

# Pure Walking Evil (Propaganda)

Scenes From The Life Of A Demon

by

Michael Black

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[www.mwblack.co.uk](http://www.mwblack.co.uk)

[www.europaproductions.eu](http://www.europaproductions.eu)



email:[michael@europaproductions.eu](mailto:michael@europaproductions.eu)

Tel: (UK) 01625-429490

07792-987526

## A NOTE ON THE AUTHOR

**Michael Black** was born in 1962, and grew up in South Manchester. He was educated at York University, where he completed a degree in European Literature and History, and then at Cambridge University, where he completed a doctorate in South African anti-apartheid literature.

His plays have been performed in London, Cardiff, Manchester, York and Edinburgh at home, and in Timisoara, Iasi, and Bucharest abroad. They include *The Life To Come* (Edinburgh 1984, Cardiff 1985), *Pure Walking Evil* (London 1989, National Theatre of Romania 1990/91) and *The Amber Room* (London, 1998).

He has been awarded three Arts Council of England Theatre Writing Bursaries, of which *Madame Polina* represents the last play to be finished.

The second, dating back to 1992, for the play *Panharmonicon*, he completed in 1997, and an option on the script was taken up by the commercial producers P.W. Productions.

A reading of *Pure Walking Evil* recently took place at the Questors Theatre, London in September 2001 with a view to production in 2003. Another reading has recently been performed at the Genesis Guild, New York, 2002.

In 2007 Michael completed *The Minotaur*, a play about Picasso and his three mistresses, set in Paris after the liberation from the Nazis in 1945/6. *The Minotaur* is set for a rehearsed reading by the Moving Parts Theatre Company in Paris, April 5<sup>th</sup> 2009.

Michael's most recently completed play (2009) is *The Lady Of The Camellias*, an adaptation of the novel by Alexandre Dumas  *fils* (1848).

*Pure Walking Evil* (under the title *Propaganda Fide*) was first performed at The Old Red Lion Theatre, Islington, London, on 24<sup>th</sup> October 1989, and was shortlisted for the Charrington's London Fringe Awards for *Best Play*, *Best Actress* (Amanda Boxer), and *Best Production*. It was subsequently performed in translation by The National Theatre Of Romania in Timisoara, in Bucharest and on tour, during 1990/91, being performed at the first post-revolutionary Festival Of Romanian Theatre December 1990. After extensive rewrites during 1999, a reading of *Pure Walking Evil* was performed in September 2001 at the Questors' Theatre London, and the play was most recently given a rehearsed reading at the Genesis Guild in New York, May 2002. A full production of the play was scheduled for 2003/04 by Vox Humana Productions, Los Angeles. Under the title *Propaganda*, the play was also performed at the Cowgate Central Theatre, Edinburgh Festival, 2004.



“Frau Goebbels knows better than I do that her husband is a genius who now and then turns into a very Satan”. *Dr. Rudolf Semler, press adviser to Dr. Goebbels.*

“Let [Pastor Niemöller] eat well, get fat, so that no one can mistake him for a martyr. But he won't be let loose on the human race again. He should have thought of that earlier”. *Dr. Goebbels's dairy, 23<sup>rd</sup> December 1940.*

# CHARACTERS

- DR. GOEBBELS** Reich Minister for Propaganda And Public Enlightenment. Aged 36 to 48. A small man (in reality 5 feet two inches tall), thin and narrow shouldered, with burning eyes in a sallow face, but also charming, his charm being central to his tyranny. Walks with a constant limp. Impeccably manicured, he wears a beautifully tailored grey double-breasted suit with a ruby fleck in it that glints in certain lights. In *Scene One*, however, his suit is worn out and frayed.
- MAGDA GOEBBELS** His wife. Aged 32 to 44. She is blonde, and dresses tastefully in well cut clothes. A woman of fading beauty, but great presence.
- HASEK** An employee of the Ministry for Propaganda. Aged 25 to 37, or thereabouts. Wears a lieutenant's uniform.
- LIZA BARDOFF** An actress. Brunette, aged 25 to 37 or thereabouts. Over-dresses in the manner of the *nouveau-riche*.
- PASTOR NIEMÖLLER** A Lutheran priest. Aged 40 to 52.

*The play requires five sets.*

1. The Fuhrerbunker should be a bare stage.
2. Pastor Niemöller's church should have a single line of pews mid-stage, and a pulpit.
3. Dr. Goebbels's office should have a large desk for Dr. Goebbels, and a small one for Hasek. On Dr. Goebbels's desk there is a large ornate globe, which he spins frequently in contemplation. In *Scene One*, however, the office should have only a small table, and should look shabby.
4. The Goebbels' drawing room needs a low table, a couch, a matching chair, and a drinks cabinet.
5. The prison cell needs only two wooden chairs, and a small table.

<b>Prologue</b>	1945. The Fuhrerbunker
<b>One</b>	1929. Dr. Goebbels's office
<b>Two</b>	1933. Pastor Niemöller's church
<b>Three</b>	1936. Dr. Goebbels's office
<b>Four</b>	1939. Dr. Goebbels's office
<b>Five</b>	1941. The Goebbels' drawing room
<b>Six</b>	1941. Pastor Niemöller's church
<b>Seven</b>	1941. The Goebbels' drawing room
<b>Eight</b>	1941. Dr. Goebbels's office
<b>Nine</b>	1941. Pastor Niemöller's church

## INTERVAL

<b>Ten</b>	1942. The prison cell
<b>Eleven</b>	1942. Dr. Goebbels's office
<b>Twelve</b>	1943. The prison cell
<b>Thirteen</b>	1943. The Goebbels' drawing room
<b>Fourteen</b>	1943. The prison cell
<b>Fifteen</b>	1944. The Goebbels' drawing room
<b>Sixteen</b>	1944. The prison cell
<b>Seventeen</b>	1945. The Goebbels' drawing room
<b>Eighteen</b>	1945. The prison cell

*Scene changes can be accompanied by German songs of the period, and ironically placed Strauss waltzes.*

## On Dr. Goebbels ...

Dr. Josef Goebbels was *the* conceptual brain behind the Nazis. His demonic power, his vanity, his extraordinary sexual drive, his intellect, his astounding ability to convincingly lie, and his equal delight in continuously so doing, cannot be over-estimated. He was a man of immense verbal capacity, and without the articulation of his ideas, the rest of Nazi tyranny would have been impossible, the central tyranny being the tyranny of “Ein volk, ein Reich, ein Fuhrer” itself. It’s the linearity and singularity of the statement that constitute the primary tyranny – the literal tyranny of the death camps follows on. And without Dr. Goebbels it would have been impossible.

In the *Pure Walking Evil*, the primary tyranny Dr. Goebbels imposes is the tyrannical idea of only one god, not subject to negotiation. And since there is only one real idea, so there is only one *permitted* plot, hence the play’s linearity – a tyranny all of its own.

Throughout his life Dr. Goebbels was obsessed by theology. Whilst it’s important the actor understands Dr. Goebbels’s point of view, he must not become in awe of it, theology simply being the common subject matter of Dr. Goebbels’s conversation. Dr. Goebbels talks about God the way most people talk about the weather. Having said which, Dr. Goebbels’s interest is so obsessional that it ignores other peoples concerns. Thus the actor must not become sympathetic to the dialogue and rhythms of speech of the other characters. He must attempt to deny their momentum by generating a greater one of his own. Dr. Goebbels is the verbal dynamo of the play. The dialogue of the other characters must bounce off his, like a tennis ball bounces off a brick wall.

But don’t forget! Dr. Goebbels must be charming as well ...

**Michael Black**

# Prologue

*(Berlin, 1<sup>st</sup> May 1945. In the Fuhrerbunker. Russian artillery pounding in the background. The action is preceded by a radio announcement of the death of Hitler)*

HASEK            I need more petrol. There are only three of us left now. Magda, oh, sorry, Frau Goebbels, Dr. Goebbels himself, and me. Oh, I say there are only three of us left. I mean three adults. There's also the Goebbels' six children. I've been doing my best to entertain them, but I'm not very good with children. Hilde is having nightmares about the guns, and Heide's still crying about the Fuhrer's dogs. Helmut thinks he's fighting the Russians with his toy Panzer tank. Dr. Goebbels is to inject them with strychnine while they sleep before going out into the bunker garden. He will shoot his wife and then turn the gun on himself. After that, it's my job to burn the bodies so the Russians can't identify them. It's not the shootings that worry me, it's the petrol, because quite frankly, we haven't enough to burn a sparrow, let alone two people. A human being is mainly water after all, so Dr. Goebbels has instructed me to concentrate on incinerating his face. Dr. Goebbels has calculated the Red Army is only two hundred yards from us, so this is a matter of some urgency

## Scene One

*(1929. Dr. Goebbels and Magda Quandt in his spartan office. He sits behind a small desk, she in front of it. She is immaculately dressed, he is attempting to look smart, but his suit is obviously worn out. Magda is seated, Dr. Goebbels stands...)*

GOEBBELS I'm sorry. Is there anything I can do for you?

MAGDA I've come about the advertisement in the paper for a librarian. Is this the right place? There was no one ...

GOEBBELS Yes, yes. My apologies. We're still understaffed at the moment. Have you any experience, Frau ...

MAGDA Quandt. Frau Quandt. I was school librarian at the convent

GOEBBELS And since?

MAGDA Since then I've been married

GOEBBELS Frau Quandt did you say?

MAGDA Yes

GOEBBELS You wouldn't, in any way, be connected to Herr Gunther Quandt?

MAGDA He was my husband

GOEBBELS Was your husband?

MAGDA Since I've been married, I've been divorced

GOEBBELS I hadn't heard

MAGDA We've lived entirely separate lives for two years now, but the press can be so intrusive, Gunther thought it best to be discreet. I have my freedom, he has his ball bearing factories. We're both very happy

GOEBBELS Do you see much of him?

MAGDA Only concerning my allowance

GOEBBELS Is he generous?

MAGDA Yes, I must confess. But Berlin is so expensive these days. He keeps talking about recessions, and reparations, and inflation, which is all very well, but one's chauffeur has to be paid

GOEBBELS Indeed. *(Pause)* Frau Quandt, it's very good of you to come here, but I think I should be frank. The position of librarian is very junior. It hardly suits a woman of your stature

MAGDA           Why not?

GOEBBELS       Well, I had in mind someone young ..., younger, an eager, unemployed student I suppose. Someone willing to work long and hard for very little, and committed to the cause

MAGDA           What is the cause?

GOEBBELS       National Socialism. Patriotism. The greater good of greater Germany

MAGDA           Then I fail to see on what grounds I am disqualified

GOEBBELS       Frau Quandt. The post is unsalaried

MAGDA           Money is of no consequence, Herr ...

GOEBBELS       Goebbels. Herr ... Dr. Goebbels. Perhaps I could ask some more questions. What are your interests, hobbies ...

MAGDA           Opera. Theatre. I'm reading some books about Buddhism at the moment

GOEBBELS       I see. Religion

MAGDA           Well, Buddhist poetry actually. Dr. Goebbels, may I ask some questions of you? If the post is voluntary, it seems only fair

GOEBBELS       Of course, please. Ask away

MAGDA           Who are you?

GOEBBELS       Me? Well, I'm a journalist, a writer of sorts, a doctor of philosophy, I'm, I'm National Socialist Workers' Party member No.5. A founding father

MAGDA           And I would be working directly for you?

GOEBBELS       Me and me alone. It's my job to collate newspaper reports about Herr Hitler

MAGDA           Ah. Your *Fuhrer*

GOEBBELS       *The Fuhrer*. I need help you see, because we've just expanded into foreign news. Do you have any languages?

MAGDA           I'm fluent in Spanish, English, French, Italian ...

GOEBBELS       I have smatterings myself

MAGDA           And from when would the post commence?

GOEBBELS       In truth, we're behind already. Frau Quandt, you can't possibly be still interested. Delightful though this interview has been, I feel ...

MAGDA            Dr. Goebbels. If I wasn't still interested, I would have already left, I assure you. Do you want me, or don't you?

GOEBBELS        (*Pause*) Yes, yes. Frau Quandt, I am indebted to you

## Scene Two

*(1933. Pastor Niemöller's church. Pastor Niemöller preaching from the pulpit, facing out to the audience. Hasek and Liza Bardoff sit silently listening)*

PASTOR We live at a time of great trial and uncertainty for our nation. Before our eyes, the very foundations of Germany seem daily to crumble before us. We have seen our currency and savings rendered worthless, our democracy reduced to the butt of beer keller jokes and Communist insults. And now by the cowardly act of arson, the Reichstag, the seat of government itself, has been set to flame. The godless may despair in these times, and in these times a few most evil godless men may believe that they and their evil causes will profit from the mayhem. But we must not lose heart. Our stability shattered, once more must we place our trust in the great stoical virtues of Frederick the Great and Count Bismarck. Fear not my children, the strengths that once made Germany great shall see her rise again. For Christ did say he that hath faith shall be given faith. Our Lord ... *(Goebbels and Magda enter, Hasek, Liza and the Pastor looking round. Hasek makes space for Goebbels and Magda to sit down)* ... Our Lord will not desert those that stand strong in His faith and true to His love. *(Pastor Niemöller reads from the Bible)* "Jesus was then led away by the Spirit into the wilderness, to be tempted by the Devil. For forty days and nights he fasted, and at the end of them he was famished. The tempter approached him and said, 'If you are the Son of God, tell these stones to become bread'. Jesus answered, 'Scripture says, "man cannot live by bread alone; he lives on every word that God utters"'. The Devil then took him to the Holy City and set him down on the parapet of the Temple. 'If you are the Son of God' he said, 'throw yourself down; for scripture says, "He will put His angels in charge of you, and they will support you in their arms, for fear you should strike your foot against a stone"'. Jesus answered him, 'Scripture says again, "You are not to

put the Lord your God unto the test”. Once again, the Devil took him to a very high mountain, and showed him all the kingdoms of the world in their glory. ‘All these’, he said, ‘I will give you, if you will only fall down and worship me’. But Jesus said, ‘Begone, Satan! Scripture says, “You shall do homage to the Lord your God and worship Him alone”’. Then the Devil left him; and angels appeared and waited on him”. Let us pray for our deliverance from turmoil. Let us pray that the soul of our great mother country shall be reborn. May she and the Lord protect us from the evil in our midst. *(Pastor Niemöller turns, and goes to the back of the stage. Immediately after the Pastor has so turned, Hasek, Magda, Liza and Goebbels appear one by one in front of the altar in the order given. Hasek and Liza exit as soon as they have said ‘Amen’)*

- HASEK *(Simply and sincerely)* Amen
- MAGDA *(Tritely, but not insincerely)* Amen
- LIZA *(Unbelievably)* Amen
- GOEBBELS *(Chillingly)* Amen. Pastor Niemöller, may I congratulate you on such an uplifting service
- MAGDA It was quite wonderful ...
- GOEBBELS I trust we’re not keeping you
- PASTOR After your reviews of my book, I’ve been expecting you. And I thank you for them, but I have no wish to be so publicly lauded. We don’t often attract National Socialists to this church ...
- GOEBBELS Your book Pastor Niemöller beckoned me here. *From U-Boat To Pulpit* is exactly what I’ve been looking for. It perfectly embodies what the German clergy must aspire to. Together, we can lead our people to a brave and prosperous future
- PASTOR I simply wrote an autobiography Dr. Goebbels. I’m not Moses
- GOEBBELS We live in portentous times. If only you could have seen the Reichstag fire. It was a beacon incinerating the old and illuminating the new
- PASTOR You take comfort from the strangest sources Dr. Goebbels
- GOEBBELS I know when destiny calls me. Was the Weimar Republic what you fought the Great War to achieve? Did you sweat in you U-boat for

that milk-livered sham of democracy? You, one of the German navy's finest commanders?

PASTOR You flatter me Dr. Goebbels. I simply ...

GOEBBELS Oh, I know what's said about us, that the Reichstag fire was the work of the Nazis, that we're thugs, murderers, gangsters, but it's all lies! Slander let loose by democrats who every day shake more in panic and trepidation

PASTOR The democrats mean well ...

GOEBBELS They mean nothing. It is we who are the true believers Pastor. I ask you to join us in the rebuilding of our nation

PASTOR And what does this rebuilding entail?

GOEBBELS Faith. We must fuel the flames of rage in our hearts until they consume the injustice done us

PASTOR But what will we be building? Faith is not anger

GOEBBELS 'Begone Satan!'. Surely Christ was angry when he said that. And did not Christ Himself minister to an oppressed people? You can breed faith from anger, but you'll breed nothing from people cowed into submission by Jews and capitalists. Hitler's hour is at hand. Our visions are the same Pastor

PASTOR I'm not even sure I have a vision. Just a few old hopes I've managed to hold on to

GOEBBELS Even so, you share my faith. It is your book which speaks of a 'national revival' Pastor

PASTOR I hope for one, but I don't presume to know its secret

GOEBBELS The secret is before you, in Christ's casting off of temptation. And the secret can be unlocked through the Reich Church. Together we must stand firm against evil. I ask you to accept the honour of first Reich Bishop

PASTOR Dr. Goebbels, neither as a Catholic nor as a politician do you have the authority to tamper with the Lutheran church

GOEBBELS But I will have. Within days Pastor, I shall be the Minister for Propaganda and Public Enlightenment, the spiritual physician of the Nation. We live at the start of a new age, and we need a new church to sing its praises

## Scene Three

*(1936. Dr. Goebbels's office. As the lights go up, Liza Bardoff is standing prominently in Goebbels's office, wearing stylish, but slightly cheap clothes. Goebbels is sitting at his now large desk, but stops writing as she speaks. He listens to her without looking at her. Hasek is present throughout at his small desk)*

- LIZA Dr. Goebbels. I despise you utterly and everything you and your gruesome bunch of criminals stand for. Before we go any further, it's only fair to tell you I think you're the single greatest source of evil in the world today. *(Pause)* I think you should know that
- GOEBBELS Fraulein Bardoff, how good of you to come. Have a drink. We run a very frugal operation here, but I think we could offer you a schnapps, or maybe some wine
- LIZA It'll get you nowhere trying to be nice to me
- GOEBBELS We can talk later
- LIZA I'll start talking now
- GOEBBELS Now, what will it be?
- LIZA Dr. Goebbels, I've had the great misfortune to observe your career for several years now, and in my opinion ...
- GOEBBELS Are you going to have a drink or not? If not, you can get out now. And if you don't, the single greatest source of evil in the world today will have you thrown out without you ever knowing why he called you here in the first place
- LIZA *(To Hasek)* How can you work for him? This man is the most sophisticated fiend of his time
- GOEBBELS There's so much being written about us nowadays, that I've had to take on extra staff. Now, Fraulein Bardoff, if I could be so bold as to interrupt ...
- LIZA *(Pause)* I will, thank you, accept a small schnapps
- GOEBBELS Hasek, you heard what this charming lady said. And the same for me *(Hasek exits to organise the drinks)*
- LIZA Now I haven't got long. Why did you send for me?

- GOEBBELS To tell you that, in my opinion, you are, without doubt, the worst and most horrendously over-rated actress it has ever been my misfortune to see perform on a German stage. How on earth you were cast as the Queen of Spain in *Don Carlos* is beyond me. Schiller must be spinning in his grave
- LIZA Good day Dr. Goebbels (*she gets up to go. As she nears the door, her path is blocked by Hasek returning with the drinks*)
- GOEBBELS And what's more, if you leave this room now, I shall personally make it my business to see you never work again. (*Liza sits down again. She takes her drink from Hasek's tray, as does Goebbels*) Relax. I have great plans for the German arts Fraulein Bardoff – Liza – but it is essential we root out everything vulgar and degenerate. Don't you agree?
- LIZA Schiller isn't vulgar or degenerate
- GOEBBELS Oh, no Liza. But a great playwright demands great actors
- LIZA Absolutely. And a great nation demands great leaders
- GOEBBELS I knew we'd see eye to eye eventually. I propose a toast
- LIZA To what?
- GOEBBELS Our friendship
- LIZA I don't know you
- GOEBBELS I thought you'd been following my career for several years. Or was that rehearsed tirade no more than the secondhand mouthings of a third rate communist you've overheard in a theatre bar? It does a woman of your talents scant justice
- LIZA I thought I was talentless
- GOEBBELS I give as good as I get. Some times better
- LIZA Perhaps I was a little hasty
- GOEBBELS Let's forget the entire episode. At least you weren't scared of me. (*Raising a glass*) To friendship
- LIZA To German art
- GOEBBELS Ah ha. I like you Liza, and to be frank, I need your help. You see, it's very easy knocking some order into the press, but to what end? How long do we remember a newspaper report? An hour, a minute, a day at the most. But a play, or a film can become part of you for

life. Isn't that true? (*Feigning*) Forgive me, forgive me, you must listen to so many frustrated writers

LIZA Berlin's full of them

GOEBBELS They're not normally Reich Minister for Propaganda. Liza, quite simply, I called you here to tell you that no one who has seen your Queen of Spain will ever forget it

LIZA Thank you

GOEBBELS As one sophisticated fiend to another, I was astounded. Imagine, though, my frustration that night in the theatre. I'm no actor, the six pounds of shrapnel in my leg have seen to that ...

LIZA I thought it was polio

GOEBBELS As I say, I'm no actor, but I know talent when I see it. There you are, illuminating the entire stage, yet denied you rightful place in the firmament of stars by a film industry run entirely by Jews. To become the idol of millions, an actress of your talent has no option but to leave for America like Dietrich

LIZA Dr. Goebbels, nothing could be further from my mind

GOEBBELS It's only natural you dream of fame. My dream is of a German cinema worthy of a Dietrich herself. Liza, I beg you to stay

LIZA I'm not going anywhere

GOEBBELS Can you really mean that?

LIZA I give you my word

GOEBBELS Thank heavens I spoke with you in time. I'll send you some scripts within the week. If you want bigger parts, I'll have bigger parts written. Anyway, I mustn't monopolise your time any longer. Hasek (*Goebbels gets up. Helps Liza put her coat on*). The company of actors gives me such joy. (*Hasek enters*) Until we meet again Liza. Hasek, will you see Fraulein Bardoff gets a cab (*Hasek and Liza exit. Goebbels goes back to his desk and sits down. Lights a cigarette, and puts his feet up on the table. A broad grin covers his face*). "The most sophisticated fiend of my time". "The single greatest source of evil in the world today". Was ever a woman in this humour wooed? (*Hasek enters*) Hasek. D'you know who that was? The most famous German actress of the next ten years, that's

who. And d'you know how I know? The Minister for Propaganda told me. Your collar's dirty

HASEK I changed it this morning Dr. Goebbels

GOEBBELS Then change it again for this afternoon. Discipline and order Hasek. Inculcate those, and you can hypnotise millions, but you can't even keep your clothes clean. The Lord, he moveth in mysterious ways. If you were seducing a woman, a very attractive woman, how would you go about it?

HASEK I don't know Dr. Goebbels. That sort of woman would never be interested in me

GOEBBELS Come Hasek, believe in yourself more! How, for instance, d'you think I went about wooing Frau Goebbels? (*Silence*) Alright then, how would you seduce Fraulein Bardoff?

HASEK I'd find out what she was interested in first. If she wanted to go to the cinema, then that would make it easier. If it was the theatre, I'd have to save up first. If she wanted ...

GOEBBELS Would you telephone her?

HASEK No, no. I'd be too nervous. I'd buy some flowers, and send them with a letter. If it was summer, I'd probably ask her to go for a walk. That wouldn't cost much

GOEBBELS A walk? With a picnic?

HASEK It'd have to be a small one, but then if she loved me, that wouldn't matter

GOEBBELS True. Flowers, a letter, and then an outing of some kind. A sound proposal Hasek, but the strange thing is, once you've got the lady in your sights, I often find insulting her beyond measure to be the most effective method of all. And florists can be so unreliable. (*Gives Hasek some envelopes*) See that these get posted. Oh, and Hasek, if my wife should ask you about Fraulein Bardoff, tell her I like her. Tell her I like her a lot

## Scene Four

*(1939. Magda and Pastor Niemöller in Dr. Goebbels's office. Hasek is present throughout this scene)*

- MAGDA Dr. Goebbels shouldn't be long Pastor. He's presently in a meeting with the Fuhrer. Please, sit down
- PASTOR Thank you Frau Goebbels. *(They both sit and stare awkwardly at each other)* So, this is the room from which our faith is to be rebuilt
- MAGDA Yes. *(Pause)* Did you expect something grander? My husband hates waste Pastor. He says ceremony and grandeur are the preserve of the Fuhrer
- PASTOR The truest apostles are always frugal *(Silence)*
- GOEBBELS *(Entering grandly)* Pastor, explain something to me. Why did the people elect to save Barabbas instead of Jesus? Why save a lousy criminal when you can have the Messiah? I'm sorry to have kept you. But I had some urgent business. As from eleven o'clock this morning, Germany has been at war with the British Empire. *(Pause)* The people need answers if they are to believe Pastor, which is exactly where the New Testament fails us. Perhaps the people thought Jesus could save himself. After all, if he truly was the Messiah, then why didn't he just walk through the walls of the prison? Messiah's can do things like that, Barabbas's can't
- PASTOR Jesus chose to live life like an ordinary man
- GOEBBELS But the people didn't want Jesus to be an ordinary man. They don't want Hitler to address them at a time like this and say "I am not confident of victory, I am an ordinary man". How can you generate belief like that? Hitler must appear infallible, miraculous, omnipotent. Maybe the people chose Barabbas because Jesus disappointed them
- PASTOR Does He disappoint you Dr. Goebbels?
- GOEBBELS It is you who disappoints me Pastor. Either the people were right to choose Barabbas, or they were wrong. Either Jesus was the Messiah, or he wasn't. If he was, the people were stupid. If he wasn't, then

they chose wisely. You believe Jesus was the Messiah, and so the people were wrong, and yet you are also a democrat. How can that be? When Pontius Pilate offered the fate of Jesus and Barabbas to the people, he presented them with the most important democratic decision man has ever had to make. And they got it wrong. Which is my entire point. Give people the freedom to choose their own destiny, and they will always get it wrong. People need to be told what their destiny is. But you insist in having faith in both Jesus, and in the peoples' wisdom. History is against you

PASTOR Your logic dazzles me Dr. Goebbels, but I don't know where it will lead you. I wish you and the Reich Church every blessing, but ...

GOEBBELS Pastor Niemöller. Will you be my Reich Bishop?

PASTOR I need time to consider

GOEBBELS Very well. But remember, we are at war, and there is little time available

PASTOR Dr. Goebbels. Frau Goebbels. Good day to you both (*the Pastor exits, escorted by Hasek*)

GOEBBELS Damn him, damn him. Hasek. I could fill his churches a million times over, but even so, he resists me. Hasek! I want that man watched. It's only a matter of time until he stands up on a pulpit to denounce us. And when he does, I want to know about it

HASEK Yes Dr. Goebbels

GOEBBELS He must have a weakness. A prejudice. Find it. Do you understand?

MAGDA Josef, are you sure?

GOEBBELS He doesn't trust me, and that's an end to it

MAGDA He won't be harmed, will he?

GOEBBELS Of course not. Magda. You must never fear me. Besides, if he's right, I'm sure Jesus will protect him

## Scene Five

*(1941. The Goebbels' drawing room. Dr. Goebbels is resting on a couch, and watching an English war report on a projector facing out above the audience. Enter Magda)*

- MAGDA            Josef. You're home early
- GOEBBELS        I'm very tired my dear. So I thought I'd rest here ...
- MAGDA            You can't watch films and rest at the same time
- GOEBBELS        It's the English Ministry of Information. Apparently we want to abolish the family and start 'breeding factories'. Aryan males inseminating broad hippered frauleins, mass produce the perfect warrior, that sort of thing
- MAGDA            How obscene
- GOEBBELS        Indeed, but very well produced
- MAGDA            Is there anything I can get you?
- GOEBBELS        Soda water. Nothing in civilisation is more thrilling than the perfect lie. Professionally speaking that is
- MAGDA            *(Goes to the drinks cabinet)* You work too hard Josef. And a lie is a lie
- GOEBBELS        Magda, can't you see what I'm up against? The English are very good at propaganda, and they pull it off with such impeccable charm. This baby factory story, it's brilliant. It has such a wonderful sense of moral outrage. *(Magda comes back with the soda water)* The Germans are barbarians, the English the most civilised people in the world. It's as much as I can do to keep up!
- MAGDA            Josef. Have you ever for one moment stopped to think what will happen if we lose the war?
- GOEBBELS        If the German people match the Fuhrer's faith in them, we won't. And it's up to me to make sure they do
- MAGDA            And what if the Fuhrer is thinking of breeding factories? How could you defend that?
- GOEBBELS        I told you it was perfect propaganda. Magda, you always have to be on your guard against falsehood

MAGDA Yes

GOEBBELS Can you tell Hasek there are some papers for him to collect

MAGDA Only if you promise me you'll get some sleep

GOEBBELS Magda. You worry about me too much

MAGDA I don't worry about you Josef. I worry about us. I'll send Hasek in  
(*Magda exits. Goebbels continues relaxing on the couch. Drinks some water. Hasek knocks on the door*)

GOEBBELS Come in. Ah. Hasek. Here you are (*gives Hasek a file*). Have that typed up by the morning

HASEK Yes Dr. Goebbels

GOEBBELS And Hasek. Fraulein Bardoff is due to arrive very shortly. Under no circumstances allow Frau Goebbels to know she is here. And tell Frau Goebbels I wish to sleep for several hours. And that's an order Hasek

HASEK Yes Dr. Goebbels (*Hasek exits. Goebbels gets up from his couch and switches off the projector. Shakes his head*) Baby factories! (*He takes out the reel and replaces it with another. Goes to the drinks cabinet, gets out a bottle of American whiskey, puts it on the table, then goes back to get two glasses. Polishes them, and puts them on the table. Then lies down again on the couch. The door opens, and Liza walks in*)

LIZA Josef! How is my favourite Nazi? (*She kisses him*) You look tired

GOEBBELS I am. I'm tired of idiots who don't understand what I'm trying to do. I'm tired of that fool Hasek looking at me as if I was letting my wife down

LIZA You can see his point of view

GOEBBELS I don't have to see anybody's point of view. It's my job to make other people see mine

LIZA And what if they don't?

GOEBBELS (*Switching on the projector*) I've got the rough cuts of your film

LIZA And a bottle of bourbon. That can't have been easy

GOEBBELS We empounded the American embassy cellars when they left Berlin. Help yourself

LIZA Here's looking at you kid

GOEBBELS Here's to your new film

LIZA I still don't like the opening. It's too obvious

GOEBBELS Propaganda my dear is the highest of all the arts

LIZA Yes, but weeping to a portrait of Hitler? Do I have to?

GOEBBELS I think it works very well

LIZA Oh, that's a nice close up

GOEBBELS What if the opening stays, and we hold that longer?

LIZA Deal

GOEBBELS That's what I like about you

LIZA *(Goes up to the couch and kisses Goebbels lasciviously)* ... All these wonderful mothers of the fatherland I play in films. They sacrifice their husbands and children for the glory of the Reich, and only ever have to see our great Fuhrer's picture on the wall to realise it was all worthwhile. Isn't it rather ironic that I'm single, brunette not blonde, not remotely interested in marriage or children, and couldn't give a flying fuck for the Third Reich. *(Pause)* Don't you think meeting me in the drawing room of your own home is being a bit too blatant by the way? I don't mind, but I imagine Frau Goebbels just might

GOEBBELS She doesn't

LIZA Oh, so she knows I'm here

GOEBBELS No

LIZA Ah. You mean she doesn't know

GOEBBELS I mean she doesn't mind. It's in our marriage contract

LIZA What?

GOEBBELS I'm allowed to have mistresses by the marriage contract. *(Liza whistles in amazement)* Oh, this bit's brilliant

LIZA I think it's disgusting. Getting raped by a Russian soldier is going too far

GOEBBELS We can't go too far. I'm more worried we don't go far enough

LIZA Oh really

GOEBBELS You don't realise how good you are. Now watch. From the violated woman back to the portrait of the Fuhrer. Our biggest asset, vengeance and invincibility

LIZA I get sick of weeping to him. It's farcical

GOEBBELS It works. So long as Hitler's projected as a god, our success is assured

LIZA Hitler a god? Can I play the Virgin Mary? Very erotic, the untouched Virgin worshipped by a million men

GOEBBELS We're rounding up a lot of priests at the moment. Perhaps you'd like to join them

LIZA Josef. You can't threaten me like all the others. Go on, chain me up, lock me in a cage. And then what? Just don't threaten me

GOEBBELS There's one pastor who particularly interests me. He has a quite alarming dignity for a Lutheran. I don't know what to do with him

LIZA I'm sure the Gestapo will think of something

GOEBBELS He hasn't even been threatened!

LIZA Yet

GOEBBELS I thought I might learn something from him I could use

LIZA Ever the good apostle (*she kisses him again. Goebbels undoes some buttons on her blouse. The embrace, passionately*)

GOEBBELS Ever the mistress. Can't you think about anything other than sex?

LIZA Yes. But you can't

GOEBBELS It occurred to me as a film. *The Resurrection*, only it's Hitler not Jesus

LIZA Josef!

GOEBBELS Alternatively, Christ returns and nobody takes any notice. Either way, it proves my point

LIZA Josef. Your power is the point. And people can't listen to someone you've locked up, can they! You just want to be a god, that's all. And god's don't stop for some lousy pastor

GOEBBELS I'm an apostle

LIZA Not really. The chances of you turning into a saint are non-existent. Apostles have to be good, god's just have to be all-powerful. You're more like Zeus

GOEBBELS Hitler must be Zeus

LIZA                   What would Hitler be without you? He's just the leading man, you're the producer. So come on, I want to see some strength, some power. Show it to me. Why create a god if you can be one yourself?

GOEBBELS            You're going too far

LIZA                   I thought we couldn't go far enough! Darling ...

GOEBBELS            Now there's a treatment. You play Leda and I'll play Zeus. I'm sure you'd rather play the beautiful Leda than some grief stricken frau. And you'd much rather be raped by Zeus than a vodka stinking Russian soldier

LIZA                   I'd much rather I didn't get raped at all. Mistress yes, victim never

GOEBBELS            I can be beautiful if I'm Zeus. I can fly. Zeus takes upon himself the image of a swan ...

LIZA                   *(Laughing)* Now you are going too far. *(Goebbels tries to kiss her. Liza resists him)* Josef, you can't!

GOEBBELS            The swan swoops down from the Heavens, and pulls open her virgin thighs. There's nothing the beautiful Leda can do about it. Such control, such awesome power ...

LIZA                   Oh, Josef *(enter Hasek abruptly, as Goebbels pulls Liza onto the couch)*

GOEBBELS            Hasek! Get out!

HASEK                I'm sorry Dr. Goebbels. But there's an urgent message from the Fuhrer

GOEBBELS            Get out!

HASEK                But ...

GOEBBELS            It can wait! *(Hasek exits. Liza starts laughing)*

## Scene Six

*(1941. Pastor Niemöller's church. Magda at front of the stage, praying)*

- MAGDA *(Quickly and without real feeling, but not insincerely, as if reciting at a school assembly)* ... Give us this day our daily bread, And forgive us our trespasses, As we forgive those who trespass against us *(the Pastor enters, and stands listening behind her)*, And lead us not into temptation, But deliver us from evil, For thine is the kingdom, The power and the glory, Forever and ever ... *(Silence)*
- PASTOR Amen
- MAGDA Pastor Niemöller. Forgive me for coming
- PASTOR Anyone is free to worship here
- MAGDA My visit is private. I wanted to see for myself, that you are still free
- PASTOR Free? No one has arrested me
- MAGDA *(The Pastor turns to go)* Pastor. I came here for another reason. All my life, I've wanted to escape. I wanted to escape from the convent, I wanted to escape from Gunther
- PASTOR Where did you want to escape to?
- MAGDA *(Pause)* To someone who loves me. And someone I can love. I don't believe Jesus loves me. I'm not good enough
- PASTOR A great many others have found another faith
- MAGDA I can't believe in Hitler. I can't believe in war. I can't believe in so many people dying. I try so hard, but I cannot believe in him. And I see far too much of him to believe he's infallible. *(Pause)* I don't expect sympathy from you. I suppose you think I'm your enemy, simply because ... *(pause)* You don't think I'm very brave do you? But I'm braver than some. How many people still come to this church? Look at it. It's empty. At least I came
- PASTOR You're not likely to get put in a camp, are you?
- MAGDA That's all lies. They don't exist. Josef has promised me they don't exist
- PASTOR They don't exist?

MAGDA            (*Silence*) At least I came here. What else d'you want me to do?

PASTOR            I never asked you to do anything

MAGDA            If you ask too much of people, they lose their faith, because they can never live up to your expectations. You can't ask people to challenge the Fuhrer head on, they're not brave enough

PASTOR            One day, they may have to be

MAGDA            (*Silence*) My husband at times appears the very Devil. He admires anything in which he can see a lie. Any skilful lie. Any "well executed piece of propaganda", Josef admires it. And that frightens me. Because there are no limits, no goals save the perfect lie. He shows me cuttings about Nazi 'resettlement camps'. And again, he admires it. "It's all lies" he says, "but it does show some talent. What an outrageous, wonderful lie". Or he shows me press reports on the camp at Theresienstadt, the model camp he lets the Red Cross into, and he just laughs. Pastor, I ... (*Pause*) ... Which is the deceit? One, the other, or both? And it frightens me. It frightens me because I'll never know if he loves me or not, or if he's even capable of loving anyone. And I feel so useless, and yet all I've done is trust my husband. You can't kill people simply for believing in different gods

PASTOR            People can be killed for anything

MAGDA            I feel so unloved

PASTOR            God loves you

MAGDA            But where is your God? There are several things I'd like to ask him

PASTOR            I can't answer that

MAGDA            Could you ever?

PASTOR            There was a time. (*Pause, uncertainly*) God is in your own faith. Find that and you've found Him. Without that, He's not there at all

MAGDA            I don't believe that. I'd very much like to care about the world. I'd like to worry about the war, and the camps, and people dying. But I can't. All I can do is worry about not being loved. I think if I felt loved, I could care for the world for more. I know I could, and I so want to do something good. I know I can help you Pastor. Even if

Josef arrests you, I can stop them killing you. I'm not frightened of betraying you. I'm just frightened you think I will

PASTOR How can you? I haven't asked you to do anything

MAGDA You don't trust me then

PASTOR You have enough difficulties ...

MAGDA If you don't let me help you, I'm bound to betray you by doing nothing

PASTOR You have helped me by being here. If the wife of the Minister for Propaganda has the courage ...

MAGDA Why don't you leave, whilst you still can?

PASTOR The world is at war. There is nowhere to go

MAGDA You want to be a martyr don't you! Pastors are supposed to save peoples souls, but all you want to do is to glorify your own

PASTOR Only God saves souls. And what you glorify is up to you

MAGDA I wish I was seventeen again, at the convent, and just about to marry Gunther. He was so dull. But he was honest. The world seemed so simple then. Everyone told me I was beautiful, everyone told me I was lucky, everyone told me I was good. And I was sure I was all three. But I can't have been that good, because I didn't love Gunther, and he was a good man. I've got neuralgia on the left side of my face. It's only a twitch, but when I look in the mirror it's all I see. The doctor says it's stress, and then asks me if I know what the stress might be. So I just say the war. *(Pause)* I like it here. I like the darkness, I like the quiet and the peace. There's no war in here. It's only when you walk outside the war starts ...

## Scene Seven

*(1941. The Goebbels' drawing room. Dr. Goebbels is asleep on his couch, a German newspaper hanging from his hand towards the ground. The projector is still running, the reel of the film ticking over at its end. Magda enters, and tries to wrestle the newspaper from him)*

- MAGDA            Josef. Josef. *(Goebbels stirs)* Josef. If you want to sleep properly, come to bed. You can't possibly be comfortable
- GOEBBELS        Magda. I was perfectly comfortable
- MAGDA            Well I've woken you up. That's not so terrible is it? If you want to sleep come to bed
- GOEBBELS        I should have been working
- MAGDA            No you shouldn't. What's the point of you reading the newspapers? You know what's in them anyway
- GOEBBELS        I have to make sure my orders are being carried out. It's astonishing the pseudo-liberal rubbish that still creeps in. Look at this ...
- MAGDA            I don't want to look. If it's true you'll say it's a lie, and if it's a lie you'll say it's true. *(She switches the projector off)* Josef. I want to talk to you
- GOEBBELS        I'm too tired to talk
- MAGDA            You talk to Liza Bardoff
- GOEBBELS        Liza Bardoff is none of your concern. I thought we'd established that
- MAGDA            She is when you start going to the opera with her
- GOEBBELS        Where on earth did you get that from?
- MAGDA            I rang up the opera house
- GOEBBELS        And ...
- MAGDA            And there was a booking in her name next to yours
- GOEBBELS        Hasek!
- MAGDA            Get someone more intelligent to do your dirty work

GOEBBELS We agreed a long time ago I could have mistresses

MAGDA Yes, but not publicly! And you've also been to the theatre to see *Faust*. I wanted to see that

GOEBBELS Then go and see it!

MAGDA I want to see it with you!

GOEBBELS I'm too busy

MAGDA You're too infatuated! And Liza Bardoff is not just any other mistress. Of all the dressed up whores in Berlin, why her?

GOEBBELS Magda. You're getting this out of proportion

MAGDA It's the truth. I could tolerate practically anyone. Just not her

GOEBBELS She's very useful to me. She makes dazzling films, and she's a big star with the German public

MAGDA She isn't with me

GOEBBELS You've never understood the war

MAGDA Do you love her? Do you?

GOEBBELS Of course not

MAGDA So you still love me?

GOEBBELS Magda, the kind of love you want happens once or twice a century at the most. Why can't you be grateful for what you've got?

MAGDA And what have I got? If you loved me, you'd give her up if I asked you to

GOEBBELS Liza's too important. To the war. She understands those with the honour to represent the Reich must show a confident public face. We have to inspire the people, make them believe we're invincible, which is generally easier if your face isn't twitching with neuralgia at the same time

MAGDA But I'm not invincible, I don't want to be invincible, and I never said I was going to be

GOEBBELS What's that Mahayana nonsense I found by your bed? 'We all die, even the gods', and come back in another life as houseflies I suppose. How am I supposed to take you anywhere? 'Please meet my wife. I'm creating a new religion around the Fuhrer, but Frau Goebbels is far more interested in Buddhist poetry!'

MAGDA I want to be loved

GOEBBELS      Everybody wants to be loved. Magda. The German army is currently involved in invading Russia. It's quite a big place. If we conquer Russia, the world will be ours. We'll have succeeded where even Napoleon failed. And then we'll be gods

MAGDA          I wonder what it was like for Josephine

GOEBBELS      What?

MAGDA          I'll bet she couldn't give a damn whether Napoleon conquered Russia or not. Stop lying to me. What happens in the 'resettlement camps'

GOEBBELS      D'you think we're barbarians?

MAGDA          You tell me

GOEBBELS      Magda

MAGDA          Don't 'Magda' me

GOEBBELS      Europe's in chaos! We have to do something with the refugees

MAGDA          What are you going to do with Pastor Niemöller?

GOEBBELS      Nothing. He's not in a camp if that's what you mean

MAGDA          No. But I'm sure he soon will be

GOEBBELS      Magda. Pastor Niemöller is not important. Forget him

MAGDA          Why should I? You obviously can't

GOEBBELS      Maybe I should put him in a camp

MAGDA          If you put him in a camp I'll leave

GOEBBELS      I will do with him what I want. Matters of state are no concern of yours

MAGDA          Promise me you'll leave him alone

GOEBBELS      No

MAGDA          Get rid of Liza Bardoff

GOEBBELS      She's too useful

MAGDA          That doesn't mean you have to sleep with her. And the Pastor. Is he useful?

GOEBBELS      That's up to him

MAGDA          Am I useful?

GOEBBELS      Love me like a god, then you'll be useful

MAGDA          Isn't bearing your children useful? What about marrying you in the first place? I made you respectable

GOEBBELS      Magda. I am a god. You've always wanted the truth, so there it is

MAGDA          I don't want this

GOEBBELS      Then you don't want the truth. Come here. I'm a god. Maybe if you  
understand that you'll understand the war, and all we are fighting  
for. Come here

MAGDA          I don't want to

GOEBBELS      Do as I say

MAGDA          *(She goes towards him)* Josef

GOEBBELS      *(Grabbing Magda crudely and sexually. She is terrified)* Be quiet

MAGDA          Josef

GOEBBELS      I'm a god. Not Hitler. Not the Reich. Me. I'm a god. Lie down

MAGDA          No. Josef please

GOEBBELS      Lie down

MAGDA          I'll leave you alone. Anything, I promise. But not this

GOEBBELS      Lie down

MAGDA          No *(pause. Then Magda does so. Goebbels pulls her legs apart, as  
he lies on top of her)*

GOEBBELS      I'm beautiful. I'm a swan

MAGDA          Hasek. Hasek

GOEBBELS      Be quiet

MAGDA          Hasek. Please, Hasek! *(Hasek rushes in. Grabs Goebbels off and  
throws him against the wall)*

GOEBBELS      *(Still standing)* I am a god

## Scene Eight

*(1941. Dr. Goebbels office. The next morning. Hasek, half-drunk, sits at his desk working. Goebbels enters with Liza Bardoff)*

GOEBBELS Hasek. Where are the press releases for the Russian front?

HASEK They were for tomorrow Dr. Goebbels

GOEBBELS They were for tomorrow yesterday Hasek. This office is getting far too slack. The Fuhrer is depending on us. Where's my coffee?

HASEK There's too much to do Dr. Goebbels

GOEBBELS What did you do last night Hasek?

HASEK I... I stayed in

GOEBBELS You look tired. Did anything unusual happen?

HASEK No Dr. Goebbels. I couldn't sleep, that's all

GOEBBELS And why was that?

HASEK There is too much to do

GOEBBELS You mean you were worried about the Russian campaign

HASEK Yes

GOEBBELS Not losing your faith in the Reich are you Hasek?

HASEK No Dr. Goebbels

GOEBBELS They why aren't the press releases ready? Don't you work hard enough?

HASEK I don't work as hard as you Dr. Goebbels

GOEBBELS *(Holds up a pistol)* What's this Hasek?

HASEK It's a gun Dr. Goebbels

GOEBBELS Correct. In the chamber, there is only one bullet. Spin it, place it against your temple, and then pull the trigger

HASEK I haven't poured your coffee yet

GOEBBELS Take the gun Hasek

HASEK Is that an order Dr. Goebbels?

GOEBBELS Fortunately for you, no. But any man who believed the world needed him wouldn't hesitate to do as I asked. *(Goebbels takes the pistol from Hasek, spins the barrel and pulls the trigger against his own head. The barrel clicks benignly, being empty)* I have nothing

to fear. Destiny you see, cannot be fulfilled without me. You're not as brave as I am are you Hasek?

HASEK No Dr. Goebbels

GOEBBELS You Hasek, are superfluous. Isn't that right?

HASEK That's right Dr. Goebbels. I'm not as brave as you, and I'm superfluous

GOEBBELS There's no need to repeat yourself. I'm not deaf. I trust you're competent to entertain Fraulein Bardoff. She has a film script to collect. And order her a taxi for lunch. *(To Liza)* The Fuhrer awaits me *(Goebbels exits)*

LIZA You have got my film script I suppose

HASEK Only he gets away with treating me like that. I'm not that much of a slave

LIZA Listen darling, I'm as much as a slave as you are. I just make sure I'm a favourite slave

HASEK How can our great Reich minister want you when he's got Magda?

LIZA He's got me in a very different way

HASEK I love Magda. He doesn't. And I haven't got anyone. Sometimes I think she loves me. Every civil word she ever says to me gives me a hundred hopes, and a thousand agonies. And he gives her a thousand agonies. We're both unlucky in love. Actresses know lots about love don't they? So what d'you think I should do about it?

LIZA I don't know. I don't love anyone

HASEK How can you say that?

LIZA Because it's true

HASEK Yes, but ... It's not the answer I wanted to hear. I could understand it if you loved him. How can anyone have so much without loving anyone? Maybe that's the answer. Stop loving people and just go out and grab whatever you want. It's what he does. He doesn't love anyone

LIZA He does

HASEK Himself

LIZA                   It's not that simple

HASEK                 The man is a tyrant

LIZA                   Undoubtedly. But that doesn't mean he doesn't love anyone

HASEK                 Sometimes I think he loves the war. Sometimes I think I love the war. Somehow, the war and Magda and him and me have got so mixed up I don't know what any of us would do without it or without each other. Every time I see her, I know I love her again. And every time I see him, I get destroyed again. Hell. I ought to rape you here and now. Be brutal, be honest, grab what I want

LIZA                   You're drunk, I've got more than you have, and you're jealous, that's all

HASEK                 I should apply for a posting at the front and leave. Forget both of them and fight. But then I'm a chauffeur not a tank driver, and a clerk not a storm trooper. I like cars. I like polishing them and driving them. But I'm no soldier. I can't stand the sight of blood

LIZA                   Join the Luftwaffe. Kill people from 10,000 feet, and you don't see the blood

HASEK                 I'm scared of heights. Blessed be the clerks, for Dr. Goebbels shall kick their teeth in. *(He sings)* "Hasek the soldier/Hasek the clerk/Hasek in love/He sings like a lark" *(Magda walks in. Hasek stands to attention)* I'm sorry *(Hasek exits, flustered)*

LIZA                   He's had too much to drink

MAGDA                 That's a very small sin for these days

LIZA                   Drunk on duty? Hardly what the Fuhrer would expect is it?

MAGDA                 I came to see my husband

LIZA                   He's with the Fuhrer. He always is at this time

MAGDA                 Are you what the Fuhrer would expect?

LIZA                   I've never met him

MAGDA                 Well I have. Frequently. And if a woman of your prodigious talents put her mind to it ...

LIZA                   I'm just an actress

MAGDA                 I'm just the wife of a Reich Minister

LIZA                   You're far more than that

MAGDA                 I don't want to be. I just want to be that actually

LIZA I think Hasek was upset about a woman he's in love with. I ordered a taxi for one o'clock

MAGDA No you didn't. How stupid d'you think I am?

LIZA I don't think you're stupid at all

MAGDA Oh, so you think I like other women screwing my husband

LIZA Oh. Jealous

MAGDA Would you like to sit down?

LIZA Josef might come back soon

MAGDA Good. I like seeing my husband

LIZA If you're this angry, it's him you ought to be talking to. I'm just an actress. An actress having an affair with a Reich Minister. Well, your dear husband does control the entire film industry! These girls nowadays, they throw themselves at anyone in the Ministry for Propaganda. Anyone, not just your husband. I didn't. He ran after me

MAGDA That's alright then

LIZA It's not serious

MAGDA I don't know what serious means any more

LIZA It means an affair where the wife's so resigned to losing she doesn't bother to confront the husband

MAGDA What about confronting the mistress?

LIZA Not totally serious. But the wife is worried it might be

MAGDA I did confront my husband

LIZA What did he say?

MAGDA He said he was a god, and then he tried to rape me. Is that serious? Does he try to rape you?

LIZA No. But then he doesn't tell me he's a god either

MAGDA Perhaps you already think he is

LIZA He's a very useful contact

MAGDA So is God

LIZA I'm sorry. This will sound very callous. But I don't want to get involved. If Josef doesn't want to see me, fine. If you stop him seeing me, fine. I'm just an actress

- MAGDA            You can see him as much as you like. I'd divorce Josef if I could.  
But it simply isn't possible
- LIZA                Of course it's possible. But you won't do it because you like your  
position, whatever the difficulties
- MAGDA            That was true up to last night
- LIZA                Are you going to divorce him now?
- MAGDA            Do you grab what you need, or just what you want?
- LIZA                I grab what's there
- MAGDA            I am jealous, but I can see now how it's happened. You see, when I  
married Josef, I thought he was a god. When I found out about his  
affairs, he was so shocked that I minded. It's all part of being  
married to a woman of my social rank apparently. Josef's always  
felt inferior about his birth, and simply assumed I wouldn't mind  
mistresses, because that's all part of my aristocratic tradition. And it  
is, except I didn't realise, because Gunther was never like that. Josef  
has a very strong sense of history. And then he's such a remarkable  
man, with so much more energy than me. In fact I feel drained by  
comparison... Well, why should he only have me, if he's enough  
energy for two? So I don't mind the mistresses. But I do object to an  
affair becoming as public as yours has. It's not that it belittles me, it  
drains Josef, and he must be free to concentrate on winning the war,  
don't you agree?
- LIZA                I'd much rather you hated me than this
- MAGDA            All I want is your promise that you'll not be too public
- LIZA                Do you know what he's done to you? I normally understand wives,  
and they understand me. They see me for the tart I am, because I am  
really, I've just got some swagger and class, but you ...
- MAGDA            If I promise to make sure you get the work, will you promise not to  
be too public?
- LIZA                My work has nothing to do with you! I get work because I'm good  
in bed. Except this time I've been too good
- MAGDA            I'm frightened Josef really loves you
- LIZA                It's sex

MAGDA           Just be discreet. And don't get pregnant. I'll kill you if you get pregnant

LIZA               I wanted to get out of the gutter. And your husband's just another way of doing it. Why can't you understand?

MAGDA            Because the more I try to, the more he convinces me I don't. There's nothing he can't justify

LIZA                There aren't any justifications

MAGDA            I don't have anyone else

LIZA                You do. Hasek. He loves you, and he's a good man. Start your own affair with him, but you can't ask anything of me. I'm not good enough. I'll only let you down (*Liza exits. Magda stands alone. Lights slow fade*)

## Scene Nine

*(1941. Pastor Niemöller's church. He is at the pulpit)*

PASTOR        My children. Germany is great again. Our prayers have been answered. Under the Fuhrer's guidance, Germany has risen from the depths of despair to the heights of greatness, risen with feats of daring to make the whole world gasp. Germany has risen through Austria, through Czechoslovakia, through Poland, through France, risen through north Africa and Russia. The Fuhrer is our saviour. Germany is great again. *(Pause)* But Germany is sick. We have risen through cruelty, through revenge, through a tyranny in which there is no glory, only shame. We have all seen it. We have all heard the trucks at night, heard the cries of people arrested without real reason, and taken away to die because ... *(Pause)* We have all seen it, we have all kept silent, and you do not deny it by walking out of this church. *(Pause)* They took away the Communists, and we said nothing, for we are not Communists. They took away the Jews, and we said nothing for we are not Jews. They've taken away the gypsies, the homosexuals, the liberals, the pacifists, everyone who they say isn't German, and we've said nothing. But we are all German. Would we still say nothing if they took away you, or you, or you? *(Pause)* Or me? When will we stop saying nothing?

**INTERVAL**

## Scene Ten

*(1942. Pastor Niemöller in a prison cell. There is nothing in the cell save two chairs and a small table. Enter Goebbels)*

GOEBBELS Pastor Niemöller. I trust you're comfortable. The Gestapo are under the strictest orders to treat you well

PASTOR They still beat me

GOEBBELS But not senseless. So, imprisoned at last. Protesting so publicly was a great mistake. You left me no choice. We're installed a more co-operative Pastor in your church. The congregation seems far more contented. In fact, it grows daily. Nobody cares about you, except me

PASTOR Dr. Goebbels ...

GOEBBELS You don't seem to hate anyone. No man can live a useful life without a prejudice rooted deep within him. The only man unfortunate enough ever to walk this earth without a prejudice in his blood was Jesus Christ. And look what happened to him

PASTOR I will hate no man

GOEBBELS Not even me?

PASTOR What do you want from me Dr. Goebbels?

GOEBBELS I'm not going to allow you the luxury of a camp to die in Pastor. I'm going to keep you here alone. If you want to die, you'll have to rot yourself away. We've had endless priests disrupting the camps, martyring themselves to save some lousy Jew who'll die the next morning anyway. That's what happens when you lose your prejudice. You lose all reason. Prejudice and hatred keep us alive. Why have you requested a U-boat command?

PASTOR My church belongs to God, the navy to Caesar

GOEBBELS Pastor. I am giving you a chance. Let's ignore for now the self-evident truth your God does not exist. Resume your U-boat command. We'll agree to differ about God for now

PASTOR Until when?

GOEBBELS      Until the war is won. I'm sure Captain Niemöller is far more amenable than the Pastor of the same name. When he has seen how a German sailor is inspired by the Fuhrer, he will see the error of his ways

PASTOR          When could I start?

GOEBBELS      Within the month. I will take care of the details. (*Goebbels makes to exit. Just as he is about to, he turns again to the Pastor*) Tell me this; do you truly believe the day will come when mankind will lay down his arms and reconcile his differences in peace and love?

PASTOR          We have agreed to differ

GOEBBELS      Captain Niemöller must have private views

PASTOR          And they must remain private

GOEBBELS      What does it matter? If I gave you a microphone, how many people would listen? The people can see Hitler. They see his face and his armies and his tanks. They hear Hitler's voice, feel his weapons in their hands. Poor faith without a gun

PASTOR          Poor gun without a faith

GOEBBELS      A rank as senior as Captain has clear public responsibilities

PASTOR          Yes. To the men I command

GOEBBELS      And to the Fuhrer

PASTOR          No Dr. Goebbels. We agreed to differ

GOEBBELS      Swear allegiance to the Reich Church

PASTOR          No

GOEBBELS      Has it not been plain since Adam bit the apple that man is a rebel incapable of knowing what's good for him. He had perfect freedom in Paradise save one thing; he was not allowed to question what he was told

PASTOR          And so the answer is to enslave us all?

GOEBBELS      The people are happy

PASTOR          Happy? You call ...

GOEBBELS      If the people aren't happy, then why don't they demand your release?

PASTOR          Because they're possessed

- GOEBBELS      Who by? The Devil? Man is not good. Understand that and you can conquer the whole world. You're a Lutheran, so behave like one. Luther understood. It is far easier to unite people through prejudice than through belief
- PASTOR        When Luther challenged Rome, he did so to save Christianity, not destroy it
- GOEBBELS      But why did he succeed? Because he cared for Christ, or because he united the German people through hatred of the Jews? Christianity has failed
- PASTOR        We have failed
- GOEBBELS      Give unto Caesar what is Caesar's
- PASTOR        I am not the same man who wrote the book Dr. Goebbels
- GOEBBELS      Then who are you?
- PASTOR        I am a Christian
- GOEBBELS      This is not the end of our fight Pastor. It's doubtless distasteful to your delicate conscience, but we have at least one thing in common. We are both ministers
- PASTOR        I am of the church
- GOEBBELS      Oh, I am of the church also, but a different one. Nobody goes to yours any more. I am the Minister for Propaganda, and I learnt my boyhood catechisms well. Propaganda fide, Pastor. The Propagation of the Faith. And may the strongest faith win (*Silence. Goebbels starts to exit*)
- PASTOR        Dr. Goebbels. May you find Christ
- GOEBBELS      May you find Christ Pastor. And when you have done so, bring Him to me

## Scene Eleven

*(1942. Dr. Goebbels's office. Hasek working at his desk. He is trying to keep his head down. Magda is loud, and hovers near him suggestively. She is half-drunk, and holding a bottle of sherry and two glasses)*

MAGDA Hello Hasek, my hero of the bed chamber. I haven't said thank you yet

HASEK Spur of the moment Frau Goebbels

MAGDA Magda

HASEK Dr. Goebbels wouldn't like that

MAGDA Well I would. And Dr. Goebbels isn't here is he? Although I bet I know where he is. So say it. Magda. Go on. *(Silence)* Put your lips together like this, and say 'Magda'

HASEK Magda

MAGDA What fun. Karl

HASEK I'm working

MAGDA It's so nice to meet a man who can stand up to my husband

HASEK I didn't think

MAGDA You were very brave Karl. *(Magda takes Hasek's pen away)* People don't think women drink on their own Karl, but they do, they just don't admit it. I drink on my own a lot. I drink sherry. Most women drink sherry, but some drink brandy. The one's who drink brandy are the one's with the real problem, so I drink sherry. I walk around in my dressing gown, talking to myself and drinking a glass of sherry. And then I'll go and have a bath, and balance the glass on the side. I just lie there and relax ... You have to be careful though, because if you play with the soap bubbles too much, the sherry falls in. That happens quite a lot actually, because I do love playing with the bubbles. Not that it really matters, because I keep the bottle on the floor and I just fill the glass up again. The difficult thing is finding it, because I make so many bubbles, you have to fish about

under the water. It's so silly. Fishing around under the water with my hand. Can you imagine?

HASEK No

MAGDA I thought I'd come and have a drink with you

HASEK That's very kind of you Frau Goebbels, but I'm afraid I have a lot of work to do

MAGDA Magda. Karl. And a drink. *(She puts the sherry bottle and both glasses on Hasek's table. She pours two glasses, a large measure for herself, and a smaller one for Hasek. He stops her pouring any more for him with a reluctant hand gesture. Hasek takes a small sip from his glass and then puts it down. Throughout the rest of the scene, he doesn't touch it. Magda drinks from her glass constantly, filling it up as and when necessary)*

HASEK Thank you

MAGDA I'm not very happy Karl

HASEK Not many people are. Magda

MAGDA Are you happy?

HASEK I try not to think about it

MAGDA What about when you get drunk with Liza Bardoff?

HASEK I didn't get drunk with her. I was drunk already

MAGDA It seems to me you're a lot happier than I am. You don't think about it all the time. I'm sure Liza never thinks about it

HASEK I'd rather we didn't talk about her

MAGDA I think we should both be very grateful to her. She's made me realise my marriage doesn't work, and she's told me about a man who loves me very much. *(Pause)* Talk to me

HASEK I can't. You're the wife of a Reich Minister, and I'm a clerk

MAGDA You're an intelligence officer

HASEK I'm a clerk. And I'm not sure if I want to call you Magda. I'm far happier calling you Frau Goebbels

MAGDA I love you too Karl

HASEK You don't. You're completely obsessed by Dr. Goebbels. If you want to leave him, leave him. You don't have to fall in love with someone else to do that

MAGDA I wanted someone better. Someone I could love more

HASEK This is cruel

MAGDA It's true. I love you

HASEK Can you imagine how much I want to believe you?

MAGDA I've loved you ever since the ... incident. You're the first man I've met who can stand up to Josef

HASEK What about that Pastor?

MAGDA That's not love. Not a woman's love anyway. And besides, he's in a camp

HASEK That's where I'll be if I'm not careful

MAGDA Why? Listen Karl. When Josef first met me, he was nothing either. He built himself on me, and I don't see why you couldn't do the same

HASEK I don't want an affair. If I admitted my feelings, I'd never be able to ... conduct ... myself when the three of us are together. I'd rather you'd never found out

MAGDA But I have found out

HASEK And there's no future in it

MAGDA Is there a future in the Reich? Half the army's bogged down in snow and mud in Stalingrad. But it doesn't stop us all fighting. So fight for me

HASEK I don't believe you love me. I think you'd fall for anyone after Dr. Goebbels. And in the future, I think you'd find that out. That's why I don't want an affair

MAGDA I don't want one either. (*Proudly*) I want to marry you. I'll divorce Josef, and then we can both be free

HASEK Magda! Ssssh!!

MAGDA Why?! I love you. You're not frightened of Josef?

HASEK Leave me alone

MAGDA I can't

HASEK If you want to be safe from Dr. Goebbels, you need a Panzer division, not a lover. When I told Liza, I was drunk

MAGDA (*Pause*) You don't love me?

HASEK If I'd wanted you to know about it, I'd have told you myself

MAGDA            You did tell me yourself. Just now

HASEK            Only because I knew you knew

MAGDA            Come here. I want more than Liza Bardoff's word (*She kisses him*)

## Scene Twelve

*(1943. Pastor Niemöller and Hasek in a semi-lit prison cell)*

HASEK I prepared the intelligence report that got you here

PASTOR Then at least you know something about me. What d'you know about the Russian front?

HASEK *(Rapidly, as if reading a press release without thought)* It is true that the German army has suffered heavy loses at Stalingrad, but that in itself is proof of the sacrifices the German people will make for the glory of the Reich. Any set backs – sorry, *stalemates* - are only temporary, and when the spring comes, current defeats – sorry, *stalemates* – will be reversed. Even now, reinforcements are poising to spring into attack once again

PASTOR Do you really believe that?

HASEK You try working in the Ministry for Propaganda for ten years. Belief doesn't come into it

PASTOR D'you know why you're here?

HASEK It's not because of any grand principle like you. I think I'm in love with the wrong person

PASTOR That makes two of us. I'm in love with God

HASEK He's never asked you to marry Him. *(Pause)* How well d'you know Frau Goebbels?

PASTOR *(Pause)* I don't

HASEK She went to your church

PASTOR Once. That's right. With Dr. Goebbels

HASEK She went again on her own

PASTOR Nonsense

HASEK I know. She was followed

PASTOR Then why ask me?

HASEK What did she say to you?

PASTOR You probably know that too

HASEK I don't

PASTOR Why should I tell you?

HASEK She asked me to marry her. (*Pause*) I think she's mad. I think they're all mad. The more people think, the bigger the mess they get themselves into, that's how I see it. I've always avoided thinking as much as possible, but I still end up here

PASTOR They were locking up simpletons long before Hitler. Playing the fool never helped anyone

HASEK Do they beat you?

PASTOR Yes. But only out of routine. They can't make me admit to anything can they? I've got nothing to hide

HASEK There are camps for everyone nowadays. Camps for orphans, camps for Jews, camps for people who don't have the right papers. I never thought I'd end up in one though

PASTOR At least here you don't have to act stupid. In fact, you're free to think whatever you want. You've been punished already

HASEK How will anyone remember we're here?

PASTOR Oh, Dr. Goebbels will remember. You can count on that

HASEK What if we never get out?

PASTOR We will

HASEK Alive?

PASTOR (*Pause*) If the good doctor wants us dead, why doesn't he put us straight in a gas chamber?

HASEK He won't do that to you. He's fascinated by your 'remarkable faith'. But he'll kill you the moment he breaks it

PASTOR Then I've never been more alive. I was terrified, but once you've taken the beatings, what else can they do? You're either alive or you're dead. And there's been no one to talk to but God. You can really here God talking in here

HASEK Don't you realise how much danger you're in?

PASTOR Hasek ...

HASEK Your God. You say you can hear Him?

PASTOR You have to believe ...

HASEK (*He listens*) I can't hear anything. I can't believe in God if I can't see Him

PASTOR Do you believe in Frau Goebbels?

HASEK I don't know

PASTOR Can you see her?

HASEK I know what she looks like

PASTOR Then listen ...

HASEK I don't want her. It's ridiculous. I can't see what she hopes to gain

PASTOR Love, I would imagine

HASEK Yes. But she doesn't want mine. She wants Dr. Goebbels's. Maybe you can't hear anything. Maybe you've just been locked up too long and gone mad, so you think you can *hear* God

PASTOR Maybe

HASEK What does He say?

PASTOR *(Pause)* Hasek. You must be here for a reason. Dr. Goebbels must think he can break you. If he can't, how can he stop you marrying Magda?

HASEK *(Incredulously)* Why does everyone expect so much of me? Just because you can hear God in a damp prison cell doesn't mean I can

PASTOR Do you love Magda or don't you?

HASEK I thought I did. But it's all very different when she starts loving me. You've loved God all your life, but you don't expect Him to turn up in this room do you? *(Hasek thinks about it, fearing the Pastor's answer might be positive)* You can't be that mad. Maybe Magda is. He's mad, and he's ...

PASTOR Do you want to marry her, do you want to be with her, or don't you? That's the only decision you've got to make. If you don't, I'm sure you'll be out of here in days ...

HASEK ... and if I do?

PASTOR You've got to have faith. Faith in yourself. And faith in Magda

HASEK I don't know what that means

## Scene Thirteen

*(1943. The Goebbels' drawing room. Liza and Goebbels having sex. He is sitting on the couch, she astride him with her back to the audience and her skirt up around her thighs. Magda walks in and sits down. She watches them. Neither Liza or Goebbels see her. Magda coughs. Goebbels stops. Liza looks round)*

- MAGDA As you know Liza, Josef is free to entertain whores on the family sofa. It says so in our marriage contract. So please, attend to his needs. I can speak to him afterwards. *(Silence)* Josef, darling, don't be embarrassed. I've never seen a god like this before. Oh, I don't mean with his trousers down. I mean at such a loss for words
- GOEBBELS What do you want? *(Liza gets up. Goebbels pulls his trousers up. Liza brushes her skirt down, and picks up her handbag)*
- MAGDA D'you always walk around without underwear? I wondered what the smell was in here
- LIZA I'm going. Josef. *(Goebbels is rearranging his suit in the mirror)* Ring me up again when you're sure your wife isn't around at the same time. It would be so much less *complicated*
- MAGDA For you and Josef, or you and me?
- LIZA For all of us *(she exits)*
- GOEBBELS Magda, you won't get away with this
- MAGDA Get away with what? I haven't done anything
- GOEBBELS Then where has all this mysterious confidence come from?
- MAGDA I've reached a decision, that's all
- GOEBBELS Decisions are easy to make Magda, but far harder to live by. I haven't exactly been idle myself
- MAGDA *(Sitting down on the sofa, conspicuously avoiding where Goebbels and Liza have been)* So I see. I want a divorce
- GOEBBELS Don't be absurd. You have no grounds
- MAGDA Josef, I don't want a divorce because of Liza Bardoff. I want a divorce because you don't love me

GOEBBELS You can want a divorce as much as you like, but the Fuhrer would never tolerate such a scandal

MAGDA That's not the impression he gave me

GOEBBELS (*Worried*) You've seen him? You went to see the Fuhrer?

MAGDA Yes I did

GOEBBELS When?

MAGDA I had lunch with him yesterday. And if we're talking about scandals, what about Pastor Niemöller?

GOEBBELS Don't bring up that irrelevant cleric

MAGDA Why not? You're scared of him

GOEBBELS Scared? Of Niemöller? He's just so bloody sure. All the time ...

MAGDA Is he alive?

GOEBBELS Of course he's alive

MAGDA Then he's not irrelevant is he? If he was, you'd have killed him by now

GOEBBELS That's not true. Hasek is utterly irrelevant, but no one's killed him

MAGDA What d'you mean?

GOEBBELS He's in prison Magda

MAGDA Why?

GOEBBELS That doesn't concern you

MAGDA Yes it does

GOEBBELS (*Dwelling on his silence. Triumphant*) So, that's where your confidence has come from. I thought as much. D'you actually want a divorce, or do you just want to marry someone else

MAGDA It's the same thing

GOEBBELS It is not. Getting off the horse is one thing. Changing horses quite another. Besides which, you're wasting your time. Hasek would never marry you. He's too frightened

MAGDA You're frightened. That's why you've put him in prison

GOEBBELS Hasek has been publicly questioning the wisdom of the Russian campaign. That's why he's in prison. It's got nothing to do with you and me, I assure you

MAGDA If you harm him, I'll never speak to you again

GOEBBELS If you want a divorce, what does it matter?

MAGDA            You can't love me. You have no right to deny me those who can  
GOEBBELS        Magda, you're not seeing things correctly. It's not a matter of you,  
                         Hasek, or Pastor Niemöller against me. It's all entirely concerned  
                         with who has the courage of their own convictions. And perhaps  
                         through this, we shall find that out

MAGDA            Then release them

GOEBBELS        Magda, I can no more arbitrarily release deviants than I can intern  
                         them without reason in the first place

MAGDA            *(She slaps Goebbels across the face)* Do it

GOEBBELS        Would that mean I loved you?

MAGDA            Release both of them

GOEBBELS        It's not in my power to release both of them. But, since I'm a  
                         reasonable man, I will release one of them. The choice is yours,  
                         Hasek or the Pastor. You must decide who you have faith in

MAGDA            Will you let me divorce you?

GOEBBELS        Did you really go and see the Fuhrer?

MAGDA            *(Pause)* No

GOEBBELS        But out of the kindness of my heart, your destiny remains in your  
                         hands. I just hope you get it right. I mean, if Hasek won't marry  
                         you, there's no point getting him released, is there? Surely Pastor  
                         Niemöller is more reliable

MAGDA            *(Silence)* I want Hasek

## Scene Fourteen

*(1943. Hasek and Pastor Niemöller in the prison cell)*

GOEBBELS      Gentlemen

PASTOR        *(Silence)* Dr. Goebbels. Good day

GOEBBELS      I have in mind a little game. Hasek is already familiar with it

PASTOR        How is your wife?

GOEBBELS      Very well, very well. Hasek she been on your mind Hasek?

HASEK         You locked me up. That's been on my mind

GOEBBELS      I must congratulate you. I stand the risk of losing my wife to a clerk.  
You're very quiet Pastor

PASTOR        As quiet as you

GOEBBELS      What? But I'm doing all the talking

PASTOR        You haven't said anything you mean yet

GOEBBELS      Hasek. Did you hear that? The Pastor knows when I mean what I'm  
saying. Do you?

PASTOR        Do you? Do you know when you lie?

GOEBBELS      Lies can be meant. Hasek. Look at this pistol. If I asked you to hold  
it to your head and fire it, would I mean it?

HASEK         Yes, Dr. Goebbels

GOEBBELS      You're as wise as the Pastor. Do you love my wife Hasek?

HASEK         You know I do

GOEBBELS      Do you? Don't forget who I am

HASEK         You're her husband

GOEBBELS      Is that all I am?

HASEK         That's all you are to her

GOEBBELS      What am I to you?

HASEK         The Minister for Propaganda Dr. Goebbels

GOEBBELS      And what does that mean? What does that mean, Hasek?

PASTOR        It means you have a gun in your hand, and Hasek hasn't

GOEBBELS      Hasek. Have the gun *(Goebbels gives it to him)*. Without me, you'd  
still be a wretched little chauffeur. Hare dare you entertain notions  
of marrying my wife

HASEK She asked me

GOEBBELS Do you want to?

PASTOR He's scared of you Hasek. He wouldn't be doing this if he wasn't

GOEBBELS Put the gun to your head, and pull the trigger

HASEK No

GOEBBELS It's not loaded. If it was loaded, why would I have given it to you?  
Pull the trigger

HASEK No

GOEBBELS You're scared of me, aren't you Hasek

HASEK I'm not

GOEBBELS Then point it at me

HASEK It'll be a blank

GOEBBELS And if you point it at your own head it won't be? Hasek, that's  
absurd

HASEK The next one would be a bullet. And that would be my turn

GOEBBELS Oh, I see. Very logical. Or almost. I thought for a moment Hasek  
you believed in some kind of destiny. *(Goebbels takes the gun back)*  
My wife and I, you'll be glad to hear, have reached an agreement. I  
am to release one of you, but she didn't say which. And to be fair, I  
thought I'd include myself in the equation. For Magda's sake, I  
think it is time we knew which of us has a future. Hasek clearly  
doesn't, but surely you have the necessary faith, Pastor. *(Gives the  
Pastor the gun)* Spin the chamber. *(The Pastor does so, and gives  
the gun back to Goebbels. Goebbels takes the gun, and puts it to his  
own head)* This is about destiny Hasek, this is about my wife  
*(Goebbels pulls the trigger. The gun clicks round, blank)* Pastor.  
*(Gives the Pastor the gun. The Pastor spins the chamber again)*

PASTOR I won't

GOEBBELS Then how d'you know you have a future?

PASTOR *(Abruptly, the Pastor pulls the trigger against his own head. The  
gun clicks over blank again. He gives it back to Goebbels)* Don't lie  
to us. Frau Goebbels wants you released Hasek, not me

GOEBBELS Hasek. Is that true? The Pastor still thinks he knows when I mean what I say. Perhaps the gun will tell you. (*Gives Hasek the gun again. Hasek spins the chamber*) If it goes off Hasek, you're dead

PASTOR Have faith

GOEBBELS The man who can't risk death can never live

PASTOR Listen. Listen to Magda

GOEBBELS How will that help? What if Magda says she doesn't love him? Now, Hasek, now you know you're alive. That's what the smell of death does for you. You are nothing Hasek! You're nation is everything, your *volk* is everything. I am everything! I am a god! (*Hasek struggles to pull the trigger. At the moment where it seems he will do, he suddenly turns to Goebbels, opens the gun barrel and finds there are no bullets in the chamber at all. He holds the empty gun up to Goebbels face*) Well of course it wasn't loaded. It was a game!

## Scene Fifteen

*(1944. The Goebbels' drawing room, semi-lit. Hasek enters from the left, Magda from the right. Hasek embraces Magda and kisses her passionately)*

HASEK           *(Releasing her)* This can never be

## Scene Sixteen

*(1944. Dr. Goebbels in the prison cell with Pastor Niemöller. The same two chairs are there as previously had been for the Pastor and Hasek)*

GOEBBELS *(Quietly, rhetorically, apparently considered)* Have you brought me Christ, Pastor? You are not the man you were, so who are you? Are you Christ? Nothing to say. Nothing to add to your words of old? Doubtless you think the man in front of you is in need of guidance. But I know your appearance before me now seals my triumph. Here stands the first man totally immune from your morals of mercy.

What kind of saviour are you? For nineteen hundred years and more we have waited in vain for you to come again, without so much as one sign from Heaven of your good will, existence, or even displeasure. How are we to believe in you if you remain forever silent? Because we are told to believe in a book? Christ cannot be a U-boat captain turned coward. Or can He? Do I finally have the pleasure of an audience with the 'saviour' I have been seeking all my life?

Silence will not help you, rest assured in that. Hasek, the very man who today worships you will tomorrow cower down before my feet and shoot you if I so ordered it. So which is it; faith in you or fear of me? Don't look at me like that! It is not me that is cruel, it is you who has tormented humanity for nearly two millenium by having more respect and love for us than we have for ourselves.

Man needs a god to be happy, so was it unreasonable that in your absence I have laboured to deify Hitler? For centuries it has been you the people wanted, but you denied your calling and showed yourself to no one. If it is you, I am privileged indeed, and I should love you all the more. Yet I do not. I hate you for the cruel trick you have played on us all. Don't look at me like that.

As I child, you know how much I believed in you, in your good grace and mercy. I believed that in your granting me with a useless,

withered leg there lay concealed a beautiful wisdom that would one day reveal itself. I spoke with you everyday. I wished to see your light more than any man that ever lived, and still you tricked me. I trained for the priesthood, no prayers were missed, no one had higher marks. No student sought you out more than me, and so the day came when I stood in front of the Father Superior to learn my fate. No record was more blemishless than my own, and yet still the Father was uneasy in my presence. “Josef” he said, “you will go far, but you will never be a priest. You do not believe in God”.

Why did you desert me? What cost in showing yourself to me when I began to doubt you? The very powers of logic I was taught in the seminary convinced me either that you did not exist, or that if you did, you no longer cared for us. Would a Lord who loved me make me live for twenty five years with a withered leg daily more painful?

Why did you desert us? Granted, you must be disappointed. We do not love our enemies as our neighbours. We do not turn our other cheeks to be slashed and torn. But it is not us who are at fault. It is your very command that is unreasonable! You respected us too greatly and asked too much of us. Is that love? Does a parent love its child if it asks more of that child than it can ever achieve? Do you beat a dog because it cannot reason? Mankind is base, brutal and without worth. Ask him to be worthy and you simply saddle him with guilt at his own sins, and sins moreover he did not know existed until You taught him of them. When you denied the Devil’s temptations in the wilderness, you betrayed us all.

You speak to me of miracles, and yet you denied their worth. If you are the Son of God, was it not reasonable you should be asked to turn stone into bread? If God exists, then why are we not free to test Him in proof? “He that hath faith shall be given faith” you say, but how can that be so? People did not want to share your faith in them. They wanted to be led, and you refused. You said we should be free. And yet we cannot live with freedom. We can only live as the children of a strong God. A slave who loves his master is far

happier than a free man who believes in nothing. We are cowards. We far prefer order to freedom of conscience. I tell you, had you walked every inch of this earth turning stones into bread, all of humanity would have followed your absolute wish and command for all eternity. But you did not. Hitler behaves far more like a god than you have ever done. Hitler's power and might are awesomely obvious. Hitler is the god you have refused to be. Look at me damn you! Here stands before you a man who wished to be your most faithful follower, and yet has been party to the greatest crimes humanity has ever witnessed. Do you still believe man is good? If Hitler were to beat swords into ploughshares, who would follow him?

When I lost my faith in you, I saw the light. I realised that man could only be happy if his freedom was forever denied. I resolved to create a god so powerful and terrifying that no one would ever dare to rebel against him. No one would be free, but everyone would be happy. In short, I sought to correct your work. Let there be no mistake however. I did this for the love of mankind. I resolved to be kind to my fellow men, not by showing them respect and love, but by having utter contempt for their worth. Has any man ever been as brave as me? But I was not arrogant. Did I not seek out your help and ask you to unite your church behind me?

I had no choice but to go on without you. How dare you show your face now! If I set you free, you will cause chaos. You will do nothing but deny Hitler's divinity, before leaving us again to pursue you impossible visions of freedom, mercy and forgiveness. You will create nothing but misery. And so tomorrow you must die. Mankind will not suffer by you a second time.

When I have destroyed you, the Bible shall be removed from all altars, and replaced by *Mein Kampf*. To the side of the altar the cross shall be replaced by the sword. Outside each and every church, the crucifix shall be replaced by the single unconquerable symbol in the history of mankind, the swastika.

The Romans allowed you to be killed in public. Even their own centurions came to spread your word. Once you were dead, they allowed your body to be taken, hence the mystery of the resurrection. I shall make neither mistake. No one shall witness your death, and your body shall be incinerated. Better to reign in Hell than serve in Heaven. (*Goebbels turns and exits, without looking at Pastor Niemöller*)

PASTOR (*Pastor Niemöller comes to the front of the stage, kneels and prays. Silence*) Our Father, Who art in ... Heaven, Hallowed be thy name, Thy Kingdom come, They will (*pause, as the Pastor asks himself if he still believes his own words*) ... will be done, On earth as it is in Heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, And forgive us our trespasses, As we forgive those who trespass against us, And lead us not into temptation, But deliver us from evil, For thine is the kingdom, The power and the glory, Forever and ever. (*Silence*)  
Amen

**Author's Note:** I borrowed the idea of this scene from the chapter "The Grand Inquisitor" in Fyodor Dostoevsky's novel *The Brothers Karamarsov*.

## Scene Seventeen

*(1945. The Goebbels' drawing room. Liza standing centre stage, with a suitcase in her hand. Dr. Goebbels enters looking wretched, no longer groomed to perfection, his suit dishevelled. His shirt is dirty, his tie is missing. He goes to kiss Liza)*

GOEBBELS I've been looking for you all over Berlin. I even went to your flat  
 LIZA *(Pushing Goebbels away)* Josef. I come to you remember. If I don't come, I don't come. As it was in the beginning, so shall it be in the end

GOEBBELS You've been avoiding me  
 LIZA I didn't like the scripts you sent me  
 GOEBBELS Don't be facetious  
 LIZA I'm not going to sleep with you  
 GOEBBELS Where are you going to go?  
 LIZA That's none of your business  
 GOEBBELS Everything is my business. I created you  
 LIZA Out of your spare rib I suppose. Josef, I'm nothing to do with you any more. In case you haven't noticed, the Russians are only twenty miles east of Berlin. I'm not auditioning for the reception party

GOEBBELS You can't do this  
 LIZA Why not?  
 GOEBBELS I won't let you leave  
 LIZA *(Laughs)* I will leave whenever I like, which means within the next ten minutes at the outside. How are you going to stop me? You're not Zeus any more, and Leda shall keep her thighs closed. Look at you. You're nothing but a funny little man with a withered leg. I could throw you down the stairs if I wanted to

GOEBBELS Wherever you're going, you'll never make it  
 LIZA That's what they said when I was a chorus girl. Go back to your wife

GOEBBELS I will not be betrayed! I drive through Berlin. The people should stand in awe as if it was the carriage of a god they saw, not ... They're so pathetic and stupid. I can't stand the desperation, or the detestable unbelief in their eyes. If I tell the chauffeur he's five minutes late, he doesn't even reply. He just looks at me as if I'm lucky he bothered to turn up at all

LIZA Such are the trials of the mere mortal

GOEBBELS You cannot leave me

LIZA I can. And I am. Now (*Liza picks up her suitcase and turns to exit. Magda walks through the door looking half-vacant*) Oh, perhaps I should introduce you. Dr. Goebbels, this is your wife, Magda

GOEBBELS Liza, shut up

LIZA Frau Goebbels, whatever your husband's indiscretions have been, I'm sure he'll be faithful now. No one else would go near him (*Liza exits. Silence*)

GOEBBELS Magda. You must understand why Liza was here. She's been in love with me for a long time, and she's very hurt. I ordered her here to tell her my loyalties lie with you

MAGDA Who are you?

GOEBBELS Magda. Believe me please. Have you seen Hasek?

MAGDA I saw a man who looked like Hasek

GOEBBELS And ...

MAGDA I didn't love him

## Scene Eighteen

*(1945. The prison cell. Dr. Goebbels enters and stares at Pastor Niemöller. Long silence)*

- PASTOR            You have come to kill me?
- GOEBBELS        I haven't broken you
- PASTOR            I have forced myself to love you
- GOEBBELS        *(Pause)* In the beginning, I wanted to be loved. But I wanted a love far bigger than the sordid little kind people call love nowadays. At first I wanted salvation but more than that, I wanted Hitler to love me. He wanted the world, and it was up to me to go and get it for him. Even Zeus needs his Hermes. Can you imagine the wonder of Hitler the god?
- PASTOR            Gods do not lose their Stalingrads
- GOEBBELS        It's not really power anyone is after. It's the desire to make the world believe in one idea, one salvation and one god. Achieve that, and then the future can begin, with no more wars and arguments consuming the whole of history. Only then shall there be peace
- PASTOR            Peace is not slavery to some concocted saviour
- GOEBBELS        How can you love me?
- PASTOR            I have to. A man consumed with so much hatred for his victims has no love for himself
- GOEBBELS        They weren't victims, they were ...
- PASTOR            They were victims
- GOEBBELS        Look at all the godless, hopeless people in this world. Where is their faith? There can be no morality without religion, and no civilisation without a god. And once the old gods have failed, you have to create a new one. What did Jesus command of his disciples? Go out and convert the world
- PASTOR            By fear or faith, Dr Goebbels? People can only be converted through belief. You don't convert anybody by killing them
- GOEBBELS        We had to kill people. We were the new religion. The old religions had to be extinguished

PASTOR You said they were already dead

GOEBBELS They are. But how can you prove it to people who never expect to see their Messiah anyway? Look at the Jews. They wait and wait and wait for a Messiah, and every time one appears, they deny Him. We had to kill them before they killed us. That's why the Jews killed Christ. That's what everybody does. Kill other peoples' messiahs. There can only be one god. Once you've disposed of the Jews, the rest would have been easy

PASTOR Then why not dispose of me?

GOEBBELS What's wrong with you? Why don't you hate?

PASTOR Your new religion is a fake

GOEBBELS Why are you looking at me like that?

PASTOR Josef. Why are you so terrified of Christ?

GOEBBELS We should have killed more, not less. And faster. Even we showed too much mercy

PASTOR You don't believe that

GOEBBELS Don't tell me what I believe

PASTOR You don't know what you believe

GOEBBELS I believe in my new religion

PASTOR Your biggest lie

GOEBBELS My greatest truth. If only people had believed in it more, it would have been true

PASTOR Lies and propaganda. People will not believe falsehoods forever

GOEBBELS That's why they've lost their faith in Christ

PASTOR I believe in Christ. And I believe in the goodness of man

GOEBBELS Look at me. Am I good?

PASTOR There is goodness, even in you

GOEBBELS Why!? Why do you claim me?

PASTOR For God's sake man, help yourself. Tell me something that is true. *(Silence)* No one can lie all the way to the end. Tell me something that is true

GOEBBELS *(Silence. Neither Dr. Goebbels or Pastor Niemöller move, negotiating some kind of ending with each other)* Go. No one will stop you. Just go ... *(Pastor Niemöller remains still, then exits.*

*Goebbels stands alone on stage, until the lights start to dim. Then he sits down, head in hands. Lights fade. Russian artillery starts to pound in the background. Hasek enters in repeat of the Prologue)*

HASEK

I need more petrol

THE END

## ON FACT AND FICTION

*Pure Walking Evil* is based on established history. Dr. Goebbels did marry Magda Quandt, and he was an inveterate womaniser. The marriage contract the play refers to is fact. Magda did have an interest in Buddhist poetry, and Dr. Goebbels was obsessed with religion (as a young man he wrote a play about Jesus Christ called *The Wanderer*). Pastor Martin Niemöller did write *From U-Boat To Pulpit* and did at first consider joining the Reich Church. His rejection of it entailed seven years in Sachsenhausen concentration camp.

*Pure Walking Evil* departs from established history only in that Hasek and Liza Bardoff are amalgamations of several other real characters and in that various chronological sequences of events run concurrently or have been concertina-ed. This was done to aid the dramatic structure of the play, and to help illuminate the ideas it examines more clearly than a strict adherence to established history would have allowed.

**Michael Black**