

HIDE OUT

*Plays by Alan Thornhill*

THE FORGOTTEN FACTOR

MR WILBERFORCE M P

BISHOP'S MOVE

*With Peter Howard*

THE HURRICANE

MUSIC AT MIDNIGHT

# HIDE OUT

*A Play by*

ALAN THORNHILL

WESTMINSTER PRODUCTIONS

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HIDE OUT was first produced at the Westminster Theatre, London, opening on 7 March, 1969, with the following cast:

WALTHER KROHN	Victor Lucas
HELGA BRUN	Miranda Forbes
MARGARET KROHN	Mary Jones
PAUL LAURITZ	Geoffrey Colvile
ELSA LAURITZ	Lisa Rayne
MAX	Philip Friend
OSKAR	Antony Higginson
THE BISHOP	David Steuart
THE CHIEF	Richard Warner
GUARDS	David Beale
	Robin Browne
STEPHAN	Michael Knowles

Directed by Henry Cass  
Setting by Cameron Johnson  
Costumes by Dorothy Phillips  
Lighting by Louis Fleming

*Characters in order of their appearance*

WALTHER KROHN

HELGA BRUN

MARGARET KROHN

PAUL LAURITZ

ELSA LAURITZ

MAX

OSKAR

THE BISHOP

THE CHIEF

TWO GUARDS

STEPHAN

The action takes place in a ski hut near the capital city  
of a country that has had to fight for its freedom

Time: the present

ACT I

An evening at the beginning of April

ACT II

An hour later

ACT III

A few minutes later

## ACT ONE

*The Scene is the interior of a wooden ski hut situated in the mountains not far from the capital city. It is owned by Walther Krohn, Member of Parliament, former member of many governments. He is a large, vigorous lion of a man in his sixties. The ski hut is only a stone's throw from Krohn's home in the mountains, and Krohn has furnished the place with books and comfortable chairs as a study where he can work in peace. It is an evening in early spring and through the windows can be seen the light of the setting sun on snowy slopes. At present, with the help of Helga Brun, his personal secretary, Krohn, pacing about the room, is dictating a chapter of his reminiscences.*

KROHN (*Dictating*) New paragraph! "That spring, while the days grew longer and brighter, the darkness of enemy occupation spread ever more thickly over our beloved land," full stop. Have you got enough light to see by?

HELGA Oh yes, thank you, Mr Krohn.

KROHN I love these first spring evenings. I hate to draw the curtains and light the lamps. You see that old cow barn up there. That's where we used to flash a red light in the days of the Resistance. It meant "something has gone wrong". It was the signal to scatter.

HELGA I know. I have heard so many stories of those days.

KROHN Well, we must get on. I want to get this chapter done before the guests arrive. "At that time I personally was the victim of a murderous attack that nearly put an end to my life." Tell me if I go too fast. "One April evening, near dusk, I was with my son Stephan in the ski hut which I had turned into a study, when there was a knock at the door. (*Slight pause while Helga looks uneasily around*) I opened it. I was faced by a man in a thick leather coat, his hat pulled down over his eyes. He had a gun in his hand."

*(There is a heavy kick on the door)*

HELGA (*Jumps*) Oh!

(*Krohn goes over and opens it. Mrs Krohn comes in with a basket of food and bottles of wine*)

MRS KROHN So sorry to bother you. I hadn't a spare hand. I must say, this place may be romantic for your party, Walther dear, but the house would be more convenient.

KROHN The whole thing's ridiculous. It's all the Chief's idea. He just lives in the past.

MRS KROHN Be honest. You grumble, but you love it too.

KROHN I wish you'd join us tonight, my dear.

MRS KROHN No, Walther, there are some parts of your life I never intrude on. The Resistance is one. My job in those days, Helga, was to sit and wait. I shall sit and wait tonight. But I'll get more food for you all. These Resistance heroes eat like wolves. (*She goes*)

KROHN Well now, where were we? Could you just repeat the last sentence?

HELGA "He had a gun in his hand."

KROHN "He fired twice and I fell to the ground." (*Breaking off*) Right here, if you want to know. We had a devil of a job cleaning the rug.

HELGA (*Busily writing*) "... cleaning the rug."

KROHN No! No! Don't take that down. What's the last thing I gave you before that - the last sensible thing?

HELGA "And I fell to the ground."

KROHN Yes. That was sensible I suppose, considering I had a bullet through my shoulder. "I fell to the ground," full stop. Damn nearly was full stop, I can tell you. (*He continues with more hesitation*) "My son Stephan, who was at that time a boy of fifteen, with great courage and gallantry flung himself between me and the killer who, after firing once more, lost his nerve and fled. That bullet, which undoubtedly would have killed me, inflicted a wound on my son which meant the loss of his right arm." (*Helga is visibly*



*upset*) This all happened a long time ago, before you were born.

HELGA (*With sudden feeling*) It's such a wonderful story – I've been brought up on it.

KROHN (*Grimly*) It's a ghastly story. Take this: "My son saved my life. Perhaps history will remember that. But, for myself, the loss to the world of a brilliant violinist is too heavy a price to pay for the life of just one more politician."

HELGA Oh, I don't think you should say that. The whole country's grateful your life was saved. You're about the one man left everybody trusts. (*She is speaking quite excitedly as Mrs Krohn re-enters*) Why you're practically a national institution. Honest Walther Krohn!

MRS KROHN Walther dear, are you dictating to Miss Brun or is she dictating to you?

KROHN Helga, like most women, sometimes likes to do the dictating.

HELGA Oh, Mr Krohn. That's not fair. I was only trying to say how much we all admire you.

KROHN That's all right. Run along. Forget all about it.

HELGA Don't you want to dictate any more?

KROHN No. I think we'd better stop. Thank you for your help.

MRS KROHN Be a dear, will you, Helga, and fetch some glasses from the house. They're all ready in the kitchen.

HELGA Yes, certainly. I'd love to. (*Exit*)

MRS KROHN Have you been bullying that girl, Walther?

KROHN Of course not! For some reason the account of the attempt on my life seemed to upset her.

MRS KROHN Do you have to drag all that into your reminiscences? Stephan just hates it being even mentioned.

KROHN I don't see why. After all, why shouldn't he be remembered for what he did that day?

MRS KROHN What you really mean is he will never be remembered for anything else.

KROHN I don't mean that at all.

MRS KROHN Let's be honest. I know most people think of Stephan as a kind of perpetual playboy, but they don't really know him. After all, when you think what he's missed . . .

KROHN Nobody objects to a playboy of twenty. It's rather charming. At thirty it can still be – well – interesting; but a sort of dilettante playboy-cum-patron-of-the-arts of nearly forty is faintly ridiculous.

MRS KROHN (*Coldly*) Yes, Walther, almost as ridiculous as a one-arm violinist.

KROHN (*Hurt*) I'm sorry. Do we have to go into all this again?

MRS KROHN Nobody blames you, Walther.

KROHN Nobody blames me. But Stephen hates me. You can see it in every turn of his head. God knows I have tried to make it up to him – found him jobs – given him money – bailed him out. It's no good. How long do you have to go on trying to pay a debt that you can never settle anyway?

MRS KROHN Stephan is our son, and I believe in him. And I'll tell you something else. He's coming home tonight. We've got a postcard.

KROHN We've actually got a postcard? Does he deign to tell us where he has been all week?

MRS KROHN Yes. He has been the whole time up in the mountains. He says he has been thinking.

KROHN Oh, no. People indulge in a lot of things up in the mountains nowadays. None of them can remotely be described as thinking. Would it be unfair to enquire which of his various lady friends he has been thinking with?

MRS KROHN He says he has been absolutely alone the entire week. You know, Walther, I am quite sure that he's been hatching a new scheme in his mind.

KROHN If it's one of Stephan's schemes that's the worst news of all.

MRS KROHN I think it has got something to do with a great national centre for music and ballet and the arts, something that would be famous all over the world.

KROHN Oh, naturally! Trust Stephan.

MRS KROHN That's just what you won't do. He's tried to explain it to me.

KROHN My dear Margaret, whatever it is it's not practical. No one would listen to him.

MRS KROHN That's the trouble. No one will listen to him and you won't listen to him either. You could at least talk to him, Walther, and give him a chance to tell you about it.

KROHN It's no use. How can you talk to a man when your own very existence is the root cause of his bitterness and frustration? Sometimes I feel I just can't stand living with him here in the same house, to see him growing older but never growing up, flitting from job to job, always reaching for a life that will never be his.

*(Enter Helga with the glasses)*

MRS KROHN Thank you, Helga.

KROHN Look, tell the chauffeur I want him to drive you home. It's getting dark.

HELGA Thank you, Mr Krohn. *(To Mrs Krohn)* Are you sure you'll be all right back at the house all alone? Would you like me to stay?

MRS KROHN Certainly not. I love being alone. I'll drink tea and do needlework and wait for Stephan. And I'll listen to the Prime Minister on the radio.

KROHN That sounds a perfect setting for our dear Prime Minister. Tea and needlework! Something soothing and sweet while he sells us down the river. *(Imitating the Prime Minister on the radio)* "My friends, the situation is serious – but not desperate." "My dear Prime Minister, with you the



situation is desperate, but never serious." When this government talk they sound like a gaggle of turkeys just before Christmas discussing their New Year plans. The trouble is the Opposition are just as bad.

MRS KROHN Are things really as hopeless as that? I know the students make an exhibition of themselves and the workers are restless. But we get along.

KROHN How long, O Lord, how long! No, waffle and wobble are just as dangerous in this world as ruthlessness and aggression – and just as morally bad. I have a horrible feeling that the PM talks to the dictators in the same vapid way he talks to us.

MRS KROHN We can't all bellow like bulls, Walther dear.

KROHN The Prime Minister is probably the only person in the world who could put those fellows to sleep. I bet that's his foreign policy! I knew he must have one somewhere.

HELGA A lot of us wish you were back in the Government, Mr Krohn.

KROHN How can I? I resigned on the issue of our lack of preparedness and the weakness of our defences. Well, they're worse now and morale is lower. Besides, how can I serve under the present Prime Minister? I could eat six of him before breakfast.

MRS KROHN I don't suppose he wants to be eaten before breakfast. He's probably looking for someone to sit down and talk with *after* breakfast.

KROHN I don't blame him for being a pip-squeak, but why doesn't he have the grace to *know* he's a pipsqueak?

MRS KROHN It's not for lack of your telling us all, Walther.

KROHN I'm sorry, my dear. I'm just an angry old bull tied by the leg in a most comfortable stall, huffing and snorting and dictating his memoirs.

HELGA There are a lot of people who would follow you still. I know my friends would.



KROHN Damn it, I've done all I could. Every day I try and tell the country. I bellow like a bull. They won't listen to me now any more than they would listen to me in the 'thirties – oh, no, it couldn't happen here, not possibly – until it did. (*Sound of a car*)

HELGA They are beginning to arrive, Mr Krohn.

KROHN Well, here comes the Resistance. Doing pretty well too, judging by the new Mercedes.

HELGA Well, I'll say goodnight. Same time in the morning, Mr Krohn?

KROHN Yes, Helga.

MRS KROHN Goodnight, Helga.

HELGA Goodnight, Mrs Krohn. (*Goes, leaving the door open*)

KROHN It's the Lauritzes. My! They look as if they're coming to a ball, not a Resistance meeting. (*He goes out to the lobby*)

PAUL Hello, Walther.

KROHN Paul, Elsa. Good to see you both. Let me take your coat.

ELSA Hello, Walther. (*Enter Elsa Lauritz. She and her husband Paul are a good-looking, prosperous pair in their mid-forties. They are both in evening dress*) Good evening, Mrs Krohn.

MRS KROHN Hello, the Lauritzes. What a lovely dress!

ELSA Thank you.

KROHN Go on in, Paul. (*Enter Paul Lauritz*)

PAUL Thanks. Hello, Mrs Krohn.

MRS KROHN Paul, how nice to see you. (*Krohn enters*)

KROHN Now, Elsa, you'll have to give us the password.

ELSA We've forgotten the password, Paul. At the most excruciatingly critical moments I always used to forget the password.

PAUL (*Going over to the buffet*) The password tonight seems to be "caviar". Wonderful!

KROHN It's funny. Our passwords seem nearly always to have been food.

ELSA And the hungrier we were, the more luscious our password became. "Eggs Benedict."

PAUL "Lobster Thermidor."

ELSA And all the time we were eating boiled stinging nettles. I used to drool.

KROHN What will you have, Elsa? Oh! Yes, Slivervitz. Help yourself, Paul.

MRS KROHN What's all the fancy get-up?

KROHN Sh! It's a disguise.

ELSA Please excuse us. We're going dancing at the Trianon afterwards. (*Krohn hands Elsa a drink*) Thank you.

PAUL I'm so glad you've decided to join us at last, Mrs Krohn.

MRS KROHN Not me! I'm going back to the house and have a nice little resistance movement all on my own.

ELSA Oh, do stay. Otherwise I'm the only woman.

KROHN Does that worry you, my dear?

PAUL Of course it doesn't! The only reason she joined the Resistance was glamour.

ELSA How surprising I only got you, my dear!

MRS KROHN Do sit down.

ELSA Thanks.

PAUL We passed Max on the way. He's been skiing all day.

KROHN Haven't seen Max for ages. How is he?

PAUL Oh, he's fine. Still fiddling about with little bits of coloured glass. Some people just don't have any ambition.

MRS KROHN I would say that making a Cathedral window that will probably last five hundred years, is a considerable ambition.

PAUL Personally, if I can make a fortune that will last fifty years, I'll be satisfied. But with this Government you've no

incentive to work, or to save. They tie you up with yards of red tape and then tell you to go out there and export like mad. I'm fed up with it.

MRS KROHN Well, you two don't look as if you are exactly withering away.

PAUL I was till I saw all this lot. (*Indicating food*)

MRS KROHN So help yourself.

PAUL Thanks, I don't mind if I do. Can I get you anything, Elsa?

ELSA Not at the moment. Where's the Chief?

KROHN He'll arrive last as usual. Make an entrance. Don't you remember?

MRS KROHN Well, I hope after all this he doesn't forget.

PAUL I wouldn't put it past him. These professor types are pretty woolly-minded. Look at what they are turning out from their universities nowadays - chaps sprouting hair all over the place where there are supposed to be brains. No patriotism and no manners. If we in business could buy those fellows at our valuation of them and sell them at their valuation of themselves, we should make a fortune.

ELSA I never found the Chief woolly-minded.

PAUL Not where you were concerned my darling - never.

(*Enter Max in skiing outfit, shutting the door behind him*)

MAX Hello, everybody. May I come in? Hello, Walther.

KROHN Ah! Max.

MRS KROHN We're delighted to see you.

MAX What a day it's been! Gorgeous!

PAUL Come on, Max. What's the password?

MAX Let's see! How about "Smorgesbord"?

PAUL You're right. That's the password to any civilized society.



MAX My! How this room has changed since the old resistance days!

KROHN (*He hands Max wine*) Margaret threatens to re-decorate all over again.

MAX Good. I'll help you. Something way out.

MRS KROHN And very expensive.

MAX I saw Oskar just getting off the bus, looking more like a funeral than ever.

ELSA Dear Oskar. He'll give us all the latest dirt and scandal from the Grand Hotel.

KROHN Help yourself to something to drink.

MRS KROHN How's your stained glass window, Max? I've been reading all about it.

MAX Coming on. Having a bit of trouble at the moment with one of the twelve Apostles. He's getting too big for his halo. (*Laughter*)

PAUL It's funny. Old Max here used to draw fancy diagrams for blowing up railways and bridges. Now he manufactures saints. There's no accounting for tastes.

(*Enter Oskar. He is a gloomy-looking man who has for years been assistant desk clerk in the Grand Hotel*)

OSKAR Greetings.

KROHN It's good to see you again. You look cold.

PAUL He always looks cold.

OSKAR Hello, Mrs Krohn. (*They shake hands*)

MRS KROHN Hello.

ELSA You'll have to give us the password, Oskar.

OSKAR The last occasion which I can recall, it was "Boeuf Stroganoff".

PAUL My dear Oskar, you look as gloomy as ever. You must still be studying Karl Marx.

OSKAR And why not? It's the study of a lifetime.

PAUL But what a way to spend a life! I'd rather accumulate

a little "Das Kapital" than just read about it.

ELSA Don't let him tease you, Oskar. You're my favourite spy.

KROHN That's true. Behind that desk in the Grand Hotel Oskar knew everything - who was shadowing who . . .

ELSA Who was sleeping with who . . .

MAX Who was drinking too much and talking too much.

KROHN And you can be sure he still knows a thing or two.

PAUL Only now it doesn't matter any more.

ELSA Come on, Oskar, tell us. Who's taking drugs? Who in the Cabinet have boy friends? Which businessmen sleep with their secretaries?

PAUL Oh, for goodness sake, Elsa, have a heart.

ELSA (*Suddenly serious*) I do, Paul, that's just the trouble.

KROHN Anyhow, your information was all darned useful then. What's the latest news, Oskar? I bet you know.

OSKAR The whole town's dead, Mr Krohn. Everyone up in the mountains all day.

MAX Sensible people. I'd rather be up in the mountains and look at a gorgeous sunset than sit in the Grand Hotel and look at Oskar.

PAUL Say, don't you ever get a promotion in your job, Oskar?

OSKAR Promotion! I should have got that years ago.

MAX Don't start him on that topic, for heaven's sake!

PAUL You mean to say you're still fighting that chief clerk, Oskar? You've had your knife into that fellow ever since the liberation.

OSKAR (*With feeling*) That man was a collaborator if ever there was one. Six months after the war he gets promoted to chief clerk over me. It's a crime, that we who risked our lives again and again should have to make way for traitors.

It's the same now everywhere, government, army, everywhere. It makes me sick.

PAUL Oh come on, Oskar. You can't go on about collaborators after all these years.

MAX You should have my job, Oskar. No one over you to bother you - except saints.

PAUL By the way, Walther, why are we all meeting tonight anyway?

KROHN Pure sentiment. It was the Chief's idea entirely. He wanted just the old gang in the old hideout.

MAX Poor old Chief! He hasn't got the Resistance out of his system yet.

OSKAR At least the Chief remembers his friends.

KROHN You know, I think it's the one time the Chief really lived. He just revelled in the secrecy and the danger.

PAUL And the power, Walther, don't forget the power.

ELSA And now he's just a professor. I think it's rather pathetic. I don't blame him if he wants to get away from those stuffy old books and lectures sometimes, and remember - well, when we all did things together. Life's pretty boring these days. I enjoyed the old days myself. At least they were exciting.

KROHN We all owe the Chief our lives. Let's not forget that. (*Sound of a bicycle bell*) I bet that's the Bishop. (*Goes out to the lobby*)

MRS KROHN Who else still rides a bicycle?

BISHOP (*Off*) Hello, Walther.

KROHN (*Opening door*) Good evening, Konrad. It's good of you to come. (*All rise. Enter the Bishop, a tough, wiry man in his seventies*)

BISHOP Good evening, Margaret. How are you?

MRS KROHN Come in, Bishop. Very well, thank you. I'm not sure you ought to be cycling up mountains at your time of life.



BISHOP Good evening, friends.

ELSA What's the password, Bishop?

*(Krohn comes in, shutting the door)*

BISHOP Unfortunately it's still Lent – "Fish-cakes".

MAX You must have had to push that bike most of the way up.

BISHOP Ah! But think of the journey home. The roads clear of snow. I shall fly like a bird. Heaven!

PAUL I didn't think even the Church was as old fashioned as that, Bishop.

BISHOP I'm not in quite such a hurry as you are, young man, but I get there just the same.

KROHN Usually at just the right time as I remember. Do sit down, Bishop. Why didn't you ask the Chief to drive you out? He'd have been glad to.

BISHOP Cycling has one great advantage – you travel alone. Of all the experiences of the war the one I enjoyed infinitely the most was solitary confinement.

ELSA Solitary confinement! It'd give me the willies!

BISHOP It's not my own company, young lady, that induces what you refer to as "the willies", but other people's. No! With my pipe *(Producing it)* and my Bible, I had everything that a man could have wished for.

MRS KROHN In that order, Bishop?

BISHOP I did not say that. Fortunately I never had to make the agonising choice between them.

*(While they are laughing the Chief enters very quietly. He is a small, intense, and controlled man. He takes them all by surprise)*

CHIEF Good evening, friends. I still like to see the look on your faces when I take you by surprise.

*(There is a slight stiffening of respect in the room. They all rise except the Bishop)*

ALL Good evening, Chief.

MAX Chief, you old rascal. Still sliding in and out like a shadow.

CHIEF Hello, Margaret. How nice to see you. (*Kisses her*)  
And Walther, you're looking well.

KROHN Chief.

CHIEF Oscar, you look as delightfully sinister as ever. That's why I chose you. No one would really suspect you of being a spy. You look so like one.

OSKAR (*Laughs*) You will have your little joke, Chief.

CHIEF Hello, Max. Still got your head in the clouds? Do you remember the night Max had worked out every minute detail of how to blow up the gas-works and then he forgot to bring the dynamite? (*General laughter*)

MAX You made me walk all the way back and fetch the damn stuff in my painting kit. I was stopped by a seedy-looking night-watchman. I told him I wanted to paint a picture of the gas-works by moonlight. He actually believed me. (*Laughter*)

MRS KROHN Obviously a lover of art.

KROHN Or he was one of us.

CHIEF Bishop, good evening.

BISHOP Chief.

CHIEF Looking your usual saintly self, I see.

BISHOP Saintly, Chief? Or do you mean stubborn?

CHIEF Well, they sometimes do go together, I admit. And Elsa and Paul. Well, you two haven't changed much. Paul putting on a little weight, Elsa taking it off. Charming.

ELSA Thank you. And now you'll have to give us the password, Chief?

CHIEF Now, let's see. How about "revolution"? . . . No. All right then, let's just say "romance". (*Kisses her*) All present and correct I see. No one missing. Good. (*Removing coat*) Thank you, Max.



KROHN What will you have to drink?

CHIEF Oh! My usual, thank you, Walther.

MRS KROHN What can I offer you, Professor?

CHIEF Nothing at the moment, thank you.

MRS KROHN You must excuse me calling you that. You see you are not the Chief to me as you are to them. You are my son's favourite professor.

CHIEF Stephan was a favourite pupil. I see him still from time to time. He's always dropping in at the university to organise a jazz festival or attend some horrible orgy.

MRS KROHN I'm afraid so. He has some most peculiar friends.

CHIEF Terribly noisy. But harmless.

MRS KROHN He'll be home later. I hope you'll have a word with him. You are one of the few people who has managed to catch his imagination. Well, Walther, all your guests are here and now I'll leave you to your drinks and your dreams.

KROHN Like me to walk across with you, dear?

MRS KROHN No, thank you. If I have the slightest difficulty, I shall call for help and seven heroes of the Resistance will rush to my aid. Goodnight, all of you.

ALL Goodnight. (*Mrs Krohn goes*)

CHIEF Walther, we must listen to the radio. We all ought to hear the Prime Minister tonight.

KROHN Really? Better keep politics out of these reunions I say.

CHIEF Quite. But they say this is a national emergency.

PAUL Oh come on! We have them about every six weeks now. They're not news any more.

OSKAR All the same, I did hear a rumour that the Prime Minister has a surprise for us this evening.

CHIEF I heard the same, Oskar.

PAUL The only surprise worth having would be if he decided to resign.

ELSA Paul thinks that every evil in the world is due to one cause - Socialism. It's so delightfully simple!

KROHN You don't seem to be doing too badly under Socialism.

PAUL I could make a damn sight more if only people would leave me alone.

KROHN That, if I may say so, is a typically capitalist remark.

PAUL Well, I am a typical capitalist. You needn't look so shocked, Oskar. I'm proud of it. At least we don't sit all our lives on our backsides reading Karl Marx.

OSKAR (*Grimly*) If you did you might know what is going to happen to you in the next twenty years.

KROHN You see what I mean, Chief. Better keep politics out of the Resistance if you want any peace.

BISHOP My dear Chief, I hope you didn't get us all here just to listen to the Prime Minister. We could have done that in our own homes.

CHIEF Of course not, Bishop. No, I asked Walther if we could have this gathering of the old crowd because I have an announcement to make.

PAUL An announcement?

ELSA What is it, Chief? I bet it's something exciting and romantic and very important.

MAX Don't say you're getting married at last?

CHIEF No, I'm not going to get married. But it is important, Elsa, and it's also rather exciting. It's a kind of dream fulfilled.

KROHN You're going to lecture in America.

CHIEF Heaven forbid!

PAUL I hope you're not going into politics.

CHIEF In a way, perhaps I am.

PAUL Oh, Chief, don't dirty your hands.

OSKAR They say the government is looking for fresh blood.

PAUL Vampires!

ELSA I know, you're going to be one of those sinister experts behind the scenes.

MAX The great specialist called in to operate on the body politic.

PAUL Operation successful. Patient dies.

CHIEF Well, something drastic is needed, I imagine.

KROHN I wouldn't deny that.

CHIEF Do you remember the night when that Military Police Officer found us all meeting here with the secret printing press going like mad out at the back?

MAX And we told him we were a poetry writing circle producing our quarterly magazine.

ELSA And we all started spouting poetry at him like mad—all very modern and mysterious. You know, things like "Hide out of the hairy belly of the darkness cushioned in silence from the probing patrols of wind and snow . . ."

KROHN And then the Bishop here insisted on closing the proceedings with prayer.

OSKAR Very long, as I remember.

BISHOP It was a perfectly genuine one. We needed it.

CHIEF By which time Oskar had managed to get hold of the officer's gun.

OSKAR He closed his eyes during the prayer. Sorry, Bishop.

BISHOP I'll forgive you, Oskar, this once.

KROHN The poor fellow spent the night in the cow barn, I think.

CHIEF And, can you believe it, in the morning he'd just disappeared.

KROHN Went abroad for his health.

ELSA Oh, Chief. I always liked you best when you were drastic.



CHIEF I had to be on that occasion or he would have squawked on us all.

BISHOP Look, if you've something important to say now, I wish you'd come out with it.

CHIEF I think my remarks will come better after we have listened to the Prime Minister. It's just two minutes to the hour. (*Oskar switches on the radio. There is the sound of a bell tolling*) Good old National Radio. Getting us all into a suitably solemn frame of mind.

PAUL Sounds like a funeral to me.

CHIEF (*He at once commands his audience*) Just before the Prime Minister comes on I want to remind you all once again of what we mean to each other. This place here has memories for all of us. Each one of us here has held the lives of the rest in his hands. We agreed on nothing except on the one thing that mattered. And we trusted each other implicitly. Some of us gave our blood (*He looks at Krohn*) literally. We gave our jobs, our money, even a strong right arm. Before every personal interest we put our common loyalty and our unity. Now let's listen to the Prime Minister.

(*There is silence in the room except for the tolling of the bell*)

VOICE ON RADIO Good evening. The speech by the Prime Minister announced for this hour will not be made.

KROHN What the devil!

VOICE ON RADIO I repeat, the Prime Minister's speech will not be made. Stand by for a further important announcement. You are asked to stay by your radio for an important announcement. The speech by the Prime Minister will not . . . (*The sound breaks off*)

ELSA It's gone dead.

PAUL For God's sake, what's he talking about? Stand by for what?

MAX The Prime Minister seems to have lost his speech.

PAUL Or better still himself.

KROHN All the same, it's odd cutting off like that right in the middle of a sentence. I think I will put a call through to the radio station. (*He goes to the phone*)

OSKAR There's nothing wrong with the set. All the foreign stations are working away like mad.

MAX Yes, an Englishman seems to be giving a lecture on the training of poodles. Not very helpful. (*We hear a sentence or two of the lecture*)

VOICE Poodles, you will find, are strange little creatures – highly strung, fastidious and touchingly temperamental. You must establish communication with your poodle.

KROHN Hello . . . hello . . . hello. Could you please keep the poodle quiet? Hello, hello. Not a sound. Exchange? Something is definitely wrong. Anything on the radio?

OSKAR No.

KROHN I think I'll just slip over to the house and see if Margaret has heard any news.

(*The Chief has moved quietly to the door and stands in his way*)

CHIEF I'm sorry, Walther.

KROHN What do you mean, sorry?

CHIEF You are under my orders. You're staying here.

KROHN (*Impatiently*) I'm doing nothing of the kind!

(*He pushes the Chief out of the way and opens the door. Immediately two men in leather jackets step into the doorway. They have guns*)

PAUL Good God!

MAX What's this?

ELSA Oh!

KROHN What the devil's going on? Who are these people?

CHIEF Guards.

MAX Guards?

KROHN What kind of guards?

CHIEF Guards of the new state. Search these people. All of them.

*(One man stays at the door while the other goes around the room searching each person present for weapons)*

GUARD Go on over there. Put your hands behind your heads.

CHIEF I think you had better do as he says.

GUARD *(To the Bishop)* You, too.

PAUL Now, look here . . .

GUARD Quiet, you.

MAX Don't you see, Paul. He's trapped us.

GUARD This man is armed, Sir.

CHIEF You, Bishop! I'm surprised. Let's see. *(He pulls out of the Bishop's pocket his large and favourite pipe)* I might have known. Armed, huh! It's loaded with tobacco.

BISHOP That's my favourite and I'll trouble you not to break it.

CHIEF *(Laughing)* In the other pocket you'll probably find a Bible. Both are perfectly harmless.

KROHN I'd have you know you're on my property among my guests.

BISHOP I think we're his guests, Walther, and I suspect from now on it isn't your property any longer. We'd better stop fuming and listen to what he has to say.

CHIEF Thank you, Bishop. You were always the greatest realist of the lot.

KROHN I demand you let us out of here.

CHIEF You'll remember in the old days I seldom killed, Walther, but if it was absolutely necessary I never hesitated.

SECOND GUARD No weapons found, Sir.

CHIEF Good, you can all put your hands down now. Mount guard outside the door and window. The slightest sound of trouble or any attempt to leave, shoot instantly. Do you understand?



GUARD Yes, Sir.

CHIEF All right, you may go. (*The guards leave. Suddenly the Chief is all charm*) Well, that's over. Now let's relax and have a drink.

PAUL Well, I'll be damned! That was the best joke ever. Chief, you deserve to be hung, drawn and quartered. Walther, you should have seen your face when he told you you couldn't leave. (*He roars with laughter*) Thought you'd give us a taste of the old war days, eh?

ELSA I must say, Chief, you certainly scared the daylights out of me.

PAUL Those fellows with guns and everything. Students from your class, I bet. And the Bishop's pipe - that was a masterpiece.

BISHOP It was all in extremely poor taste, I would say.

MAX It was too darned realistic to suit me. Aren't you letting your dramatic sense run away with you?

KROHN Just a moment. What about my telephone? And tell me, is that radio a joke? The Prime Minister not making his speech, is that a joke?

PAUL (*Going to door*) We'll soon settle this. Let's go out and see what's really going on out there. (*He opens the door. There is a guard standing just outside*)

CHIEF Don't be stupid, Paul. Do you want to be killed?

OSKAR The war's over, you know, Chief.

CHIEF You're wrong. The war was never over. Look, everybody, I apologise for the melodrama. I had to do it. One of you bright spirits might have had a gun with you and spoiled the party. But now let's talk this over as friends realistically, like we used to do.

BISHOP This isn't a joke. He means every word he says.

CHIEF I've only to raise my voice, and my guards will prove it to you in no uncertain terms.

BISHOP Let me go out and talk to those guards.

CHIEF Sorry, Bishop. I remember in the occupation days you had a habit of talking to the enemy guards. They often used to end up on your side.

KROHN You can at least allow me to go over to the house. I want to look after my wife.

CHIEF Your wife is being looked after, Walther.

*(A moment's pause)*

ELSA *(Nervously)* Well, whatever happens, I trust the Chief.

CHIEF Thank you, Elsa. You're going to get another chance to serve your country and look as charming and decorative doing it as you always did.

ELSA You mean the Resistance all over again. How thrilling!

PAUL Don't be a fool, Elsa. If the man isn't joking, then he's a raving lunatic.

ELSA That's what you used to say in the old days, but the Chief was right every time.

PAUL He certainly was all right as far as you were concerned. We all know that.

KROHN Stop arguing, for heaven's sake, and let's get the facts. Now, tell us what all this is about.

CHIEF Good idea. Well, come and sit down, all of you. Make yourself comfortable. Friends, tonight the country has been liberated. The revolution has taken place.

KROHN What do you mean, revolution? What kind of revolution?

CHIEF The only kind that matters. Rule by the best men with the best brains who know what's best for the country.

BISHOP *(Exploding)* Good Lord, deliver us!

MAX Tell me, Chief, could you be referring by any chance to yourself?

CHIEF Possibly. You all know how during the occupation we would sit and talk for hours about what we would do when liberation came – the kind of society we'd build – you know



– far-seeing, intelligent, co-ordinated. Well, I ask you, have you built it? No, after the war you all gave three cheers, waved a flag and stopped fighting. I wasn't satisfied full liberation had taken place. So I stayed underground. Now the keys of power in the army, the police, and the government are in our hands.

KROHN Whose hands?

CHIEF You'll find out. You won't have to wait long. Any moment now the radio will announce instructions for citizens under the new regime.

MAX (*Twiddling radio*) The radio doesn't seem quite as certain as you are.

VOICE ON RADIO But you may ask, when is the poodle ready for clipping?

(*Max switches off*)

CHIEF People in key positions all over the country have been arrested today. You know, it is fascinating how we discovered the particular hut or hotel or hideout where every one of these people spends his weekend. It was so easy to pick them all up without fuss.

OSKAR That's true. I could tell you most of those places myself.

CHIEF I'm sure you could, Oskar. For various reasons each one of you here was on that list to be arrested. I got you here to save your lives.

ELSA I knew it. Trust the Chief.

BISHOP And who, may I ask, are you to arrest people or save their lives?

KROHN Exactly. Suppose he is speaking the truth – two thugs with guns don't make a revolution. What exactly is your position in this affair?

OSKAR Yes, you act like you're the big cheese in this new regime.

CHIEF No, no, no, Oskar. I'm a comparatively minor cheese.

There are others far more powerful than I am. But I do have my modest part. One bit of it is to look after all of you.

MAX That's very good of you, Chief. What exactly do you have in mind?

CHIEF First of all to convince you.

KROHN Are you trying to tell me that you've been a traitor all these years? Plotting against the State?

CHIEF Not against – for. I hope I've been a patriot and a realist. And knowing each one of you as I do, I honestly believe that as patriots and realists we'll stand together now. (*As Krohn tries to interrupt*) We're all of us ready to die for our country. We don't actually need to prove that point to one another. But this time we are not attacked from outside by anyone. This is not an invasion, it is a revolution. And revolutions, remember, can be the highest form of patriotism. They very often are.

MAX My dear Chief, do revolutions happen just like that? Amazing!

CHIEF This one has been happening for years. Of course, today being a Sunday in spring, everyone has been up in the mountains skiing, enjoying the sweet, pure air of liberty. They will come back tonight to a city that is quiet and orderly and completely under control. You only have to deal with a few men and the old order falls like a house of cards. It falls of itself. It's riddled and rotten through and through.

KROHN But what do you propose to put in its place? Another dose of what we had before?

CHIEF Nothing from the past. Nothing that has ever been. This is the future, the next stage in history. The liberation of the human mind to control its destiny. The age of un-sentimental, scientific planning.

BISHOP The kingdom of the computer.

CHIEF Why not? I'd rather have government by computer than what we have now – government by commuter –

little men with brief cases, proliferating muddles and clinging to their little empires like limpets.

MAX I don't want to be personal, Chief, but would professors with brief cases be an improvement?

BISHOP They'd probably lose their brief cases.

CHIEF We're not all professors. A large section of the army is on our side. No, the only thing we've lost is our complacency. You seem to have kept an astounding amount of that.

PAUL Perhaps you're right. I am against this take-over business, of course. It's unpatriotic, unconstitutional. All the same, I have been warning you politicians of this sort of thing for years. Do you realise what he's saying?

ELSA Yes, Paul, and there is no need for you to repeat it all with suitable cries of "I told you so!". Actually, say what you like, I think the Chief is pretty smart. All those stuffy old books and lectures were just a blind. Pretending to be a professor, when all the time he was planning a revolution. You've fooled the lot of us, haven't you, Chief?

CHIEF I would rather say I may have been just one step ahead of the game. And now I want to give you all the chance to catch up.

KROHN Good God, you think we would submit to you?

CHIEF Not submit. Co-operate. Like in the old days. Our country is occupied as much as ever it was in the war. It is occupied by a pretty moth-eaten Establishment. We've got to get rid of them. They don't represent us, the real people.

MAX I'm delighted to meet one of the real people.

KROHN Don't let this man frighten any of you. The great thing in a crisis is to stand firm and stand together.

PAUL Yes, I think you are right. Loyalty. Stick together. Yes, I think that's what we have got to do. I hope you're listening, Elsa.



CHIEF (*Turning to Paul*) Deeds speak louder than words, Paul. Take a look at these. (*He produces some papers*)

PAUL What? What do you mean?

CHIEF Look at them. Receipts for money received from your firm – one or two cheques with your signature on them – private contributions to the cause. I congratulate you. You've helped finance the revolution.

KROHN You mean to say you've been paying money to these people, whoever they are?

PAUL Certainly not! I mean, it was a purely unofficial thing – a contribution . . .

KROHN You have known about this . . . this conspiracy, and you've actually contributed . . .

PAUL You know how it is. Some of it seemed to make sense. Besides, we were pressed by some of our workers.

KROHN Talk about not dirtying your hands.

PAUL Customers made it a condition of doing business. It was . . .

CHIEF A little bit of insurance, eh, Paul? Just in case.

PAUL Well, if you want to put it that way . . .

ELSA It looks a pretty cheap and dirty way, if you ask me. Here have you been booming and bragging about patriotism and a free country, and all the time you've been playing a double game.

PAUL At least I had the wits to figure this out in advance and take precautions.

ELSA Oh, yes! As far as money is concerned you're just a little vacuum cleaner.

PAUL I have to be. Because when it comes to throwing money about you're a steam-shovel.

ELSA You might at least have told me what you were up to. I bet there are a lot of other things you haven't told me.

PAUL I tell you, it was purely business – to show them which side their bread was buttered on.

OSKAR And you're the butter, Mr Lauritz.

CHIEF Good old Oskar; now there speaks the authentic voice of the people.

OSKAR I think you'd better leave me out of this, Chief. I'm no big shot.

CHIEF No, but you'd like to be. You're with us at heart. You always have been.

OSKAR Chief, if I could get back to the hotel, I hear a lot of things that might be of use to you.

CHIEF Of course. And by the way, when you get to work tomorrow you may find your friend the chief clerk has . . . er, found other employment. He never was the man for the job. You understand?

OSKAR Thank you, Chief. Thank you very much, Sir.

CHIEF Go back to your Grand Hotel and keep your eyes and your ears open, as you used to do, and report to me. And remember, I never forget my friends. Guard, let this man pass.

OSKAR Goodnight, all. I'm sure the Chief will take care of you all. *(He goes)*

CHIEF Now, let's see. Elsa, you married Paul, but you always took orders from me. I can rely on you.

ELSA Yes, Chief.

CHIEF Paul, we know enough about you to keep you in line.

*(During this speech Max has been edging his way towards the door)*

CHIEF *(Suddenly swinging around)* No heroics please, Max. That was always your weakness.

MAX Sorry, Chief. I just thought I'd go out and paint a picture by moonlight.

CHIEF Good old Max. You were always the resistance within the Resistance. Well, we have to make some allowances for genius.

MAX Genius my foot! I'm just an ordinary man who'd like to carry on with his own job.

CHIEF Splendid. Go on working. We won't interfere – more than we can help. Go on with your stain-glass windows if you want to. Saints are wonderfully decorative in their proper places. Put Jesus Christ in your window. Keep Him there.

BISHOP He has a way of breaking out, you know.

CHIEF Ah! Bishop. I can see we're going to have trouble with you. We often did, though I'll admit there was a certain stubbornness in your make-up that was useful at times.

BISHOP I hope there will always be a certain stubbornness in resisting evil.

CHIEF Mind you, we certainly aren't going to let you be a hero or a symbol like last time. That would never do. We may have to break you.

MAX Heavens, man, what are you saying?

CHIEF Not by torture, I sincerely hope. No, I think he'll see reason. We might start with a little solitary confinement.

BISHOP That would be a welcome change.

CHIEF You might like to meditate, Bishop, on the future of your Church. You seem to have run out of gas. Perhaps you need a new brand.

BISHOP The brand is good enough – though I admit we don't always spark as we might. All the same I would hate to entrust the steering to you. I always mistrust men when they rank themselves among "the best brains" – especially if they are also knaves. If a man has got to be a knave, I say, for God's sake let him remain a fool. However, perhaps the good Lord, in His mercy, has looked after that point too.



CHIEF Have it your way, Bishop. Resistance seems to be the one thing you're good at, though, mark you, many of your clergy secretly sympathise with us. (*Shouting*) Guard! You wouldn't get the kind of popular support now that you got in the war days. You see, you and your Church haven't done much for the people in the last few years. (*To guard*) All right. Take the Bishop and lock him in the barn.

BISHOP It will be a pleasure. (*To guard*) And how is the revolution treating you, my friend?

CHIEF No talking to the guard. I remember your power of persuasion. On second thoughts, you stay here. I'll look after this. After you, Bishop.

BISHOP (*To guard as he goes*) Don't let him get you down. (*Exit Chief and Bishop*)

KROHN Now look, everybody. We've no proof as yet that this man is speaking the truth. Where is his precious announcement on the radio? It certainly hasn't happened yet.

MAX Nothing doing on any of the national stations.

KROHN But supposing it's true, don't you see what he's up to? He's picking you off one by one trying to divide you from the rest. Whatever this man says or does, it is pretty obvious what he's out for - violence - dictatorship. It's an old pattern. It creates a chain reaction of death across the world. I've warned people about it for years.

PAUL So have I, by God!

ELSA Really, Paul, it seems to me you have cheered for one team and put your money on the other.

PAUL You're just starry-eyed about the Chief. You always have been. I'd like to know what's gone on between you two. I believe you were a damn sight more than a personal assistant.

KROHN Don't let's quarrel among ourselves. Don't let this pocket Napoleon fool us. We've all been through this sort of thing. If you stick to what you know to be true, you

get through all right. Our people still value liberty. Those who tried to take it away last time didn't succeed. They'll not succeed now.

*(Heavy knock on the door)*

GUARD Who's there?

VOICE OF SECOND GUARD Another prisoner.

*(Guard cautiously opens the door. Someone pushes Mrs Krohn into the room)*

MRS KROHN Oh, Walther, they've got Stephan.

CURTAIN



## ACT TWO

*It is an hour later. The radio has been removed from the room. The only people present are Krohn, who is brooding gloomily in his chair; Mrs Krohn, who is cautiously looking out through the window; and Max, sitting in a corner of the room drawing a portrait of Krohn. There is an air of quiet in the room after a storm.*

KROHN Better keep away from that window.

MRS KROHN Those horrible men are still out there. Does he mean to keep us here all night?

KROHN Probably.

MRS KROHN But what's happening?

KROHN As he's taken away our radio and cut our telephone, it's extremely hard to say.

MAX Walther, would you mind raising your chin a little? That's perfect.

MRS KROHN (*Exasperated - to Max*) I don't know how you can sit there like that. Why don't you do something?

MAX I am doing something. As far as I can see, I'm the only one who is.

MRS KROHN I'm worried about the Bishop. What are they doing to him?

KROHN (*Grimly*) Whatever they may do to us, I have no intention of giving in to this man.

MRS KROHN (*On edge*) I know, Walther, but somehow I wish you wouldn't keep on saying it again and again.

KROHN He's diabolically clever. He's won over the Lauritzes and Oskar. He intends to break the Bishop somehow. He uses every possible device to shake your confidence. But what does he stand for himself? It's the lash and the chain. We've seen it all before.

MAX You were a bit of a revolutionary yourself once, weren't you?

KROHN Of course. I grew up in the workers' struggle. My father actually knew Lenin in Switzerland. I myself fought in Spain. I have been to South America, China, Hungary, Czechoslovakia. The revolution was my spiritual home. I used to feel that I was carrying the whole of suffering humanity in my heart.

MAX And don't you feel that still?

KROHN In a way, yes. But I suppose I've become disillusioned in my old age. As Margaret knows I used to believe in old-fashioned things like justice and the brotherhood of man. I still do. But you don't find much of it around - here or anywhere else. I sometimes wonder if you can do very much for humanity but try and coax it along.

MAX Ah, there's the catch.

KROHN What do you mean?

MAX While we coax, he coerces.

KROHN But that doesn't make him right.

MAX No, but it makes him horribly persuasive. Look how he won over the Lauritzes and Oskar. They went off back to the city like little lambs. Besides, revolution is in the air. The students want it, apparently the army wants it, even the artists want it. There's the trouble. If the Chief offers his brand of revolution, whatever that is, and we don't offer any alternative, people may go for the Chief. Just a little more up with that chin, will you? You are going to make a marvellous Apostle.

KROHN (*Exasperated*) I have no desire to be an Apostle, Max.

MAX You're a natural Saint Peter. You know, "On this rock I will build my Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it". That's what you should be, right at this moment. (*Krohn glares at him in annoyance*) That's perfect, hold it. (*After a pause*) What I'm really looking for, of course, is a Judas. I've never found the right model. There ought to be a good chance of finding one tonight, don't

you think? (*Another pause*) You evidently wish I would change the subject.

KROHN I don't find it particularly relevant to the situation.

MAX How about one of us making a dash for it? Try and get help? I'd like to have a shot.

KROHN And get yourself killed? No. We've got to out-think this fellow. I still believe he's bluffing.

MRS KROHN You wouldn't think so if you had been in the house. It's full of his people. They've taken over the phones and the kitchen and everything.

KROHN The man occupies your home, bullies your wife, threatens you with a gun, and then asks you to tell him he is the saviour of society.

MRS KROHN Oh, Walther, I'm so frightened.

KROHN Hold on. This isn't the end yet. Don't forget, he's worried too. Something's gone wrong with his announcement over the radio.

MRS KROHN I can't stop thinking about Stephan. What are they doing to him?

KROHN I know. To tell you the truth, I doubt if they'll bother about him too much.

MRS KROHN (*At once nettled*) Why wouldn't they bother about him?

KROHN What I mean is, he's no use for politics, one way or the other.

MRS KROHN And to you a person who has no use for politics isn't worth bothering about, is that it?

KROHN I don't mean that at all.

MRS KROHN What you mean is, you don't think much of Stephan. Therefore you don't think anybody else will.

KROHN Oh, for God's sake! We're on edge, I know.

MRS KROHN I think I could bear anything except that they should hurt Stephan. He's been through enough already.



*(The Chief enters followed by two guards, who carry with them a microphone which they set up in the middle of the room)*

CHIEF All in order?

GUARD All in order, Chief. We've got this connected up now. We should be ready for broadcasting whenever you want it.

CHIEF Good! *(Exit guards)* Some bright soul put the national radio out of action just at the critical moment. So we're going to have to improvise one of our own. Surprisingly it turns out that you're at one of the nerve centres of the revolution.

MAX *(Tearing off a sheet and starting a drawing of the Chief)* Think of that! Just stay where you are, will you, Chief. I'm struck by a sudden idea.

CHIEF The announcement of the new regime will be made shortly now. A group of national patriots will speak, some of them from this room. Think of it, Walther. Words spoken here will be on every front page of every newspaper in the world tomorrow. You can picture it. Prime Ministers, drugged with sleep, will be tumbled out of their beds. Editors will rush to their typewriters to prove how wise they are - after the event. Questions will be asked in a dozen Parliaments. Cries of protest will fill the air, and then everyone will settle down to sleep again until the next shock - and the next and the next.

MAX Chief, just before you shock the whole human race to death, would you mind keeping still? I want to get your profile.

CHIEF My dear Max, you don't actually have to sanctify the new regime to the extent of making me a saint - yet.

MAX Thank you. Actually, I had a rather different purpose in mind. *(The Chief instinctively draws himself up)* Relax. Be yourself. It isn't Julius Caesar I'm looking for. Why do you not sit down?

MRS KROHN I don't see how you can sit there looking so

pleased with yourself when you're out to destroy life and liberty.

CHIEF Don't worry, Margaret. I'm quite sure you'll soon see things the way I do. People who squawk most about liberty have got things pretty much the way they like, I find. Oh, they're free all right - free to exploit, free to extort, free to fatten on others like pigs shoving at the trough. We're going to plan a different kind of freedom now.

KROHN I know just the kind of "freedom" you mean. It's the knock on the door in the middle of the night; it's the look back over your shoulder to see who's following, who's listening. It's not to dare meet your friends on a street corner and talk. It's fear eating at your guts day and night, waking, sleeping. Do you really think you're going to get the people of this country to swallow all that again.

CHIEF Don't exaggerate, Walther. It's not going to be like that at all, if people co-operate. And they will. They'll swallow a certain amount of discipline if the prize is big enough. People are ready to put their ideals before their personal comforts and their own likes and dislikes. You'll see. Plenty of others will be speaking on this radio tonight besides me.

MAX You know, Walther. Collective leadership and all that. Participation!

KROHN Who can you find to speak on this radio whom the nation will listen to?

CHIEF You'd be surprised. Some of your most trusted colleagues, your own intimate friends, have been waiting for years with their speeches prepared for tonight. But the person I'm interested in is you.

KROHN You must be mad. Me!

CHIEF Why not? Nobody is more trusted. Come in with us, Walther. I guarantee we'd agree on most things. You've hated and opposed the old regime every bit as much as I have. You know it's finished. The death took place years

ago. All we've done is issue the certificate.

KROHN Signed and sealed with guns.

CHIEF Don't be so squeamish about a few guns. You've used them before. So have we all. If that jelly-baby of a government hasn't the guts to dissolve itself when it's obvious nobody wants it, then it has to be assisted. You've said as much over dinner tables when you've had a few drinks. Why don't you say it now? A suitable word from you over the radio could do a great deal to steady the people. You wouldn't need to say much.

KROHN (*Carefully*) I would say one word, and one word only – "Resist".

CHIEF I see. (*Pause*) Would it make a difference to you to know you would be speaking beside your son? Guard! (*Enter guard*) I want you to bring Stephan Krohn over here just as soon as I give the word.

GUARD Yes, Chief.

CHIEF That's all. (*Exit guard*)

MRS KROHN (*In terror*) Oh, Walther!

CHIEF Don't worry, Margaret. Your son is in no danger. You may as well know it now – Stephan comes into his own tonight – at last. He's one of us.

KROHN What do you mean?

CHIEF Your son will be one of the architects of the new order.

KROHN (*After a pause – roars with laughter*) Rubbish! Stephan has never architected anything in his life.

MRS KROHN That's not fair, Walther.

KROHN Anyway, he's no use for politics, never has had.

CHIEF He may not be interested in your kind of politics, but he's interested in mine, because he's interested in the future. After all, he hasn't had much out of the past.

KROHN I don't believe a word of it.

CHIEF It's always surprising how utterly ignorant parents are



of their children. They neglect them or spoil them for years, and then say, "This can't be our little darling." But it is. What do you think Stephan has been doing all these years? Botany?

KROHN I often wonder.

CHIEF You needn't wonder any more. He's been in touch with some of the liveliest, most creative minds in the country. That's the force I've been training for years.

KROHN It's another trick.

MRS KROHN It's not a trick, Walther. It's true.

KROHN How would you know?

MRS KROHN Stephan believes in that man. He's often said he is the only man who has ever taught him anything worthwhile.

KROHN That's possible. He may have put ideas into Stephan's head. That's what professors are for. That doesn't make Stephan a conspirator against the state. He wouldn't be any use to them anyway. He's not practical enough.

MRS KROHN There you go again, running down Stephan.

KROHN (*Furious*) I'm trying to tell you Stephan isn't a traitor.

MRS KROHN (*Equally furious*) And I'm trying to tell you that whether he's a traitor or not, he's not a fool.

(*Krohn turns away baffled*)

KROHN He's never been any use at the jobs I got for him.

MAX (*Quietly*) Has it occurred to you that Stephan might have joined the Chief to show you he could do a job that you *didn't* get for him?

KROHN (*Snapping*) You can keep out of this, Max.

MRS KROHN I think Max is right.

CHIEF Actually, you know, you've never given Stephan anything to live for. I have. It makes a difference.

MRS KROHN Of course it makes a difference.

KROHN Will you pull yourself together, and if there is any-

thing you know about Stephan that I don't know, you'd better tell me.

MRS KROHN That you don't know! Why, you know nothing – nothing that matters. I know how the fingers of the arm that isn't there hurt him on a cold day. I know exactly how he looks when one of his learned articles on music have been cut or printed in little type at the end of some magazine. I know when he's hard and cruel, whether it's because he enjoys it or whether he's taking it out on us because he's been hurt by someone else. I can tell you his dreams for a great national opera and ballet centre. I know what that man means in his life. I can understand how he would be drawn to this revolution.

KROHN You talk as if you approved of such an idea.

MRS KROHN In a way I do.

KROHN You don't know what you are saying. You mean you support what this man is doing?

MRS KROHN Of course not. Actually, I know very little about politics, as you're always saying. But I do know Stephan. He's never had his chance in the present system. You know that. In a new order of society he might.

KROHN Why, they'd use him and destroy him and throw him away.

CHIEF Why should we? Stephan is one of my most promising lieutenants. Underneath all the charm and frivolity, he's deadly serious. He's been working for our take-over for years in the universities. And he's been training and preparing for another big task, too. One of the projects of the new order will be a great national palace of the arts. Artists will have their chance to be among the heroes of the new state, Max.

MAX Please don't waste any time making me a hero. Let me get on with the job.

CHIEF We shall create a superb theatre, concert halls, an art gallery, a cultural centre for the whole world. Stephan and

I have discussed it for years. The site is chosen, the plans are already drawn, and the man to direct the whole thing from the very beginning is your son. It will be the golden age of the artist. You will have a part to play, Max.

MAX Don't tell me I'm going to be nationalised under Stephan.

KROHN Stephan has his own choice to make in life. It has nothing to do with me.

CHIEF He's your son. He's irrevocably bound up with you in the public mind, not only because of his name, but because of the story that has almost become part of our national history – the way he saved your life. In these first days of the revolution, the smallest things can turn public opinion one way or the other. If honest Walther Krohn were branded a traitor, Stephan Krohn, his son, would not be safe or acceptable as an architect of the new state. If you have to go out on to the scrap heap, I'm afraid your son will have to go too.

MRS KROHN Oh, no.

CHIEF But if you will take a stand behind your son – give him your blessing and backing – say a few words on the radio, for instance, then Stephan begins his new life today.

KROHN That, quite simply, is blackmail, and I'll have none of it.

CHIEF It's realism – something political windbags like you know nothing about.

KROHN (*Furious*) Like me! Why, I've been in politics before you . . .

CHIEF You don't seem to have learnt much . . .

MRS KROHN (*Shouting above them*) Be quiet, both of you! (*They stop in amazement*) You men will argue and wrangle for hours without ever coming to the real point. (*To the Chief*) Tell me, I believe you honestly care for Stephan.

CHIEF I can truthfully say that I do.



MRS KROHN Does he really believe in this precious new order of yours?

CHIEF He is one of the aptest pupils I have ever had.

MRS KROHN Does he believe in it with his whole heart?

CHIEF (*Slowly*) I'm not sure Stephan has ever yet believed in anything with his whole heart. He needs to do so. It will be his salvation. This, I know. He has found a great cause to which he could give all his powers and his passion. Without it, he's a dying man. The cause can exist without Stephan. But I doubt if Stephan can exist without the cause.

MRS KROHN You hear that, Walther?

KROHN Do you expect me to give up my most cherished principles because of Stephan's frustrations and stand for something I hate and despise?

MRS KROHN I don't ask anything of you and I'll support you in what you decide, as a loyal wife. But he is our son, Walther, and you are his father. Can you ask him to give up his chance in life for a second time? You've had your chance. (*She picks up Krohn's manuscript*) There it is, 250 pages of it. "My Reminiscences" by Walther Krohn. *My* early struggles, *my* successes, *my* achievements, *my* career. Stephan hasn't had any achievements or successes. As for his reminiscences, he only wishes he could forget them himself.

KROHN I never knew you felt so deeply.

MRS KROHN I never knew myself. Perhaps it takes a revolution to show a loyal wife just what it is she does feel.

KROHN I tell you, Stephan's future is his own affair. It has nothing to do with me. My conscience is my own, and I shall keep it.

MRS KROHN Your conscience. Don't you have any conscience about your son?

KROHN Of course I do. I wrestle with it every day.

MRS KROHN (*Bursting out*) Oh, I know. Honest Walther

KROHN I've lived with him all these years and I'm sick and tired of him.

KROHN Margaret! What do you mean?

MRS KROHN He's so horribly, maddeningly, boringly right. He's like a great spreading fungus that shuts out the light from everything that tries to grow in its shade. Why, people think the only worthwhile thing Stephan Krohn is capable of is to save his father's life at the age of fifteen. All the rest is anticlimax. And now when he's got a chance to prove himself, you can't help him. Oh, no, you won't stand by him and take the bullet, as he stood there and took the bullet for you. Never fear, you'll sit there wrestling with your precious conscience and risk his life all over again. And then when it's all over, you'll come out on top somehow - I know you - and you'll dictate another chapter to prove how right you were. Well, don't ask me to be there to read it. I'd rather be on the scrap heap with Stephan.

CHIEF Guard! (*Guard enters*)

CHIEF Guard, are we ready to go on the air?

GUARD As soon as you see the warning light, sir.

CHIEF Good, and bring Stephan Krohn in here immediately. (*Exit guard*) Well, Walther, you haven't got long to make up your mind. It's an amazing thing. That little light and a nation waiting. They've been waiting a long time, and what have you given them? A standard of living and nothing to live for. Schools without discipline, churches without faith, jobs without incentive to work, licence without limit. Tonight we turn a page of history. We can do things together, Walther, as we did in the old days.

(*The door opens and Stephan Krohn enters quietly. He is a young forty - easy, charming, until he is roused*)

STEPHAN Hello, everyone!

MRS KROHN Stephan!

STEPHAN Hello, Mother. Hello, Father. (*He draws back the*

*curtains and opens the window*) It's a perfect night, full moon and everything.

MAX Be careful, Stephan.

CHIEF That's all right. Stephan has nothing to fear. And the more those guards keep an eye on you the better. You'll be glad to hear, Stephan, the coup has gone like clockwork. The revolution has taken place.

STEPHAN So I gather.

CHIEF Have you got anything to report?

STEPHAN I did exactly what you told me to do, Chief – disappeared for one week, and hid out in the mountains alone. Then reported back here tonight.

CHIEF Good man!

STEPHAN I can't say you gave me a very heroic role in your operation, Chief. But I carried it out to the letter. I expect you thought it was all I was capable of fulfilling.

CHIEF Don't be a fool. You know what your role is. And it begins now. I believe you'll fill it superbly – provided one thing.

STEPHAN Yes?

CHIEF That your father co-operates.

STEPHAN I see. So it's like that.

CHIEF To save you the trouble of explaining, Stephan, you may as well know that all the cats have been let out of the bag tonight. Your parents already know your past. I've also told them about your possible future. I have explained to your father how, as far as you are concerned, everything depends on your having his backing. You understand that?

STEPHAN I think I do. Go on.

CHIEF As your father's son, with his support, you could be of supreme value to the new state. Without it, I'm sorry but I'm afraid it's too big a risk to take. What have you to say, Walther?

KROHN (*Looking searchingly at Stephan*) Look at me, Stephan.



Do you understand what this man is saying?

STEPHAN Yes. It sounds pretty clear to me, Father.

KROHN Do you know what he stands for?

STEPHAN Oh yes, I do, very well.

KROHN Do you really want to take on this project he outlines – art, theatre and the rest?

STEPHAN It's the thing I've dreamed of for years – you know that.

KROHN Are you absolutely sure you believe in what you're doing, that it will bring you satisfaction and fulfilment?

STEPHAN I believe in revolution, Father. Don't we need one? Don't I?

MRS KROHN Yes, Stephan, we do need it. I'm with you.

KROHN (*In despair*) It's no use. I can't do it. I can't back you, Stephan. I would be backing a lie. I would never forgive myself and the day will come when you'd never forgive me. But I can't stand in your way either. You've found something you believe in, at last. Well, I no longer believe. Everything I've stood for in life seems to have crumbled. My country, my politics, my most cherished principles, even the love and respect of my own wife. There's nothing left. Nothing. (*He has been working his way over near the door and now he suddenly makes a dash to go out. He shouts:*) Let the guards shoot!

(*He gets the door open, but Stephan flings himself against it and manages to throw his father back into the room*)

MRS KROHN No! Walther.

STEPHAN Father!

KROHN Let me go. Don't you see – it's your only hope you have for the future. This is the only way I can set you free.

STEPHAN For God's sake, Father. (*He forces him into a chair*) Sit down.

KROHN (*Struggling*) Let me out of here.

STEPHAN (*With sudden fury*) How many times am I supposed to save your life? Isn't once enough?

KROHN I don't ask you to do it, do I? Why can't you leave me alone?

STEPHAN It's true. We don't seem able to leave each other alone and that's the hell of it.

CHIEF (*Quietly interposing*) All right, Stephan. Don't get worked up. Your father won't worry you any more, I promise you. He'll come around now. I haven't a doubt of it. Speak to him Margaret. He needs you. He's overwrought. He'll need time to recover himself – to think about the future and about that speech on the radio.

MRS KROHN Here, drink this my dear. He's right you know. You've done all that a man could do – and more. But there comes a time when we have to be reasonable – for the sake of Stephan's life as well as your own.

MAX Come to think of it, Margaret, you'd make a pretty good Eve. You make that apple sound very tasty.

KROHN All right, Stephan. You win. (*To the Chief*) Him too. There is no other way. What do you want me to say on your radio?

CHIEF That's better, Walther. Now you're talking. I knew you'd see sense.

KROHN Don't think I trust you, or what you're trying to do. As far as I can understand it I hate it with my whole heart. But there comes a moment in life when you know you've fired your last shot. Someone else has to have a chance. And if there's only one way left of giving you that chance, Stephan, well, I think I owe it to you.

MAX That doesn't sound like you in the Resistance days, Walther. You never had fired your last shot then.

CHIEF That's enough from you, Max.

MAX Oh, certainly. I'm just an artist – a dreamer. All the same I've been drawing Walther tonight as a man of rock. "On

this rock I will build my Church and the gates of hell will not prevail against it." Yes, but that's the Walther I remember. I would hate to think I have got it all wrong now.

KROHN I know, Max. But in those days I knew what I was fighting for. I believed in it. Now I seem to know nothing.

CHIEF That's all right. We'll help you. You'll serve your country as you have before.

CHIEF (*Quietly to Stephan*) You see, Stephan, it's quite simple. He was bound to come around in the end. He has a guilty conscience and that makes him vulnerable.

MAX At that rate we must all be pretty vulnerable, Chief.

CHIEF I'll come to you later, Max. Now I want to talk to Stephan. You'll get your job all right. Your future's assured. It was never in doubt actually.

STEPHAN What do you mean?

CHIEF Well, we'd have got his support one way if not another. You were the easiest way.

STEPHAN I see. In other words, all this business of my job depending on my father was just a trick. You were just using me to get at him.

CHIEF Don't be a sentimental fool, Stephan. You know perfectly well that for the sake of the cause you use everything and everyone. That's the glory of it. As for your father, be honest. You hate him and all he stands for. You've told me again and again. Can you deny it?

STEPHAN No, I can't.

CHIEF Very well, forget him. Believe me, he'll toe the line. He'll do it very well. Honest Walther Krohn! And the beauty of it is that when he comes to speak on that radio he'll believe every single word. Meanwhile, you have work to do.

STEPHAN You say forget him. But that's just what I can't do. All right. I've hated him - have done for years. Agreed. But I tell you there's something I hate most of all, and that's



what he's prepared to do now, even though he's doing it for me. You see the man we are talking about is not just a broken politician. He's my father. And in spite of myself, in spite of him, I suppose the trouble is I love him. It's quite a discovery. Hate and love tear you apart. You've got to get rid of one or the other.

CHIEF Grow up, Stephan. What you call love isn't love at all. It's primitive, animalistic, straight out of the jungle. It's the tiger licking its cub. It's the young bird opening its mouth for food. Get rid of all that. Grow out of it. Your life exists now for one thing and one thing only - the cause.

STEPHAN Yes, that's right. The cause. There's only one difficulty Chief. I'm not sure I believe in your cause any more.

CHIEF (*Threatening*) What's that?

MAX (*Laughs*) Excuse me, Chief. But how very awkward!

STEPHAN I don't believe in it. I really decided that up in the mountains this week.

KROHN Do you mean it, Stephan? But why didn't you tell us as soon as you came in?

STEPHAN Well, it takes an awful lot of courage, I find, to make the final wrench. It's risking your life, of course. But that's not all. It's like tearing out a vital part of yourself. Besides, Father, you make it difficult for me. I've been haunted with the thought that if I break with the Chief the only place to go is with you. That would be like giving up life and choosing death. All the same, I believe there's another alternative, a greater revolution. That's what I'm choosing. I'm going to break with you, Chief.

CHIEF Stephan, control yourself. Don't you realise this is our hour? We have won everything.

STEPHAN That's the trouble. As long as we were just attacking the old order I was happy. I hated the old order. I still do. I think most of it is rotten. All it seems to offer the world is hypocrisy, money and the bomb. I dreaded that the cause might fail. But now there is something I dread even more -

that it will succeed. And it looks as if it's going to.

CHIEF Of course we'll succeed. Tonight it's one country. Tomorrow the world.

STEPHAN You may be right, and now I know I don't want it.

CHIEF You're too late. It's here.

STEPHAN Yes. I wish you luck. You may do as well as the old lot. A Godless dictatorship may not be so different from a Godless democracy. But one thing I know now for certain. You haven't got the answer either. You can't create a world at peace when your weapons are threats and lies.

MRS KROHN Be careful, Stephan. You don't know what you are saying.

CHIEF (*Threatening*) That's enough . . .

STEPHAN One moment. Just before you get rid of me, I want to thank you. You've taught me more than any man I know. You've given me something to live for bigger than myself. No one else ever did. You lit a fire inside me. It's burning still.

CHIEF Then for God's sake man, why don't you trust me now?

STEPHAN How can something that makes me hate people – hate even my own father – how can that ever produce the brotherhood of man? How can it? Your new order isn't good enough.

CHIEF Oh, I see. And I suppose you've found something better?

STEPHAN Yes, I have.

CHIEF It's the old Stephan – the old impractical dreamer. The poor little Yes-and-No man who promises big, but who hasn't got what it takes when it comes to the crunch.

MAX For a man who hasn't got what it takes, Stephan seems to be doing pretty well.

CHIEF I've believed in you, Stephan. When I chose you and trained you, I risked a very great deal on you. I believed

when nobody else did. But I was wrong. Your father was right after all. You're no good.

MRS KROHN You saw what he did just now. He saved his father's life for the second time. Do you call that being no good?

STEPHAN Mother! Do stop trying to defend me. That's been your mission in life for years, hasn't it, and it gets awfully boring.

MRS KROHN Stephan!

STEPHAN The Chief is absolutely right. I'm no good. I was just a misfit and a runner-away. But I believe that's over now. And I'll tell you why. You remember Joseph, don't you? Joseph Bachmeister, my old violin teacher? He came to see me the other night. It was actually the first time since I stopped being his pupil. Well . . . since I lost my arm.

MRS KROHN And of course it upset you. It brought back all the past.

STEPHAN No. It opened up the future.

MRS KROHN Staying away all those years and then suddenly dropping in out of the blue. He must have upset you very much.

STEPHAN He did terribly. But I needed upsetting. He may have even begun to set me up the right way.

CHIEF What are you talking about? Artists! Musicians! They have their place in life, an important place in the service of the cause. But this has nothing to do with political reality.

MAX Don't underestimate the power of artists, Chief. They can upset a lot of things. What happened, Stephan? I'm interested.

STEPHAN You know what Joseph suffered in his country before he escaped. Nineteen of his personal family were tortured and murdered in gas chambers. But in spite of all that, that man has ceased to hate. "It's no good, Stephan," he said. "I spend my whole life trying to make harmony



when my own heart is one great crashing discord.”

MRS KROHN Life is the discord, Stephan, the hideous, bitter past. You can't resolve some things ever.

STEPHAN Joseph believes you can. He ought to know.

CHIEF It's his sacred duty to hate, and ours too.

STEPHAN You talk to me about growing up, Chief. Grow up yourself. It's things like revenge and hate that are primitive.

CHIEF (*Passionately*) Hate alone gives the fire and passion to avenge those murdered victims of the gas chambers, and to burn up the rotten, putrefying systems controlled by the men of the old regime. No. You can't get rid of hate. You've got to direct it and use it.

STEPHAN My hatred has directed me. Hate always gets control, that's the trouble, and in the atomic age it will destroy us all. You've got to cure it.

CHIEF Cure is a big word, a very big word. I don't give a damn for all your talk. If you really mean what you say, show me how you cure hate. Go on. Show us all how.

(*Stephan, with great hesitation, turns to his father*)

STEPHAN Once upon a time, Father, you were my hero. I don't think you could ever know how proud I was of you. You were my very ideal of a fighter, and a patriot – yes, and of a revolutionary. Sometimes at night, all alone, hugging the arm that wasn't there, I'd weep – and then I'd think of you and know it was all worthwhile. Until – until the years went by and I saw you getting more and more soft, and cynical and self-righteous, and then I'd curse and swear at this empty sleeve – and all the emptiness that went with it. And I began to hate you, Father, for what you were – still more for what you weren't. One of the reasons I joined the revolution was to get my own back on you. I'm terribly sorry. It's poisoned everything between us.

KROHN How could I live up to what you did for me, Stephan? How could I?

STEPHAN I didn't want you to live up to it exactly. Just accept it. I don't suppose I really wanted a hero. I just wanted a father.

KROHN God, how I wish you'd never stopped that bullet. I could have been at peace in my grave – a martyr for my country – and you, Stephan, could have been what you were meant to be.

STEPHAN It's no good, Father, that's just running away. It's the old, old hide out. The point is we're here, both of us, mutilated if you like, tarnished, but alive, breathing, and needed, both of us, and needing each other.

KROHN Such a fool. I thought if only I talked big enough somehow I'd win your respect. If I had just let you see what I'm really like I could have had your love.

STEPHAN You've had it all along. We were just too blind and proud to know it.

MAX You may as well face it, Chief. He's answered your challenge. He's got rid of hate.

CHIEF So he's got rid of hate? That doesn't accomplish anything – nothing practical.

MAX Doesn't it? I think I'd wait and see. Stephan's found a better way of righting wrongs than you have. And if this way is real, if it works, than everything you stand for is as slow and out-dated as the Bishop's bicycle out there. All your plans to tidy up and computerise the human race are pure fantasy, because they leave out the one thing that matters – man himself – man who won't be pigeon-holed or pressurised. This world is not a battery hen house. It's for people – human beings, who have a knack of doing the most unpredictable and irrational things like forgiving each other, and loving one another.

CHIEF Ridiculous!

MAX You may say what you like but you're going to need what Stephan stands for sooner or later. And you'll need more and more people like him. You'll never succeed with-

out them. For in them lies the future.

CHIEF (*Draws gun*) There's only one future for traitors.

MAX Wait a minute. If you're going to arrest Stephan you can arrest me too. And in case we don't meet again, you might take a look at this. (*He hands him the portrait he has been drawing*)

CHIEF That. Do you think I've got time for pictures?

MAX My dear Chief. I know you. Cause or no cause, you'll always have time to look at yourself.

CHIEF (*Looking at it in spite of himself, shaken*) Is this some kind of a joke? It may be your idea of a saint, it certainly isn't me.

MAX I told you artists can change things. Don't you see the likeness?

CHIEF There is something there, of course. I can only imagine your portrait isn't yet complete.

MAX The portrait is complete. It's the subject that isn't. (*He takes the picture back*) Come to think of it, that's the whole point. You once led a group of freedom fighters, Chief - we weren't heroic - but men who cared for their country and for one another. My God, what's happened to us all? We're none of us what we were meant to be. But then on the other hand, we're none of us "complete". And I'll tell you another thing. There's a red light flashing from the old cow barn up there.

CHIEF What's that?

KROHN By God, he's right. It's the red light. It's the signal to scatter.

CHIEF (*With great excitement*) Not to scatter, but to strike. (*There is a sound of cars and motor-bikes starting up*)

MAX Whatever it is, there's plenty of confusion out there. (*He has been edging towards the door and as he speaks he dashes out*)

MAX I'm going to get help.

MRS KROHN No, Max, come back.



CHIEF (*Shouting at the door*) Shoot that man!

KROHN He hasn't a chance.

(*They wait in silence then a single shot is heard*)

MRS KROHN Max!

CURTAIN

### ACT III

*It is a few minutes later. Mr and Mrs Krohn and Stephan are standing at the window looking out. Outside you can hear the sounds of several cars and motorcycles driving away. The sound dies. The guard stands in the doorway, his gun in his hand. He is watching carefully all that goes on.*

STEPHAN There goes the Chief. I believe they've cleared out everyone of them.

KROHN It sounds like the last car.

MRS KROHN What does it mean, Walther?

KROHN It can mean that they've failed. More likely it's just a change in their plans. They don't waste much time getting away. *(To guard)* Look! You've got to let us out. Don't you realise they've left you here on your own. You can't just stand there all night. *(The guard does not move)*

MRS KROHN Now listen to me. There's a man out there who has been shot.

GUARD That's nothing to do with me.

KROHN He may be bleeding to death at this very moment. You've got to let me go out to look for him.

GUARD Stay where you are.

KROHN The man out there risked his life to try and get help for us. We can't just leave him.

GUARD The Chief told me to keep you here.

MRS KROHN The Chief! Don't you realise he's gone. He's run away.

GUARD I trust the Chief.

MRS KROHN Oh, how can any revolution succeed when it can make a man so stupid?

KROHN If you stay here the police will come and arrest you.

GUARD The Chief will look after all that. He cares for his men.

MRS KROHN We may as well sit down, Walther. You can't do a thing.

KROHN It's true, damn it. I can't send for a secretary or call a meeting or dash off in an aeroplane, or even deliver a speech.

MRS KROHN Would those things really help right now, Walther?

KROHN Of course not. But it's what one always does in a crisis. At least you feel as if you're doing something. (*A pause*) The crisis usually gets worse.

STEPHAN (*To guard*) Will you let me go out and look for Max? I'll come back, I promise you.

GUARD No! I don't trust you. I thought you were one of us. But it looks as if you're no different from your old man.

MRS KROHN What do you mean by that?

GUARD Plenty of words, lots of promises, but when it comes to action - God help us.

STEPHAN (*To Krohn*) We are evidently more alike than I thought, Father.

GUARD (*To Krohn*) You were a worker once, weren't you - one of us. You fought against injustice - so you said. Look at you - rich, fat, comfortable. You've got everything you want.

KROHN (*Rising in protest*) You don't understand . . . never mind. (*He subsides*)

GUARD (*To Stephan*) And, for all I can see, you're just the same.

MRS KROHN You can say what you like about us, but how can you be so cruel and ridiculous about our son. He doesn't have what he wants. Look at him! He was going to be a great musician.

STEPHAN Oh Mother! That's what I thought once. I didn't finish telling you about Bachmeister. He has been a terribly



hurt and bitter man. You know that. He's poured all his feelings and passion into his violin, and his pupils. I was one of his favourite pupils. And yet when I lost my arm, he cut me out of his life. I thought it was because he didn't care. I was wrong. He cared so much that he lay awake night after night, weeping and cursing. He was too bitter to trust himself near me. Not long ago he found the secret of peace of heart. It was honesty – not about the people who had hurt him, but about the people he had hurt. They were many, actually. Then he asked me to forgive him. "I taught you to love music," he said, "and to hate men." He was so real that I was able to ask the question I had never dared to ask before – not even to myself.

MRS KROHN You shouldn't be talking this way, Stephan. It isn't good for you.

STEPHAN I asked him to tell me the truth. Would I really have been a great musician? He looked at me and then almost casually he said, "I think not – you would have been good, of course – very good – but not great. I don't think you had it in you."

MRS KROHN (*Shouting*) The man's a liar. A cruel, vicious liar. He's trying to destroy you, Stephan, he's trying to destroy us all.

STEPHAN No, Mother. Bachmeister doesn't lie. Not about music anyway. Oh, I was furious too, to begin with. I plunged and kicked, like a mule. But then, up there all alone in the mountains, something seemed to say to me, "Why so hot and bothered, little man? Get some sense of proportion for God's sake – for God's sake!" It's a curious experience. You're at the end of your tether. You don't know what to do. And then it comes. As soft as a whisper and yet it's as clear and sharp as a bugle – "the truth shall set you free". And you won't believe this, Mother, but I laughed. All alone out there I roared with laughter at the thought of what a fool I've been all these years. I suddenly saw that this whole musician business has been for me one great,

big, glorious "out". It's excused every cowardice, and justified every rottenness. It was like . . . like a benediction to face the truth. It didn't even seem to matter any more. You see it isn't an arm I have been missing. It's a backbone. (To guard) You understand what I mean?

GUARD (*Awkwardly*) No need to drag me into it. I'm no ruddy musician.

STEPHAN While I was up there, I thought a lot about my relationship with the Chief and the cause and I thought about you, Father. My hatred for you was like a great stone in my heart. But the stone has rolled away at last. (*He turns towards the window*) What's that? There's someone moving out there.

GUARD Get away from the window all of you or I'll shoot the lot of you.

MRS KROHN There's someone out there.

(*There is a slow footstep outside, a knock on the door and the Bishop enters. He is without his coat and he has a bloodstained handkerchief in his hand*)

KROHN Konrad!

MRS KROHN Bishop!

GUARD What do you want?

BISHOP (*To guard*) So they've left you here alone. That's the way it is, isn't it? You start out with a vision for the brotherhood of all mankind and you end up with a gun in your hand alone.

GUARD (*Points with gun*) Get over there.

BISHOP If you wish.

KROHN What's happened?

BISHOP Oh, they were in much too much of a hurry to bother about an old man like me. The guard let me go.

MRS KROHN Bishop! That's blood. You're hurt?

BISHOP No, no. I'm all right. This is not my blood.

STEPHAN Max?

BISHOP Yes, I found him outside. I'm afraid it's too late.

MRS KROHN Oh, no.

BISHOP You can leave him now. He's very peaceful. I've covered him with my coat. No harm will come to him now.

STEPHAN And his greatest work barely begun.

KROHN He should never have run out.

STEPHAN Max did many foolish and magnificent things. That's why he was different from most of us.

MRS KROHN (*To guard*) Do you realise what you've done? Do you?

GUARD He shouldn't have run out. Anyway, I didn't want to shoot. I didn't mean to kill. I was only obeying orders.

BISHOP We all obey orders, you know. It just depends whose orders they are.

MRS KROHN You wouldn't even let us go to him. You shot him and then let him bleed to death out there alone. You're guilty, do you hear. You've got blood on your hands.

BISHOP We've all got blood on our hands, Margaret, all of us. I got to Max just as he was dying. He had this in his hand. (*He shows them Max's picture*) He gave it to me and he said, "Keep it safe. It's the last piece of my window. It's the last of the twelve Apostles."

STEPHAN It's the Chief!

MRS KROHN It can't be the Chief. It's radiant. It's the face of a saint.

STEPHAN It's out of this world.

KROHN All the same, it's the Chief.

STEPHAN Did he say any more before he died?

BISHOP Only a very few words. He said, "It's Judas".

STEPHAN Is that all?

BISHOP "Judas—as he was meant to be." I think I can explain. Max often talked with me about his window and how he would depict each of the twelve Apostles. He modelled



them all on people he knew, people he felt suitable. He thought a great deal about Judas. He said to me once, "Perhaps Judas was the best of the whole bunch. Perhaps Jesus counted on him one of the most. If he hadn't been a traitor he might have been a saint." And then Max said, "Why don't I put Judas in the window not as he was but as he was meant to be?"

STEPHAN You're right. This is the Chief, as he was meant to be.

*(The door has opened quietly and the Chief is standing there watching the whole scene)*

CHIEF What's going on here? *(He takes the picture)* What's this?

MRS KROHN It's Max's picture, the one he showed you. It's the last picture he'll ever make.

CHIEF I'm sorry he had to die. I loved Max as much as any of you did. He was a strange and lovable man. Like many artists he saw things occasionally that - are not there.

BISHOP Or the things that are there - and the rest of us are too blind and foolish to see.

CHIEF *(Handing the picture to Stephan)* Stephan, I came back for you. I never forget my friends.

STEPHAN What do you want?

CHIEF The fight is on - and you're needed. Some fool gave the game away too soon. They've called out troops against us. People have started rumours that the country is threatened. Everyone's out in the streets yelling for the Prime Minister, shouting for freedom and patriotism like madmen. The idiots!

STEPHAN Is the revolution over?

CHIEF It hasn't even begun. We have to take to the mountains. Look, forget the quarrel we had. My car is here. I came here at the risk of my life to get you. *(Stephan does not move)* Forget your father. He doesn't count any more.

He could have helped us once but it's too late. We need fighters now. Not fossils.

STEPHAN You're wasting your time, Chief, I'm staying.

CHIEF What, with this lot? And what are they? Proud ecclesiastics who opposed every honest reform all down the ages. Pompous politicians who veer with every wind of change but never give up their power till they are forced to do so. To think I've trained you to be a revolutionary, Stephan, and you prefer to stay with the status quo. Yes, your father. There's nothing so reactionary in this world as an old revolutionary who has run out of steam.

STEPHAN Is it true, Father. Is that all that you stand for. The status quo?

BISHOP It's a fair question, Walther.

KROHN I'd like to answer it. I wish I could. But I have become a cynic. I've seen revolutions come and go - wars, systems of government and all the rest. But I'm not sure there is much you can do except try your best and hang on.

STEPHAN (*Facing the Chief and Krohn*) Oh God! You're both reactionaries from the hairs of your head to the tips of your toes. You belong to the stone age - both of you. You're die-hards through and through. The Chief, because you believe man can only amount to anything when he's bullied and regimented. And my father, because you don't believe in man at all. Or God. You won't risk or change anything for the sake of the future. The truth is, you are both in love with power, and you cling to it for yourselves. You're so alike. And I'll fight both of you with every breath I have.

BISHOP I'll stand with you, Stephan. I think Max died for something like that.

CHIEF There's no more time for argument. This is a command. Do you understand? You come with me.

STEPHAN We've murdered one innocent man, Chief. And probably there'll be thousands more. Violence won't do it. Your revolution is heading downhill. You know it. If you

have any honesty you'll have to jump off sooner or later.

CHIEF Where would I jump to?

STEPHAN Into a real revolution – where systems and structures change because people change, where men control their own destiny because they have learnt to control their own natures.

CHIEF (*He hesitates for a moment – then his face hardens*) That's no good. It's no use waiting for men to change as you say. Human selfishness is much too deeply ingrained. You're crazy, Stephan. What's more, you're a traitor. Nothing will stop us. Nothing, even if we have to bring in help from over the border.

GUARD What's that? Foreign troops in our country?

CHIEF Quiet! Now, Stephan, I give you one last chance. You come with me now or you die where you stand. (*Stephan does not move*)

MRS KROHN Oh, no, please!

CHIEF Do you hear me? It's an order. (*To guard*) All right. Shoot him!

KROHN No! No!

CHIEF Do as you're ordered. Kill him. All right, if you won't . . . (*He starts to raise his gun but the guard is too quick. He suddenly turns his gun on the Chief*)

GUARD I wouldn't if I were you. Drop that gun! Drop it. (*The Chief drops his gun*) All right. Now you get over there. I don't trust any of you. (*He kicks the gun away*) All my life I have had people telling me what to do. Well, for once in my life I'm going to make up my own mind.

MRS KROHN Oh, thank you, thank you. I'm sorry I said you were stupid.

GUARD I'm not so stupid as to trust any of you yet.

CHIEF What do you think you're going to do?

GUARD I don't know yet. I'm not so smart at deciding things as some of you.



CHIEF Don't you realise the country is in deadly danger. I'm desperately needed out there.

GUARD That's what they all say: "The country this and the country that. *I am desperately needed.*" Maybe if everyone who thought he was someone was locked up for a bit the world might get along a great deal better.

BISHOP Hear! Hear!

CHIEF You'll die for this.

GUARD You're getting just a bit too keen on this dying business. First that chap out there and then him (*pointing to Stephan*) and now me. Seems to me anyone who doesn't agree with you is due to die. (*With rising anger*) And didn't I hear you say you were going to call in help from outside? Didn't you? Foreign tanks and guns to murder our own people just like they did the last time? That's what people said you'd do, only I wouldn't believe them. I trusted you. You . . . you Judas. That's what he called you, didn't he? Judas.

CHIEF This man is obviously a lunatic.

KROHN He's not a lunatic. He's a human being. He's turned from a machine into a man. He's what you've been talking about, Stephan - a man who has suddenly come alive and started to think for himself.

GUARD (*Turning to Krohn*) All right you! I've no more use for you than I have for him. What've you got that's any better?

KROHN (*Very simply*) You're right, I've nothing. It's no use pretending any more. I *was* a revolutionary once, just as you said. I cared desperately what happened to people like you.

GUARD Well, go on. I'm listening.

KROHN But comfort, career, always being right, they've put out the fire in me. There are only ashes left. They are cold and dead.

STEPHAN Is that true, Father?

KROHN (*Looking at Stephan*) Not entirely, Stephan. Because if you can become a different person, Stephan – and you have – and this fellow too – well then, perhaps there is truth in what you say. Perhaps there is just a spark of hope.

BISHOP That spark could spread, Walther, like a forest fire. It's the spirit of God.

CHIEF Isn't it a little late to talk about that now?

BISHOP Sometimes when I look up at the shimmering, fiery glass in the Cathedral windows I know it's not too late. The fire can come again and burn up our lust and our pettiness, beginning in the Church.

KROHN I believe you. But when?

BISHOP When? I'm an old man. I haven't long to live. But I'd give . . . I'd give anything in the world to see it happen before I die.

*(He half unconsciously lays his favourite pipe on the table. The Chief bends to try and get to his gun)*

GUARD (*To the Chief*) No, you don't! All right. I'm not going to shoot you. We've done enough killing around here for a bit. I'm not going to add to it. I'm going to put you in the barn, till I think what to do with you. Come to that, you might do a bit of thinking, too. As for the rest of you – at least you don't all seem to think you know everything any more. You might even find the way out of the mess.

KROHN We might find it together.

GUARD Together! That's rich! (*To the Chief*) You come along with me.

CHIEF You've won your first recruits, Stephan. Your father, the Bishop, now this fellow. Not a very impressive body.

BISHOP Not very powerful, Chief, not very clever. God has chosen the foolish of this world to confound the wise. And the weak to confound the mighty.

CHIEF Unfortunately, you're too late. You haven't a chance.

BISHOP We all have a chance – even you – and even I. The world is waiting to see what God can do through one man wholly given to Him. Would you mind putting me in the barn with this man? I want to talk to him – somewhere where he can't get away.

GUARD Lock 'em both up and let 'em knock their heads together? All right. You gave me some of your talk out there. It wasn't bad sense for a Bishop. All right. Go along then – the two of you.

STEPHAN (*To the Chief, as he hands him Max's picture*) Oh! Here! You'll need this.

BISHOP Come along, Chief. You and I know the inside of that barn.

CHIEF I think you'll be wasting your breath. All the same, after you, Bishop.

GUARD (*To Stephan and Mr. and Mrs. Krohn*) As far as I can see, you'll have to look after yourselves now.

(*The Chief and the Bishop go, followed by the guard*)

MRS KROHN Are we really free? Can we go back to the house?

STEPHAN Wait a minute, Mother. We aren't going back to anything. This is where our revolution begins. Do you agree, Father?

KROHN Yes, Stephan. But I still don't know what we can do.

STEPHAN I don't know either yet. But I believe we'll find out. First of all I'm going to look after Max. (*Exit Stephan*)

MRS KROHN Walther, I'm so desperately ashamed of the things I've said tonight – about you, I mean. They burst out of me. (*Sound of a car arriving*)

KROHN They were true. You should have been saying them long since.

(*Enter the Lauritzes in great excitement. They have had several drinks*)

ELSA Hello, everybody!



PAUL We had to dash back to tell you. It looks as if the crisis is over – finished.

ELSA It's true. Someone has given the game away, and the police are everywhere.

PAUL They've released the PM and they're arresting the rebels right and left. The army is coming in to restore order. They're telling everyone to keep calm and go home.

ELSA Everybody's out in the streets. They're all singing patriotic songs and cheering like mad.

PAUL (*Helps himself to a drink*) Then we all had drinks to celebrate. Several drinks.

ELSA It was all terribly moving really. I mean you felt the basic soundness of everybody. This country will never stand for revolution. Look, aren't you glad? You all look so . . . don't you understand. We are free.

MRS KROHN Except that most of us sold out to the other side.

PAUL Now then. That's hardly fair. I mean, we were up against it with the Chief. We had to roll with the punches. Of course, I knew all the time the Chief was exaggerating with his "we are in control" and all that.

KROHN You fool! Don't we ever learn? Don't we ever face the truth?

PAUL I don't know what you're talking about. It's all over I tell you. All right. We came especially to tell you. If you don't want to believe us, don't. Come on, Elsa. Let's make a night of it and celebrate. Goodnight, all. (*He goes to the door followed by Elsa. When he opens it, Oskar is standing there*)

OSKAR (*Coming in*) Sorry, Mr Lauritz.

PAUL Good God!

KROHN Oskar!

OSKAR I apologise for this, Mrs Krohn. But I'm here urgently at the request of the Prime Minister. Mr Krohn, they want your immediate help in forming a National Government.

KROHN My help?

PAUL Who the hell do you think you are? Message from the Prime Minister?

OSKAR There is no time to explain now. But for years I've been in Special Security. You'll have to take my word for it. I was up here this evening keeping an eye on things. I've reported everything.

MRS KROHN Oskar! So you really have been a spy after all?

OSKAR That's right, Mrs Krohn.

ELSA And you really mean to say you've been reporting on us. Well, I never.

OSKAR I'm afraid so. I've been keeping track of you for a long time, Mr Lauritz.

PAUL Of me! Scandalous!

OSKAR I know quite a lot of things you've been up to, too.

ELSA Really, Oskar! We must have a talk about this some time.

OSKAR Come to think of it, you can go if you want to. You're only small fry.

PAUL I like that.

OSKAR Mr Krohn, I'm instructed to ask you to stand by here. The Prime Minister and the heads of the armed forces will try and contact you shortly.

KROHN What's the situation, Oskar?

OSKAR The report is that foreign troops are massing on the frontier. They've issued an ultimatum. Unless the country submits to the rebels and allows them to form a Government, they're coming in to take over.

PAUL That's definitely not true. Pure rumour! I tell you . . .

KROHN It could be true. We heard it from the lips of the Chief himself.

OSKAR It's true all right. (*Bitterly*) Foreign troops! Coming to liberate us - for the second time.

PAUL Look, there's nothing in this, but if by any chance there

could be, why get caught like rats in a trap? We've got a fast car here. We can take the lot of you and drive across the other border.

KROHN You two had better go. Get out, for God's sake.

PAUL (*Bitterly*) That's right. We don't belong in this rotten country. You can't trust anyone any more. It's full of spies. Come on, Elsa, we can make it.

ELSA (*Hesitating*) I don't know. I'm not sure I trust you either, Paul. Besides, you can't expect me to go dashing across frontiers dressed like this, can you?

PAUL For God's sake, make up your mind, one way or the other.

ELSA You can go if you want, Paul. I think I'm staying.

PAUL But what can we do here? I ask you. Absolutely nothing.

(*The guard and Stephan have entered*)

STEPHAN Look, there is something we can do. This fellow reminded me.

KROHN Yes?

GUARD The Chief was going to use this mike here. It's still hitched up to the transmitter in the truck outside.

MRS KROHN Walther. You can broadcast to the nation - to the world.

OSKAR Yes, and use the Chief's radio to do it. I like that.

KROHN But can you operate a radio?

GUARD I'll need help.

STEPHAN Oskar's your man. He'll help you.

ELSA That's right. Oskar used to operate our transmitter in the Resistance.

OSKAR I'll do what I can.

GUARD As soon as the light comes on, you can speak.

OSKAR We may have very little time. (*Guard and Oskar go*)

PAUL Are you coming, Elsa?



ELSA No, Paul.

PAUL Well, good luck, all of you. (*He goes*)

KROHN He's right. This could be the last chance for all of us. But I don't know what to say. I don't even know how to begin.

STEPHAN In the war, Dad, we both of us cared enough to give everything. Don't you think we can decide that for the second time?

KROHN Stand by me, Stephan, and you, Margaret.

MRS KROHN We're with you, Walther, all of us.

ELSA I'm with you.

*(They join him. They are a force. The warning light goes on. Oskar comes in and goes to the mike)*

OSKAR This is a free radio station in the mountains. We're calling the whole nation and all who love freedom everywhere. Here is Walther Krohn who'll speak to you. Here is Walther Krohn.

KROHN My friends, I speak urgently. Once again we may have to defend our freedom. If we do, we will fight. Let the whole world know for certain we will fight and never give in. But that is not enough. What will we do with our freedom? Tonight I have learned why it is that nations go down to disaster. It is because of people like me – we who talk big and live small. It's not enough to keep things as they are. We cannot use our freedom to perpetuate injustice and inequality. We will live, we will die if we must, to show the world that free men, united in faith and courage, can create a new order of society for all – where all can live in dignity everywhere. I speak to you now with my wife, and my son, Stephan, by my side, with patriots who stood firm in the Resistance and will stand firm now. The Prime Minister and I have been divided by personal rivalries and points of view. Now I pledge him my fullest support. And because tonight I have found again after many years my own family, I have found also my lost faith in a family of

nations. (*We hear the distant roar of planes*) You, beyond our borders who can hear me, do not forget us. Use your freedom now or you will lose it. We must choose to be governed by God or we condemn ourselves to be ruled by tyrants.

(*The sound of planes gets louder and louder. As Krohn speaks the lights fade except for a spotlight on his face. Finally this fades too and there is darkness as we hear Krohn's voice*)

KROHN Calling all who love freedom everywhere. Calling all who love freedom everywhere.

CURTAIN

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