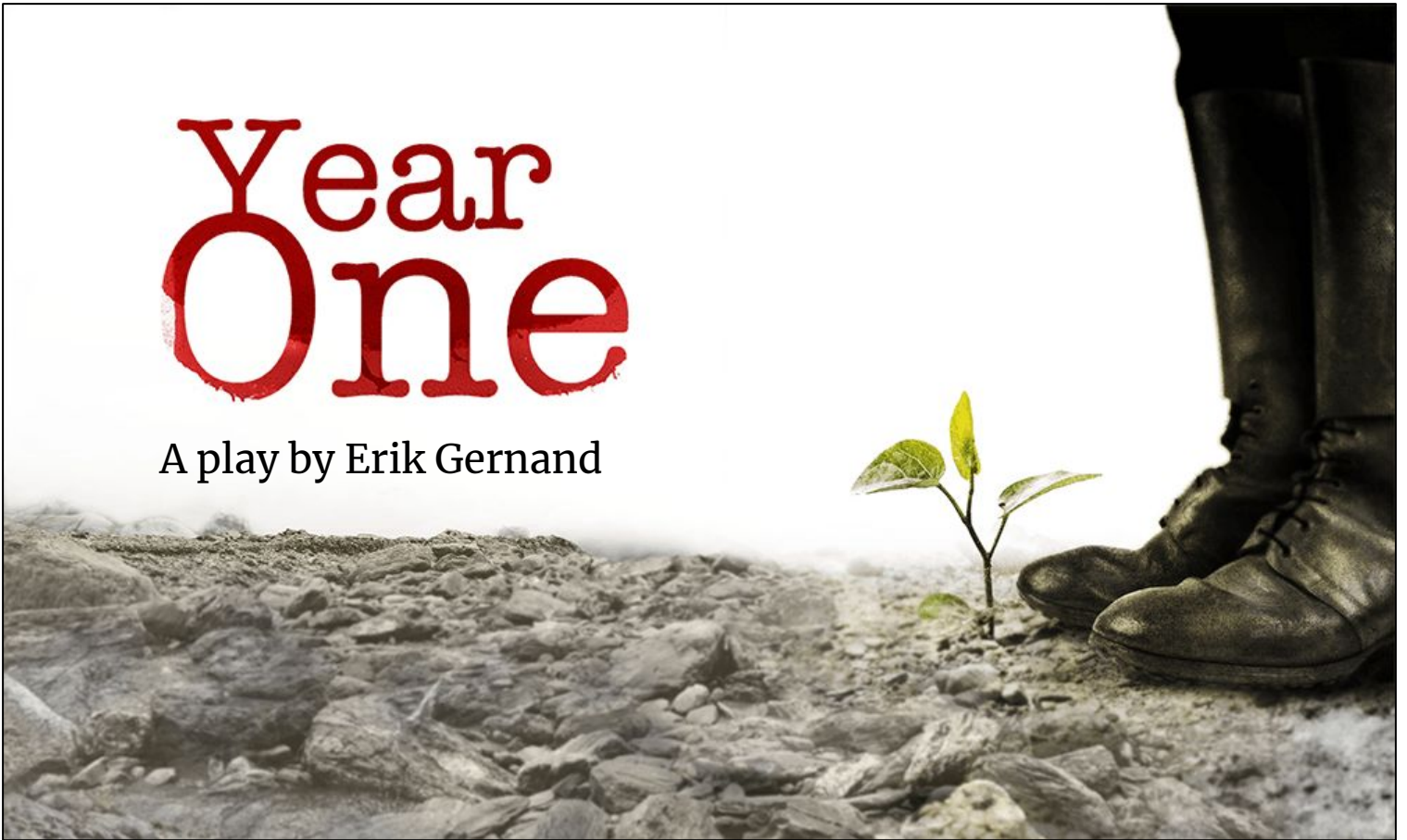


# Year One

A play by Erik Gernand



**A full-length play by Erik Gernand**

**SYNOPSIS:**

In 1933 Germany, Anna struggles to keep her family afloat during the first year of Adolph Hitler's rise to power. When her brother Max arrives unexpectedly from Berlin, Anna's life is thrown into even greater turmoil when the true reason for his visit is uncovered and she's forced to choose between family and country.

**PRODUCTION:**

Premiere Stages, Union, NJ, 2021

**DEVELOPMENT:**

Summer Playwrights Festival, The Road Theatre, Los Angeles, 2023

Valdez Theatre Conference, Alaska, 2021



*Year One* at Premiere Stages, Union, NJ, 2021

"A compelling dive into extremism's creep... It leaves audiences with the difficult task of recognizing the seeds of evil concealed in otherwise perfectly pleasant people. This point of view ensures that 'Year One' is not a history play exploring specific events of 1933, but rather a valuable meditation on the unseen or—worse— willfully overlooked origins of violent extremism."

—Patrick Maley, *The Star-Ledger*, Newark

"*Year One*, in fact, evokes some of the worst aspects of modern life so effectively that it's painful to watch. It's one of those rare plays that not only tackles big, important, difficult issues, but does so in a consistently absorbing way."

—Jay Lustig, *NJ Arts*

"A gripping, thought-provoking drama."

—Marina Kennedy, *Broadway World*

"With a focused laser beam of truth, history is reflected magnificently in this play."

—Susan Dougherty, *The Westfield Leader*

"In *Year One*, playwright Gernand has pulled off what I consider a tour de force... the play certainly provides food for thought—about art, about politics, about the pressure to conform, about the necessity to take a stand."

—Ruth Ross, *NJArtsMaven.com*



*Year One* at Premiere Stages, Union, NJ, 2021



*Year One* at Premiere Stages, Union, NJ, 2021



*Year One* at Premiere Stages, Union, NJ, 2021



*Year One* at Premiere Stages, Union, NJ, 2021

**PLAYWRIGHT BIO:**

Erik Gernand's plays have been in production and/or development at theaters including Premiere Stages (Union, NJ), Redtwist, American Theater Company, and Chicago Dramatists (all Chicago), Actors Theatre of Louisville, as well as The Barrow Group (NYC). As a filmmaker, his award-winning short films have screened at more than 100 film festivals around the world including SXSW, Chicago International Film Festival, and Cinequest, as well as been broadcast on IFC, PBS, and the Logo Channel. Erik is graduate of Ball State University and an Associate Professor of Instruction in Radio-TV-Film at Northwestern University.

"Affecting, thought-provoking...Mr. Gernand has created complicated, recognizable people who are, like most of us, victims of their own flaws."


—Anita Gates, *The New York Times*

"An untenable situation, spiraling out of control. This is what it looks like from the inside, when a family is coming apart at the seams."

—Nina Metz, *Chicago Tribune*

"Gernand quickly stakes out his own turf, plunging his characters into ethical turmoil... Gernand ingeniously navigates a world of increasingly murky morality."

—Jack Helbig, *Chicago Reader*



The Barrow Group presents  
*The Beautiful Dark*  
A new play by Erik Gernand  
Directed by Shannon Patterson

featuring: Calleen Clinton • Drew Minard • Chelsea Mojjalali  
Stephen Singer • Brant Spencer Amundsen • Jesse Turris

April 23–May 18, 2014 • TBG Studio Theatre  
312 W 36th Street, 3rd Floor, New York • barrowgroup.org  
tickets: SmartTix.com or 212-868-4444

the barrow group EQUITY NYSCA

This production is made possible by the New York State Council on the Arts, the National Endowment for the Arts, and the City of New York. The Barrow Group is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization. All proceeds from this production will be used to support the Barrow Group's mission of providing high-quality theater to the community.



"An immensely successful piece of art...the message of the play lingers for days, if not longer."  
—Theatre by Numbers

**A PLACE IN THE WOODS**  
A NEW PLAY BY ERIK GERNAND  
DIRECTED BY PATRICK KENNEY

**"RECOMMENDED"**  
—ChicagoCritic

"The cast wins the audience over from the start—Gernand's script is an endearing mix of desolation and humor, and Patrick Kenney's direction yields a surprisingly arresting evening with this family we meet at a critical and long overdue moment of truth."  
—NewCity

THE FINE PRINT THEATRE COMPANY

JEFF RECOMMENDED

"Year One"

By

Erik Gernand

Premiere Stages Production

DRAFT: 9-10-2021

Erik Gernand  
Email: [erikstevengernand@gmail.com](mailto:erikstevengernand@gmail.com)  
Tel: 773-655-9048

## **CHARACTERS**

Anna, 40s, a doctor

Peter, 18, her son

Claudia, 18, his girlfriend

Max, 30s/40s, Anna's brother

Rosemary, 60s/70s, Peter's grandmother/Anna's mother-in-law

## **SETTING**

A home and various locations in a small town.



SCENE 1

*January. A hospital.*

*Anna washes up after surgery in scrubs,  
addresses a colleague.*

ANNA

Appendicitis. You must have seen him yesterday. Thirty-something. Nice-looking. More than I would expect from someone who... some...

So, we can barely get him on the table. Dripping with sweat. Looks like death. Yet somehow he musters the strength to look me square in the eyes and say, he actually says to me... "Are you one of them? I won't let some vermin touch me."

I said, I wasn't. I should have told him I was. I mean, I'm not, but... In the moment, my brain froze up. Like some...

This is awful. I know. But later, I'm standing over him. He's cut wide open. And he bleeds. Bad. I clamp down. His life is literally in my hands. One little move and he'd be...

Would that have been so wrong, I think? Wouldn't we all be better off with fewer people like him in the world?

I'm kidding! I wouldn't. Would never. It's just...

Vermin? Seriously? What kind of animal... Who says something like that? What have we devolved to in this country that he could say that and no one said anything. *I* didn't say anything? Where did everything go so wrong?

Right? Right?

(A beat. She hears a response she wasn't  
expecting.)

Oh. I didn't realize you...

Oh.

## SCENE 2

*April. A home. Evening.*

*The family recently finished a meal together around the dinner table. Celebratory, festive music plays on a device.*

*Claudia has taken to dancing. She goes to Peter who is seated and takes him by the hands to get him on his feet.*

CLAUDIA

You have to dance.

PETER

I can't.

CLAUDIA

It doesn't have to be perfect.

PETER

I don't know what I'm doing.

CLAUDIA

Just follow me. You have to start somewhere. Left foot, then right foot. Left foot, then right foot. It's easy.

Claudia leads Peter in a dance. He's not good but he tries.

PETER

I look like an idiot.

ROSEMARY

You look like you have the whole world in front of you.

CLAUDIA

Come join us!

ROSEMARY

My bones are too old. I like watching. It reminds me of when I could still dance like that once upon a time.

CLAUDIA

Dr. Caldwell?

ANNA

I was under the mistaken impression that the dining room was for eating not dancing.

ROSEMARY

Let the children have their fun.

PETER

Don't worry, I'm not having any fun.

CLAUDIA

Of course, you are! This is a celebration. A double celebration, in fact.

ROSEMARY

Oh, I love a party! What are we celebrating?

CLAUDIA

For starters, Mr. Schmidt, of course.

ROSEMARY

(disapproving)

Hmmm.

MAX

I'm nothing to celebrate.

CLAUDIA

That's not what I hear. A war hero should be honored every chance we get.

MAX

That was years ago.

ROSEMARY

My Herbert was a war hero.

PETER

Yes, Father was.

ANNA

He was. And so was my brother.

CLAUDIA

Peter's told me all about you. He's very proud.

MAX

Peter's quite the young man himself.

PETER

Can we sit down yet?

ANNA

Yes, please do.

Peter collapses into a chair. Claudia goes to Max.

CLAUDIA

I want to hear how you got your medals. Spare no details.

MAX

Perhaps another time.

PETER

Uncle Max has lots of stories. He used to tell them all when I was little.

CLAUDIA

Did you ever have to shoot anyone? Pow!

ANNA

That's not appropriate.

CLAUDIA

If he did I'm sure they had it coming.

PETER

He had to do lots of things. Drive a tank. Use a machine gun. He even led a rescue mission once.

CLAUDIA

Oh, I love war stories. I find them absolutely exhilarating.

ANNA

It was a war. People died. It's not entertainment.

Anna turns off the music.

PETER

Mother.

ANNA

That's enough dancing anyway.

PETER

Claudia just wanted to have fun.

CLAUDIA

I'm sorry. We were only celebrating.

ROSEMARY

There's no need to apologize.

ANNA

We have neighbors to think about. Not everyone's in the mood for fun these days.

CLAUDIA

They should be. We should never miss a chance to celebrate. Otherwise we tempt the fates not to send more good our way.

ROSEMARY

I could watch young people dance all night.

ANNA

I picked up a cake for Max.

MAX

You didn't have to.

ANNA

It's the least I can do.

MAX

Thank you.

CLAUDIA

But I didn't even get to the second thing we're celebrating.

ROSEMARY

Oh! What else is there? I knew there had to be something more than just Max.

CLAUDIA

Drumroll, please!

A beat. No one obliges.

Finally, Rosemary gives it her best shot. She's horrible.

Claudia eventually explodes...

CLAUDIA (cont'd)

Peter got a job!

ANNA

That's wonderful!

ROSEMARY

Peter?! When were you going to tell us?

PETER

I wanted it to be for sure before I said anything.

ROSEMARY

Oh, I'm so happy!

MAX

Congratulations. That's terrific.

PETER

Thank you, Uncle Max.

ANNA

What is it?

CLAUDIA

He'll be an apprentice at...

(slight beat)

No, you tell them.

PETER

It's OK. You can say it.

CLAUDIA

He'll be with Thomas Dunst at his print shop.

ANNA

I'm so proud of you.

CLAUDIA

After months upon months of no work anywhere to be found, Peter finally has something. I think that's worth celebrating.

MAX

Now that's a reason to have cake.

ROSEMARY

I agree.

CLAUDIA

I've been dreaming about cake.

PETER

Is that all you dream about?

CLAUDIA

Only when I'm not dreaming about you.

ROSEMARY

Ahhh. There's nothing like young romance.

MAX

When do you start?

PETER

April 10th. Next Monday.

CLAUDIA

Will you still be here, Mr. Schmidt? Then he can tell you all about it in person.

MAX

Please, call me Max.

CLAUDIA

How long will you be in town... *Max*.

MAX

Just for dinner tonight.

CLAUDIA

It's rather far just to just say hello.

ANNA

Max will stay as long as he likes.

ROSEMARY

(insincere)

How nice.

CLAUDIA

Wonderful! Then hopefully we'll see you again.

MAX

Is there dancing every night?

ANNA

Absolutely not.

Anna sets the cake on the table.

ROSEMARY

Oh, my. That looks expensive.

ANNA

It's a special occasion. Max hasn't been home in years.

CLAUDIA

What kind is it?

ANNA

Chocolate almond with orange.

MAX

I remember.

ANNA

When we were little our mother would pick one up for holidays. We didn't have any money but she'd squirrel a little away so we could have something to look forward to. And she guarded that cake with her life. She knew that if she cut it right there would be just enough for all of us to have exactly three servings. Make it last. I had a sweet tooth--still do--and at night I'd sneak downstairs and cut the thinnest piece I possibly could just to get another taste. Of course, she figured it out. But what she didn't know was that it was me. I was the perfect child and Max was the eternal trouble maker. So he got blamed.

PETER

I didn't know you had such a devious side.

ROSEMARY

Your poor mother.



MAX

Poor me.

ANNA

This is my penance. You can have as much cake as you want. I couldn't help myself.

CLAUDIA

Now I can't wait to try it!

ROSEMARY

Where's it from?

ANNA

Bergman's.

Beat.

CLAUDIA

Oh.

ANNA

Is that a problem?

ROSEMARY

I'll make tea.

PETER

That sounds great.

CLAUDIA

Yes. I'll help.

ROSEMARY

No, sit.

CLAUDIA

I insist. You've done so much work already.

PETER

She insists, Grandma. Claudia won't take no for an answer. That's something I adore about her.

ANNA

What's wrong with Bergman's?

PETER  
Mother, please don't.

ANNA  
What?

PETER  
You know exactly what.

ANNA  
No. Enlighten me.

PETER  
You just... We probably shouldn't shop there any more.

ANNA  
I'll shop where I want.

PETER  
Mother...

ANNA  
Don't be like them.

CLAUDIA  
Peter just means that we should support local businesses.

ROSEMARY  
On second thought, I could use some help. Why don't you join me in the kitchen, dear.

ANNA  
Is that what my son means?

PETER  
It's not a big deal.

ANNA  
It's a rather big deal. Max, what do you think?

MAX  
Um...

ROSEMARY  
Peter's right. Let's not get on some insignificant tangent that's going to end us up somewhere we'd rather not go. There's enough fighting in the world already.

CLAUDIA  
That sounds good.

PETER  
I agree.

ROSEMARY  
Thank you.

ANNA  
It's not insignificant.

An awkward beat.

MAX  
Everything was certainly delicious.

ROSEMARY  
I was happy to make it. Peter's suggestion. He remarked how much you liked my meatloaf last time you were here.

CLAUDIA  
(to Peter)  
Oh. That's so sweet of you.

PETER  
You're sweeter.

CLAUDIA  
Oh my goodness!

ANNA  
(under her breath)  
Oh, God.

MAX  
How long have you two known each other?

CLAUDIA  
Literally, forever. But also, like, not long enough.

MAX  
Huh.

CLAUDIA

I know, you're thinking, "What does that even mean?" But the thing is, we've always been in each other's orbit, but never actually realized it. Like, do you know how something can be there right in front of you, with you, in your midst, but you don't see it? Like you're blind or something. And then one day, something happens and you get back your vision and there it is staring you right in the face. That's how it was with Peter and me. We finally just one day... opened our eyes.

PETER

It's all true.

ROSEMARY

That's beautiful.

MAX

Yes, that's very sweet.

CLAUDIA

Do you have someone who makes you feel like that, Max?

MAX

I do.

CLAUDIA

Why isn't she here?

MAX

It's complicated.

CLAUDIA

Love is always complicated! That's what makes it so wonderful. And like nothing else in the universe.

PETER

I'd like to meet her some day.

CLAUDIA

So would I!

ANNA

The Bergmans are citizens.

Slight beat.

Anna. ROSEMARY

I'm simply stating facts. ANNA

You're provoking. ROSEMARY

Not by blood. CLAUDIA

Blood? ANNA

Mother, please... PETER

No. No, no, no. ANNA

CLAUDIA  
In times like this, shouldn't we be supporting actual citizens? Who were born here?  
Whose parents were born here?

ANNA  
I didn't check their papers.

CLAUDIA  
I'm not trying to be disagreeable. I don't have a problem with anyone.

ANNA  
Are you sure?

CLAUDIA  
But it just seems like if we've been asked not to shop somewhere, it's easy enough to do.  
It's patriotic.

ANNA  
It's vile.

PETER  
(to Anna)  
Stop this, please.

ROSEMARY

Why must we fight incessantly?! I'd like to someday again before I die take in a breath of air that isn't tainted with arguing!

Slight beat.

PETER

I couldn't agree more.

ROSEMARY

Can't we please go back to the damn dancing?

ANNA

I'd rather we go back to January. Before he came to power.

ROSEMARY

Anna!

(beat)

Who wants the first piece?

(no response)

Then how about ladies first?

CLAUDIA

No cake for me, thank you.

ROSEMARY

Peter?

PETER

No. Thank you, Grandma.

ANNA

Peter. It's just cake.

An uncomfortable beat.

ROSEMARY

Well... How about we save this for later. That seems best, I think.

CLAUDIA

We should be heading over to my house soon anyway.

ROSEMARY

You don't have to rush off.

CLAUDIA

My father wants to congratulate Peter on the new job. A toast for the man of the hour, he likes to say.

ROSEMARY

Then please tell your parents hello from us.

CLAUDIA

Of course. And they send their best. I forgot to tell you.

(beat)

Dinner was wonderful. As was the company. And so nice to meet you finally, Max. Thank you for having me, Dr. Caldwell.

No response from Anna.

ROSEMARY

Of course, dear.

A hesitation.

CLAUDIA

Heil Hitler.

ROSEMARY

Heil Hitler.

Slight beat.

MAX

Heil Hitler.

PETER

Heil...

But Anna cuts off him before he can.

ANNA

Goodnight.

A beat. Peter and Claudia exit.

Another beat.

ROSEMARY

Well... I for one think she's lovely.

ANNA

Compared to what?

Rosemary exits in a huff.

MAX

Was that wise?

ANNA

Someone has to speak the truth.

MAX

You should at least say the heil. Even if you don't mean it.

ANNA

That makes him too real.

MAX

The heil doesn't mean a thing. Say it loud and clear if you have to. It's what you do after you say it that matters.

ANNA

What are you going to do?

MAX

Keep saying it until I can't any longer.

Beat.

ANNA

How long will you stay?

MAX

I shouldn't even be here now.

ANNA

We're your family. You're not going anywhere.

MAX

I didn't leave Berlin by choice.

Slight beat.



ANNA

I suspected as much. Are you OK?

A hesitation, Max shakes his head.

MAX

You can't imagine.

ANNA

I know.

MAX

You don't. If you really did you wouldn't be instigating.

ANNA

What can I do?

MAX

Keep your mouth shut.

ANNA

I'm not good at that.

MAX

Don't draw attention. Don't be so judgmental.

ANNA

I'm not judgmental.

(he gives her a look that says otherwise)

What? It's hard when everyone else is so stupid.

MAX

It's not safe. For you or Peter.

But Max can't respond, too emotionally overwhelmed.

ANNA

Stay. We'll get through this together.

Beat.

Max nods in agreement.

ANNA (cont'd)

But I won't say his name.

## SCENE 3

*A cemetery.*

*Rosemary holds flowers.*

## ROSEMARY

There was this boy from town. Years ago. Peter must have been eight or nine. Pathetic little thing. He was Peter's age but looked much younger. Malnourished. The children at school were unbearably cruel.

I came home one afternoon and there was an awful stench in the house. I said out loud, "Dear God, what is that smell?" And I turned the corner and there was Peter at our table with that dirty child. My heart sank, I was sure he heard me.

I told Peter to invite his little friend for dinner. Though I didn't know how I'd stomach the stench. But sure enough when they came back downstairs... Peter had let the boy bathe and given him his own clean clothes to wear.

In your son... that's where I see God. In Peter. So no one can tell me that Peter is doing anything wrong now. You should be proud of the man he's growing into. In spite of a world that's turned against him. Against all of us.

Everything's just become... as if night settled in and won't go away. When someone is drowning they don't rather care who throws them the rope, now do they? Can you blame them?

Perhaps since you're already there, if you talk to God, tell Him to pay us some attention again. We need it.

My sweet son. My Herbert.

She leaves the flowers at the grave.

## SCENE 4

*May. At home. Another day.*

*Rosemary enters, sets out breakfast.*

*Peter rushes in from his bedroom, finishes getting dressed.*

PETER

Morning.

ROSEMARY

Good morning. What can I get you?

PETER

Nothing. I'm running late.

ROSEMARY

Not too late to eat.

PETER

I'm afraid so.

ROSEMARY

Toast and tea.

PETER

I can't.

ROSEMARY

Just one piece of toast. I'll worry all day if I let you run off without eating.

(coy)

My heart can't take it.

PETER

You're impossible.

ROSEMARY

At least someone finally noticed me.

PETER

But it has to be fast.

Peter finally sits and eats.

ROSEMARY

Will you be back for lunch?

PETER

I'm eating with Claudia.

ROSEMARY

Ah, that's getting serious. You're both welcome here any time. I'll make sure your mother behaves herself.

PETER

Do you have magic powers?

ROSEMARY

I have my ways.

Rosemary watches Peter eat.

ROSEMARY (cont'd)

You look happy.

PETER

You sound surprised.

ROSEMARY

I'm glad.

PETER

I'm exhausted.

ROSEMARY

Exhaustion from work *is* happiness.

PETER

Then I'm absolutely thrilled beyond belief.

ROSEMARY

What are they teaching you?

PETER

Everything. It doesn't stop. Folding. Cutting. Type-setting. I've just started learning the actual presses. I have a ways to go still. My hands are raw with paper cuts.

(slight beat)

Oh! And cleaning. Lots and lots of cleaning. I've never cleaned so much in my life.

ROSEMARY

Do you enjoy it?

PETER

Not the cleaning. But everything else.

ROSEMARY

Hard work is good for you. It'll grow hair on your chest. That's what my father always said. Even to me.

PETER

I know.

ROSEMARY

Well... at least I'm not repeating myself like some woman whose grown old and crazy.

PETER

You're not that old.

She smiles. Peter finishes gobbling down his breakfast. One last swig of tea and he pushes the plate away.

PETER (cont'd)

One piece of toast. Finished.

ROSEMARY

Was that so hard?

PETER

Practically impossible.

She smiles, looks at him hard.

ROSEMARY

My dear baby boy. You've grown into such a wonderful smart ass.

PETER

Now you're just flattering me.

ROSEMARY

Just like your father at your age.

PETER

Thanks for the breakfast. Most delicious piece of toast I've had in years.

Anna enters.

ROSEMARY

Well, speaking of...

ANNA

Of what?

PETER

Speaking of I have to go or I'll be late.

ANNA

I want to hear more about your job. You're always running out.

PETER

You're always at the hospital.

ANNA

You can tell me everything over lunch.

Slight beat.

PETER

I'll be eating with a fellow from work.

ANNA

Oh. That's nice.

ROSEMARY

Yes, that's nice.

ANNA

Have a good day.

ROSEMARY

Goodbye, sweetheart.

Peter kisses them both and rushes out the door. Anna sits at the table and pours a tea.

ANNA

You got him to actually eat breakfast. Impressive.

ROSEMARY  
(smug)  
It's nothing.

Anna picks up a newspaper on the table and reads it.

Beat.

ROSEMARY (cont'd)  
Your brother isn't up yet. Once again.

ANNA  
OK.

ROSEMARY  
Should I put breakfast away?

ANNA  
It's up to you.

Beat.

ROSEMARY  
I'll leave it out.

ANNA  
Fine.

Beat.

ROSEMARY  
Max sleeps rather late, don't you think?

ANNA  
I hadn't noticed.

ROSEMARY  
Well, he does. Every day for weeks now.

ANNA  
Why does it matter, Rosemary?

Beat.

Anna reads.



ROSEMARY

I thought you didn't like that newspaper.

ANNA

This is what I'm left with. The real paper was shut down for doing their job.

ROSEMARY

(under her breath)

Well, they were rather biased.

Anna gives her a disapproving glare.

ROSEMARY (cont'd)

No one's forcing you to read it.

ANNA

I want to know what they're lying about today.

ROSEMARY

I'd rather not.

ANNA

I wish I had that luxury.

ROSEMARY

You do. And for your information, there's nothing wrong with choosing to stay sane.  
Might do you some good.

(beat)

Perhaps you should check on Max.

ANNA

(scoffs)

Why?

ROSEMARY

I think it's odd.

ANNA

That he sleeps.

ROSEMARY

That he needs to sleep so late.

ANNA

I'll take a wild guess that he's tired.

ROSEMARY

Or that he thinks he's still in the big city.

Slight beat.

ANNA

What does that mean?

ROSEMARY

The things men like your brother do in the city aren't the same things they should be doing here.

ANNA

Max can do whatever he wants.

ROSEMARY

Like running around at all hours of the night? With God knows what kind of people?

ANNA

He goes to bed before I do.

ROSEMARY

Then he leaves.

ANNA

Max has friends from school. He probably goes to see them.

ROSEMARY

At two in the morning?

Slight beat.

ANNA

That's his business.

ROSEMARY

You invited him in. My grandson looks up to him, that makes it my business if he's up to something deviant.

ANNA

Then you have nothing to worry about. I'd be ecstatic to know that Peter were following in his uncle's footsteps.

ROSEMARY

All I'm saying is you should pay more attention to what's happening beneath this roof instead of just what's happening outside of it.

ANNA

I have many things keeping me awake at night. Max's comings and goings aren't one of them.

ROSEMARY

I may only be your mother-in-law but I live here too.

ANNA

I'm not going to argue with you about this.

ROSEMARY

Your brother is stealing from us.

Slight beat.

ANNA

Rosemary.

ROSEMARY

I didn't want to say anything.

ANNA

Clearly you did.

ROSEMARY

I've seen him sneaking around.

ANNA

Are you spying?

ROSEMARY

I'm observing.

ANNA

Same thing.

ROSEMARY

I knew you wouldn't believe me, that's why I waited to get proof. Herbert's pocket watch is missing.

Beat.

ANNA

It's in the desk.

ROSEMARY

When's the last time you saw it?

ANNA

I don't know.

ROSEMARY

It's not there.

ANNA

Then you're not looking in the right place.

ROSEMARY

It's gold. And worth quite a bit of money.

ANNA

I know what it is.

ROSEMARY

I'm sick over all of this. It's a family heirloom. Given to Herbert by his father. And eventually it should be Peter's.

ANNA

I'll find the watch.

ROSEMARY

I certainly hope so.

ANNA

But you have to let this go. Max didn't steal it.

ROSEMARY

I hope you're right.

ANNA

Of course, I'm right.

ROSEMARY

You always are.

(under her breath)

According to you.

Anna picks back up her newspaper.

ANNA

I'd like to read my lies in peace. I will find the watch.

Beat.

ROSEMARY

Suit yourself. But don't be surprised if something's awry in this house. I have a keen sense for these things.

Rosemary decides to clear breakfast after all. She exits into the kitchen.

Once Rosemary is gone, Anna goes to the desk. She searches for the watch. Nothing.

## SCENE 5

*June. Outside.*

*Claudia and Peter hold hands as they walk.  
Claudia looks up at the night sky.*

CLAUDIA

I love summer nights when it still gets cold. Like winter wants to remind us that she's never far off. When we were little we'd go to the sea this time every year. My grandparents had a cottage near the water and at least one time every trip we'd go out and camp on this little island. You see, we'd take a boat out. It seemed so far back then. Like a grand adventure and I remember wondering what would happen if we ever encountered pirates on the way. It's silly but that's what I thought about. The first time we went, we were about to go to sleep and my dad ran up from the shore in a panic and said that Gypsy thieves had snuck onto the island and stolen our boat and that we were trapped. My older brothers snickered but Michael and I believed every word, because my dad looked so distraught. He could have been a wonderful movie actor. You know what he's like. But he told us not to worry because he said he had a large magic straw and he was going to stay up all night if he had to and drink all the water out of the sea.

PETER

What?

CLAUDIA

That's what he said. And sure enough we woke up the next morning and he'd done it... the sea was gone.

PETER

No.

CLAUDIA

That part of the story is actually real. You see the tides would come in and go out so much that you could actually take a boat out one way to the island and then walk back the other way when the tide went out. It's the strangest thing. But I didn't know that. So I woke up in awe of what my father had done with his magic straw and we walked back to the mainland relieved. He was my hero.

PETER

And you believed he drank the sea?

CLAUDIA

I never said I was a smart child.  
(slight beat)

It seems cruel that we ever have to lose that sense of believing. Don't you think?

PETER

Or maybe it's cruel that your father made you believe something that wasn't true.

Slight beat

CLAUDIA

What's your favorite memory?

PETER

Tonight. Walking along the river. Listening to you.

CLAUDIA

No. Something of your own. Something I don't already know.

PETER

There isn't one.

Beat.

CLAUDIA

You're so quiet lately.

PETER

I'm sorry.

CLAUDIA

Are you ok?

PETER

Of course.

CLAUDIA

Did I do something?

PETER

No.

CLAUDIA

It feels like something's wrong. If it's something I've said or done, just tell me. Please.

PETER

You'll think I'm an idiot.

CLAUDIA

Please tell me what's bothering you, Peter!

Beat.

PETER

(distressed)

Everything is good.

Claudia laughs.

CLAUDIA

That's why you're acting so strange? Because life is too perfect?

PETER

I knew you'd laugh.

CLAUDIA

And I thought you wanted to break up with me.

PETER

No! Why would you think...

CLAUDIA

Well you can see where I might get that idea. You've hardly said a word for days.

PETER

I've been anxious.

CLAUDIA

Do you want life to be bad?

PETER

Maybe.

CLAUDIA

Peter!

PETER

There's something wrong with me. I know. But at least back then I knew things couldn't get worse. It was oddly comforting. Because now that they're finally good I can't stop thinking that it's not going to last. And I'm just waiting for it to happen.



Someone's going to get sick. Or lose their job. Or their house will burn down. Or the sky will fall. There'll be another war.

CLAUDIA

That's awful.

PETER

I know. But those things, they bounce around inside my brain waiting to get out and become true. Like a ball that some kid is throwing against his house. And he throws it harder and harder and faster and faster and faster. And it makes me feel like I'm going insane.

CLAUDIA

When you get like that, think about me.

PETER

But you make it worse.

CLAUDIA

What?

PETER

No. Not...

(slight beat)

You're the final thing that made my life perfect. So when I get like that, you're what I worry about most.

Beat.

CLAUDIA

How is it that you're such an amazing human being? And how did I get so lucky that you picked me?

PETER

I'm the one who's lucky.

Beat.

CLAUDIA

When I saw you across the street watching us. You kept looking up. And I'd smile. Hoping you'd smile back. But you just turned your head away.

PETER

I was nervous.

CLAUDIA

But you see, you didn't need to be.

PETER

I didn't know if you'd want to talk to me.

CLAUDIA

I guess you found out. And the snow started coming down. It was so beautiful. The first time it had snowed that winter. And I watched you step across the street. And Madeleine was so sure you were coming to talk to her. She nudged me and said, "Who's that boy? He's so handsome."

PETER

She didn't say that.

CLAUDIA

She did! And it still makes me laugh that she thought you wanted her. Everyone always wanted to talk to Madeleine over me. So pretty and perfect. But I knew. You walked right past her and up to me and said hello.

PETER

I've never done that before in my life.

CLAUDIA

But you did that day.

PETER

You made me fearless.

CLAUDIA

What are you now?

PETER

Happy. And terrified.

Slight beat.

CLAUDIA

You can't worry so much, Peter.

PETER

But it's inside me.

Beat.

CLAUDIA

I'm going to tell you something. You'll think I'm stranger than you already do, but I'm going to say it anyway.

(beat)

I believe we can see the future.

PETER

Like science-fiction?

CLAUDIA

No. Something we actually see in our minds. We can see the past. Our own past, right?

PETER

I guess.

CLAUDIA

Of course, you can. They're memories. Like how I can still see the little island from when I was a child. Or the way my father still talks about the war even though it was so long ago.

PETER

That's because those things really happened.

CLAUDIA

But maybe we see our futures that same way. In our minds. As visions. Perhaps we just don't know what they are.

(slight beat)

Don't you ever go somewhere or meet a new person and you feel like you've known them forever?

PETER

That's how I felt with you.

CLAUDIA

Exactly. And what if that's because we knew all along that we'd finally meet. Like we had these future memories about each other. Because it was for certain going to happen.

(slight beat)

When I was twelve I kept having this, like this thought or idea, about an old man. He had a long white beard and he'd reach out in the most loving way and take my hand. And one night I was lying in bed thinking about him and I just knew he was real, that what I was seeing wasn't some kind of dream but it was my future, it just hadn't happened yet.

(beat)

When I saw you walking toward us across the street that day. Through the snow. That smile on your face. I knew he was you.

PETER

But I'm not an old man.

CLAUDIA

But you will be. Some day.

(beat)

Do you think I'm odd?

PETER

Horribly.

CLAUDIA

What do you see in the future?

PETER

My mind doesn't work like yours.

CLAUDIA

Close your eyes and let something appear. Go ahead. For me.

(he finally does)

Ok. Jump ahead ten years. It's 1943. You're twenty-eight now. You've grown another inch, probably as tall as you'll ever be. And you're heavier, bulkier. More muscle, but maybe a little gut. Perhaps you have a mustache. You can feel it sitting there above your lip, like a sweet caterpillar who crawled across your handsome face.

(beat)

Where are you?

PETER

A house?

CLAUDIA

Is that a question?

PETER

A house.

CLAUDIA

Good. Your mother's house?

PETER

No. It's bigger. Much bigger.

Who's there? CLAUDIA

You. PETER

Is there anyone else? CLAUDIA

Slight beat.

There's someone upstairs. PETER

Just one person? CLAUDIA

More than one. I hear them. PETER

Good. Now look out the window. CLAUDIA

OK. PETER

Can you see outside? Look up. Is the sky still blue? CLAUDIA

Yes. PETER

Really look, Peter. CLAUDIA

It's blue. The bluest sky I've ever seen. PETER

Are there still clouds and birds and trees that reach their gigantic arms up to the heavens? CLAUDIA

Yes. PETER

CLAUDIA

Then we know the sky's not going to fall. You can open your eyes and stop worrying. The future is ours.

Peter opens his eyes. A beat as he looks at her deeply.

Peter leans in and kisses Claudia. What they lack in grace they make up for in passion.

## SCENE 6

*The home. Days later.*

*Anna is home alone. She paces, upset.*

*Max enters.*

*Anna holds up a gold pocket watch, shows it to him.*

ANNA

I found this in your room.

A long beat. Max is caught off guard.

MAX

Are we alone?

ANNA

No one's here. Is that what you care about? Not getting found out?

(An uncomfortable silence.)

I've been looking all over for this. Up and down the house. Rosemary driving me crazy. What are you doing with Herbert's watch?

MAX

I was going to sell it.

Beat.

ANNA

Rosemary wants to call the police.

MAX

You have to talk to her.

ANNA

I did. I told her you'd never steal from us. It was apparently a lie.

MAX

I didn't have a choice.

ANNA

I have to tell Rosemary something. She keeps asking about the stupid watch. What do I say?

MAX

I don't know.

ANNA

You could have asked. I've always been there for you. Even when no one else was.

MAX

I have to do something for this country!

Beat.

ANNA

What have you done?

MAX

You claim to hate all of this. That you detest what's happening.

ANNA

Of course, I do.

MAX

Then fight.

ANNA

I am fighting.

MAX

Because you shop at a bakery? Because you provoke a teenager?

ANNA

You will not steal from me and then lecture me.

MAX

Words are not fighting. Talk is not action.

ANNA

Should I attack someone? Is that what you want?

MAX

If that's what it takes. If any of this truly matters to you.

Slight beat.

ANNA

This... what is happening in this country... it matters to me more than you can understand. This isn't just about me. I have a family, I have a child.



MAX

I have a family. We aren't married. We don't have children. But I have a family.

Slight hesitation.

ANNA

I know.

MAX

We both fought in the war. Fighting for this country.

ANNA

That's not... I wasn't trying to imply...

MAX

Then, please, tell me how all of this could matter to you in ways I couldn't possibly understand?

ANNA

I'm not your enemy.

Beat.

MAX

They built a camp in March. Rumor is they're building more. Anyone they don't agree with they can just lock away. Maybe worse.

ANNA

We have to keep speaking up.

MAX

It won't stop until he's dead.

ANNA

Then let's pray he gets the flu.

MAX

Or someone kills him.

Slight beat.

ANNA

You shouldn't even joke about that. If anyone hears they might think you're serious. You know what they'd do.

MAX

How much money can you get?

Slight beat.

ANNA

Is that where you go at night?

MAX

I need your help.

A beat. She understands.

ANNA

Oh my God.

MAX

There's a group of us. Former soldiers. Bomb makers. We fought together when we were young.

ANNA

You can't do this.

MAX

We're prepared to die if we have to.

ANNA

Then you're all fools. You can't make anything better when you're dead.

MAX

There's a rally planned for August in Nuremberg. He'll be here. Will you help me?

Long beat.

ANNA

I know this is bad. I feel that in my soul. This darkness that has crept over this whole country. It makes me sick. Most mornings I feel like I can't breathe. The air is thick and vile and putrid. And I don't want to pick up a newspaper let alone get out of bed. Or speak to anyone. Because I can't stand to hear what he's done next. But I can't help myself.

(beat)

And all of that is true... every word of it... yet I still believe deep down that we are good people. We will do the right thing. And we can't let ourselves descend into lawlessness. Or civil war. And that's what you're talking about. Half the houses on this street have that awful flag waving out front. But in every house, inside... those are our neighbors.

The same ones who come see me when they're hurt. Or sick. Or dying. And I try my best to make their lives better. Or I hold their hands when I can't.

(sight beat)

I heal people.

(slight beat)

I don't...

(slight beat)

I can't...

Beat.

MAX

Katje and I were walking home from visiting friends near the park. We'd stopped going out to the queer clubs, it didn't feel safe any more.

(slight beat)

We turned down a street and came upon this mass of young men. Teenagers. Younger than Peter, most of them. All wearing that brown uniform. It was actually, strangely, kind of beautiful. Nostalgic maybe. They were so enthusiastic. Singing. Marching. All together. You might think they were Scouts like in the old days.

(slight beat)

As we were walking away, a group of them approached us from behind. They had a question for Katje: Are you a man or a woman? But that's not what they really wanted to know. What they meant is are you an us or a them? When we divide, and that's what they're trying to do with all of us, where will you stand? Of course the answer to their question didn't matter. They started hitting us. With fists. And sticks. And rocks.

(slight beat)

No matter how hard they hit, Katje got right back up. So they hit harder and harder. When the police finally came, they laughed at her. Ripped off her wig. And they didn't want anything to do with me. It was crueler to separate us.

(beat)

You would like Katje. I often think of you when I'm in an argument with her. She always wins, too. I tried to see her at the jail. They of course put her in a cell with men. The officer asked if I was her family. I don't know why I didn't say we were brothers.

ANNA

Where is Katje now?

MAX

I don't know. Fighting. Giving someone a piece of her mind. But she's alive.

ANNA

Good. I hope so.

MAX

I know so. I would feel it.

ANNA

I'm sorry, Max. I'm so sorry.

MAX

I don't want your pity.

ANNA

I don't pity you. I want all of this to be over.

MAX

Then help me end it.

A beat. Max reaches out for the watch, but Anna can't give it to him.

Max exits outside. Anna remains alone in the house.

Claudia enters. She's in a school. She holds a paper as she delivers a written speech.

CLAUDIA

My dear friends, sisters, fellow citizens in The League of German Girls...

There are moments in the history of mankind when everything about the world as we know it changes. The tragedy is that most of us are oblivious to it while it's happening. When Jesus was born in Bethlehem, it literally shifted the heavens. The brightest star ever seen in the sky appeared and shone down, leading the way for others to find him. And nothing would ever be the same again.

Imagine those first people looking at that little child in the manger--the wise men, the shepherds, Joseph and even Mary--could they have ever dreamed what was to come? That this baby before them would ignite a religion that would sweep the nations and become the guiding light for every civilized country of the world? The birth of Jesus changed the entire way we look at history. We created a calendar that marks time by before and after his birth. Yet it all began in a single moment.

I propose that we are again in such a time. Not of Jesus or even the second coming, but a time of great change unlike the world has seen. Certainly than this country has seen. We've lived through a generation lost. Financial ruin. Hunger. Unemployment. Loss of pride. An utter lack of hope.

Given the choice, most would say, “Give me any other time to be born. I don’t want to grow up with that suffering.” And I wouldn’t blame them. How could we? But I’m grateful for that suffering, because it led us to where...

But Claudia can’t continue, the memory of suffering wells up inside her. It’s too raw to go on.

She’s about to sit back down, but instead finds strength inside of her to go on. She puts down the paper, goes off script now.

CLAUDIA (cont'd)

It’s a privilege to be alive at this very moment. To be witness to the rebirth of our great nation. That one day we will say we were here, we were a part of that movement.

And I promise you this:

Great things are coming.

Claudia exits.

Time has passed, it’s late now. Anna still ponders her decision in the house.

Max enters from outside.

ANNA

You can’t sell Herbert’s watch, it’s too dangerous. But I’ll find your money.

MAX

Thank you.

He walks to his bedroom.

ANNA

Be safe, Max.

Beat.

MAX

To the future we create.

## SCENE 7

*July. At home.*

*Rosemary rummages through the house in search of something.*

*Anna enters.*

ROSEMARY

I'm sure I look awful. I haven't slept. I'm sick with worry. If it's not one thing it's something else. Maybe Herbert's watch will turn up some day. No one else seems to care.

Slight beat.

ANNA

I spoke with Max.

ROSEMARY

Took you long enough.

ANNA

He has the watch.

ROSEMARY

I knew it.

ANNA

So he could have it cleaned and repaired.

ROSEMARY

Really?

ANNA

Yes.

ROSEMARY

Well, why didn't he just ask?

ANNA

It was a surprise. A thank you gift. For letting him stay with us.

ROSEMARY  
Huh.

ANNA  
I told you it was nothing.

ROSEMARY  
But it seemed like he was sneaking around.

ANNA  
He was. I explained.

ROSEMARY  
Not the good kind of sneaking.

ANNA  
I don't know what else to tell you, Rosemary.

ROSEMARY  
Where is it?

A slight hesitation.

ANNA  
It's not ready yet. It could take a while.

ROSEMARY  
Did they think they could repair it?

ANNA  
I believe so.

ROSEMARY  
Well I certainly hope he took it to Otto Jung. If anyone can do it he's the one. It's quite valuable. But it was in bad shape. Wasn't it?

ANNA  
Yes.

Slight beat.

ROSEMARY  
Well I suppose I feel better knowing what happened. And that I'm not losing my mind. That I was right about Max all along.

ANNA

You weren't...

(she stops herself)

I did what you asked. Now I need a favor in return.

ROSEMARY

I was simply helping you get your own watch back.

Beat

ANNA

*He* is holding a rally in Nuremberg next week.

ROSEMARY

You can say his name. It's not as if you say it out loud and the *great leader* magically appears in our living room.

ANNA

Claudia asked Peter to go with her. I need you to keep him from going.

ROSEMARY

He's not a child.

ANNA

He listens to you.

ROSEMARY

Not about politics.

ANNA

This isn't politics, this is... Peter respects you immensely.

Slight beat.

ROSEMARY

He does.

ANNA

But you can't tell him we don't want him to go. That'll make things worse.

ROSEMARY

I don't like to lie.

ANNA

Then find a real reason.



ROSEMARY

I'd rather not get in the middle of things.

ANNA

You know what kind of people go to those rallies. Thugs. Degenerates.

ROSEMARY

Last I checked they were fellow citizens.

ANNA

Do you want your grandson running around with those kinds of citizens?

Slight beat.

ROSEMARY

Not particularly. No.

ANNA

Then help me.

Beat.

ROSEMARY

I think *you-know-who* is awful as well. He's vulgar. Offensive. He can barely speak a proper sentence. It's a national embarrassment really is what all of this is.

ANNA

He's far worse than embarrassing.

ROSEMARY

But still... some of what he says is true.

ANNA

The man only knows how to lie.

ROSEMARY

He tells stories. It's what politicians do. It's what the newspapers do. The Bible does. It's what you do. Everyone. When you want to convince someone of what to believe you tell them a story to make your case. You surely don't think Jonah really lived in the belly of a whale do you? Of course not. It's a story about faith. Or something. But you wouldn't call God a liar. That's not the same as lying, especially if you're getting at an actual truth.

ANNA

What truth?

ROSEMARY

We're being overrun. Just look around. They're everywhere. With their little hats and the funny way they talk.

ANNA

Don't be like that.

ROSEMARY

Like what? Honest?

ANNA

Like him.

ROSEMARY

At least he says what needs to be said. Maybe not in a civilized way but everyone already thinks it most people are just afraid to say it.

ANNA

They're not afraid any longer.

ROSEMARY

Our own people don't have work. Enough to eat. If we didn't have enough to eat at home and Peter was hungry, who would you feed, Peter or some stranger who knocked on our door?

ANNA

It's not the same thing.

ROSEMARY

Who would do that?

ANNA

Jesus would.

ROSEMARY

You're not Jesus! I'm not Jesus. If the world were perfect, yes, anyone who wants can come and have all the jobs and food they want and a lovely home and everyone will be fine... but that's not the world we live in. You don't want to admit it because it offends your senses.

ANNA

But I want Peter to live in a world like that.

ROSEMARY

It's an act of compassion, of Christian charity, to take our young people, like Peter, who were on the streets, who had nothing going for them, and give them hope. Give them a future. That's what he did. Yes, that man is an awful person. I may not like everything he does or says, and I certainly do not, but I can't forget the good things he's done for us.

ANNA

But you can't overlook the evil just because you think he might have done something good.

ROSEMARY

It was a silly boycott. The world didn't end. You didn't even go along with it.

ANNA

It's the violence he incites. The things he says.

ROSEMARY

Give Peter some credit.

ANNA

He's too wrapped up in it. He can't see clearly.

ROSEMARY

Katherine Mueller... her grandson Karsten is the kind of young man you'd have a reason to worry about. Always fighting. You remember how he used to torment Peter when they were little. He stole Peter's bike! Karsten still throws rocks at cats in the neighborhood. For no reason except they're furry and cute. Awful human being. Don't you know it, Karsten shows up at home two months ago wearing that god-awful uniform.

Slight beat.

ANNA

If we're able to keep Peter from joining, isn't that our duty?

ROSEMARY

You can't control him forever.

ANNA

Then just one night. We keep him from going. He's not like Karsten. Violent and fighting. But if he joins he'll have no choice but to be a part of that. What does someone like Peter do with them? He doesn't throw rocks at cats. He can't pass a cat on the sidewalk without picking it up. Peter's just like his father. A sweet, kind man.

Beat.

ROSEMARY

I'll see what I can do.

ANNA

Thank you.

Slight beat.

ROSEMARY

You keep him from one rally, but what about the next one? And the one after that? Peter doesn't want to merely survive he wants to live. What are you going to do about that?

ANNA

I don't know yet.

ROSEMARY

Then you'd better figure that out, my dear.

## SCENE 8

*At home. Night.*

*Peter does push-ups.*

*Max enters from outside. Peter stops, thoroughly exhausted.*

MAX

Sorry to interrupt.

PETER

I need a break anyway. I can't do any more.

MAX

There are greater virtues than physical strength.

PETER

How many could you do when you were my age?

MAX

I don't recall. That kind of thing doesn't matter to me like it used to.  
(slight beat)

I should get to bed.

Max walks away.

PETER

Why are you out so late?

MAX

(slight beat)

I went for a walk.

PETER

Grandma said you kept strange hours. I didn't realize how strange she meant.

MAX

I'm a night owl. Always have been. Ever since I was your age studying for exams. Trying to get out of this place.

PETER

It's a good town. Why would you want to leave?

Slight beat.

MAX

It's complicated.

PETER

You say that a lot.

Beat.

MAX

It's late, Peter. I'm sorry I disturbed you.

PETER

I was actually waiting up. I was hoping we could talk. I hardly see you any more.

Slight beat.

MAX

Of course.

(a hesitation)

How's Claudia?

PETER

Very well. I've been spending a lot of time with her family.

MAX

That's nice.

PETER

Claudia's dad is very, um... intense. And her brother, Sven... he's older, looks like some Olympic athlete. He's always doing some kind of sport. Leading something. Doing something. Makes me feel rather small.

MAX

I'm sure he doesn't mean to.

PETER

No, he definitely does. It's OK though. He's earned that right, I suppose.

(slight beat)

Claudia's other brother, Michael... He was out of school for two years and couldn't find work anywhere. Let himself go. He got so depressed, his eyes looked like an old man's.

(beat)

Last summer, Claudia's dad came home from work and Michael had shot himself in the head. He found him in his bedroom.

MAX

Oh, my God.

PETER

When life throws something hard our way, I think we have a choice to be a Sven or a Michael.

MAX

Or a Peter. That's certainly a good option, in my opinion.

PETER

If only he could have made it a little longer. Things are finally getting better.

(long beat)

How did you know when you were in love?

(slight beat)

I hope this isn't weird. It's just, you're the closest thing I have to a father. I don't have anyone else to talk to about these things.

A nervous hesitation.

MAX

A lot of people talk about love as a feeling. And that's true, that's part of it. But for me it was this sudden awareness that someone else's life mattered to me more than my own. And I would do anything in the world for them.

PETER

Then I'm in love, Uncle Max.

MAX

I'm happy for you.

PETER

I wish my mother could be, too.

MAX

Your Mother likes Claudia.

PETER

It's OK. Claudia says it's normal that a mother gets jealous when her son finds someone special.

(beat)

I think we're a lot alike, you and me.

MAX

We're family.

PETER

Sure. Of course, but... We both love someone who... other people don't understand it.

Beat.

Max smiles warmly, tries to avoid this conversation.

MAX

Goodnight, Peter.

Max exits toward his bedroom.

PETER

I know. About you. The way... you are. People talk. Is it true?

(no response)

I just want you to know that... It's OK. Even if it's complicated.

A beat.

MAX

It's not safe right now. For people like me.

PETER

I know. We just have to get through this time. Everyone wants the same thing. We all do. A better world. For all of us. Someone just had to shake everything up for us to get there.

MAX

I hope we get there.

PETER

We will.

Peter resumes doing push-ups.

Max exits to his bedroom.



## SCENE 9

*Another day. The backyard.*

*Anna has a shovel, tools. She paces, looks at the ground.*

*After a few moments, she calls out...*

ANNA

Peter.

(no response, then louder)

Peter, sweetheart. Come out to the backyard.

Peter enters.

PETER

What's wrong?

ANNA

Nothing.

PETER

Then why are you yelling?

ANNA

I wanted to see you. I have the day off.

PETER

I'm going out this afternoon.

ANNA

Then you're free now?

PETER

I guess.

ANNA

Don't look so frightened. I'd just like your help with something.

PETER

I need to get ready soon.

ANNA  
Do you know what today is?

PETER  
Saturday.

ANNA  
Silly. It's your father's birthday.

PETER  
I know.

ANNA  
Then we should celebrate.

PETER  
That's weird.

ANNA  
It's not. It's a way to remember. To honor him.

PETER  
I didn't get him a gift.

ANNA  
I did.

PETER  
Really?

ANNA  
Help me.

Anna hands him a tool to dig.

PETER  
Are we burying treasure?

ANNA  
We're planting a tree. A new tree. For him.

PETER  
(scoffs)  
Why? Don't we have enough?

ANNA

Don't be so negative. We'll take care of it. Watch it grow. Hopefully it will be here for years and years, long after we're gone. For your children to enjoy. Your grandchildren. Maybe even their grandchildren. Who knows?

PETER

That's a lot of pressure. What if it can't live up to it?

ANNA

We'll never know if we don't try.

(beat)

Fine. If you think it's a waste, you don't have to do anything. Go back inside. I just thought it would be nice. Something we could do together. But if you're too busy...

Beat.

Finally...

PETER

Sure.

ANNA

Good.

PETER

But I can't get dirty.

ANNA

Of course not. I want you to look nice and pretty for your date.

Slight beat.

Anna digs in the dirt.

PETER

We've never done anything for Father's birthday before.

ANNA

That's not entirely true.

PETER

When?

ANNA

You were little. You probably don't remember. But I would mark the occasion by staying in bed all day and crying inconsolably.

PETER

That sounds like a fun party.

ANNA

And you crawled in bed with me one time and asked why I was so sad. And I told you it was your father's birthday and you said--you looked at me so confused--and you said, "Only people who are alive get to have birthdays."

PETER

That was cruel of me.

ANNA

No. Not at all. You were saying that you and I get to have birthdays. That we were alive so we had to live. That I shouldn't keep dwelling on the past, but I had to move us into whatever was next.

PETER

I was quite the gifted three-year-old.

ANNA

You were.

PETER

That's clearly not what I was saying.

ANNA

But that's what I heard.

PETER

(laughs)

OK.

ANNA

You can laugh, but it's true. You helped me through that time.

PETER

Well... I'm glad. Good for toddler me.

ANNA

Plant this in the dirt

Anna hands him a small sapling.

Peter places it in the spot they've prepared in the ground, pushes dirt around it to firm it in place.

PETER

For Father.

ANNA

May this grow into a mighty tree that towers over us all.

PETER

But not so tall and mighty that the wind can knock it over onto our house.

ANNA

Well said.

Peter walks away, Anna stops him.

ANNA (cont'd)

Your father didn't want to have children.

PETER

(sarcastic)

Thank you for sharing that.

ANNA

Let me finish! Maybe eventually he would have wanted them. I don't know. But... life happens. I got pregnant and he was upset. He said it didn't make sense to bring a child into a world plagued with war.

PETER

What did you think?

ANNA

I said it was the war that didn't make sense. And then you were born. And this man who didn't want children... who thought it was the worst idea in the world looked at you for the first time and... I've never seen someone change their mind so quickly about anything. He was instantly madly in love with you. You became his guiding light. Everything he did was because of you. He fought harder so he could help end that war for you.

Slight beat.

PETER

Maybe some day my children can climb his tree.

ANNA

He'd have liked that.

Anna kisses Peter on the forehead.

PETER

What was that for?

ANNA

For being his son.

Beat.

PETER

I'm not him.

ANNA

I know.

PETER

But that doesn't mean I'm not a good man, too.

ANNA

Of course, you are.

PETER

You don't know what he would do if he were alive now. In this moment. Having lived through what we've lived through.

ANNA

Yes, I do.

PETER

You can't. You only think you know.

ANNA

I know.

PETER

He might be a party leader, just like Claudia's father.

ANNA

Absolutely not.

PETER

Could you still love him if he were?

A long beat. She can't answer.

PETER (cont'd)

Then maybe you never really loved Father after all.

ANNA

I loved your father.

PETER

Would you still love me if I joined?

A hesitation.

ANNA

You're not going to.

PETER

But if I did?

ANNA

That's a silly question.

PETER

Because you can't answer it.

ANNA

Because you wouldn't.

PETER

Isn't that what this is all about? Planting trees? Trying to make me feel nostalgic about a time I don't even remember?

ANNA

No.

PETER

If I join the Party, will you still love me?!

Another hesitation, lasts too long.

ANNA

Of course.

A beat. He shakes his head with disdain.

PETER

You're a horrible liar.

He walks away.

She has no response.



## SCENE 10

*August. At home.*

*There's a KNOCK at the front door.*

*Another KNOCK. Anna enters, opens it to find Claudia.*

ANNA

Claudia. Hello.

CLAUDIA

It's good to see you.

ANNA

Peter's not home.

CLAUDIA

Can I please come in for a moment? If I'm not intruding.

Slight beat.

Anna reluctantly welcomes her inside. Claudia enters.

ANNA

Please.

CLAUDIA

My mother said to tell you hello. Do you remember her? She said you were in school together. She was several years older.

ANNA

Yes, of course.

CLAUDIA

She always admired you.

ANNA

That's very kind.

CLAUDIA

She said she wasn't surprised in the least when she learned that you became a doctor. She remembers you always taking care of the other younger girls. That they all looked up to you.

ANNA

I'm sure they didn't.

CLAUDIA

If my mother said it she definitely meant it. She doesn't say things just to be nice.

ANNA

Please tell her hello.

A hesitation.

CLAUDIA

My parents wanted to invite you and Peter over for dinner at our house. For a special celebration. Family is so important. We should all get to know each other.

ANNA

The hospital keeps me very busy. I can't promise anything.

CLAUDIA

Oh, I know. And we'll try not to talk politics. It's ruining people, don't you think? No one knows how to act around anyone anymore.

(slight beat)

We won't try to convince you to join our side or anything.

ANNA

I'll let you know.

CLAUDIA

Peter didn't think it was a good idea. Us all getting together. But I told him we should. That we had to at least try.

Slight beat.

ANNA

I'm sure... I'm sure we can find an evening to make it work.

CLAUDIA

Oh, that's terrific news! Now I can't promise my father won't talk a little politics. It's all he knows these days. Perhaps we can send the boys outside to have a smoke and a drink though while we all catch up like regular people.

Beat.

ANNA

Why wouldn't you try to get me to join your side?

CLAUDIA

I beg your pardon?

ANNA

You said...

CLAUDIA

Oh. That was just a joke. Not a good one.

ANNA

I thought you believed in all of it.

CLAUDIA

I do.

ANNA

Then shouldn't you be recruiting a little harder?

A hesitation.

CLAUDIA

I think people need to be able to disagree and still get along. We need more of that.

Beat.

Rosemary enters.

ROSEMARY

What a wonderful surprise this is!

CLAUDIA

It's lovely to see you.

ROSEMARY

To what do we owe this honor?

CLAUDIA

We're planning a small gathering at my house. You're, of course, invited.

ROSEMARY

Oh, I can't wait!

CLAUDIA

We're still figuring out the exact details.

ROSEMARY

(hopeful)

Is there anything particular to celebrate?

CLAUDIA

(coy)

There's always a reason.

ROSEMARY

I can't wait to talk to Peter about this!

Slight beat.

CLAUDIA

Where is Peter?

ROSEMARY

Oh. You didn't tell her?

ANNA

No, I...

(slight beat)

It happened so suddenly.

CLAUDIA

Is everything all right?

ROSEMARY

It's fine, dear.

ANNA

Peter's at the train station.

CLAUDIA

For what?

ROSEMARY

Oh, my. I don't want you to be upset.

ANNA

He's buying tickets for Rosemary and him tomorrow. Rosemary's sister is very sick and she needs to be with her. She can't travel alone. I'm afraid Peter won't be able to go to the rally with you this weekend.

ROSEMARY

*I can* travel alone. I prefer not to...

CLAUDIA

What's wrong with your sister?

Slight beat.

ROSEMARY

She's ill.

ANNA

She's dying actually.

CLAUDIA

This is just awful.

ROSEMARY

I knew you'd be upset.

CLAUDIA

Of course, I am. You must be worried sick. Peter should absolutely go with you.

ROSEMARY

Peter said how excited you both were.

ANNA

He wants to go with you, Rosemary.

CLAUDIA

Of course, he does.

ROSEMARY

I just feel awful dragging him away.

Slight beat.

CLAUDIA

I have a suggestion, I hope you don't mind... but I'd like to go also.

ROSEMARY

Dear, I couldn't ask you to do that.

CLAUDIA

You didn't.

ANNA

Yes. That's a good idea. You should go as well.

ROSEMARY

You can't miss the rally too.

CLAUDIA

I can and I will.

ANNA

I'm sure Peter can get another ticket. You can all take the train together.

Slight beat.

ROSEMARY

Are you positive? I know how excited you were to go. I don't want to be the cause for you to miss out on something important.

CLAUDIA

This is important. I insist.

Beat.

Rosemary is genuinely moved. She embraces Claudia warmly.

ROSEMARY

Thank you, dear.

ANNA

Good. If you run down to the station right now you might be able to catch Peter. Have him buy you a ticket as well.

ROSEMARY

You'll be a lovely travel companion. We'll have a day of it.

CLAUDIA

Does your sister like flowers?

ROSEMARY

Yes. Daisies are her favorite.

CLAUDIA

Then I'll pick some up. They always brighten my mood.

ROSEMARY

Of course. What a wonderful idea.

CLAUDIA

See you tomorrow.

ROSEMARY

Yes. See you then.

Beat.

Rosemary smiles from ear to ear until Claudia exits.

Then she turns to Anna and shoots daggers with her eyes.

ANNA

Your sister's been sick for years. She won't even have to pretend.

Anna walks away, Rosemary yells after her.

ROSEMARY

It's convenient how your morality changes depending on what you want!

## SCENE 11

*The next day.*

*Max and Peter are on opposite sides of the stage.*

***Peter is in a large gathering room.***

***Max is in a dark basement.***

*Peter stands rigidly. Uncertain. Anxious. His breath quickens.*

*He intently listens and watches something we can't see. He looks to his right and left, acknowledging others who are standing near him.*

PETER

I pledge fealty to the Reich's constitution, and swear that I, a courageous soldier, shall strive to protect the German Reich and its institutions, and be obedient to my superiors.

At the conclusion of the pledge, Peter sings the Nazi anthem in German, the *Horst-Wessel Lied*.

He starts off meekly. But his confidence builds as he moves through the lyrics.

PETER (cont'd)

*Die Fahne hoch! Die Reihen fest geschlossen!  
SA marschieret mit ruhig festem Schritt.  
Kam'raden, die Rotfront und Reaktion erschossen,  
Marschier'n im Geist in unser'n Reihen mit.*

*Die Straße frei den braunen Bataillonen.  
Die Straße frei dem Sturmabteilungsmann!  
Es schau'n aufs Hakenkreuz voll Hoffnung schon Millionen.  
Der Tag für Freiheit und für Brot bricht an!*

*Zum letzten Mal wird Sturmalarm geblasen!  
Zum Kampfe steh'n wir alle schon bereit!*



*Schon flattern Hitlerfahnen über allen Straßen.  
Die Knechtschaft dauert nur noch kurze Zeit!*

*Die Fahne hoch! Die Reihen fest geschlossen!  
SA marschiert mit ruhig festem Schritt.  
Kam'raden, die Rotfront und Reaktion erschossen,  
Marschier'n im Geist in unser'n Reihen mit.*

Simultaneously on the other side of the stage, Max addresses a small group of men we can't see.

MAX

My fellow soldiers, comrades, brothers... Patriotism doesn't ask for our blind loyalty. It asks for our whole selves. Our minds. Our hearts. Our souls. To be a true patriot is to recognize that the nation is a fragile and living thing, and as with any living thing it can die if not cared for. When a cancer arises, we must be both vigilant and unafraid to see the sickness for what it is and to cut it out before it's allowed to consume the entire body.

Do not be afraid. In your depths you know what is right. These are not abstract ideas. There are fundamental truths that go beyond party, that are bigger than any one of us. Perhaps they even come from the heavens. But there is right and there is wrong and no amount of saying that the one is the other can ever change that.

The defense of our nation didn't stop with the war. We fought side by side against enemies who dropped bombs out of the sky, devastated our cities, slaughtered our troops, forever changed our way of life. We now have an enemy who goes against everything we believe, all that our fallen brothers gave their lives for... but that enemy is within.

We stand together to stop this disease that has infected our great nation. As we rise to do what not long ago would have been unthinkable, remember who we are fighting. Remember what he has done to this country that can never be undone, what he is doing, what he is yet to do beyond what we can even imagine.

You mustn't doubt yourselves. Justice and truth are on our side. But if we fail at what we've set out to do this day... God help us all.

Max and Peter end together.

By the final verse, Peter's fully come around. He sings loudly and proudly.

## SCENE 12

*At home. The next day.*

*Anna opens the door and walks inside. She puts her things down. She walks into the kitchen.*

*Rosemary enters from her bedroom. Anna returns from the kitchen. She's startled to see Rosemary.*

ANNA

What are you still doing here?

ROSEMARY

I wanted to tell you...

ANNA

The rally's tonight.

ROSEMARY

I know.

ANNA

Why aren't you on the train with Peter?

ROSEMARY

We're not going.

ANNA

Where is he?

ROSEMARY

Don't be upset.

ANNA

You said you would take care of this.

ROSEMARY

If we want the world to be better then Peter should be a part of that, not kept away from it.

You stupid old woman!

ANNA

Peter enters from his bedroom in full brownshirt uniform, including the red armband with a swastika.

Leave her alone!

PETER

Anna stops where she is and stares at her son in disbelief.

A beat as they take each other in.

Rosemary exits, walking right past Peter. She gently touches his arm as she goes.

Peter...

ANNA

You lied to me.

PETER

To help you.

ANNA

What kind of person does that?

PETER

Someone who loves you.

ANNA

Then accept me.

PETER

What are you doing?

ANNA

Being a patriot.

PETER

Take that off.

ANNA

No. PETER

She grabs at him as if she could rip the vile uniform from his body.

Take it off! ANNA

Stop it!! PETER

He manages to push her away.

A beat.

Why? ANNA

Why shouldn't I stand with my fellow citizens? Marching. Fighting. PETER

Fighting for what? ANNA

My country. Your country. PETER

This isn't who you are. ANNA

Everything I am. Everything I have at this moment is because of the great man whose name you won't allow to be said in our home. Well, I'm not afraid. PETER

The world looks at us and thinks we're all mad. Because they see the monster that he is even if we can't. ANNA

Why should you care what the world thinks? PETER

They've brainwashed you. ANNA

PETER

You're the one who's been brainwashing. Trying to turn me against my own country. My own people.

ANNA

You can't even see the truth any more.

PETER

I see the truth of what you are.

ANNA

Is that what Claudia told you?

PETER

Leave her out of this.

ANNA

Or her father?

PETER

This was my decision!

ANNA

Don't let them lead you down a path of darkness.

PETER

How weak do you think I am?

ANNA

I think you're young. I think you're naive.

PETER

I am doing exactly what I want and taking Claudia with me.

ANNA

You'll regret if you do this. Maybe not tomorrow, but some day.

PETER

I regret you! That I let you infect my mind for even a second. Those people you can't tolerate, those degenerates, that's who I am.

ANNA

You're better than them.

PETER

They're my blood.

ANNA

I am your blood! Your father is your blood! Not this!

Beat.

PETER

Claudia and I got married.

It hits Anna like a punch in the gut. She turns from him, greatly pained. It devastates Peter.

PETER (cont'd)

Why can't you be happy for me?

She looks at him in the Nazi uniform.

ANNA

Because I am deeply and profoundly ashamed of you.

Beat.

PETER

You call us trash. Animals. Yet you're the animal who despises your own home. That man you hate so much... He speaks for me. He stands up for me and people like me who no one else cared about.

ANNA

I care more than you can imagine.

PETER

You can't love and despise something in the same breath.

ANNA

Your father gave his life for this country. I raised his son by myself to be a good citizen because I love this country. It's the reason I fight every day. I know you and I disagree about many things. Maybe everything now. But know that everything I do is because I love my family and my country.

PETER

Claudia's father loves his country. He's dedicated his entire life to it. And it will be the honor of my life to sit in the front row with him at the rally tonight.

Peter walks to the door.

ANNA

You can't go, Peter.

PETER

I don't care if I ever see you again.

ANNA

It's not safe.

PETER

I'd sooner die for this country than live with you.

Peter walks away.

Slight beat.

ANNA

Something's going to happen tonight.

PETER

What?

ANNA

You can't be at the rally.

PETER

That's not enough.

ANNA

You have to trust me.

PETER

I don't.

ANNA

Please...

PETER

What's going to happen?

ANNA

I can't tell you.

PETER

Then I'll find out when I'm there.

Peter walks away. She finally stops him, it's the hardest thing she's ever had to say.

ANNA

It's a bomb.

He walks back.

PETER

How would you know that?

ANNA

I just do.

PETER

I don't believe you.

ANNA

I promise, this is real.

PETER

Then where is it?

ANNA

I don't know.

PETER

You have to tell me!

ANNA

That's all I heard.

PETER

Who said it?

ANNA

I heard rumors.

PETER

Where?

ANNA

At the hospital... People were talking...

PETER

Which people?



Peter... ANNA

You're a liar. PETER

I'm not. ANNA

Why didn't you report it? PETER

You're right. I should have. ANNA

Then I will. PETER

Please, Peter. ANNA

PETER  
I will do anything for my country. If I have to run up and down the street yelling like a madman. If I have to leap on top of a bomb myself. I will give my life for this country. So unless you're ready for that to happen tell me... what do you know?!

Beat.

Anna can't speak. Peter senses her devastation. He finally realizes...

It's Uncle Max. PETER (cont'd)

Peter... ANNA

It's him. PETER

Stay home tonight and you'll be safe. ANNA

PETER

I'll kill him myself.

ANNA

You love him. Max adores you.

PETER

Then how could he do this?

ANNA

Just like you... exactly like you... he's trying to do what's best for our country.

PETER

Far from it.

ANNA

Please don't do anything rash. Please.

A long beat.

PETER

I'll take care of it.

He turns to leave.

ANNA

Peter!

PETER

I won't tell anyone you knew about this.

ANNA

You know what they'll do to him.

PETER

He'll get what he deserves.

ANNA

I'm begging you.

PETER

You could have stopped this yourself.

ANNA

He's our family. Doesn't that mean anything?

PETER

Yes. I know how hard this was for you. Now I understand. It's not your fault. His evil infected you.

Beat.

ANNA

I want Max to do it. I hope he kills that awful man. I hope he bleeds and he burns and he suffers and his disgusting body is blown to bits and pieces. Because that's exactly what your leader deserves.

PETER

That's not what you truly want. If you really did, you wouldn't have told me about the bomb.

ANNA

I told you that to protect you. You're my son.

Peter walks back to Anna.

PETER

Thank you.

Peter leans in to kiss his mother on the cheek. She recoils in revulsion.

ANNA

Do not thank me. Do not thank me!

Beat. Peter walks to the door. He stops.

PETER

He's not my leader. He's your leader. He's all of our leader. That's what it means to be a nation. We created the system that put him in charge. You don't get to opt out because you don't like the result. He is us and we are him. This is who we all are now.

Peter looks at her one last time then exits leaving Anna all alone.

She starts to run after him but stops herself, she realizes it's over. She weeps.

Rosemary, having heard it all, enters and consoles her daughter-in-law.

## SCENE 13

*December. At home. Night.*

*Lights up. The house is empty. Peter and Claudia enter from outside dressed for winter.*

CLAUDIA  
It's so cold.

PETER  
I'll keep you warm.

He holds her close and warms her with his arms.

CLAUDIA  
Where are they?

Peter yells out.

PETER  
Mother! Grandma!

CLAUDIA  
Maybe we shouldn't disturb them.

PETER  
They'll want to know.

After a moment, Rosemary sleepily hobbles into the room in her nightgown.

ROSEMARY  
What's happened? What's the matter?

PETER  
Where is she?

ROSEMARY  
We had the best of intentions but couldn't keep our eyes open. I figured the explosions would wake us when the time came.

PETER  
(yells out)  
Mother!

Anna finally enters. She too was asleep.

ANNA  
What time is it?

PETER  
It's almost midnight.

CLAUDIA  
We're sorry to wake you. We thought you might still be up.

ROSEMARY  
I told them we tucked out. It's what happens when you get old. Wait and see.

PETER  
It's just... this is a quite serious matter and we came here at once.

ANNA  
What?

ROSEMARY  
Should we sit? My heart isn't what it used to be after this year we've had.

PETER  
(with feigned gravity)  
Perhaps. Especially if you're feeling faint.

ROSEMARY  
Oh, dear.

CLAUDIA  
(stop teasing)  
Peter.

ANNA  
What's going on?

An anxious beat...

PETER  
Claudia's pregnant!

Rosemary gets up and lets out a piercing scream of delight.

CLAUDIA

Isn't it wonderful?!

ROSEMARY

Yes, oh yes!

PETER

We couldn't wait any longer to tell you.

ANNA

I'm happy for you both.

PETER

And happy for you! You'll have a grandchild before you know it. If it's a boy... we're naming him after father.

Rosemary cries from gratitude.

ROSEMARY

Thank you. Thank you.

CLAUDIA

Your son was a hero and his name will live on forever.

ROSEMARY

He would be proud. He would be so proud.

PETER

And if it's a girl... well we'll figure that out. Or we could still name her Herbert.

ROSEMARY

You're having a boy! I just know it. It's meant to be.

PETER

We were going to tell you tomorrow at dinner...

CLAUDIA

But then we got to thinking and realized the year shouldn't come to an end with you not knowing.

PETER

We were in town celebrating with friends from school. You remember Hans Moritz and Marta Lutz and Adam Hessler...

CLAUDIA

We were all talking about everything that's happened since the last New Year's Eve, and we all at once realized that this is the first year of our entire lives that ended better than it began. It's so different from last year. People actually have hope. It's a beautiful thing. And we wanted you to start the new year with that same hope for the future, knowing that you're going to be a grandmother. And a great-grandmother.

PETER

It was Claudia's idea to rush back.

CLAUDIA

It's what we both wanted.

ROSEMARY

Well, this is the best news I've heard in years and years. And to think I almost slept through the whole thing.

CLAUDIA

You would've awoken in 1934 none the wiser.

ROSEMARY

You tricked us! You really did. I thought something awful had happened.

PETER

Those days are behind us.

ANNA

Let's hope so.

ROSEMARY

How much more time until the New Year?

Peter takes out the gold pocket watch to look.

PETER

Just a few minutes.

ROSEMARY

We should have a toast. A celebration! Put on some music, dear.

Rosemary searches for something.

CLAUDIA

Of course!

Claudia puts on festive music.

PETER

This is the perfect ending of one year, and a beginning of something brilliant.

Peter takes Claudia by the hand, leads her in a dance.

Rosemary finds a bottle of fancy wine, fills glasses.

ROSEMARY

I'd been saving this. I bought it on a glorious visit to Switzerland with my sister years and years ago. It was after Herbert died, and I needed a reminder that life had something left worth living for. And in those beautiful sunsets over the mountains I found it. I figured I'd come home, have a glass and remember our lovely trip. But I never could bring myself to open it. I just kept waiting. And waiting.

CLAUDIA

That's because you were saving it for this very day. You knew.

ROSEMARY

I suppose I did.

Rosemary hands them all glasses.

PETER

Who wants to make the toast?

CLAUDIA

Everyone. We all have something to be thankful for.

ROSEMARY

We certainly do now.

PETER

I'll start. For opportunity.

CLAUDIA

I'm thankful for family. The one we have and the one we will become.

ROSEMARY

For unity. It's been far too long that it seemed like we'd never have it again.

They look to Anna, who doesn't respond.

CLAUDIA

What do you want to raise a glass toward?



Slight beat.

ANNA

My hope... my prayer for your child... is a world of peace and goodness.

CLAUDIA

That's what we all want!

PETER

Sixty seconds until the new year!

(slight beat)

For all these things, we're thankful and hope for even more.

Peter raises his glass.

ROSEMARY

This is so exciting!

PETER

Heil Hitler.

CLAUDIA

Heil Hitler.

ROSEMARY

Heil Hitler.

Claudia and Rosemary raise their glasses as well, but not Anna. She's in a daze.

PETER

Raise your glass, Mother.

But she doesn't. She can't.

ROSEMARY (cont'd)

I, for one, think we've seen far too much pain and suffering. It had to end. Someone had to end it.

PETER

Thirty seconds.

Nothing. Anna is overwhelmed by the moment.

ROSEMARY

Anna, dear.

CLAUDIA

I hope you truly believe what you said. That there will be peace and good in the world. That our child will be part of that. You do believe that?

ANNA

I have to.

Peter looks at his watch.

PETER

Please join us, Mother. It would mean the world to me.

(slight beat)

For our family.

The words strike her. Finally, Anna raises her glass.

ANNA

(meekly)

Heil Hitler.

Something washes over Anna. A look in her eyes, a newfound determination. She speaks out again, louder and clearer. This is something more--a decision to act.

ANNA (cont'd)

To the future we create.

The rest of the family smile and laugh. But Anna simply watches her son, her mind races.

Peter starts the countdown from ten, Rosemary and Claudia join.

Midway through counting down, something clicks with Peter. He turns to his mother, stares at her. Her determination disconcerts him. They lock eyes.

The countdown reaches ONE.

Blackout.

Explosions fill the night sky.

End of play.