Not like one's and fives. They smell like cleavage and crotch rot.

EGON

Not a bad smell.

WALLY

You'd say that.

EGON

Use it to get a lawyer.

WALLY

Sweetheart, lawyers and I are about as close as a Jew to the Pope. We're in the same room but for different reasons.

EGON

Get Uncle Leo. (*Eating.*) This is shitty bread.

WALLY

Sorry. It's all I...

EGON

More like a brick. Could use it to get out.

WALLY

Knock out the guard.

EGON

And run.

WALLY

Right into the electric barbed-wire fence. They'd have artist for lunch.

EGON

Then get me the fuck out of here!— (*He kicks his bed.*)

WALLY

Don't break that—

EGON

I fuckin' hate it here!—

WALLY

They won't be kind to—

EGON

Those Neanderthals can lick my ass.—

WALLY

Coming from a guy who looks like one.

EGON

I'm workin' on a new look. (*Sarcastic*) Okay?

WALLY

God, you confuse me. I'm goin' crazy out there worryin' about you, and all this... It makes me sick. And you! You're a freak of nature. Hot- cold- hot- cold. Sweetheart. Be real with me.

EGON

I'm tryin'.

WALLY

Tryin?

EGON

To be strong, not real. See? (*Pointing to his back where there are bruises.*) Here. And here. And my legs—

WALLY

Judas Priest—

EGON

[This] Morning I pissed blood.

WALLY

God. Maybe you do need my make-up—

EGON

Naw. I just need... You know... I never... I didn't do it.

WALLY

Rape her?

EGON

Yeah.

WALLY

Did you?

EGON

Just 'cause some girls showed me their twats—

WALLY

Believe me. I'm here for you, but... shit... get sideways on this. As my Pop used to say, "We must get sideways on this". Don't face it full [front]. Plant both feet. Stand sideways, head down. Look new or we're goin' under.

EGON

Fine. Head down an' look new. (*Pause.*) Yeah. Fine. Just don't ask me if I did it.

WALLY

Okay.

EGON

Just get me help.

WALLY

Okay. You want me to find the girl?

EGON

NO! No way! Leave her alone.

WALLY

Got it. Okay. Maybe... Find your Uncle Leo? How do I get him?

EGON

Try through the professor.

WALLY

Not your Mother?

EGON

No. Please. Don't. (*A sound of thunder.*) Hey? Can you get me...

WALLY

Clothes?

EGON

Sweet. And. An oil stick. You got in bread and the blanket.

WALLY

A "wife" can bring in—

EGON

(*With a smile*) You told 'em we're married?

WALLY

A little lie won't damn me to hell.

EGON

That's not what'll do it.

WALLY

Oh please. Believe me— I worked to get in here.

EGON

The *guard* paid you?

WALLY

Not that *kind* of work.

EGON

You mean *you* paid the guard?

WALLY

Yes, sweetheart— For privacy.

EGON

Well then— art supplies won't be hard.

WALLY

Sure. But dear, that's not lookin' at this right. That's just art to avoid the shit.

EGON

I'm not avoiding it... It's my way...

WALLY

Sweetheart...

EGON

It's bad? Real bad?

Scene 2: Transition to 1908

(PROFESSOR GRIEPENKERL walks into the art studio and speaking to the life drawing students. He is hung-over. WALLY hands EGON clothes. He dresses. EGON becomes a few years younger.)

PROFESSOR

(To a student simultaneously with previous line) It's not that bad.

WALLY

It's bad.

PROFESSOR

(To a student) Can you keep it down? My nephew's bar mitzvah was too good to me. Too much drink for this body.

EGON

(As he dresses) Okay. Ask the professor too. I'm gonna fight this—

PROFESSOR

(To a student) Must you paint so loudly?

WALLY

It's a misundersandin'. You'll feel better soon.

PROFESSOR

(To a student) Yes, I've got a cold, again. You can get a cold from going from a cold place into a warm place, or a warm place into a cold place, or from drinking too much booze--

EGON

I explained it to the police-

PROFESSOR

(To a student) I explained last week—a body is *not* disorganized. Yes- see her from every angle, but not all of them at the same time. It looks like your drawing her through the bottom of last night's wine bottle.

EGON

You remember when we first met?

PROFESSOR

(To a student) Putz! Begin with the head.

WALLY

In the life drawin' class? Seems like ages.

PROFESSOR

(To a student) Oh scheisse! *(Baffled)* That's her head? Got me. Try doing eyes.

EGON

Three... Four years.

PROFESSOR

(To a student) That's as challenging as getting up this morning.

WALLY

You didn't like me-

PROFESSOR

(To a student) Yes. Like that—

EGON

You were just a model then.

(The prison vanishes. EGON grabs a pencil and draws WALLY, standing as a model in the middle of a life-drawing class. The other artists sketch her. PROFESSOR walks around the studio instructing.)

Scene 3: 1908-Life Drawing Studio at the Academy

(The lights on the studio are a brilliant white.)

PROFESSOR

Explore the body with your pencil, your brush, your eyes. But quietly, please. See the curve of her thigh, the jut of her hip, the line of the neck. Caress your portrait with your lead. *(WALLY winks at EGON. EGON drops his pencil.)* Egon!

EGON

Yes?

PROFESSOR

Please. Your look is too casual.

EGON

It's what I see.

PROFESSOR

Not your painting. *You.*

EGON

Livin' with shitty rats do that.

PROFESSOR

And that's called an undershirt for a reason. *(Beat.)* Model? Please turn so we see the back of your head. *(WALLY moves.)* People. Observe. Not as spies but get outside your own skin and look in for a change-- Mr. Schiele, wrong. Work the background space into the portrait. *(WALLY flirts with EGON.)*

EGON

Space means nothing without her body.

PROFESSOR

(Displeased) Dear boy, follow the *rules* from lecture.

EGON

The rules...

PROFESSOR

Yes?

EGON

Nothin'.

PROFESSOR

Go ahead.

EGON

It's just... they're wrong.

PROFESSOR

The rules? Are wrong?

EGON

(Guarded) Yeah. Kind-of. It's just...

PROFESSOR

Yes, Mr. Schiele?

EGON

Nothin'.

PROFESSOR

Maybe you could show us what you mean, Mr. Schiele.

EGON

What?

PROFESSOR

Show us! Teach us how to draw.

EGON

But I'm not the teacher.

PROFESSOR

(Provoked) And maybe you're not an artist either. Maybe you're an accountant. You do draw such good bottom-lines. That's all you seem to like to draw! *(Beat.)* Now, Mr. Schiele. Art is ... It's spiritual. In a way. You ever feel the presence of calm when you paint?

EGON

Yeah. Like a remedy or like it makes me feel ... weird.

PROFESSOR

Spiritual. Once you get there you want to stay there, but you can't.

EGON

Yeah. That's it. (Pause.) Everything else floats way away. And all I see is her.

PROFESSOR

And the only way to the spiritual space of art, that place where art can enchant us is to follow the rules. Explain to us how to draw. Everyone! (*PROFESSOR gauchely staggers around the class.*) A new page. Pull out a new pencil. (*To one of the students*) Lordy! Pick up this stuff! Like my two dogs! When I get home they've left me a "pile", but I don't know which to blame.

STUDENT (KLIMT)

It's hers.

PROFESSOR

Both of your stations are in a state of clutter.

STUDENT (TATJANA)

Yes, Professor. Sorry.

PROFESSOR

And I thought gentiles were supposed to be neat. Alright. Class. Egon? Go ahead.

EGON

Okay... I look.

PROFESSOR

You look at what?

EGON

I look at the whole thing, not the parts.

PROFESSOR

All of her?

EGON

Yeah. Her. Right. See, if you look at the parts you'll be ... [confused]. (*WALLY flirts with him and he gets uncomfortable and speaks quickly.*) See this... hand? Look too long, and it'll get bigger and bigger... and it'll grow and grow until... It'll look out of [place]. Hard. Hard to fit in. It's difficult as the penis is starring... I mean the problem with starring at a beautiful [object] or I mean... starting to draw is we see it too fast, like too much. Looking at her, *she* appears random. All tits and pieces.

PROFESSOR

Tits?

EGON

Bits and pieces. But it lines up. (*Using a paintbrush to show the lines he speaks of.*)
So. Begin in a void. Find where to place my head.

WALLY

Place it in my lap.

EGON

Not my head, your head. Look at it with detachment but with feeling. (*Handling WALLY*) And see the lines.

WALLY

I don't have any lines.

EGON

Yeah you do.

WALLY

(*Aghast*) Screw you!

PROFESSOR

He means ones you can't see. (*PROFESSOR weaves around the class, clumsily in and out of the easels.*) Artists find connections the ordinary dodo birds don't.

EGON

Yeah. I didn't mean nothin' by it. But there's lines like here. At the eye-line. Here. Right in the middle—between the top of the head and the bottom of the chin.

PROFESSOR

Class pay attention. (*He continues to walk around the class.*)

EGON

Well, it's here. Halfway between the eye line and the bottom of the chin is the nose, at least the end of the nose. That's what I look for. Now halfway between the end of the nose, and the bottom of the chin, [is] the mouth-line. You can draw these connections in lines. Then line up the vertical lines, up and down-- the corners of the mouth, line-up to the pupil of the eye.

PROFESSOR

Ahh! (*Acerbic*) Everything lines up in a portrait, but not in order.

EGON

Right. Not a neat lay-out.

PROFESSOR

But still the composition, the planning, the order is there. Now class—

(PROFESSOR stumbles over a student's bag, and falls to the floor. EGON quickly moves to him.)

EGON

Professor! Are you okay?

PROFESSOR

Dear boy. I...

EGON

Are you hurt?

PROFESSOR

I just ... [I stepped wrong].

EGON

Here. Let me help you.

PROFESSOR

Up we go.

EGON

Easy.

PROFESSOR

This is why I tell you [students to] be more organized. You might hurt someone with your art. *(To EGON)* Thank you. I'm fine.

EGON

Are you sure?

PROFESSOR

Yes. Thank you. *(Sigh)* Oh Lord. And wash before next class.

EGON

My brushes are clean.

PROFESSOR

But your breath and your body aren't. Try bleach. *(To the class)* Now, students, tomorrow Gustav Klimt and the Secession have their seasonal show.

EGON

They aren't taking new students.

PROFESSOR

You don't need them. Do not attend. Attendance is against our policy. Also, don't forget. Your portfolio of imitations of the masters is due. My office Friday. Shalom.

(The lights suddenly shift from optimistic to gloomy as WALLY and PROFESSOR exit to the artist stations.)

Scene 4: Tatjana's Testimony- One

(As PROFESSOR and WALLY return to their easels the lights dim on EGON. He moves to the "prison cell". TATJANA, a young girl, comes out of the class dressed in a children's girl's cape, and gives her testimony. She has a black eye and busted lip.)

TATJANA

(Fuming) He *beat* me! Then ... Yeah, that's what he did. Each night. He then would sneak into my room. He did! That's where he did it. I don't want to say it. I suffered. Bad. He made me. He yelled. He yelled at *me*. So I did. I took off... my pants. He *made* me take off his. I cried. He stopped me. Physically! He forced me! His hand over my [mouth]. Like this. No one heard me. I still screamed. Like this! *(Scream.)* I screamed. All the way through it. It was bad. Tell the police?... I can't tell them. I don't want to. Trust me. It was bad. Saying it... is just as bad. It was daily. If I resisted. Worse. Worse than you can imagine! AND I HAD NO ONE TO CRY TO! Not Wally. Yeah. The other girl. She ... I can't say it. *(She listens.)* You want me to ... what? Write it down? But... Why? It's bad. Real bad.

(TATJANA fades. In the distance a train is heard.)

Scene 5: The Prison Cell

(The cell light is shady. EGON drawing on the floor and WALLY enters.)

WALLY

(Wound up) I've got news!

EGON

What? You've got fuckin' lice too?

WALLY

No. But... Stop it. You'll love what I've got to tell—

EGON

Uncle Leo said yes?

WALLY

Sorry. No. He's as stubborn as a dog that won't get off the bed.

EGON

Next time dangle bacon in front of him. And Mother?

WALLY

You said—

EGON

I know what I said. Try Gustav.

WALLY

Oh I have.

EGON

Tempt him with your sexy tomatoes.

WALLY

(Lying) His lawyer might be able to—

EGON

You bring me a pint of Black Bush?—

WALLY

You hungry?

EGON

Yeah. All I do is jack-off, sleep, wank some more and dream of food. *(Pulling WALLY to him)* What'd ya' eat?

WALLY

Spaghetti and tomato sauce.

EGON

Give me some of that.

WALLY

(Impatient) Oh please. Don't ruin my good—

EGON

(He kisses her.) Mmm. Garlic and basil. [Tasty.] But I need more.

WALLY

(Pushing back) Stop it!

EGON

(EGON physically forces himself on WALLY.) A little more sweet pasta.

WALLY

I didn't come for this.

EGON

Come on. (*Sexually*) I'll give you some real meat.

WALLY

Get off me!

EGON

Please!

WALLY

Egon, I mean it! OFF!

EGON

You sure can cheer up a guy.

WALLY

I don't deserve this. While you've been in here I've been getting you help—

EGON

But we don't have any money.

WALLY

I have a few tricks up my skirt.

EGON

And you've had a few tricks up your skirt.

EGON

(*Moving his hand up Wally's skirt.*)
But I'm going to find the next trick up—
It'll calm me—
Make me happy!—
Why?! It's what we do—

WALLY

Don't do that!
I told you ... don't!—
Stop! I said NO!
And I meant NO!
Get your hands out—!

EGON

(*He finds a letter up her skirt.*) What's this?

WALLY

That's my news, you little shit! I was going to give it to you but then you--- GOD!

EGON

Professor Gripe?

WALLY

Yeah. He fuckin' sent a letter! (*EGON puts the letter in his pocket. She fixes herself.*) Damn Egon, you don't get it! You're about to lose everything. And you wonder why they think you did that to Tatjana?

EGON

Leave it!

WALLY

GOD! You could get life. Life in prison. Get it?

EGON

I get it.

WALLY

Do you? Then why are you doing *this*— here? They're watchin' you. You've got no help, no lawyer, no money, and with your record... if you don't take this more—see it for what it is— you'll be locked away and they'll throw away the key. You'll leave me no choice but—

EGON

Please. Don't.

WALLY

Then behave! (*EGON nods.*) Give me some respect, okay? (*EGON nods.*) You're on notice. Look at the road we're on.

EGON

I'm sorry. I just.... I'll behave. (*Silence between them.*) So? When this is all over we'll go to America.

WALLY

If. A big if.

EGON

But then we could walk down Madison Avenue—

WALLY

With a white stallion on lead—

EGON

Right up the steps of the museum—

WALLY

To see your grand opening.

EGON

I want my first big show in The Reichstag.

WALLY

In Berlin? Why not New York or London?

EGON

I donn-know. Just the big doors, and into the great hall of parliament, and whoa (*sees it*)! There you'd be. A portrait of you bigger than life. You and me. And all of my girls.

WALLY

That would be nice.

EGON

Yeah. With help from the professor there's hope. Maybe we can get Klimt.

WALLY

I don't think Gustav's going to help us.

EGON

Why not? (*WALLY is silent.*) He's jealous of my talents.

EGON

Oh, sweetheart. You've got a lot to learn. Green was never Klimt's color. Gold was.

(The prison fade, and we hear applause.)

Scene 6: 1908-Meeting Klimt and Wally

(Everyone enters the dazzling studio with a big black box and face up-stage toward the box hiding the paintings "The Kiss". They applaud as KLIMT, wearing his work clothes, enters with his model, WALLY, and stands by his painting.)

KLIMT

Work from the Wiener Werkstaate. Art in harmony. The entire month we are showing a collection around this. We believe our homes are, or should be places of art in synch. No area of life escapes our attention. From baby clothes to gravestones. Even the cakes, plates and glasses are in harmony. We start with this!

(WALLY removes a black cloth covering the box with "The Kiss" inside behind glass. We hear applause.)

KLIMT

The Kiss. See? Harmony. Flowers. And a couple merged into one.

EGON

Amazing. Is that your wife?

KLIMT

The woman [in the painting]? No. I'd never allow it. I'm not married. That woman over there, she's not *really* my wife, just my secretary. Anyway art should never be about the artist. We should surround ourselves with it. Vanquish the ugly! (*Seeing two guests at the show*) Rub-out the repulsive. Hide the hideous. And who let those two out? —

WALLY

(*Interrupting*) The General and his wife--

KLIMT

(*Speaking over her*) Stay with me—He's generally horrid. They're beauty and the deceased. But I'd love to have her in my studio.

WALLY

You're a dirty—

KLIMT

Bird.

WALLY

Dirty—

KLIMT

Bird. I know. And he's ugly! (*Beat.*) They are why I paint. If reality can't be beautiful, our art must be.

EGON

And it is beautiful. Like your Beethoven piece?

KLIMT

The Garden of Love?

EGON

(*Lying*) My prof took us. Professor Griepenkerl was my field trip buddy. Or I was his prison bitch, depending on who you asked.

KLIMT

Ah, dear professor Gripe-and-kill any talent he sees. Are you at the Vienna Fine Arts Academy?

EGON

Yeah. “vifaa”, as we like to call it.

WALLY

Has “vifaa” changed their policy?

EGON

(Lying) Yeah. *(Honestly.)* No.

WALLY

You’ve got bigger balls than Gus here—

KLIMT

And Mr. Big Balls, if your professor saw you, wouldn’t “vifaa” be “offa” *[over]*?

EGON

Yeah. But he’ll never know.

WALLY

Unless I walk over there and tell him.

EGON

Please don’t. I really like it.

WALLY

So? You like what you see?

EGON

(Looking at Wally) Yeah. You bet.

KLIMT

Last guy who bet on her lost his pants, his shirt, and his health.

EGON

(To Klimt) No. I mean I liked your work. I wanna be good as you.

KLIMT

Maybe some fairy will make your dreams come true.

EGON

It’ll never happen...

WALLY

Why not?

EGON

If someone, you know, noticed me, maybe they’d take me in, and I’d learn—

KLIMT

You'd join them?—

EGON

Yeah. If they're good as you, wouldn't matter if he's a dwarf. I'd join him –

KLIMT

(Speaking over him and quickly) Of course *you* don't mean me. I'm not looking for parasites. Had 'em. Don't want 'em. Moochers that is. Especially pooch moochers. Those artists are like dogs who want everything you're eating, and can't wait until you're done with your plate before they start stealing off you. "You're not going to eat that are you?" "Well, no, but I ..." "Thanks! Hey can I have your napkin too?" Moochers do this—

WALLY

(Interrupting) You've taken on a few young artists, Gus--

KLIMT

(Speaking over her) Stay with me— I'm not sayin' I won't. It's just you've got to know more than how to paint to get a show like this. Make them want you. Dress well! Less like Oliver Twist. Hit the salon. 'Course they'll probably hit you back, but insist on them making you noticeable so the next time you bump into a buyer—

WALLY

Be willing to do –

KLIMT

(Speaking over her) They won't—Stay with me— they won't be willing to take their eyes off you. I know what I'm saying. Find out whatever you can about their passions.

EGON

How?

KLIMT

Learn their craft and learn yours better than the best. Do it in such a way they want to learn from you.

EGON

(Flattering KLIMT) I'd love to do good art, like yours. You know beauty.

KLIMT

I do; but it's subjective.

EGON

Right. (*Enthralling KLIMT.*) Beauty's up for grabs.

KLIMT

Like a wedding bouquet tossed to a crowd of virgins.

WALLY

You know any virgins, Gustav?

KLIMT

Apparently not.

EGON

Beauty is tough to grab. But you've got it.

KLIMT

Chasing it leaves you as cold as my marriage bed. Yet, many great works survive by luck. Sometimes it is being in the right place, being seen by the right person... praised by the right institution. Many fine things are thrown out because someone was uncomfortable with 'em.

EGON

So be careful what you throw away?

WALLY

Yesterday I threw out my expensive boots and kept my comfortable ones.

KLIMT

I've done the same with models.

EGON

So who decides?

KLIMT

Who decides what?

EGON

Who decides what's "comfortable"? What we keep?

KLIMT

The institution. That's why I created my institution, so I decide.

EGON

And you decide who is good?

KLIMT

In a way. I'd rather I do it than let the institutions. Then someday, the institutions rejecting me will be the very institutions buying me when I'm old.

EGON

I don't want to be acceptable because I'm old.

KLIMT

Of course. Who wants to be acceptable because they're dead? Don't lose hope.

EGON

That's what they're doing to me at the "vifaa".

WALLY

Not goin' well?

EGON

Nope. [They're] Filling my life with what they want.

WALLY

You know what you want?

KLIMT

Sorry. Let me introduce you to my model, Valerie Neuzil.

EGON

I'm Egon.

KLIMT

(Knowingly) Schiele? Oh?

WALLY

My friends call me Wally.

EGON

Wally? Wild.

KLIMT

Well, yes she is.

WALLY

You were in the life drawin' class. [I was] the model.

EGON

Right! Sure.

KLIMT

She's trying to get to America. Wally reminds me of the American flag. Both've had 45 stars on them.

WALLY

Check your self, old man.

KLIMT

(Speaking over her) Stay with me— Wally. You know I love you.

WALLY

The way you love a worm before you stick it on a hook.

KLIMT

Come on. Don't get offended. You end up making your anger lines connect all over your face. Looks like the Berlin railway system.

WALLY

Oh, Gus. You've got about as much taste as homemade wine.

KLIMT

Perhaps she could model for you. Take her.

WALLY

You can't swap me like we're at some county fair.

EGON

I couldn't pay you.

KLIMT

Neither could the priest, but she still did a job for him.

WALLY

Stop it, Gus. So, Egon? *(He nods.)* Show us your art--

(EGON unrolls some drawings. They hold EGON's paintings in contrast to KLIMT's.)

EGON

Well, my stuff... It's the best and the worst of us.

KLIMT

(Looking at EGON's drawings.) Dear, boy? You're how old?

EGON

Sixteen. I'm gonna be-

WALLY

How do you... what do you see?

EGON

The feeling. The moment. What'll be gone. A flash. Here. Two women. Legs locked in a kiss. Did it in my studio. I'm tryin' to capture... the feeling of ... guilt. She looks right at you. The spectator involved in— A feeling of truth...

WALLY

Truth or dare.

KLIMT

Very bold. Risqué.

EGON

Or risky. I like to think it's more risky. What I try to capture is their feeling first, in their eyes. Her eyes leave something to be desired.

KLIMT

Yes, the rest of her. Boy, understand-- they're teaching you rules.

EGON

Maybe you could teach me a thing or two?

KLIMT

More like ten. Sure. I'd like to.

WALLY

You're goin' to be a success.

KLIMT

Valerie, get my secretary. She must help with the ugly part of art. *(Beat.)* Selling it.

WALLY

(With a kiss to Klimt) Yes, Gus.

KLIMT

And have her bring my wallet. I want two of these.

EGON

Two of mine?

KLMT

Is that too many?

EGON

No. No, of course not. Wow.

WALLY

Good to meet you, Egon.

EGON

Yeah. My pleasure.

KLIMT

Not yet. *(Beat.)* Come by my workshop tomorrow.

WALLY

And meet all the elves.

EGON

I can't. I've an assignment, and I haven't started it.

WALLY

Tonight, think of me. Draw what happens. Tomorrow, show us. We're doin' nudes.

KLIMT

(As WALLY exits to her artist station.) We'll corrupt you together.

EGON

Professor won't like that.

KLIMT

But I'll introduce you to more beautiful models.

EGON

I'd like that!

KLIMT

I'll talk to the old Jew.

(KLIMT exits to his easel station. There is the sound of thunder and the lights shift back to the cell on EGON as he rolls up his paintings. PROFESSOR enters into his own spot light with files and a cane.)

Scene 7: The Prison Cell- Professor's Letter

(EGON in the cell removes a letter, and reads it.)

PROFESSOR

Shalom, Mr. Schiele—this letter may come as a surprise, but you've always surprised me too. I am very sorry for your arrest. My prayers are with you. Yahweh

is watching over you, as if you were my own. In him, place your trust. Their attack on you is an attack on us. The police came to the school. Investigated all of us. They took some of your “assignments”. I hide the most incriminating ones. They’re gathering evidence against you. As you wait and stew. I hear it’s the waiting, the silence, the isolation that destroys your mind. So paint, create or you’ll lose it. We prayed last Sabbath and took up a collection.

EGON

(Seeing there’s no money) Cheap skate.

PROFESSOR

Rather than send you the money, I’m sending it to a friend: the judge’s wife. We courted years back. She enjoyed my murals. Yet, since she’s only half my tribe... her father found her a more suitable suitor, the judge. We correspond in secret, so the donation to her favorite charity should come in handy.

EGON

What charity? The firing squad ball?

PROFESSOR

We are worried. I don’t believe *everything* I read in the papers. But ... Next time, run right home. Sincerely, Professor –

*(The lights change, and PROFESSOR walks forward.
The cell disappears. EGON is in his lively studio.)*

Scene 8: 1908- Egon’s Studio and Homework

*(EGON turns as PROFESSOR walks in with a folder
of paintings and his cane. EGON’s hair is messy.)*

EGON

Professor. Welcome to my studio.

PROFESSOR

Egon, what did you do to your hair?

EGON

Something new. If I’d know you were... I’d’ve picked up the place.

PROFESSOR

After I received these I didn’t know what to do. And today walking the Ringstrasser and I realized I was nearby. And—

EGON

And— “Why not stop in?”

PROFESSOR

Yes.

EGON

And how are you? After that nasty fall?

PROFESSOR

Much better. Thank you. (*Dismissing the subject*) So [this is it].

EGON

Yeah...Uncle Leo's helping in exchange.

PROFESSOR

In exchange for ...?

EGON

Small portraits. Women. Legs spread. Lesbians, doin' it. Those are big sellers.

PROFESSOR

And he sells them?

EGON

Yeah. To friends. Politicians. Pays the bills.

PROFESSOR

(*Sarcastically*) If it works ... Women come here? (*Shaking his head*)

EGON

(*Giggles*) Yeah. They come. But I wouldn't call 'em "women".

PROFESSOR

What *would* you call 'em?

EGON

Models. Shapes. Things. Whatever. Sit. They model in the nude.

PROFESSOR

(*Nearly seated*) Where?

EGON

On that chair.

PROFESSOR

(*Standing up quickly*) Thank you. I'll stand.

EGON

You could come watch.

PROFESSOR

No, thank you.

EGON

They're friendly. I found 'em through this gyno-doc.

PROFESSOR

A woman's doctor?

EGON

Yeah. He lets me draw 'em during exams or—

PROFESSOR

Egon! (*As if to God.*) Oh Lord help in--

EGON

What?

PROFESSOR

It isn't ... appropriate.

EGON

Oh.

PROFESSOR

Dear boy, it's come to my attention you're—

EGON

So you got my note?

PROFESSOR

You're not happy at the Academy—

EGON

Please. Who couldn't tell—

PROFESSOR

Explains why you were at the show the other night. Talking to Herr Klimt.

EGON

Yeah... but—

PROFESSOR

Strutted in there like a god.

EGON

I wanna work with him.

PROFESSOR

You think you're going to study with him?

EGON

Like a mentor-- yeah.

PROFESSOR

Is that why you did this "so-called-letter" on the back of this...

EGON

You didn't like the nude or the letter?

PROFESSOR

(He produces a watercolor from his folder.) Never tell anyone I taught you to paint.

EGON

It was good.

PROFESSOR

Your good and my good are at odds. You did this here?

EGON

Yeah. What's wrong?

PROFESSOR

I hope the curtains were drawn.

EGON

And block out the good light?

PROFESSOR

This is you... naked ... with a huge...

EGON

Penis.

PROFESSOR

Dear Lord!

EGON

Father named my body parts. This leg is Crown. My left is Rudolph. And that's "Prince". Crown Prince Rudolph!

PROFESSOR

Disgusting! You're abusing yourself!

EGON

(Innocently) No I'm not. You wanna see?

PROFESSOR

You're masturbating! Herr. Schiele! You can't just request to work with Klimt on the back of this and shove it under my door.

EGON

Next time I'll nail it to your door.

PROFESSOR

Keep it up and you'll be out the door! *(Pause.)* Egon, these others— fine. Your other work is very good. But then you throw in this and I don't know what to do.

EGON

Grade it.

PROFESSOR

Or use it for my ass! You were supposed to copy David. *(Pronounced in the French manner, Da-ved.)* Not paint yourself with a goliath penis in your hands!

EGON

I paint what others are afraid to.

PROFESSOR

Are we going through this again?

EGON

Listen to me!

PROFESSOR

Yelling will not make you right!—

EGON

I paint my way.

PROFESSOR

Paint what this institution demands!

EGON

Don't institutionalize me!

PROFESSOR

Excuse me, Egon? (*Silence.*) Try this again and you'll never show here. Got me?

EGON

Yes, Professor. What about Klimt?—

PROFESSOR

You're not ready.

EGON

You don't like him.

PROFESSOR

So I am protecting you.

EGON

From what?

PROFESSOR

Bad influences. He'll corrupt you.

EGON

He'll teach me.

PROFESSOR

With drugs and whores--

EGON

Oh, please. (*Beat.*) Can't we make a deal?

PROFESSOR

Stop doing these paintings?

EGON

Let me paint with Klimt?

PROFESSOR

Scheisse! You are in no position [to negotiate]!

EGON

Fine! (*Silence.*)

PROFESSOR

Will you keep it quiet? (*EGON nods his head.*) And no more of these?

EGON

Yeah. Fine.

PROFESSOR

But. Any signs of immorality run away.

EGON

Oh, of course, Professor. If I see anything immoral I'll run right home.

PROFESSOR

You do that.

EGON

Relax, Professor.

PROFESSOR

Egon, it's ... I don't want Gustav's *lifestyle* to ... impair you. Dear boy... Find yourself, before you begin working with someone so *powerful* – otherwise you won't ever know who you are.

(PROFESSOR exits to his artist station. The lights change to the cell.)

Scene 9: The Prison Cell- Day Dreaming

(EGON sits back down in his bleak cell, folds up the letter, and looks out the window.)

EGON

Find me? Right see. Find me... *(Almost prayer-like)* Hey, Father? Used to have to find you lots. Before you died... You'd escape your room. But as the station manager, you'd always return at night when you heard the train. Sometimes you'd return with horsemeat and beans, as a bribe. Best way to get Mother? You know it. A bar of chocolate. You taught me that. Chocolate with carmel. *(He switches from the prayer and begins his ritual of drawing.)* Always have it when seeing a woman. That or a diamond. But then Mother put bars on the windows to keep you from jumping out. You thought you could fly off the roof of the train station house. So, she kept you locked up.

EGON

There was ... One morning, I let you out. Free. For a day. When I came home from school Mother was frantic. "Father's gone. How could you?" I had to find you. I knew where you'd be. Not far from our train station house. I found you playing in the river. With two prostitutes. Naked and swimmin'. "Father? Mother sent me." "Come swim. It's wonderful! We're catchin' turtles." *(He takes off his shirt.)* So I striped and dove in. Why not? *(He takes off his pants. He is in his artistic high.)* Father. You. Me. And two appealing... okay, maybe not, but to an eleven year old it was fun. Diving. Catchin' turtles. It was getting late, so I said, "Father? You

hungry?" We got out, naked as Adam... weird. Confusing. Prince stood at attention and saluted both of 'em. No towels. I looked like ... a werewolf. *(He picks up his drawing paper and pencil and draws himself.)* Skinny legs, boney hips, and a chest like a girl's. I'd lose in a fight against myself.

EGON

(He takes off his underwear and stands there naked drawing himself.) Father, you found twigs for a fire. 'member? Before I knew it, you'd tossed the whores underclothes on the fire. You said, "It's all filth. Nasty!" While you did the fire I noticed your big skin lesions. Big. Open sores the size of coins. So gross. You saw I saw 'em, and you said, "We all abuse ourselves in our own destructive way." *(We hear the train in the distance.)* In the distance the train. The one you were in charge of... comin' over the bridge. It jarred you. "Oh wait!" You said, "Put on your shorts, Son." *(To the mirror)* You must have looked like me. *(He half-laughs at himself.)* You kissed the whores, and we left. We stopped at a store for got some beans and chocolate. With carmel. When we got home ... you gave Mother the chocolate... And you went right to your room, like... and you... laid down, you know, on your bed. Mother, behind you, dragging the belts on the floor... I can still hear them ... she confined you... again... with the leather belts and... You know, she strapped your legs, then your arms, then your chest, then you. Oh my. It was so hard to watch. ... Real tight. Strapped you to the bed. I stood in the door way watchin' it all. As she patted your head. And said, "Good night dear. You've had a long day. Time to sleep." And you just said, "Good night, love." And she walked right to me. "You fool. See what you've done?" I did. I had. It was all my fault. *(Pause.)* She pulled me out of the room, and locked the door ... Father, you just cried. I could hear you. Crying behind the door. *(Silence.)* I wanted to cry out. To help you, Father! But I couldn't! Mother dragged me... she's bigger ... she threw me into our coal shed. I tried to fight it! But... I don't know. She locked me in too. Hard to sleep in the coal shed. Hard to find yourself in the dark. *(Pause)* A week later... I miss you, Father. I liked our last swim ... Why, Father, did you die? *(Pause)* Your last day free. *(The prison cell fades away as KLIMT enters. EGON puts on his pants.)*

Scene 10: 1909- Painting with Klimt and Wally

(As they speak WALLY enters dressed in an ornate, flowing gown, with a fan, similar to Klimt's "Woman with Fan". She pushes a cart with absinthe glasses, spoons, and a fancy absinthe decanter. She lights the sugar cubes on fire. The flames are dramatic. While KLIMT rants WALLY pours drinks. KLIMT and EGON are finishing painting.)

KLIMT

(Drunkenly) A free man is never a fool. Should've seen it coming. Congress voted. Yes! They polled and agreed. Me? Convicted by a bunch of over-stuffed birds. No more!

WALLY

(Interrupting) Gus, dear?

KLIMT

I'm warnin' you, Egon. Don't endure public criticism? I won't—

WALLY

(Handing KLIMT a glass of absinthe) Gustav?

KLIMT

Wally, don't interrupt—

WALLY

More Green Fairy?

KLIMT

Ah! Yes! Number two?

WALLY

Three. Your third.

KLIMT

Explains why you're so beautiful tonight.

WALLY

And why you have a personality tonight. *(KLIMT scowls.)* You don't want it—

KLIMT

In this weather I'd do anything for it.

EGON

Even another government project?

KLIMT

(As he sips the absinthe) Except another government project! Rebel! No need to please the masses-hyphen-government-hyphen-regime-hyphen-evil asses. Please yourself.

EGON

I do. Oh yeah I please my self.

KLIMT

Me too.

WALLY & EGON

(Simultaneously) Ewe!

EGON
Dirty.

WALLY
Bird.

EGON
Dirty.

WALLY
Bird.

EGON
I need some more? Gotta wash that image outta my head.

KLIMT
You two are about as funny as the World Congress for Women's Rights.

WALLY
You want to see this woman's left? (*Handing EGON a glass of absinthe*) Careful this doesn't make you crazy as Gus here.

KLIMT
It's better than sex-

EGON
Wouldn't know.

KLIMT
Better than tobacco. Better than wine. Better than opium. Better than... okay, not better than money-

EGON
I'd never do drugs.

WALLY
That's what they all—

KLIMT
(*Speaking over her*) Stay with me— my dear friends- my friends Arthur and Henri introduced me to this. Ever since then I enjoy a few glasses while I paint. 'Course now Toulouse- the dwarf- wonders around his house like a simpleton. (*As Toulouse*) "What the hell? Who made everything green!" (*Raising his glass to EGON. Everyone raises their glass.*) Ah! To the green life! To the great life! To the art of life! Wally, make a toast.

WALLY

(Dully) Cheers.

KLIMT

You're as simple as that hairdo.

EGON

To the refuge of the damned. Drink up!

WALLY

Cheers! *(They drink.)*

KLIMT

(As KLIMT pulls out a bag of selected paints and hands them to EGON.) I've decided, for your education Egon, so have these. A gift.

EGON

Wow.

WALLY

Nice! The only thing my mentor gave me was a pair of black eyes.

KLIMT

He also gave you those ugly necklaces. Your chest looks like a gypsy graveyard.

WALLY

I can't listen to you anymore--. *(As she exits off stage to get the phonograph)* How about some music? Boys?

KLIMT

(dryly) Just no ballet crap. Ballet music does it for me. Woo. You, Egon?

EGON

Big band stuff that's like wow, you know.

KLIMT

Like wow, right.

EGON

So, why these?

KLIMT

(Referring to the painting) You're use of silver rather than gold— Nice. You're the new me. You're Don Carlo to my Don Juan. Trilby to my Svengali. Here.

EGON

(EGON drinks his absinthe and looks in the bag) Enough gold for King Tut.

KLIMT

It's too-- Distracts from the body too much.

EGON

Nothin' like a great body.

KLIMT

See, my trick is paint them nude. Then cover them with silly decoration.

EGON

What if we didn't cover them?

KLIMT

We have to.

EGON

But what if we didn't? Just left 'em.

KLIMT

Reveal women's secrets and people will hate you.

EGON

Oh. So? They love you because you keep women's secrets?

(WALLY enters with a large phonograph. She winds it up and plays a record.)

KLIMT

Precisely. Smart kid. Inspiring! Isn't he Valerie?

WALLY

Does somethin' to me.

KLIMT

Good too. Look at these [paintings]. Valerie, you judge. You've been judged by the best as one of the worst so pick one.

WALLY

If I'm judging on who has the best love handles you'd win.

KLIMT

And you'd win on how to best handle lovers.

WALLY

Hey Gus, bitter much?

KLIMT

Just pick the best one. Like my mine.

EGON

Or mine. And the winner should *possibly* get somethin'.

WALLY

If I'm the referee and the reward I pick the sure thing.

KLIMT

That's me.

WALLY

Gus, lately, there's nothin' sure about you. You're less Eiffel Tower and more Iffy-tower.

KLIMT

Stop wagging you tongue.

EGON

I like a wagging tongue. Can't wait to try a girl's.

WALLY

I'm a girl.

KLIMT

(pouty and sarcastic) Yeah, right, sure. And what a cute girl you are too. Now judge.

WALLY

This one. *(Selecting Egon's painting.)* Put it in the Vienna International.

KLIMT

(Sarcasm) Exactly. Aim for the top. Go for the stars. No harm in that. Put yourself right in with the sharks: Picasso, Matisse and me!

WALLY

Why not?

EGON

(Drunk) Yeah... Okay. I will.

KLIMT

(Sarcasm) Right. Why not? Of course. I'll help you get your stuff in.

EGON

(Drunk) I can get my own stuff in, tank you, mery vuch!

WALLY

Easy for you to say.

KLIMT

After you-- They'll see bodies so... differently. Wally, any more green fairy?

WALLY

In the kitchen.

KLIMT

Be right back. And I'm sure I've got an entry form for the International somewhere.

(KLIMT exits, with the absinthe decanter cart. WALLY changes the record, something like The Skeleton Rag. She dances to the music. EGON drinks the last of his absinthe. The lights become more romantic.)

EGON

I love painting you.

WALLY

And I love you painting me.

EGON

(Drunk and coy) I don't know. I have a lot to learn.

WALLY

About painting? Or women?

EGON

Both.

WALLY

Oh. A virgin? No way. You draw woman's bodies like you've *known them*. Egon?
(EGON shrugs.) That's nothing to be ashamed of.

EGON

I'm not. *(Referring to the music)* You like big band?

WALLY

Big? What?

EGON

Big band music, you know?

WALLY

Right. Sure. But I'd rather go with the sin-co-pation of ragtime.

EGON

Yeah. Would you like some chocolate?

WALLY

You have some?

EGON

Always. Just in case.

WALLY

Let's split it. *(She goes to him. She breaks it in half and they eat the chocolate bar together.)* So you really like painting me?

EGON

It wasn't just some line.

WALLY

(Laughing) Not a bunch of *works* to get me buttered up? What we really need to do is sell your stuff. Right. To get you money. You need the money. Look at this belt. It's falling apart. *(WALLY undoes his belt.)* All these extra holes. Did you get this off a dead man?

(KLIMT returns with some papers, and stops in the distance. He watches in the shadows.)

EGON

(Matter of fact) Actually, yeah. Father's.

WALLY

Oh, sorry. *(WALLY pulls off the belt and turns EGON.)* And those shoes. Cheap. Take 'em off. *(EGON is dizzy and drunk, and has difficulty getting off his shoe. He hops.)* You're dancing like a skeleton on a hot plate. *(He may even fall over to take off his shoes)* And... damn! Where's the sole?

EGON

All my money's going to school.

WALLY

You gotta have at least a better t-shirt. Slip that over your head. Come on. (*As she takes off his undershirt one way, he tries to take it off another way.*) Here. Let me help.

EGON

I'm tryin'.

WALLY

Go this way. This t-shirt is so yellow.

WALLY

(*EGON gets stuck in his shirt.*) They'll pay you. Enough for new shoes.

EGON

I'm stuck. Help?

WALLY

Let me pull.

EGON

Don't pull there.

WALLY

It's okay— (*They rip his shirt off.*) Whoa. [Sorry.] (*She sees his nice body.*) And whoa.

EGON

Yeah?

WALLY

Yeah.

EGON

That was my only one without holes.

WALLY

Not any more. (*She undoes his pants but he holds them*) I'll get them to pay you enough for new pants?

EGON

(*Grabbing his pants so they don't fall*) Wait. Wait.

WALLY

Silly boy. Are you really a virgin?

EGON

If I am are we done?

WALLY

Depends. What's it going to cost me?

EGON

Underwear.

(EGON pulls WALLY into him and they kiss. His pants fall to the floor. KLIMT extremely pained watches.)

EGON

I thought girls like you didn't kiss.

WALLY

(Slowly) That's not what I don't do.

EGON

Really? What don't you do? *(Silence.)* What don't you do?

(We hear three hammerings of a gavel. WALLY removes the phonograph.)

Scene 11: The Court Hearing

(The lights shift from the easy studio to the rigid court as WALLY & KLIMT move to a chair with the absinthe glasses and watches the court room hearing from the easel seat. EGON moves to court.)

UNSEEN VOICE:

Docket number ending 3496! The People of the City of Neulengbach versus Egon Schiele. Charged with kidnapping, rape, immorality and depraved indifference of a minor, menace to the youth of the city, and possession of lewd materials.

(JUDGE enters.)

JUDGE

Be seated. Ready to proceed with the hearing?

EGON

Yes, your honor.

JUDGE

And? So, Herr Schiele? Where is your lawyer?

EGON

Working on that. My friend Gustav Klimt is sending one.

JUDGE

Herr Klimt is supplying a lawyer?

EGON

Yes... I hope, your honor.

JUDGE

We can not live by hope, Herr Schiele. Either he is or he is not.

EGON

Can I have a few more days?

JUDGE

Maybe your father? Can he get you an attorney?

EGON

No.

JUDGE

Herr Schiele— This is difficult. A thirteen year old girl, Tatjana Von Mossig was *supposedly* kidnapped, coerced to live with you and a prostitute. Boy. You need a lawyer, but seeing none present, and I am not required to give you one, and since this is not a capital offence, and because we can't wait another week-

EGON

A little longer?

JUDGE

Let me paint you a picture. Get a lawyer for the trial, or you will be on your own.

EGON

Yes, your honor.

JUDGE

But, as for this hearing... How does the defendant plead?

EGON

Not guilty.

JUDGE

Then this case'll go to trial. Scheduled it ... *(looking through his books)* in three months. In the mean time, you'll remain in prison. Or have me preside. A bench trial. Herr Schiele?

EGON

But I'm innocent.

JUDGE

So?

EGON

Wait three month? I'm not guilty.

JUDGE

Then forfeit a jury and I'll play judge and jury.

EGON

I guess.

JUDGE

Good. Trial's in two days. Have a lawyer bring you some decent clothes. And boy?

EGON

Yeah?

JUDGE

Grab that bucket there. Full of lime and water. Wash your cell.

EGON

Me?

JUDGE

Work is useful. Now. Take Herr Schiele back to his cell. Next case.

(WALLY exits to her easel. EGON takes the bucket and washed the walls of his cell. The lights dim.)

Scene 12: Tatjana's Testimony- Two

(TATJANA steps out of the shadows dressed in her coat, with still her black eye and an hour-glass squash. She speaks to the audience.)

TATJANA

At first I thought, "He's cute." "Handsome." At the train station. I saw him. There. Tall. Looked strong. Alone. Smiled with his eye brows. I thought. This other woman? Not pretty. She turned the corner. Old. Wrinkles like here. Around the mouth. She took his hand. Gloves like Mother. And then! Right at me. He looked *at me*. Right in my eyes. All the oxygen! Here and whoa. Gone. Went outta me. Love feels that way. When it happens. Fast like that. He loved me. I knew it. Right away. Father'd hate'em. Just 'cause. Maybe 'cause of his hair. Rebel-like. Or his hands.

Not clean. Dirty and cute. And paint. Between these fingers. He looked at me. So? Maybe? I thought. Maybe. But then. I knew it. He loved me. I know. He'd take me. He was it. I'd be away. Loved. He wanted me. I knew. I followed him. Them? Okay. Them. To the market. Buying groceries. I followed. On the street he dropped this. A squash. My mom cooks with 'em too. But he didn't know he dropped it. I picked it up. I thought, "How cute. I'll bring it. Yes. To him. It's his." And I followed. To the post office. For his mail. That's how I knew his address. He picked it up. He did look back at me as I followed him to his house.

TATJANA

He walked out. And smiled. At me. Like this. With his fingers. Running up his hair. Up through it. He pulled up. Making it stand up. Tall. Like him. Strong. I liked him. Father'd hate him. I tried to give him the squash then. I did. But... I don't know. How could I? *(She takes the squash and throws it on the ground.)* I never thought he'd force himself on me. I didn't think he'd do that to me. Violate me! That way! Force me! Force me! *(She stomps on it and smashes it.) (Silence.)* Can I take a break? Please. A short break?

(The Vienna Blood Waltz grows for the end of the act.)

ACT II

Scene 1: Tatjana's Testimony- Three

(Before the intermission ends, EGON enters and stands shirtless, as he's been standing for hours in the prison square, in the sun. He's burned, and battered. As the Skaters' Waltz begins, the lights change. Elsewhere, in court, TATJANA speaks to the JUDGE.)

TATJANA

I'm okay. Now I'm okay. His squash. He'd bought. I was returning it. When I got there. To his house. I saw. Lots. These other kids. From the neighborhood. They'd stand for him. He'd draw'em. Paint 'em after they left. They ...stood there. Standing still.

EGON

Standing still. In the sun. Hours.

TATJANA

Naked. Kids. Boys. Girls. My age. Younger. Some younger.

EGON

Bare. Still. Hours.

TATJANA

I thought, "I'll give him this. It's his. He'll let me in. Maybe he'll draw me. Like a model. I could eat. I could stay. Live there. But I never thought. ... I told you he did those. Those are me. My pictures. He drew me.

EGON

All day.

TATJANA

Some were nude. I thought he loved me. He made goulash. He saw me. Really saw me. I knew when Father saw him, he'd hate him. So. I'd be his. But then. He didn't want it. She said it. I had to go. Leave. Back to Father. No way never! Father hit me. He'd do it again. Especially now. He wanted to help. She didn't. Not in any way. To grandmother's. In Vienna. That was before the whole ... before he forced me to do what I said he did. *(Beat.)* I did say "No."

(TATJANA disappears back to her station as the lights dim. The prison comes up and EGON crawls beneath his blanket.)

Scene 2: The Prison Cell

(EGON tries to sleep in the gray cell.)

EGON

No. Never. *(In German)* Nein. Niemals. Nicht.

(WALLY walks in dressed more like a man, in a hat, a tie and a jacket, with a bucket of water and a brush.)

WALLY

Egon? Egon, you gotta get up.

EGON

Leave me alone.

WALLY

Egon.

EGON

I wanna sleep.

WALLY

You don't sleep. *(Silence.)* Stop playing possum. Guard said clean up your mess.

EGON

No.

WALLY

They'll make you stand in the yard all day.

EGON

Again.

WALLY

What?

EGON

I can't.

WALLY

They made you—

EGON

Last two days. Without movin'. In the sun.

WALLY

You sunburned?

EGON

Yeah. My back. It's killin' me. Come on. Let me sleep.

WALLY

(Digging through her bag) Here. Take this?

EGON

What?

WALLY

Drink it. *(She pulls out a flask.)* Some green fairy. It'll help. *(She helps EGON sit up and drink.)* Better? *(EGON nods.)* Good. You'll need it. Well... Gus? He said no.

EGON

He can't?

WALLY

He won't send you a rope.

EGON

Won't send *me*? *(Beat.)* Me? Not us? Now it's all up—

WALLY

That's not what I meant—

EGON

I'm on my own—

WALLY

Sweetheart—

EGON

You used to always say “we”, we’re in this together—

WALLY

He warned you.

EGON

Whatever.

WALLY

Gus wouldn’t risk it. Get over it.

EGON

Fine.

WALLY

He didn’t hang the moon. Did you try your uncle?

EGON

Shit! Of course! God, Wally. Get off it. (*Beneath his blanket.*) Leave me alone.

WALLY

You can’t hide now. Come on. Sit up. Let’s clean you up. Come on, Egon. Sit up. This’ll feel good. (*EGON sits up. WALLY wipes him down. The water stings.*) Let’s clean you up—a bit of a bath. Make this easier. The authorities—

EGON

They enjoy this.

WALLY

Don’t give ‘em reason to.

EGON

I don’t. It’s just... I don’t understand--

WALLY

You’re at the bottom. Those kids were nude.

EGON

Not completely-

WALLY
Some were.

EGON
They consented.

WALLY
They're kids.

EGON
I was nice to 'em.

WALLY
And that makes it right? (*Silence.*) Start thinking about this from *their* point of view. They think the more people see nude kids, nude women, like ... whatever... well, then the more they'll want it.

EGON
Bull!

WALLY
Is it? Look what happened to your father?

EGON
He did that 'cause Mother turned him away.

WALLY
His affairs with whores came before he met her.

EGON
She could've helped.

WALLY
He was already sick with syphilis!

EGON
But I'm not.

WALLY
Maybe not.

EGON
What's wrong with—

WALLY

Even a small town hick like me get's it! Exposing people to a woman pulling up her skirt so we can see all her privates will lead men to want more, and more, and the more they see it, the more they'll want to do it in groups, or other shit. And yes, I mean shit. And then they're doin' it with animals— like your pop.

EGON

That's not how he got it—

WALLY

That's how it starts.

EGON

It's just sex.

WALLY

No it's not. Egon. It used to be that if you wanted to see a woman's privates you couldn't. At least not until marriage. Showing it—

EGON

I think its art.

WALLY

They think its trash.

EGON

Thank you Mom.

WALLY

Don't get defensive—

EGON

They're my girls.

WALLY

Really. The paintings—these kids are your babies?

EGON

Not what I meant. I'm just sayin'—

WALLY

We all want babies.

EGON

Sure. Yeah. But... You want kids?

WALLY

I've got you don't I? *(Beat. She decides to do a make-over.)* Here. Let's fix you. A bit more like the lawyer you're going to have to be— *(As she puts her tie and her jack on EGON.)* Of course I want kids. If I could, sure I'd have 'em; but I can't. God, I'd love to have kids... but... Once. Almost. But I lost it. The baby, my baby. Maybe it wasn't meant to be? But oh it hurt. I wanted that baby so much. It ached right here. For months. I never wanted to get out of bed. Sometimes I can still feel ... but I don't think about it. *(Pause.)* I was really young.

EGON

I'm so sorry. I didn't mean to... Whoa. *(Pause.)* You got rid of it?

WALLY

Father ... forced me to. That was another lifetime. I had to. See-- Kid's are nature's art. They are our way of leaving something. See, you have this drive because you can't give birth. So you make up for it. You make art in place of children.

EGON

Art as a substitution for kids?

WALLY

Well? What do you call your paintings?

EGON

My ... children.

WALLY

It's official!

EGON

You come here and tell me Gustav won't help, that my dreams of makin' it outta here are screwed, and then you give me this like I'm some sick-o.

WALLY

You just drive me crazy. It's not all about you. God! I've had it! Here I am trying to get you to defend yourself and you turn it on me. I've brought you clothes, bread, I've hunted down the little brat, smuggled art supplies and absinthe, and even dragged-in your blankie, smelling of farts, and what do you give me? Not a thank you, but a headache! I'm startin' to wonder what I get from this? On my birthday you gave me a painting of you, and then you turned around and sold it.

EGON

I thought we needed the money.

WALLY

It was mine!

EGON

Sorry. But I gave you a box of chocolates with carmels too.

WALLY

CARAMEL! CARAMEL! Is it really that hard to pronounce it *correct*? (*Beat.*) Stop lookin' at how this is affectin' you, and start lookin' at how you, your paintin's, affect others.

(Lights shift as WALLY exits to easel with the bucket.)

Scene 3: The Trial Part One

(As the JUDGE walks in the lights change.)

JUDGE

Maybe you belong in the Insane Asylum at Steinhoff. You could at least enjoy the Lunatics Ball. You defend your self? We need to talk! And when I mean "we talk" I mean I talk and you listen. First, I appreciate the new look. Nice, sharp, and clean. But, second, I don't think you can do yourself justice. You have no idea how to defend your case.

EGON

I have no choice.

JUDGE

You understand the moral injustice charge?

EGON

I understand morals more than most lawyers.

JUDGE

You're as morally bankrupt as a Serbian bordello!

EGON

You've been to one?

JUDGE

What?

EGON

I'm just saying— these ones aren't immoral.

JUDGE

Yes—they are.

EGON

Like which one?

JUDGE

This one. A picture of a prostitute?

EGON

Yes.

JUDGE

So, if my Latin is wrong, this is “porne”—a loose woman. A harlot.

EGON

But it’s a work of art.

JUDGE

Fine. A type of work. Porn-ism? Porn-ogram? No, it’s an “ography”. So. Pornography. And it should be banned.

EGON

But prostitutes aren’t banned.

JUDGE

No. Not yet. They’re not. This one. It’s embarrassing. Just for this I should lock you away and throw away the key. Sick. Immoral. Dear Lord showing a nude deformed men?

EGON

That’s me.

JUDGE

Why?

EGON

Why not?

JUDGE

It’s self-obsessed. Venus—I get that. Naked men? Makes me want to vomit. Did this sell?

EGON

(Lying) Well.

JUDGE

How many?

EGON

None actually.

(The lights dim on JUDGE and we see KLIMT.)

Scene 4: The Exhibition of 1909

(KLIMT, in his studio, cheerfully approaches EGON.)

KLIMT

But you showed. You showed with the best of the best. Give it time.

EGON

Screw time. I need money.

KLIMT

It is tough, Egon. But get over it.

EGON

It was like ... “ahh”.

KLIMT

You're just too hard on your self. You're up there With the likes of Oskar Kokoschka and Vincent Van Gogh. They're used to showing. They know what the audience wants. Your first big show. Maybe I set you up too much.

EGON

Maybe I suck, like, not any good.

KLIMT

But you are.

EGON

(Near tears and sniffing) I've got talent. God, tell me I'm good.

KLIMT

Good grief, Egon, calm down. If I had half your talent at your age-

EGON

So I have it?

KLIMT

Damn yes. But, sometimes you're... such an adolescent.

EGON:

(Sniffing) I'm not. Don't call me a child.

KLIMT

Here. Wipe your nose.

EGON

(Wiping his nose) I should have sold some stupid thing at the show.

KLIMT

Oh dear God. Egon. It was The International. You can't aim so high. (Silence.) You are a remarkable artist. One of the best. Let me... There's this other guy who aims high, but he's got no talent. Tries hard, but trying doesn't make an artist. He wants to join the Academy. But they've turned him down four times. And he still... They asked me to write him. They thought maybe a letter from me would—

EGON

Who is he?

KLIMT

Some hack. What is it? Um... Adolph.

EGON

Is his shit better than me?

KLIMT

No, of course not. He's ghastly. He can't draw people- only landscapes. But he tries. Now you can draw people. You're ten years younger than him, and one-hundred years superior. A natural. What I'm trying to say: You don't need me. You need to find you.

EGON

I'm trying.

KLIMT

Go away. Find you. Then look at the world and see how you fit into it. Only then, Egon, will you be an artist.

EGON

Are you telling me to drop out of the Academy?

KLIMT

Yes. *(Pause.)* And, I'm saying we have to stop too.

EGON

You're throwing me out?

KLIMT

No. I'm setting you free.

EGON

Shit! To go where?

KLIMT

Go on. Where? I don't know. Runaway. I hear Tahiti is nice. Oh, Egon, dear boy, Part of me wants you here. Another part of me doesn't. I know. *(Pause.)* Son, you want to grow, and to do that you've got to go.

EGON

I can't live like a damn bum. I'm already living off rice—

KLIMT

Bum? *(Speaking over Egon)* And stay with me on this-- I'm not saying be a bum. I'm saying bum around a bit. It is very different. Live with friends. Go form that group you and your friends wanted to create. Anything.

EGON

I should go?

KLIMT

Yes. Go. God-damn it! Get out.

EGON

But I—

KLIMT

God! Don't you get it? Go. Get! Go on!

EGON

(Hurt) FINE! And fuck you! *(EGON exits to the cell. Silence as KLIMT is left alone.)*

KLIMT

And send me a postcard. *(Pause.)* Ah. Damn, damn, damn.

(KLIMT exits to his easel as the lights change.)

Scene 5: Tatjana's Testimony- Four

(TATJANA walks into a white light.)

TATJANA

(To the audience) He went with me. Wally did too. Back to Vienna. To get *my* things. Wally thought she'd dump me. No way. I said. Grandmother would take me. That she wanted me. She didn't really. I made it up. Grandmother would have. Kept me. Not let me go back. So. I talked to the cook. Instead of... The cook told me what Father thought. He thought I'd been kidnapped. Perfect. I didn't care. The cook

understood the truth. Egon would make me famous. Everyone would know me. I'd be important. Father'd see. So. I told cook. Where I was. She needed to. You know. To know. My cook. She cared. I didn't think she'd tell Father. How to find me.

(TATJANA wilts back to her station.)

Scene 6: The Trial Part Two

*(The lights change as JUDGE moves to his "bench".
EGON moves to the court room)*

JUDGE

So you came to our town to *find* yourself?

EGON

Yes.

JUDGE

And you brought these? *(EGON nods.)* They look ... These are grotesque.

(As JUDGE discusses each painting those in the "life drawing circle" turn a canvas around so the audience can see the specific painting.)

EGON

I don't think so.

JUDGE

They are ugly.

EGON

It's how they feel, Your Honor.

JUDGE

Is this one a doll?

EGON

No, sir. That's Helen. I painted Helen like a doll.

JUDGE

But she's eyeless, empty sockets.

EGON

Helen's despair. She'd been starving for weeks.

JUDGE

She's a local girl?

EGON

Yes, sir. Helen's an orphan.

JUDGE

In so many of these-- You show us in despair. Sadness. And then in the others we look like insects. You want the world to see us this way?

EGON

Those are real people. With real names. How they really feel.

JUDGE

Town's people?

EGON

Yes, your honor.

JUDGE

This one seems in convulsion.

EGON

Karen.

JUDGE

Was she beaten?

EGON

No your honor.

JUDGE

Did you touch her?

EGON

No, your honor.

JUDGE

And these? Are they sick?

EGON

That's Willhelm, Richard, and Olga. Brothers and sisters. Their father's fighting off in Greece.

JUDGE

Are they sick?

EGON

Um... they don't get much to eat.

JUDGE

Some of these were sick at the hospital?

EGON

Yes, some. I try to show how they feel. They don't all feel good.

JUDGE

And this one? It's you?

EGON

Yes.

JUDGE

Were you sick?

EGON

No, sir. I just felt ... ugly that day. I show my self as I see me.

JUDGE

And you come to my town to express your self this way. Outrageous. On the first charge you exposed Tatjana to questionable art, pornographic and obscene, immoral works. You think this is appropriate?

EGON

I don't see why not.

JUDGE

The courts can't support unredeemable art.

EGON

Courts don't really support artists. You hinder us, but I think you need us.

JUDGE

We. Don't. Need. You!

EGON

(Afraid) How can you say that?

JUDGE

You serve no purpose.

EGON

Yes I do.

JUDGE

You put sick images in our heads, rather than getting us to see God's work.

EGON

I repeat feelings. What could be more natural—

JUDGE

You're not necessary! Not you! And definitely not your art!—

EGON

Oh come on. You *need* us—

JUDGE

We do not! And as a judge I don't see we'll ever need your art.

EGON

As an artist I see further than you do.

JUDGE

Don't you dare! Do *not* speak to me that way, boy! And for that: this garbage will be destroyed.

(JUDGE pulls out a match and burns a drawing.)

EGON

You shit!

JUDGE

Herr Schiele! Hold your tongue. You're a guest in my court room! *(As JUDGE burns the painting he continues.)* Now when did you first meet the girl?

EGON

Noooo! *(EGON runs at JUDGE trying to stop him from burning the painting.)* You can't do that!

JUDGE

Guards! Guards!

EGON

That's mine you asshole!

(EGON attacks JUDGE. WALLY and others rush to pull EGON off JUDGE.)

JUDGE

Guards! Get this boy off of me! Now!

EGON

Oh my God! It's the fucking god-damn Middle Ages!

JUDGE

Get him out of here! We are recessed until he can control himself! Next time I see you in my court you'll be bound!

(JUDGE tosses the burning painting into a grate, and exits to his easel. The lights change as EGON moves to draw WALLY by the burning painting, now a fireplace.)

Scene 7: 1912- Wally and Egon in Neulengbach

(The set becomes a house, with a fireplace and a window frame.)

(We hear the waltz. WALLY enters with the mail, as EGON prepares a page.)

EGON

Wally? That look... You...

WALLY

Me?

EGON

Let me? Your skin. You look... Let me draw you now.

WALLY

But the mail. And dinner?

EGON

Five minutes.

WALLY

Oh, of course. I'll leave some of this on, if you don't—

EGON

Of course. Some of it.

(WALLY strips and stands dressed in black stockings and a camisole. She reads the mail as EGON sketches WALLY from behind. The lights shift as if we can hear EGON's thoughts. The waltz grows louder.)

EGON

(To WALLY but more to himself and the audience. Find the rhyme.) A line. Intense an' fine. A center line. *(To WALLY)* Bold. Figure. Stay. Hold it. Bigger. Tort the muscle. *(To himself and the pencil.)* Twist. Torsion of the pencil. *(Draws.)* A line. Here. At this time. *(He draws the line of her body curve on the page.)* One strong line. The link between the body and the soul. Clean black lines on white. As if we dirty up God's clean place. *(Pause.)* A new language. Waltzes on the page. One, two, three... *(He draws.)* Sunken rib cage. Empty eyes rage. One, two, three... *(He draws.)* The body dominates the page as women dominate my stage. One body part. At. A. Time. *(He draws her breasts.)* No stroke wasted. Each touch— taste it. Even erotic art is sacred. ... One, two, three... One. Two. Three. *(He sketches a full arm, and then erases it.)* This? Out. Out. Out. What's a woman about? Plump. Rump. Elegant pencil curve. Thin. Skin. Efficient pencil arch. As if she likes the feel of my touching her. She coils in ... "Don't forget the background..." Fuck it! It is not her! Look at *her!* *(EGON draws a strong curve.)* Elegant and raw. Noble.

(The lights shift back to their room. A moment of silent bonding between model and artist.)

EGON

Wally? You won't believe it. Last night, I couldn't sleep as usual, so, when I came out to stoke the fire, I saw him.

WALLY

Right here?

EGON

Right here. This ghost appeared. He spoke.

WALLY

Who?

EGON

My father. Why does he keep haunting us?

WALLY

Because we live on a dead end. Was he wearing "spook-tackles"?

EGON

You don't get it.

WALLY

I do too. Sweetheart, you're obsessed with dead things.

EGON

No I'm not.

WALLY

You paint gravestones. Go to the mortuary. You paint stillborns-?

EGON

It was him. As sure as I remember. My father. There.

WALLY

Did he want to go catch turtles?

EGON

He was warning me. But I'm not sure about what.

WALLY

(She laughs.) Perhaps, my dear Hamlet, he was warning you about painting all the neighbor kids nude.

EGON

He was warning me of death.

WALLY

Sweetheart, let me rest. My back? It's killin' me.

EGON

I'm sorry. Come sit on my lap.

WALLY

Hey? Did you notice that girl?

EGON

What girl?

WALLY

At the post office, when we got the mail? She'd followed us from the train station.

EGON

What about her?

WALLY

What about her? She followed us to get the mail. That's almost as creepy as you drawin' gravestones and seeing ghosts.

EGON

It's not creepy. She probably heard about the new modeling job.

WALLY

What *new* modelin' job?

EGON

The one that's replacing you.

WALLY

Ha! You're not sendin' me out to pasture.

EGON

Gustav did.

WALLY

Shut up.

EGON

You're always tellin' me to shut up. Have I said anything in the last month that you liked? Remind me. I'll say it again.

WALLY

Okay. Well yesterday ... no I don't think you said anything nice ... Oh, wait you did say I was a good kisser.

EGON

You are.

WALLY

That was last week.

EGON

What you *do*. Not what you don't do--? Are you ever going to show me what you don't do?

WALLY

Maybe. Is there a letter from Gus?

EGON

Nope. There's only a letter from my mother—

WALLY

(Laughing) Marie, your Virgin Mother!

EGON

Respect her.

WALLY

I will when she finally acknowledges me.

EGON

She sent my allowance. (*Reading the letter*) "Dear Egon. I'm sure you're finding that village less distracting than Vienna." I don't think so. (*Kissing each other*) Mother says-- "Your friends here are enlisting in the military."

WALLY

That's horrible.

EGON

She thought I'd've joined the army.

WALLY

What? And miss the great life of an artist? How much did she send?

EGON

The usual. Tonight we splurge.

WALLY

Some firewood?

EGON

Are you cold?

WALLY

Yes. Put some wood on the fire.

EGON

All right, Valerie. (*He beaks up a chair to put in the fire box.*)

WALLY

Not the chair.

EGON

We don't have any other wood.

WALLY

Then get a job.

EGON

I'm on vacation.

WALLY

For two months?

EGON

I'm finding my self.

WALLY

If we have to break up another chair for firewood ... I don't know.

EGON

I'll make get-well cards. Nude women on cards'll perk up any man.

(TATJANA watches through the window.)

WALLY

You sure love women's naked bodies.

EGON

In them I find God.

WALLY

When you paint it's a sexual thin'.

EGON

It's not a sexual act, the brush is not my penis—

WALLY

You can't see your self when you paint.

EGON

And what do I look like?

WALLY

The same as when we make love.

EGON

I do not.

WALLY

You do. But for me that's not obscene. Probably because I'm part of it. But when I saw you do these you looked like a stallion in the middle of a herd of mares in heat.

EGON

Don't be silly.

WALLY

You look like that. When you're engaged, when you're painting. But I don't think it matters who you're painting. You don't look at me as *me*. You look at me like I'm sex. Like one of those kids you drew today. I felt really uncomfortable with it. They

way you see them—I'm not saying you look at them like sex, but you don't look at them like children.

EGON

They're models

WALLY

They're objects?

EGON

Yeah.

WALLY

That's what I'm saying. But they're not. They're real kids. I'm a real woman. I'm nameless, but not at all faceless. They're not nameless folk. Blank folk. Blank eyes of blank women. Like we don't have a brain in our head. We're called Nude Woman in a Chair. "Woman." Use my name, for God's sake. Me. These kids. We're not things to be treated like -

EGON

You make them sound like prostitutes.

WALLY

You make them look like prostitutes.

EGON

You would know.

WALLY

Fuck you!

EGON

Sorry. But women like you, fallen women who ran away to the city—

WALLY

Fallen? You little shit! Where do you get off sayin' that? What'd I fall from? For me this is a step up. Shit, you say it like I lost something. To lose something I'd have to have something. The only thing my parents gave me was the freedom to do this. Fuck you for not givin' me recognition, for not givin' me my due for contributing to your work. You can do this on your own you little ass.

EGON

You want me to use your name?

WALLY

Duh. Recognition. I've got you this far. But I'm also sayin' respect 'em.

EGON

I do. I just don't name 'em.

WALLY

Why not?

EGON

I don't know. I guess ... I will. You're right. Respect 'em in the painting too.

(TATJANA moves from the window.)

EGON

Shit! Did you see that? There's some girl outside.

WALLY

What's she doing?

EGON

Watching us.

(WALLY quickly dresses.)

WALLY

Who is she?

EGON

Maybe that girl from the train station?

WALLY

Like a stray dog. You pat her on her head. That's all some girls need.

EGON

But she's starving.

WALLY

Egon, don't invite her in.

EGON

She's really young.

WALLY

She's poor. It's hard to tell her age.

(EGON at the entrance calls out to TATJANA.)

EGON

Excuse me, sweetheart-

WALLY

Think about this--

EGON

Come in? You want dinner?

WALLY

Don't.

EGON

I have chocolate. With carmel.

(TATJANA steps on with the squash. EGON sees her.)

TATJANA

You have chocolate?

EGON

Yes. You want some? Aren't you pretty in that outfit.

TATJANA

My favorite.

EGON

You like me to paint you?

TATJANA

Okay. Do you want this?

EGON

What is that?

TATJANA

Your squash. You dropped it.

WALLY

Is that ours? From the market?

TATJANA

Yeah. I'm returning it.

EGON

Nice.

WALLY

Egon, get the police.

EGON

Just ... I don't know...for a night or so.

WALLY

Call the police now.

EGON

Tomorrow. *(He takes the squash.)* We can put this in dinner.

(WALLY, EGON, and TATJANA move back to their places. The others wheel out an old style bellman's hand truck and strap EGON onto it with leather belts. JUDGE hits the gavel a few times as if to quiet the gallery.)

Scene 8: The Trial Part Three

(WALLY moves to the witness stand.)

JUDGE

ORDER! ORDER! So Ms Neuzil... the girl was curious. Peeping in on you two.

WALLY

Egon took her in. He tried to convince her to go back to Vienna. She had this black eye, and busted lip. And a pumpkin. There was no way...

JUDGE

Why not?

WALLY

The abuse. I know what it's like when parents abuse or hit or don't want you-

JUDGE

You wanted to help?

WALLY

Yes. Egon suggested she go. To her grandmother's. We went with her back to Vienna. She went in the house, and they spoke. At least that's what she told us. She lied. She never spoke to her grandmother. She talked to the cook.

JUDGE

How long was she there?

WALLY

At our house? A few days.

JUDGE

And? When the police showed up? She was nude?

WALLY

Egon was drawin' her. I was fixin' lunch.

(The light on JUDGE and WALLY dims. TATJANA, in a spot light from her station down stage, turns, and sits like she's sitting for her portrait.)

TATJANA

You love me. Don't you? Make me pretty. Pretty like ladies. You can have it. Father can have it. He'll buy it. I'll be pretty. Prettier than her. I could lower this. *(She reveals a shoulder.)* I don't mind. I've seen mother do it. For Father. Like this. *(She lowers the other shoulder.)* If I'm really good. Being a model. You won't. Call Father. Just show him later? Maybe then he won't... Maybe it won't start all over again. I like you. Like you pictures. Nice. I want to stay.

(JUDGE gavels. Lights on WALLY and TATJANA.)

WALLY

A pounding at the front door.

TATJANA

Father?

WALLY

With the police.

TATJANA

NOOOO!

WALLY

They pushed right past me and her father went straight to her.

TATJANA

Father? Please.

WALLY

Tatjana ran from him.

TATJANA

Get the hell away from me!

WALLY

The police searchin' the house. Her father yellin' at me

TATJANA

SHE HAD NOTHING TO DO—!

WALLY

Then screamin' at Egon—

TATJANA

Egon's famous! I'm GOING to be FAMOUS!

WALLY

Chasin' her like a chicken in the yard—

TATJANA

DON'T TOUCH ME!

WALLY

The police tearin' up my house.

TATJANA

HE'LL make me FAMOUS.

WALLY

The police found some of his drawings—

TATJANA

That's me! It's NICE!

WALLY

They showed them to Egon, and the girl.

TATJANA

Don't you think I look pretty? Father?

WALLY

Her father was ...

TATJANA

Father?

WALLY

He was so hurt. He said, he asked, if Egon hurt her?

TATJANA

Please. Don't.

WALLY

He said, "You can tell me. I won't do anything."

TATJANA

No, Father. You'll take me away!

WALLY

If you don't tell me the truth—

TATJANA

My painting's famous.

WALLY

I'll take you back home—

TATJANA

YOU CAN'T!

WALLY

...and never let you out of my sight.

TATJANA

Father, WHY?

WALLY

He said, "You ran away, sweetheart. You left me and Mommy. Now if you tell me the truth, you won't be in trouble. Did this man hurt you?" She just...

TATJANA

(Standing still and making an innocent look.)

WALLY

"One more time. Did he put his hands on you?"

TATJANA

Yeah. He moved me. Put his hands here.

WALLY

AND? DID HE TOUCH YOU?

TATJANA

(Nods.)

(The lights return to the JUDGE and the regular court room. The lights dim more and more on TATJANA.)

WALLY

But Egon had only posed her. Her father didn't understand.

JUDGE

That's when she ...?

WALLY

Her father suggested it. She couldn't say why she was really there.

JUDGE

Which was?

WALLY

To get away from her father.

JUDGE

Maybe. But that doesn't mean she wasn't raped by Herr Schiele

WALLY

She lied. She had to lie. The man who beat her was standin' right there.

(JUDGE gavels her testimony. The light goes out on TATJANA. She turns around to her station.)

JUDGE

And you simply stood by—or stood in another room, another place, and in a way watched over the whole thing—a spectator without judgment—without participation. And you just let the events unfold? You just stood by—

WALLY

No, your honor.

JUDGE

As I thought. And you did nothing to stop a deviant from being alone with a child. During his time alone with the girl was she fully clothed?

WALLY

Not every minute. But I know him—

JUDGE

And so do I! No further questions. Be seated. Next witness-- Tatjana Von Mossig.

Scene 9: Tatjana's Testimony- Five

(WALLY sits. JUDGE stays in his place. TATJANA steps out of the shadows and speaks to the audience. The lights accentuate her.)

TATJANA

I liked him. I liked his pictures. It was nice. Sleeping all three of us. In the same room. Really. Friends. More of a family than mine. I didn't care about the pictures of the others. They weren't good. I was good. The others weren't as good as me. Judge. I didn't know. I was scared. Father'd beat me. ... And when Father came. I was embarrassed... Scared. ... That's why I lied. ... That's why I made it up. That he raped me. That he wanted me. He didn't. ... I shouldn't have... said it. He didn't rape me. I'm sorry. ... It's just... When they came. When the police came. When Father came. I didn't know what to do. ... So... Father suggested it. I told them. ... No. It wasn't true. But Father made the police believe him. The police believed him. And then they asked me. You should've seen the look on my Father's face when he saw my portrait. I had to say something. I didn't think it would go... I was scared. Not from Egon. He was nice. He never. He didn't. ... I'm sorry. ... Really. Sorry.

(TATJANA fades back to her seat.)

Scene 10: The Sentencing to Prison

(The lights shift to JUDGE.)

JUDGE

Will the defendant please rise. *(EGON is wheeled into the court room strapped to the bellman's handtruck.)* In light of this new testimony the kidnapping and rape charges are dropped.

EGON

Thank you.

(KLIMT enters and exchanges a welcoming look with. EGON. A train whistles in the distance.)

JUDGE

I believe that you did not rape or kidnap Tatjana. But the other charges. *(Sigh.)* Herr Schiele you allowed a young girl an impressionable child. So inappropriate.

EGON

I'm sorry, but your honor, its all in the eye of the beholder isn't it?

JUDGE

No. It's not! Not at all! She's a child! And no action, not even looking at paintings of sexual acts, much less posing for them, no behavior is entirely harmless in the context of children's lives. Do you see? Don't you know better?

EGON

She was... I thought... I'm not sure.

JUDGE

The harm was on her, dear boy, not on you. You exposed her to immoral works. But I am dropping the charge of kidnap and rape... *(Beat.)* But for the charge of immorality ... This is the first time an artist has been on trial for this. I pray that it will be the last. We have no precedent. But artists can't be free to do what ever they want.

WALLY

Oh dear god!

JUDGE

Quiet! Your art is ugly. So. There will be two stages: first—in the square outside the courtroom we will burn the rest of the tasteless canvases.

EGON

What!

JUDGE

I do not want them to show up as under paintings for other paintings. Or make their way into some museum. Following the sentencing we'll have a bonfire and burn the paintings. Herr Schiele, I sentence you to thirty days of imprisonment!

EGON

I've already done a week.

JUDGE

Quiet! Interrupt again and I'll add time to your sentence. *(EGON is silent.)* Better. Now the thirty days was my original plan, but my wife reminded me the punishment should equal the crime. One for one. And since the bonfire is befitting the crime, I'll sentence you to fourteen days. One for each painting. The bonfire is lit. The bailiff has moved the paintings there. Let us reconvene in the square.

(The lights shift as they move to the bonfire pit.)

Scene 11: The Bonfire

(A bonfire {trap door with lights up through the open door} is roaring as JUDGE moves a painting near the pit. EGON watches, strapped to the hand truck. A buried cry escape his lips. WALLY and KLIMT stand near each other.)

KLIMT

I'm sorry I didn't get here sooner.

WALLY

[I know.] Wouldn't have mattered.

KLIMT

I guess not.

JUDGE *(to the townspeople)*

(Placing a painting in the fire) Every day climb away from the edges of hell, and remind ourselves how to be good.

KLIMT

So the little tart lied?

WALLY

Yep. *(Scowling with a shocked expression)* Little shit!

KLIMT

Didn't I pay you to never make that face? You look like Strindberg in a dress.

WALLY

You mean your secretary's new lover? Speaking of her—how is she?

KLIMT

Thinks I'm in Paris. She's pestering me to marry her. Wants me to be a father. Claims she has my child—

WALLY

You a father? I'm sorry. I didn't—

KLIMT

I'm too old— she left me. Like so many. Get old. They leave.

WALLY

She left? Gus? Your secretary? After years? I'm so sorry. But... Why're you here?

KLIMT

You know. *(The reasons are implied.)* Does it matter what we think? This'll make him. Every collector'll want a bit of him. Those two I bought...

WALLY

When you first met him?

KLIMT

Seems so long ago--. Those first two painting I bought off him. Already sold them.

WALLY

Sold them so soon?

KLIMT

A nice turn around and an even nicer profit. Five times what I paid for them. He'll be more famous for this than if they'd—

WALLY

Have let it slide. He sure will. *(They are silent and watch the fire.)*

JUDGE *(to the townspeople)*

(Placing a painting in the fire) Each of us holds this community together.

KLIMT

Will you stay with him?

WALLY

God yeah. I love him. I love him so much... Judas Priest. I've never...

KLIMT

Me too. I know. He's like a ... But I can't stay. Can't have him around.

WALLY

I won't abandon him. He's too ... vulnerable.

KLIMT

Wake up. He'll leave you—dump you when he get's big.

WALLY

No he won't. We're harmony.

KLIMT

Harmony? *(Sarcasm.)* Right. Now... especially with *this*?

WALLY

Is it really his fault?

KLIMT

Does it matter?

JUDGE *(to the townspeople)*

(Placing a painting in the fire) *(With a chuckle)* Funny if you think about it. We should all be laughing.

WALLY

Sick. Burning those. Like real people to me. Friends, people we knew, had lunch with, held. Losin' our friends. (*EGON'S weeping quietly.*) I should've never—but I—. As a kid—a girl really-- my neighbor had these horses. So pretty. Always wanted a horse. A pony. But—parents never would—right? But they'd let me go over to the neighbor-- look at them, touch 'em, ride' em, play with 'em, kiss 'em. But my parents—"Don't get attached to 'em." They reminded me. When I'd come back in the house they'd make me wash, and they'd yell, "Don't get attached."

KLIMT

But we do.

WALLY

I got—like this one horse—I like this one. The horse. Applegate. Even gave him a special harness. He was my—I like him. And one day, winter, cold, and I went over there, to the neighbor's, and they tell me, "Applegate's ..." I don't think they said what really happened. But it hurt 'cause I got...

KLIMT

Attached?

WALLY

For years that's all my—Horses I could pet, touch, but not—and I did. It's not the kissing. I got... shit. Sure there are things I don't do—never mind—but somehow he got me.

KLIMT

Or you got him. What happened to Applegate?

WALLY

My horse. I found him... stumbled over him ... walkin' in the field. He was frozen— of course... they couldn't dig a grave for him in the winter. See I'd been walking, and I tripped over him. Fell on him... this thing. Knew it was him right away. I realized it. Maybe not right away, but when I saw he was still wearin' the harness I gave him. I got— He wasn't my horse. But he was. That's how I felt. And I wasn't supposed to get attached to him. But I did. I loved him. And I wasn't supposed to-- I wasn't... you know? I've fallen... I'm in love with Egon so... I promised myself I wouldn't get attached. But some how he slipped right in.... Damn him. He got me. And I don't... I don't get attached.

KLIMT

Promises we make ourselves.

JUDGE (*to the townspeople*)

(*Placing a painting in the fire*) (*With a chuckle*) We're the watchdogs howling.

KLIMT

That drawing—it's you. Some of them are you.

WALLY

But all of them are Egon.

JUDGE

Our last one! (*JUDGE drops the last painting into the bonfire.*)

EGON

No! Dear God, no. (*EGON surrenders on the handcart.*)

WALLY

Oh, Egon. Gus, he needs me. He can't do this.

*(KLIMT stops WALLY from running over to EGON.
He pulls her into him. She weeps into KLIMT's chest.)*

EGON

(Crying) I'm sorry. Please. Don't do this. Please.

JUDGE

I'd like to thank our firemen for this. It was necessary. We'll not let art be used as a weapon against us. There is one road to morality and its milestones are obedience, diligence, order, sacrifice, and love of one's country. With that-- Court adjourned!

(TATJANA, KLIMT, AND JUDGE exit completely.)

Scene 12: The Prison Cell

(EGON and WALLY in the prison cell.)

EGON

I can't feel my hands. They're numb.

WALLY

Let's get these off you. (*WALLY unfastens the straps on EGON.*)

EGON

The fire's still [roaring in my ears].

WALLY

Try to forget.

EGON

I am. You know, Wally, I'm sorry. You've done so much for me. I never meant—

WALLY

Of course.

EGON

Thank you, Wally. *(He steps from the hand truck.)*

WALLY

The guards would leave you in this—

EGON

Not for this, but for everything. Really. Everything. I see it now.

WALLY

(Slowly) See what?

EGON

What *they* ... saw. It wasn't my... intent. My whatever. It was there, like they saw—

WALLY

Don't say it. Draw it.

EGON

I can't. Not that way. Not like before. You. Them. Each one ... was real. With a real background. A real life. And I'm not the only one seeing 'em. The geezrs see 'em and think I'm sick. I'm not. Really. I'm not.

WALLY

Okay. Do it a new way.

EGON

I don't know. ... I don't know where to start.

WALLY

Sure you do, sweetheart. Start with the lines... the invisible ones.

EGON

I've tried to erase so much...

WALLY

We still see what's erased. So? *(WALLY hands EGON his blankie. Egon does not take it.)* Your blankie—a reminder of ...

EGON

No, thanks. You take it.

WALLY

Really?

EGON

Yeah. I don't want it. I'll ... all this... I'll make it up to you somehow. I promise.

WALLY

You've never... Are *we* okay?

EGON

Yeah. (*Silence.*) No. I'm not. It's all... wasted. All of it. (*Silence.*) You'll visit?

WALLY

I'd ... like to. But.

EGON

Then?

WALLY

It...it's against ...they won't let me... (*EGON "Why?"*) No visitors. For offences like this... Not for offences of morality. Sorry. (*EGON shrugs "I know."*) I love you.

EGON

You'll be missed.

WALLY

Anything more?

EGON

You know... right now... I've got no words.

WALLY

Sure.

EGON

We're ... hopeless ... you know ... with love.

WALLY

Don't say that.

EGON

Just... Don't worry about me.

WALLY

I do. Hey. When you get out we'll flatten this place and cover it in salt.

EGON

Then run like hell. (*They kiss.*) Okay. Go. (*EGON pulls out his paints.*)

WALLY

Yeah. *(Of course.) (WALLY exits off-stage.)*

EGON

(Mumbled) Bury this place...

(The Vienna Blood Waltz returns but this time it is sung by the Vienna Boys Choir.)

EGON

Smell the smoke... Still smell it... I won't let 'em... take it away... this [brush] I will [create/draw]. The geezers can't win. They can't determine art, taste. Beauty. How we think. How we see. How we love. I can. I'm ... alive, so... I can!

(EGON, using the white sheet, draws an outline of himself.)

EGON

(His drawing "waltz" slowly begins.) One strong stroke. A young life... A-yoke... Body and God. Made with... My hands... My... handiwork. God's masterwork. *(Draws.)* Another... [line]. My body. Comin' back. With a mark. *(Draws.)* Yes! A line.... Connect the... body to soul. *(Draws.)* YES! And... it is ... good. Clean and good. Black on white! And ... *(Draws.)* One, two, three... One, two, three...

(As he draws himself, he grows strength.)

EGON

(With the waltz in three-time beat) I will ... *(Draws.)* Continue! I will make! *(Draws.)* Watch me form! I will create! I WILL *(paint)*. YES! I! WILL!

(The waltz continues as the lights fade to black.)

NOTES TO THE DIRECTOR:

Egon charges us to question who should decide what we and our children see. Egon was one of the most influential painters to emerge from Vienna at the turn of the century. He was controversial, but so were Robert Mapplethorpe, Georg Baselitz, and Madonna. Egon showed us things, then and now, we might rather resist seeing. The play paints a portrait of how institutions determine who and what we see. With that said, the relationship between Egon and Wally is of upmost importance. It is their relationship which shows his expressiveness, his demonstrativeness, and his adolescence. His growth from a teenager to a man is progressive, and by the end he transforms into a mature, yet martyred artist.

As for the play's structure, it eludes a linear construction and aims to mimic how we recall events. Memory is not a perfect sequential machine. The structure conceals information, while revealing it at the same time. For some audiences this might confuse them and they may need "title cards", lighting or sound cues to designate time shifts. If "title cards" or projections are used, the font could be written in the stylized manner Schiele signed his paintings.

The words in square brackets [example] are not verbalized, but non-verbal and implied. In order to reflect how we speak some words are missing.

Because of the nature of the accusations and Egon's artistic practices the actor should balance innocence with charm, attractiveness with inexperience, and physical youth with advanced talent.

Concerning the nudity, this play is not politically correct, safe, or tame and therefore the nudity should not be safe. Where that line is between safe and risk, is up to the actors, and the director, and the audience. The nudity should be real, done by real people, in order to make the audience realize they are not seeing a non-event, but a real event, a current event. The nudity reminds us of our own bodies, who we are, and how the actors are real. This is not film, or television; it is live. The nudity demands we compare us to them, them to each other, and all of us to Egon's paintings.

Why do I suggest the actors remain always present? The cast sits between the audience and the action on the stage, drawing, painting, doodling, and reacting to the action. They watch as we watch. They guard the action as guards for us, from us, and for Egon. They help us know what to see, what they see, and how to see Egon's art. As they too are artists, as they too grow as artists, we can see the simplicity of Egon's art, and yet know its difficulty.

The question has been asked, "Where is this?" Why a bare white stage instead of a naturalistic courtroom, or a realistic jail cell? This play is about people, their bodies, not about a specific location, or place we put those bodies. They are the site of complaint. They are framed by the arch of the stage, not of the location of a court room. I would suggest the other actors frame the spaces, make the places. Maybe other sexy thin women or handsome young men could make the set pieces, or move the minimal set pieces, so we see Egon's focus on the body.