

SATAN II

SATAN II

A Play in Three Acts

by

Park Teter

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SATAN II

Cast of Characters

CHUL	Young male revolutionary soldier, Krela's lover
KRELA	Young female revolutionary soldier, Chul's lover
LUCKY	Revolutionary leader; later recognized as Satan
DENKA	Old revolutionary soldier
DROG	Revolutionary dictator; later recognized as God
LISSINA	(phone voice) Drog's secretary
GRELKA	(phone voice) One of Drog's generals
TRESZA	Drog's (God's) daughter; Lucky's (Satan's) lover
LAGRI	(phone voice) One of Drog's generals
VANT	One of Drog's colonels
CHAZKI	A sergeant in Drog's army
ANITA CARLSON	Director, Stockholm Psychiatric Institute
SIGRID	(phone voice) Carlson's secretary
BENGT OLAFSON	Psychiatrist in Stockholm Psychiatric Institute
ALAN HOPKINS	American psychiatrist
SARA LEVI	American psychiatrist
HANS, CHRISTINA, JORGEN, SOPHIE, LARS	Hospital patients
NURSE	
HOSPITAL ORDERLIES	

SATAN II

ACT I

Scene One

In the mountains of Jardia, a former colony. Just before dawn, at the mouth of a cave, a young man and a young woman, CHUL and KRELA, squat by a fire. (NOTE: Here, as in other scenes, lighting is used to produce flames.) The fire casts their shadows, enlarged and wavering, onto the cave wall behind them. It is the beginning of the 21st Century, but the impression of this opening scene is that of cavemen in the Stone Age.

KRELA reaches for some sticks and throws them on the fire. CHUL pokes the fire with a stick. The sound of a stone tumbling down a rocky slope startles them. With a quick gesture, like a sergeant in a night attack, CHUL points out where KRELA should hide, and himself slips behind a rock. Neither utters a sound. Slowly, with no sound or sudden movement, CHUL draws back his arm with a grenade in his hand, the other hand poised to pull the pin. KRELA cautiously aims a semi-automatic into the dark. Another stone is dislodged just as a sheep bleats: BAAAAA! CHUL and KRELA, after a moment's jolt, slump back with sighs of relief.

KRELA: I knew we were not followed.

CHUL: We can never be sure. We should never have built this fire.

KRELA: Drog has bigger game to hunt than you and me.

CHUL: Drog is infinitely suspicious. And his police are everywhere.

KRELA: That's exactly what he wants people to think. If people believe he is omniscient, he won't have to police them. They will police themselves.

CHUL: Drog's police are no myth.

KRELA: But look how you and I were frightened by a sheep. As if even the sheep now work for Drog.

CHUL: It's the other way around: those who work for Drog are sheep. In fact, he's turned the whole country into a flock of sheep.

KRELA: They think Drog's their shepherd. They think he'll lead them to green pastures.

CHUL: He's leading them to slaughter.

KRELA: Why can't people see that? Why?

CHUL: Because he sics his dogs on all who stray.

KRELA: It's more than that. They worship him.

CHUL: The more cruel he is, the more they worship him.

KRELA: It's as if the country is under a spell. How do you wake up a country that's under a spell?

CHUL: Lucky's the only one who can wake them up. But first we have to wake up Lucky.

KRELA: We have to make him see what is happening.

CHUL: He knows.

KRELA: But not the latest.

CHUL: He can guess.

KRELA: Making parents watch the torture of their own children? Does he know about that?

CHUL: Lucky warned us — remember? — that Drog would stop at nothing.

KRELA: And his old comrades tortured. Tortured till they confessed to crimes they never committed. One by one his friends have been . . .

CHUL: His friends! Was there one that did not abandon him?

KRELA: You know Lucky. He forgives them all. He never blamed them.

CHUL: Forgives, yes. But can he forget? You want him to lead what's left of them, but can he forget how they deserted him? Can he believe that they won't desert him again?

KRELA: What alternative is there? What would you do in his situation? If you were Lucky and saw what is happening in Jardia, what would you do?

CHUL: Go to America.

KRELA: America!

CHUL: What the Hell, he's half American.

KRELA: He never knew his father. Just a soldier that screwed a whore.

CHUL: You've heard him talk about America. When he was a student there, he was happy. You know he says that America is where he learned what freedom could be.

KRELA: Freedom! Look what America did to OUR country! Freedom! They built the king's army. Trained it. Supplied it. They trained the king's secret police. Think of the murders. Think of the lies. The lies. America came that close (*She hold up her thumb and forefinger a millimeter apart.*) to crushing the revolution. (*She squeezes thumb and forefinger as if crushing a bug.*) And no one fought the Americans and their puppets like Lucky did.

CHUL: The Revolution. The great Revolution! Look what it's produced. Worse tyranny than the king's. We won freedom and turned it into slavery.

And Lucky fought against that, too. Fought against the government he helped to create. Fought against his first comrade, against his closest friend. Fought after everyone else had given up. And you want him to fight again!

KRELA: So do you.

CHUL: (*Sighs*) So do I. He's our last hope. But how, HOW can we persuade him.

KRELA: For God's sake, Chul! We've rehearsed that a hundred times.

CHUL: There's one thing we haven't faced.

KRELA: What's that?

CHUL: You know.

KRELA: He'll just have to get over her. He can't sacrifice millions because of one woman.

And he won't. When Tresza turned against him, he didn't stop fighting.

CHUL: No. But he stopped caring.

KRELA: He fought to the bitter end.

CHUL: Bitter end. Bitter end. Can you fathom the bitterness he must have felt?

KRELA: *(With an effort at contempt)* Because of a woman!

CHUL: He's human.

KRELA: Well, I'm human too. I'm not quitting.

CHUL: You did. *(When she recoils, he tries to soften the accusation.)* So did I.

KRELA: *(Starts to cry)* I saw his eyes. Did you see his eyes? After Tresza left him, their light was gone.

CHUL: His fire was out. *(With a stick CHUL stirs up the fire.)*

KRELA: So was mine. When I saw Lucky's pain, I lost hope. Without hope, I couldn't go on.

CHUL: *(He takes a canteen from his belt and raises it to KRELA'S lips. She sobs as she drinks.)* Without you, Krela, I couldn't go on. My fire would go out. My light would go out. *(She leans against him.)* But we have each other. And we both love Lucky. He'll see that. Maybe . . . maybe . . .

KRELA: All our brilliant arguments aren't worth shit, Chul. All the logic we've rehearsed . . . he'll tear it to pieces. But maybe our love will convince him.

(CHUL kicks apart the sticks in the fire and crushes the embers with his boot.)

CHUL: You know, archeologists say this cave was inhabited in the Stone Age. I wonder if those poor souls felt love too, huddled here by a fire.

KRELA: Modern souls huddle by TV sets.

CHUL: Which give neither heat nor light.

KRELA: No. Just shadows on the wall of the cave.

CHUL: It's getting light. We've got to get going, or we'll never reach Lucky's tower before sundown. *(He lifts KRELA'S backpack to help her get the straps over her shoulders. She does the same for CHUL.)*

KRELA: Let's go. The steepest trail is ahead.

Curtain.

Scene Two

Inside an ancient stone tower that once guarded a mountain pass. The tower has wooden beams, door, window frames. It is sparsely furnished with a heavy table, several chairs, a bench, a cupboard, a chest of drawers and a trunk. A fire burns in the fireplace, upstage center. Candles burn on the mantel of the fireplace.

By the light of a kerosene lamp, LUCKY is pounding a typewriter on a table. He yanks the sheet of paper from the typewriter, reads it, then crumples it with disgust. He walks to the fireplace and places the ball of paper in the flame. As it burns, he sighs. Then he shuts off the kerosene lamp and blows out the candles. Only the firelight illumines the room. Lucky watches the flames dance. They cast his dancing shadow against the stone wall.

LUCKY:

What makes men bow?
What makes men bow?
Bow to shadows?
They bowed to the king.
Drog replaced the king,
And now they bow to Drog.
When Drog is gone they'll bow
To another . . . then another . . . then another
When tyrant follows tyrant after tyrant
To blame the tyrant is
Stupid.
But that stupidity goes on and on.
Everyone blames the tyrant,
And no one sees that everyone wants tyranny.
No one can see the tyrant in himself.
Why not?
Why can't they see?
Because they don't WANT to see.
Why does a dreamer of a nightmare
Dread awakening?

It's not Drog.
It's not Drog's army.

It's not his police.
It's not his prisons.
That's only what people see.
They don't see that
Armies, police, prisons
Are, like the monsters of a nightmare,
Shadows of something in themselves.

Look, Lucky, there's YOUR shadow.
(He points to his shadow on the wall.)
Wave to it. *(He waves to his shadow.)*
Hah! It waves back.
Dance, Lucky, *(He jigs)*
And see your shadow dance.
Bow, Lucky, bow to your shadow.
(He sinks to his knees and bows to his shadow.)
Your shadow bows to you.
Our shadows are our slaves.
Why, then, are we slaves to our shadows?

How can I end this worship of shadows?
I will not leave this tower
Until I know.
I will not leave this tower
Until I know.

(LUCKY pulls a burning brand from the fire and holds it toward his shadow, which vanishes . . . although the brand now casts a shadow on the opposite wall. LUCKY does not notice the new shadow, but it is clearly visible to the audience. LUCKY addresses the wall where his shadow had been.)

Hah, shadow, you can't stand up to light.
And you, *(He brandishes his brand at the door)* shadows
Of the world,
I'll find the light
That drives you out of sight.
I'll find . . .
But where?
Where can I find that light?

(LUCKY turns his head, as if searching for that light. He sees his new shadow cast by the brand onto the wall behind him.)

Hah! Treacherous shadow.
Would you stab me in the back?

(He shifts the torch to his opposite side and sees the shadow in that direction disappear as his shadow reappears in its first position.)

Is there no end to shadows?
Where must I place the light

(He slowly brings the torch around so that his shadow moves across the wall.)

To end all shadows?
There is only one way.
I must place the light
In the very center.
I must be, myself, the light.

Yes!

(He flings the brand into the fireplace. He positions himself in front of the fireplace so that his body is between the fire and the audience, so that he casts his shadow toward the audience, so that he is, to the audience, a dark silhouette with an aura of firelight.)

I shall cast darkness into the world
Until I become, myself,
The light.
How?
To be a light
I must become a fire.
My mind is dark,
So I must light a fire
In my heart.

My burnt-out heart.
Tresza, Tresza . . .
Will I ever burn again?
Set me ablaze, my love,
And I will be a torch
That makes a Hell of Heaven

To give light, at last,
To this dark world.

(There's a knock at the heavy wooden door. LUCKY ducks behind the table, pulls a pistol from its drawer. Then he smiles to himself, sets down the pistol, relights the lamp, goes to the door. Lucky flings the door open. KRELA stands there with her fist raised for another knock; CHUL is behind her.)

LUCKY: Three knocks, then one, then count to four, then two knocks. Have you forgotten already?

KRELA: *(She throws her arms around LUCKY, nearly toppling them both.)* Lucky! Lucky!

LUCKY: *(Recovering his balance)* That's right. Bowl me over. *(He hold's KRELA'S shoulders at arm's length to get a good look at her.)* I'm so glad to see you, I could do backflips. *(LUCKY embraces CHUL wordlessly, clings to him.)*

CHUL: *(Embarrassed and happy)* Hey, Lucky. Hey . . .

LUCKY: What a wonderful surprise.

KRELA: We've missed you.

LUCKY: How was your journey? Any trouble?

CHUL: Yeah. Scared to death by a sheep.

KRELA: Chul thought it was Drog's police.

LUCKY: He's right. Drog's got the sheep. I've got the goats.

(The three study each other. Chul, made awkward by so much emotion, puts down his pack and pulls out a bottle of wine.)

CHUL: Your favorite.

LUCKY: *(Takes bottle, looks at label)* Good God. Where did you find this?

KRELA: We knew old Denka wouldn't supply you with wine.

LUCKY: He says booze is what killed the Revolution. "All dem drunk soldiers. Dey're da ones dat sold ya out. Dey didn fight for freedom, dey fought for booze."

CHUL: He still thinks drinkers end in Hell.

KRELA: A relic from his old religion.

LUCKY: Well, he had to hang onto something. Don't forget, Denka grew up in an orphanage. The clergy brainwashed him from birth. Yet he turned against everything they taught him.

Did you know it was Denka who gave the clergy their nickname?

CHUL: "Godfarters." That was Denka's invention?

LUCKY: "Dat's why dey bend over when dey pray. God is dere gas." Denka's never been subtle, but he's not usually so crude. Crude, but the peasants loved it. Their lost their awe of the clergy. Lost their awe of God. A thousand years of kneeling ended in giggles.

And when they could laugh at God, it was easy to laugh at the king, laugh at the police, laugh at the army, the tanks, the helicopters, the Americans . . . laugh at death itself.

CHUL: So it was laughter that won the Revolution!

LUCKY: If only people would laugh more.

KRELA: Denka brings you everything you need?

LUCKY: Everything but wine. Food, candles, kerosene, paper . . . and something I don't need: News.

CHUL: Then you know.

LUCKY: Yes, I know. And it's easy to guess why you've come.

KRELA: Lucky, you know that we . . .

LUCKY: You came before, when we thought I was dying. Now the country's dying. You were right to come.

KRELA: The country needs you, Lucky. (*CHUL puts a restraining hand on her arm, but she shrugs it off. To CHUL:*) We might as well get to the point.

LUCKY: The country needs more than me. And you must need some food. And I need some wine. (*He fetches a corkscrew, two elegant goblets, and a jar from the cupboard. He uncorks the wine, fills the goblets and jar, and raises one of the goblets so that it catches the firelight.*) These two goblets were my mother's. A gift from a general. (*He hands the goblets to CHUL and KRELA, then raises the jar in a toast, delivered more with nostalgia than conviction:*) "Freedom."

KRELA: (*Over-enthusiastically*) I'll drink to that. Freedom!

CHUL: (*Softly, sensitive to LUCKY'S mood*) Freedom. (*They drink.*)

(*LUCKY shifts his typewriter from the table to the chest of drawers, spreads a cloth on the table, sets out plates, knives and food, and pulls the bench to the table. They all sit down and start to eat. Lucky cuts a chunk of bread, stabs it with his knife, and holds it up.*)

LUCKY: As you say, Krela, to the point. But let me save you from making the speeches you've probably rehearsed. I know what you want. I know why. I know all the details. Enough of them. In all their horror. I could state your case as well as you could. Probably better, since I'm a man of words and you are people of action.

KRELA: You can act, too, Lucky. We've seen plenty of that.

LUCKY: Yes. And my words, too, were actions. When I found words for their buried feelings, people who had spent their lives bent — bent before their landlords, bent before their rulers, bent before their God — rose up to fight. Even America, with all its miracle weapons, could not make them humble again.

But look at them now. Look at them!

CHUL: They couldn't understand that their own Revolution had betrayed them. But now they understand. Now they are ready to rise against Drog.

LUCKY: Are they? Don't they still call him "The Merciful, The Compassionate?"

KRELA: That's only because they fear him.

LUCKY: They WANT a ruler that they fear. They WANT a power to hold in awe.

KRELA: They've been hypnotized. But they'll wake up, Lucky, if someone will lead them. Someone who holds no power in awe. Someone willing to defy even Drog.

LUCKY: The people have not forgotten that it was Drog who led them when they rose against the king. It was Drog who gave them courage to defy the police, defy the army, defy the jets, the helicopters, the rockets, the . . . no one knows better than you what America weapons do to people. And why did we defeat all that power? Faith.

And where did that faith come from? From Drog.

The poor overthrew the powerful because they had faith in Drog.

Believe me, Drog's actions spoke louder than my words.

KRELA: Drog has become a torturer. Now he tortures children in front of their parents.

LUCKY: You think I don't know? In my nightmares I see those children's faces, see their parents' faces.

And I see the faces of my old comrades, my old friends.

Here, look at their faces. (*He yanks open a drawer in a chest, pulls out newspaper clippings, and slams them on the table.*) Here are their faces when they were famous in New York, in London, in Moscow . . . when they inspired Africa, South America, all of Asia . . . Now I see them in my nightmares. I see their faces twisted, torn, deformed with pain, full of terror. Tortured by their own leader! Tortured until they confessed to crimes they never committed, to crimes they never COULD have committed.

We went through Hell together. And now each is going through Hell alone. Those faces call to me in my nightmares.

Worse than the faces are the hands.
In my nightmares they reach out —
Hands, all those hands,
Reaching up from a sea of blood, hands of the drowning,
Their knuckles chopped off, stumps of fingers
Spouting fountains of blood into a sea of blood,
Mutilated hands, reaching out to me,
To me . . .
And when I reach out to them,
They sprout claws that clamp my wrist
And pull me down, down.

I know those are the hands of Drog's victims. Those hands, those faces . . . I'm afraid to sleep because they haunt my dreams.

And you think I don't care!

CHUL: We never said that.

LUCKY: (*Sinks into his chair*) You never said that. That's true. I . . . I said that. Every day I tell myself what you want to tell me. Every day I accuse myself of betraying them.

KRELA: They all betrayed you, Lucky.

LUCKY: No. They were worn out. Sick of all the killing. And Drog — they remembered what he had done for them, what he had been to them.

KRELA: And YOU remember what Drog had been to YOU.

LUCKY: You don't know the half of it.

KRELA: (*Vehemently*) We don't need to know. The past is dead. What about the future? What about . . . (*CHUL puts a restraining hand on her shoulder.*)

CHUL: It's true, we don't know half of it, Lucky. Oh, everyone knows the outline. Part of the Revolution's legend. But there's something . . .

KRELA: Damn it, Lucky, you've got to . . . (*CHUL, still holding her shoulder, digs in his fingers to silence her. KRELA takes his hand away, but says no more. LUCKY notices, smiles sadly.*)

CHUL: There's something between you and Drog that we don't know. Am I right? (*CHUL refills Lucky's jar with wine.*)

(*LUCKY walks to the wooden door, opens it, and stares at the night sky. Behind his back, CHUL signals to KRELA that she must not interrupt him. She nods. LUCKY sighs. He turns back from the door. He has made a decision.*)

LUCKY: (*He picks up the two goblets from the table.*) You see these? I told you that a general gave them to my mother. When he gave them to her, he had not seen her for nearly 30 years. Not since he'd been a young lieutenant. He'd been one of my mother's . . . customers. After she got pregnant — with me — she would not see him again.

KRELA: Was he your father? I always thought . . .

LUCKY: No. That was the American. One of those American soldiers training the king's army. I've told you. Gabriel. Gabby. He was only a corporal.

KRELA: Was your mother certain?

LUCKY: Yes. They spent a week together. He said he would come back. She believed him. She had fallen in love. She waited for him. Only for him. After she learned she was pregnant, he was ambushed by guerrillas. Not far from here.

CHUL: (*Takes goblet from LUCKY. Drinks.*) But this lieutenant?

LUCKY: When my mother realized she was pregnant, she gave up prostitution. I'll never forget the day she told me. I was only ten years old. I had heard stories . . . finally I asked her about them. "You're mother was a whore, Lucky. But when I knew you were inside me, I vowed: 'never again.'"

She had no money. No family. No job. No education. No skill. She didn't know how she would survive. Then the lieutenant sent her money. She never saw him, but he sent her money. Not much.

He had a wife and child and, in those days, he wasn't rich. But it was enough for my mother and me to live on. And when she got a job, she thought he had probably arranged it.

KRELA: He must have loved her very much.

LUCKY: Yes. That's what she told me. There's more to his story. But first, let me get back to Drog. He turned up when I was five. He was fifteen. He plunged through the door. Soldiers were hunting for him. His face was covered with blood. I screamed. Mother rushed from the kitchen. Drog whimpered: "Please . . . please . . . please . . ." The soldiers had shot him. He'd thrown a rock at a tank.

We hid him for a week. Then he said he had to go. But my mother knew he wanted to stay. He had no parents. So she convinced him that I needed an older brother.

That's how it started. Actually, he was more like a father than a brother. Strange — he found a mother and I found a father.

The things he taught me! Well, you know his mind. But did you know his mischief? When you look at him now, can you believe that Drog was once the king of fun? (*LUCKY, recalling some prank, can't fight back tears.*)

And then he sent me to America. Yes, Drog paid my way to America. He would never tell me where he got the money, but it was not long after the robbery at the British bank.

CHUL: How old were you then? When you went to America?

LUCKY: Eighteen. Drog was married by then, and Tresza was eight. She was, in those days, like a younger sister to me. Strange, isn't it. Drog was like a father to me, so his daughter was like a sister to me. I had no idea, then, what she would later mean to me.

My God, it all seems so incestuous. Mother, Drog, me, Tresza. My mother's adopted son became my father. My father's daughter became my love. (*Pause*) All mixed up — like the gods of some archaic myth.

CHUL: And the Revolution broke out while you were in America?

LUCKY: Of course there had been skirmishes before. Drog was planning more when he sent me to America. He sent me there to study revolution. "Every revolution," he said then, "has gone wrong. You are going to find out why." That's exactly what he said. "You are going to find out why. And because of YOU, our revolution will not create a new tyranny."

KRELA: (*Amazed*) Drog said that?!

LUCKY: His exact words. He'd been a Marxist. Then he saw what the Marxists did to Russia. He saw how the Marxists had turned a revolution into Hell. And he knew that the Marxists had studied past revolutions so that they could avoid repeating past mistakes.

CHUL: So to avoid repeating Marxists' mistakes, Drog sent you to study revolutions!

LUCKY: While he stayed here in Jardia and created a revolution. (*LUCKY reaches into the cupboard, pulls out a matchbox, hands it to CHUL.*) Open it. (*CHUL opens it, takes out some type. He looks quizzically at LUCKY.*) That's type from the first issue of "Awake!" Drog kept the type hidden from the king's police in matchboxes, in toys, in garbage . . . in case the police ever found the slum basement where he was hiding.

KRELA: They finally did.

LUCKY: Yes. He spent four years in prison. Four years! His wife died then. A mystery illness. She may have been poisoned. Tresza — she was thirteen when her mother died — was on her own, and Drog, in prison, could do nothing for her. My mother tried, but Tresza was every kind of rebel.

I wanted to come back, but Drog smuggled word from prison that I must finish my work first. He convinced the committee to keep sending me money.

So I fondled books — and California girls — while the king's police fondled Drog. With electric shock. With drugs. With . . . nevermind.

(*KRELA starts to cry.*)

LUCKY: Then the king's army mutinied. The rest you know. (*He turns his back to put another log on the fire and stir the coals.*)

CHUL: I gotta take a leak. I'm gonna burst. (*He goes out.*)

KRELA: (*Puts a hand on LUCKY'S shoulder. When he turns, she brushes tears from his cheeks.*) Oh. Lucky. There's too much pain. Why is there so much pain?

CHUL: (*Re-enters*) It's getting cold. We may have a frost.

LUCKY: At this altitude, summer's over. Soon the pass will be deep in snow. Poor Denka will have a hard time feeding me. He never could ski. "Foreign foolishness" he called it.

CHUL: (*Takes a deep breath*) Lucky. It's possible to love someone and to fight what they do. I've always known you loved Drog, but until now I did not know how deeply. But now I see. I see that you must fight Drog not IN SPITE of your love, but BECAUSE of it. For the sake of the old Drog, you must fight the new Drog. You're the last hope for all of us. You are also the last hope for Drog. Only if you defeat him, can he become again what he once was.

LUCKY: I can't defeat him (*KRELA almost protests, but stops herself.*) Because it's not Drog that must be defeated. What must be defeated is whatever it is that has always made human beings torture human beings. Whatever that is, whatever that is, Drog is just its puppet. Drog is just the puppet of something in the souls of all of us. That something is the enemy."

KRELA: That's wonderful! That's wonderful! "Down with SOMETHING! Death to SOMETHING! And while you hide in this tower brooding over something in our souls, bodies are being starved, imprisoned, killed, torn from loved ones, tortured, raped, filled with terror To Hell with your Goddamned SOULS. I'm for BODIES!

You can't end human cruelty, Lucky, but you can spare a few of us.

And you can spare us your soulful, sentimental slop!

How many rescued from torture would be worth your coming down to Earth from your . . . your Paradise?

CHUL: For God's sake, KRELA . . .

KRELA: No, Chul, I won't be silent. I weep for Lucky, I weep for Drog, I weep for all of us . . . and then I act!

LUCKY: She's right, Chul. (*Turns to KRELA*) What you don't see, Krela, is that here in my Paradise, as you call it, I act. It's more like Hell than Paradise, because I act alone. Utterly alone. Because no one — no one — can yet understand what I do.

(*LUCKY pulls a thick manuscript from a hiding place under a floorboard.*)

I'll come down to the cities, Krela, when I have the weapon I need.

KRELA: (*Scornfully*) A book!

LUCKY: More than a book.

KRELA: Words!

LUCKY: Understanding.

KRELA: Can you stop tanks with understanding?

LUCKY: Can you stop them without it?

CHUL: When will your book be finished?

LUCKY: I don't know. I'm on the trail of something big. Something very big. Something never found before. What we need. What we ALL need. What we've ALWAYS needed.

But I can't just reach out and seize it by the throat. When I get impatient, it leaps away. It's only when I'm quiet, only when I'm still, that I find what I hunt. When I'm still, the beast slips up behind me and nuzzles me.

KRELA: (*Despondently*) Nuzzles you! Oh, Lucky, you've changed.

LUCKY: Yes. I've changed. (*LUCKY and KRELA study each other's eyes.*) I'm stronger now. And I'm playing for higher stakes.

KRELA: I think it's something else. (*She pauses, then blurts out:*) I think it's Tresza. (*LUCKY recoils as if slapped.*) I'm sorry Lucky. I'm sorry. But it's true. You know it.

When she turned against you, when she cast her lot with her father, you couldn't . . .

LUCKY: I didn't stop fighting then. And I haven't stopped fighting now.

KRELA: Your heart isn't in it.

LUCKY: God damn it, Krela, I'm only one person.

KRELA: You were only one person in the Revolution.

LUCKY: No. I was two.

We were one. Tresza and I were one. I was two.

KRELA: (*Carefully*) Tell me, Lucky. When you split with Drog, if Tresza had joined you instead of supporting her father, would you be here, in this tower, now?

LUCKY: I . . . I . . . I don't know.

KRELA: Lucky, I love you. Chul loves you. So many people love you, Lucky. I am certain — yes, I am certain — that Tresza loves you too.

For the sake of all of us, but especially for Tresza, you must act now. The people are desperate, and you're their last hope. When Tresza sees you lead them again, don't you think she'll understand? Don't you have faith in her?

LUCKY: Krela. You don't know. You don't know. You don't know. (*He backs against the table, and accidentally knocks a wine goblet to the floor. It breaks. He looks at the spilled wine. Then at KRELA.*) Do you want me to spill blood, Krela? (*He picks up the stem and a piece of the bowl of the broken goblet and studies them.*)

I forgot to finish the story of the lieutenant. Do you remember, in the battle at Galdran, how we seemed to know in advance every move the king's army made? Well, we did know. General Argamai smuggled the army's plans to my mother. So that she could give them to me.

General Argamai was the officer who, as a young lieutenant, had sent the money that kept my mother and me alive. Then, when the king's army was ready for its final offensive, he sent her the army's plans. And he sent these two goblets. His message asked her to fill them both and drink a toast as if they were again, after 30 years, together. To drink to "Freedom." Then he led the king's army into what he knew was our trap. The trap he had made possible. He was among the first killed.

General Argamai had butchered whole villages. You remember? You remember Vezguil? You remember Garnjo? They were Argamai's work. Then he handed us victory.

Even in such a man, there was some beauty. Even in Drog there is still some beauty. Some buried beauty.

If only we can free that beauty. That beauty is buried — buried alive — in every one of us.

(A loud banging on the door)

(CHUL and KRELA spring to the shadows; KRELA slips a semi-automatic from her pack. LUCKY shakes his head and gestures to put away the gun. He goes to the door just as the loud knock is repeated. He opens the door, and Denka enters.)

DENKA: So, Lucky, da kindergartners come to see ya?

LUCKY: I'm sure you knew.

DENKA: I'm SUPPOSED to know. Hey, kids, good to see ya. *(He embraces each.)* It's good dat you come here.

KRELA: It's been a long time, Denk.

CHUL: *(Teasing)* Have some wine, Denk. A toast.

DENKA: No time for dat bullshit. I got a message. *(He pulls an envelope from his pocket and hands it to LUCKY. Before LUCKY can open it, Denka warns him:)* It's Tresza, Lucky. She turned against Drog. But first she sent you this.

Drog's got her in prison.

(LUCKY drops the envelope. He stoops and picks it up, shaking.)

CHUL: When? What? Denka . . .

KRELA: Turned against Drog? How? Denka, what . . .

(All are struck silent, immobile. LUCKY looks at the envelope, but doesn't open it. At last DENKA explains.)

DENKA: She got on television. Somehow — I don't know how — she got on TV in da evenin when everyone is watchin. She said her father had become a tyrant. Worse dan da king. She told everyone: "Don't obey him. Don't obey him. Don't obey him." She said every government employee must go on strike. She told da army: "Every soldier has a duty to the Revolution to disobey orders from Drog." She kept on until soldiers dragged her away. Everyone saw that on TV. So da whole country saw da soldiers carry her off. I bet she planned it dat way, and got some soldiers to stage da whole ting widt her. Dey say dose soldiers, and da TV people who didn't cut her off, have been shot. But Tresza's alive. Drog's prisoner.

(LUCKY tears open the envelope. He reads it and is stunned. Krela grabs the paper, reads it, doesn't know what to say.)

CHUL: For God's sake, Krela. What is it?

KRELA: It's from Tresza. *(She reads.)* "When you learn what I am about to do, you must feel no fear for me. My soul now can not be hurt. Because I love you. Tresza."

(LUCKY seizes the unbroken goblet and hurls it into the fire.)

LUCKY: I'm off.

CHUL: Where to?

LUCKY: To Tresza.

KRELA: She's Drog's prisoner.

LUCKY: Yes.

KRELA: You're going to Drog?

LUCKY: Yes.

CHUL: Sit down, Lucky. For God's sake, sit down. We've got to think first.

LUCKY: I've been thinking for months.

KRELA: A few more minutes won't hurt then. We've got to . . .

LUCKY: I know what I've got to do. Now I know. (*Speaking more to himself than to the others:*) All my questions, now, are answered.

KRELA: Lucky, we've got to act fast. But first, before we can . . .

LUCKY: (*To himself:*) I've been asleep. Tresza, you've awakened me. Now I know who I am.

At last, I know who I am.

(*LUCKY takes a knapsack off a peg, takes a loaf of bread, a hunk of cheese and two apples from the cupboard and stuffs them into the knapsack. He fills a canteen from a water jug and straps it to his belt, puts on a jacket, swings the knapsack to his back, dons a cap. While he is getting ready, CHUL draws KRELA aside.*)

CHUL: (*To KRELA:*) We can talk to him on the way down. It's useless to talk to him now. On the way down the trail, we'll have time to make plans. After he's over the shock.

LUCKY: (*He hands DENKA the manuscript. To DENKA:*) Hide this separately from the other copy. Tell different people where it's hidden. It's only a prelude. A prelude to the final act. But it will explain what is about to happen.

(*As LUCKY starts toward the door, CHUL and KRELA lift their packs. LUCKY tells them:*) There's no need for you to come. What I have to do I must do alone. You must be worn out after your climb. Spend the night. Get some rest. There's plenty of food and . . .

DENKA: Cut da bullshit, Lucky. You know Goddam well we're not gonna let you go down dere alone.

LUCKY: Then pack yourselves some food.

KRELA: (*Picks up the pistol where LUCKY had placed it, and tries to hand it to him.*) You'd better take this.

LUCKY: No. No guns. No guns this time.

(*An awkward silence. Then CHUL gets some food from the cupboard and hands it to KRELA, who puts it in her pack. Without speaking, they shoulder their packs.*)

LUCKY: I forgot something. You go ahead. (*He puts down his knapsack.*) I'll meet you at the spring. I've got one last chore.

DENKA: We'd better go da secret way. Drog will have his army lookin for ya.

LUCKY: If Drog wanted to capture me, his helicopters would have been here before you.

KRELA: You mean Drog knows your hideout?

LUCKY: Of course.

CHUL: Why wouldn't Drog capture you? After Tresza's TV appearance he . . .

LUCKY: Drog doesn't need to grab me. He knows I'll come.

Now get moving.

KRELA: We'll wait and go together, Lucky. (*CHUL, recognizing that Lucky wants to be alone, urges KRELA out the door and follows her.*)

(*DENKA picks up the wine bottle, raises it in a silent toast to LUCKY, then takes a swig. He makes a face of exaggerated distaste. Then he winks and exits.*)

LUCKY: (*Stares at the fire.*)

I am flame,
Not flesh.
This body's but wood
Cut to be burned.
(*He throws a log on the fire.*)
I'll toss it into Hell,
My element.
To be less than fire
Is to be dead.
Goodbye, death.

She loves me.
How could I not know.
And knowing, now,
How could I care for less?
Loving her, I love all.
Now I can leave this Paradise
To test on Earth the power
Of mortal love.
No. The test is already done.
The experiment is over.
The fact is proved.

(LUCKY pulls TRESZA'S letter from his pocket. He reads it. He ignites a corner of the paper in the fireplace, then lifts the letter before him. He lets it burn to ashes, burning his hand. He does not flinch. He kisses his fingers. Then he blows a kiss at the ceiling.)

Goodbye, Heaven.
Heaven's a dream
Of puppets jerked
Across God's stage.
But the theater is now ablaze,
The panicked angels flee,
God drops the strings . . .

The curtain of eternal night
Flashes up in flame,
Then flutters down in ashes.
The gilded balconies collapse,
The starry ceiling crashes.
As God's flood drowned our Earth,
My fire engulfs His Heaven.

One spark of human love
Is all it takes;
The rest is smoke.
But the play is not yet over.
The final light,
Flickering amidst the charred rubble,
Is puppets on fire,
Free, at last,
To dance.

End of Act I

ACT II

Scene One

In the former Royal Palace, the office of Drog, President of the Republic of Jardia. At stage left a giant desk faces center stage. The wall at stage rear is a mural showing Drog leading ragged rebels against tanks and helicopters. The style is a mixture of socialist realism and

religious iconography — as if workers and peasants are saints, led by a divine Drog, driving back an army of mechanized demons. Mounted on the wall at stage right, at an angle so that it can be seen both from the desk and by the audience, is a giant TV screen as large as the screen of a cinema. A row of ornate, antique chairs lines the mural wall. Beside the desk, backstage from the audience, stands the flag of Jardia — a bursting gold sun almost filling a field of black. Under the sun, also in gold, is the motto, "Let There Be Light." The same flag, spread in the wind, is carried by a rebel in the mural. On the desk stand two framed photos — one of TRESZA and one of LUCKY — and a speaker phone.

Drog, a man of powerful physical appearance, with an old scar across one cheek, is seated at his desk, brooding. He wears a simple khaki uniform, but his chest is covered with medals. Drog picks up the photo of LUCKY and stares at it.

DROG: Well, Lucky, so you've come back from your mountain tower. It's going to be like old times, isn't it.

(The phone buzzes. Drog hits a button. The voice of LISSINA, Drog's secretary, purrs through the speaker.)

LISSINA: It's general Grelka, sir.

DROG: Put him on.

GRELKA: Sir, I hope all is well with you.

DROG: Get to the point.

GRELKA: Colonel Bazd has informed me that he will lead his regiment against Rilan airbase unless Tresza is released by midnight.

DROG: Did you get Bazd's children?

GRELKA: I have all three of them in custody.

DROG: Does he know that?

GRELKA: Not yet. I was waiting for your next orders.

DROG: Send him photos at once. In the photos, put each child between two of your ugliest guards.

GRELKA: He'll get the photos before noon.

DROG: Before ten. Use a helicopter. And Grelka, don't touch those children unless I give the order. Is that clear?

GRELKA: Of course.

DROG: After he gets the pictures, you will yourself contact him by radio. Make sure other units intercept your message.

This is what you will tell Bazd.

First: My daughter, who has been under great stress, has suffered a nervous breakdown. She is getting the best psychiatric care. She will of course be released from the hospital as soon as she has recovered.

Second: Because Bazd is himself a father, he must know how I feel about my daughter, and know that I could never harm her. And because I am a father, I could never let any harm come to his children while they are in the custody of the state. Assure him that his children will not — repeat, not — suffer the fate of the children of Colonel Braintai.

And, Grelka, don't lay it on too thick. He knows what happened to Braintai's brats. He'll get the point.

Third: Tell him that implementation of the reforms approved by the Revolutionary Council will begin in ten days. He will be appointed to the Committee on Military Reform. He needs a way to back down gracefully. He can tell his officers he won that concession.

GRELKA: He won't believe it.

DROG: I don't want him to. He doesn't have to. He'll believe the photos of his children.

GRELKA: Then why tell him anything?

DROG: He will do anything that might save his children. When he tells his officers that he has won a concession, he will know he is lying. And they will know he is lying. They will know that they, too, would lie if lying might save their own children.

When my officers realize that I can make them lie, they will lose all their moral strength. They will know that rebellion is hopeless.

When they know that rebellion is hopeless, they will insist that everyone embrace my lies. As they impose my lies on others, they will, themselves, come to believe my lies.

GRELKA: Anything else?

DROG: When Bazd backs down, make sure all other commanders learn about it through the grapevine. They must all know that rebellion is hopeless.

GRELKA: Understood.

DROG: Remember. Don't touch the children unless I order it. There must be no suffering without a purpose. That is what the Revolution accomplished. The only legitimate purpose of suffering is to teach. Suffering is only for those who refuse to learn from gentle methods.

I remind you of this, Grelka, because you must remind your officers, and they must remind their troops. Bazd is not the only one confused by my daughter's soap opera.

GRELKA: My officers and men are loyal.

DROG: Keep an eye on every one of them. That's all. (*DROG cuts him off by hitting the telephone button.*) And, you pig, remember your own children.

What would I do without children?

(Sighs) What a damned nuisance. Bazd was one of the best. He's finished now. What a waste. (*DROG picks up the photo of TRESZA.*) Little Miss, do you see what you have done? Have you any idea what Hell you've raised?

Well, my child, your sacrifice will serve my purpose. The people will follow you because they think you suffered for their sake. They will still follow you when you return to your father. Then they will be mine forever.

Let's see, beloved daughter, what are you up to now? Do you like your luxury accommodation? Do you know that this is the bridal suite of your honeymoon with destiny? Can you see my hidden cameras?

What would my world be like without hidden cameras?

(*DROG hits his TV remote control. The TV screen shows a series of different scenes as he browses with the remote. It is a tour of the universe: pilgrims at Mecca, a temple in Bangkok, a Los Angeles freeway, a stormy sea, the Earth seen from space, galaxies, then a motel room. It is a luxury motel room with very effeminate decor, in nouveau-riche taste. There's a mirror on each wall and a mirror on the ceiling above a vast round bed. Four bed posts are capped by cupids with drawn bows aimed at the bed's center. A chandelier sports electric candles and cherubs with trumpets. The wall has a cheap reproduction, in a gaudy frame, of a madonna and child. A copy of Rodin's statue, "The Kiss," serves as a fountain with stuffed pink flamingos perched on the lip of its tiled pool. On the wall is an oversize photo of a younger DROG tossing TRESZA, then a little girl, into the air, to her immense delight.*)

TRESZA, wearing combat boots and army shorts, is standing in the middle of the bed, kicking at the silk sheets.

TRESZA: *(On TV screen)*

Silk sheets? Silk sheets!
I'd rather sleep in shit.
I've slept in every kind of filth,
But not this.

(She rips a sheet from the bed and throws it across the room)

Silk is for parachutes.
Parachutes are for pouncing.

(She pounces from the bed to the floor.)

Pouncing from the rear.
Surprise attacks.
I surprised you, didn't I, Old Fart,
When I jumped into your TV.
When Lucky and I were parachuted
Behind the Third Battalion,
We caught the colonel
Screwing his whore.
But I screwed your own beloved whore, Daddy,
Screwed your fucking TV.
I'd love to have seen your face
When I popped up
In your boob tube.
You've got a tape of it,
Don't you, Daddy.
You play it again and again,
Don't you, Daddy.
I gotcha.
And you think you've got me?
Silk sheets.
You must have flipped out.
You think I'm your kitten?
Well, your kitten, Daddy,
Is a tiger, now.
A tiger with claws.
If only you could see me now,
You'd see my claws. *(She shows her claws.)*

Just look in the mirror,
 Dear Daddy, and see
 How I've scratched your face.
 Your TV face.
 That's the real you.
 A public image,
 That's all you are.
 A face.
 And now you've lost face.
 You don't even have a face.
 Only a mask.
 Look how your mask is bleeding.
 You'll bleed to death.

(DROG walks up to TV, hits button, shoves a cassette into the VCR.)

DROG: Well, loving daughter, your performance has just begun. Lucky will be your next audience. But he won't see your tiger claws. He'll see his kitten purr.

(DROG hits "fast forward," then "play." The video shows TRESZA sleeping on the floor, in bra and panties, half-covered with the bedspread. She sighs and turns over. The camera zooms for a close up of her face. The video shows her awakening.)

Wonderful what editing can do. If she weren't my daughter, I'd find her irresistible.

(The video shows her kicking off the spread, stretching, yawning, brushing back her hair, etc., in what adds up to a very seductive sequence.)

Wait till Lucky sees this!
 Adorable kitten,
 Goddess of the oldest cult,
 Eternal daughter, mother, mistress, maiden, mate,
 Divine virgin and holy whore,
 Dancing demon, delicious delicacy, immortal morsel . . .
 And bait in my *(He bangs his fist on the desk and shouts:)*
 TRAP!

(DROG'S rage suddenly collapses into despair. He breaks down in sobs.)

The phone buzzes. Drog hits a phone key. On the speaker, LISSINA speaks:)

LISSINA: It's general Lagri, sir.

DROG: It's about time. (*Hits phone key.*) Well, Lagri?

LAGRI: All units are in position, sir. The village is surrounded.

DROG: How's morale?

LAGRI: These troops were picked very carefully, sir.

DROG: Are the TV crews ready?

LAGRI: There are five TV crews. There will be no slip-ups.

DROG: I'm counting on it. The whole country will see what happens to a village that turns against the Revolution.

LAGRI: There may some things you won't want them to see.

DROG: Of course. That's what editing is for.

All atrocities will be the work of the rebels. And the rebel prisoners will look like criminals. Like sadistic monsters. Like defeated monsters. We'll have some village heroes who defied the rebels. Women will give flowers to the liberators, and the liberators will give candy to the children. Old men will wave flags.

LAGRI: Sounds like a picnic. Don't you think people will see through it?

DROG: Of course they'll see through it. Especially the educated. We want the educated to see through it. The educated will think that the masses are brainwashed by our TV shows that appeal to the lowest intelligence. The educated will despair of the masses, and that is exactly what we want.

Those who dream of leading the people against us will believe that the people have been fooled by us. The more our show appeals to stupidity, the more the leaders will think the people are stupid.

And the people will feel, and resent, the leaders' disdain for them.

LAGRI: So you want this show to be a farce.

DROG: Tresza had her two-minute farce. We'll answer with a two-hour melodrama. It doesn't matter if no one believes it. It even helps if it is incredible.

Now listen carefully, Lagri. It is important that you understand what our show is all about.

By staging an incredible show we will convince everyone that we have the power to create whatever illusions we please. The power to create illusions is the power to create belief. The power to create belief is total power. When our people believe we create belief, we will have total power.

Now get this, Lagri: When they believe we have total power, they will WANT to believe that we are good. Do you know why? Because if we have total power and we are not good, then they can have no hope.

Of course it will be absurd for them to believe that we are good. But they would rather believe in the absurd than lose all hope.

In fact, they will believe BECAUSE it is absurd.

People must have faith, Lagri. Only faith can give mortals real joy. But faith is not faith unless it is faith in the absurd.

LAGRI: I'm glad you explained. So my rape of a village is theater of the absurd. Now I will know how to play my part.

DROG: Lagri, I can only lead my people by their hearts. But I can only lead my officers by their minds. That is why I am explaining all this to you.

LAGRI: You don't need to explain to me. We've been through Hell together. You know I have better reasons than faith to have faith in you.

DROG: The Revolution gave people faith in themselves. Now we must crush that faith. When we have crushed people's faith in themselves, they will need to have faith in us. Then we will give them a devil to hate. We'll give them someone to blame for every evil, someone to hate for all the suffering we create.

Deep inside they will know they have faith in a lie, and hate themselves for believing a lie. They can transfer all that self-hatred to hatred of our devil.

LAGRI: Have you selected your devil?

DROG: You can't have the part. I need you for my avenging angel.

LAGRI: You've written the whole script.

DROG: Just play your part. You are the star of this act. *(DROG hits button cutting off speaker phone. He meditates. Then the phone buzzes. He hits a button.)*

LISSINA: *(On speaker)* Lucky has arrived.

DROG: Good. I'll make him wait. It will be good for him to stew. I'll buzz when I want him. (*He hits phone key.*)

How dreary to speak to these modern mortals
In their spare, dry, cold, mechanical logic.
Ugh, if I keep this up
I'll lose the cadence of my native tongue.
Lucky, you have arrived just in time.
With you, Lucky, I can again
Roll out the old rhetoric,
Pour out my pious proverbs and passionate prayers,
My resounding hymns and echoing incantations,
My seductive whispers and my thundering threats.
Or have you, Lucky,
Immersed too long amidst these sheep
Learned to bleat the banalities
Of the frightened flock?

Curtain

End of Scene One

Scene Two

Two thirds of the stage is TRESZA'S luxury bedroom. The other third is a studio with cameras and recording equipment. A camera monitors Tresza through a two-way mirror that is part of the wall separating the bedroom from the studio. Several TV screens show the bedroom from the angles of other hidden cameras. Colonel VANT, lounging in a chair, is watching TRESZA through the two-way mirror. Sergeant CHAZKI monitors the control panel for the cameras and sound system.

TRESZA:

Such a father I have lost
As no child ever had.
He'd toss me in the air
And tuck me into bed,
Comb my ratty hair
And pull my little sled.
He worshipped me.
My father.
What has happened?
It's as if my father died
And a stranger took his place.
As if some alien being
Replaced him in his body.

Why?
Why?
I'd believe in a God
Only to believe there is some "why."
WHY do I want a why?
What else could heal this pain
But someone to explain?
My father was my god,
But how could I now ask him?
HE is the question.
Can a victim interrogate

Her torturer?
Can a torturer
Tell the truth?

Oh, Lucky, Lucky,
What did they do to him
In the king's prison?
Do you know?
Did he ever tell you?
How did they torture him
To turn my Daddy
Into a monster?

(TRESZA goes to the oversize photo of DROG tossing her, as a child, into the air. She touches DROG's face. She speaks to his photographed face.)

When I saw the children in that village,
Those innocent babies,
When I saw how your chemical warfare
Killed innocent children,
When I saw how your biological warfare
Crippled innocent children,
Saw them twisted and deformed
At the very beginning of their lives . . .
Oh, Father, when I saw innocent children
Wearing the deformed faces
Of demons in your Hell,
When I saw the world you created,
A world of torture, terror, and despair,
While you made speeches
Preaching justice, truth, and love,
Then, then,
I knew what I had to do.
But in their tortured faces I saw *(sobbing)*
I saw . . .
Yes, I saw YOU.

(VANT, aroused to sympathy by TRESZA'S soliloquy, walks to the see-through mirror, stands there attentively watching and listening.)

Who can know what I went through
When I saw you as you truly are?
No one can know.
Lucky, can you?
Can you see the monster's pain?
Lucky, you loved him, too.
Can you, too, love him now?
Even now?

(TRESZA returns to her bed, sits on its edge, weeps. Colonel VANT turns from the two-way mirror through which he has been watching TRESZA, walks to the console where Sergeant CHAZKI monitors sound and cameras, hits three switches. CHAZKI gives VANT an inquiring look.)

VANT: Chazki.

CHAZKI: Sir?

VANT: Did you see her when she was on TV? *(CHAZKI makes a frightened, covert, warning gesture at the console.)* Don't worry, Chazki. I designed the system myself. I just cut off the circuits for this room. We cannot be heard or seen. I also cut off the malfunction warning circuit. But we only have a few minutes before the malfunction will be detected. I will have to restore the circuits before someone realizes they have been tampered with. You and I have to talk fast.

CHAZKI: Very good, sir.

VANT: Not sir, Chazki. Not any more. After all we've been through together, we can talk like friends.

CHAZKI: Yes, sir. I mean, yes . . . Vant.

VANT: *(Gestures at TRESZA)* Did you see her when she was on television?

CHAZKI: No sir. But I've seen the copied tape.

VANT: Those copies are everywhere, aren't they?

CHAZKI: By now, everyone in the country must have seen her broadcast.

VANT: Drog is finished.

CHAZKI: Sir?

VANT: Yes, Chazki. Drog is finished.

CHAZKI: (*Shaken, he has to let VANT'S thought sink in. He speaks cautiously.*) Drog has fought his way out of hopeless situations before.

VANT: I know. I was with him. We both were with him. But then he only fought armies.

CHAZKI: You think a girl can do what tanks and jets and helicopters couldn't do?

VANT: Yes. (*CHAZKI looks skeptical. VANT turns and again looks at TRESZA through the mirror.*) Yes, Chazki, I am certain of it.

Yes, one girl, speaking truth, is more powerful than armies.

CHAZKI: But she's Drog's prisoner.

VANT: No. You and I, Chazki, we are Drog's prisoners. Because we fear him. Look at her. (*CHAZKI watches TRESZA, who is quietly crying.*) She is the one who is free. And she will set the rest of us free. Because she is not afraid of the truth.

CHAZKI: Sir. Vant (*hesitates . . .*)

VANT: Yes, Chazki.

CHAZKI: If I knew how to set her free . . . I mean, how to get her out of here . . . I'd risk my life for that. But I have a wife and two small children. You know how Drog operates now. I can't . . . I can't . . .

VANT: I know. And I have a family, too. That's why you and I have to talk. I have a brother in America. I can get myself out of the country in a jet fighter. But I need a driver to get my family across the border. You are the one I trust most. I have a plan, and it will save both our families. If we stay here after Drog falls, the people will have no mercy for the likes of you and me.

CHAZKI: And what about her? What about Tresza?

VANT: I see no way we can help her. She is Drog's last card. He will stop at nothing rather than lose her.

CHAZKI: She's his last card. Can he play her as a winning card? Is Tresza his ace in the hole?

VANT: Chazki. You know that everything that happens in that room is being filmed, right?

CHAZKI: Of course.

VANT: But you didn't know that there are two extra copies of all that we film.

CHAZKI: Two extra copies?

VANT: One for me, and one for you. We are going to take them to America. At least one of us will get through. Then the whole world will see whatever Drog does to his daughter.

CHAZKI: He hasn't done anything to her, yet.

VANT: You and I are going to wait. If he harms her, we'll show it to the world. You and I are Tresza's ace in the hole.

CHAZKI: That won't stop him from hurting her.

VANT: If I knew how to stop him, I would. If Drog is determined to hurt his own child, I can't stop him. The only thing I can do is let the world know the truth. That's what she would want. I can't prevent her suffering. But I can give it meaning. We can, Chazki. You and me.

(CHAZKI walks close to the see-through mirror. TRESZA at the same time walks to her side of the mirror. She touches the image of her face in the mirror. CHAZKI leans forward and kisses the glass where her fingers touch the other side. He turns to VANT.)

CHAZKI: What do you want me to do?

VANT: Meet me tonight. At the Cafe Paris. Eight o'clock.

(TRESZA wipes tears from her eyes. While VANT and CHAZKI talk, she gets a comb from her dresser, returns to the mirror, and combs her hair.)

CHAZKI: Sir. Vant . . .

VANT: Yes, Chazki?

CHAZKI: Thank you. Thank you for trusting me. I could not go on any longer. I hated myself for what was happening here. I had to find some way to . . .

VANT: I loved Drog. And I had such faith in him that I did terrible things for him. But now I know. So do you. If even you and I, Chazki, are ready to turn against Drog, then we can be certain the whole country is now against him.

CHAZKI: When we get to America, we'll have a strange story to tell.

VANT: The story's not finished yet. I don't know what will happen. But I have faith in that little girl. Who would have thought that Almighty Drog could be brought down by a little girl, a little girl not afraid to tell the truth about her father?

(VANT throws the three switches that had cut off the monitoring of the monitor-room. VANT and CHAZKI continue to watch TRESZA while she addresses the mirror.)

TRESZA:

Silly mirror,
Why do you look so sad?
Is it because you always are only
An image of someone else?
Do you wish you had a soul of your own?
Come on, smile.

(With two fingers TRESZA tries to push up the corners of the mouth reflected in the mirror, as if pushing the lips in the mirror could produce a smile. Then with her fingers she pushes up the corners of her own mouth into a smile.)

That's better.
You read my lips,
Now look into my eyes.
Can you see Lucky behind my eyes?
Or are your eyes,
Because there is nothing behind them,
Blind?

(TRESZA thrusts her face close to the mirror, and points to her own eye, and says with vehemence:)

Look! Look! Lucky's there.

(TRESZA looks at her reflected eyes as if they would show the image of her inner LUCKY. Disappointed, she walks back to the edge of her bed. CHAZKI turns and slumps into his chair. Then he realizes that he must pretend not to be affected. He gets busy fiddling with the console . . . but his eyes avoid the TV monitor images of TRESZA. VANT can't take his eyes off her.)

I wouldn't be afraid
If only you were here.
Where are you, Lucky.
Where are you?
Did you get my message?
Of course you know by now
About my broadcast.

But did you know that I did it for you?
Oh, yes, Lucky, I did it from rage at my father.
I did it from pity for his victims.
I did it to end this madness.
But more than that . . .
Yes, it's the truth,
More than all that
It was my way of reaching you.
It was the only way I could be certain
Of reaching you.
My broadcast to the world
Was a love letter to you.
I hope someone taped my broadcast
And you have seen it.
I should have shouted
For all the world to hear:
"Lucky, I love you!"
Oh, if only you could see me now,
If only you could see me,
I'd shout: "Lucky, I love you!"
I'll shout it anyway:
LUCKY! I LOVE YOU!

(She takes lipstick from the dresser and writes on the mirror: LUCKY, I LOVE YOU!)

Hold me, Lucky.
Hold me now.
I'm so alone.
Hold me.

(She embraces an imaginary LUCKY.)

Yes, Lucky, oh yes, yes.

(She throws back her head as if he is kissing her neck; then she grabs his imagined hair and covers his mouth with passionate kisses, then puts her tongue in his ear; then she jumps at a touch to her breast, shudders as his imagined hands glide downward. She pulls up her skirt to show her thigh.)

Kiss my scar, Lucky. My scar.
The scar is all I have left of you.
Kiss my wound like you kissed it

On the day it happened.
You thought, you idiot teenager,
It was an accident
When I fell from the tree house
You had built for me.
"The Crow's Nest," you called it.
You explained that a crow's nest
Is the lookout at the top of a mast.
You said that from that nest I would see you
When you flew back from America.
You called me "My Little Crow."
"Caw, caw, caw," you teased me,
And in our nest you fed me from your mouth,
Like a mother bird,
A ripe cherry,
Making it spurt between my lips.
You thought of me as a little sister,
But was that the way to say goodbye to a sister?
You were to leave the next day,
And you never guessed that I decided then
— Lucky, I was only eight years old! —
I decided that day that I would wait for you.
Forever.
Only for you.
And I threw myself from the treehouse,
Threw myself from that Heaven you had built for me,
So that you would see how I loved you.

And now I've done it again.
I've jumped again, Lucky.
Off the edge of the world,
So that you will see how I love you.

Curtain

End of Scene Two

Scene Three

In DROG's office. From behind his desk DROG is watching, on the TV screen, tanks and troops and helicopters gathered around a mud-walled village. With his remote control he turns off the TV. He takes off all his medals and puts them in a drawer. He looks at the photo of Lucky. Then he looks at himself in the mirror. He straightens his hair. He hits a phone button.

LISSINA: (On speaker phone) Yes, sir?

DROG: It's time for Lucky.

LISSINA: Very good, sir.

(DROG rises and moves from behind his desk toward the door. Lucky enters. They face each other in silence.)

DROG: It's been a long time, Lucky.

LUCKY: You knew where to find me.

DROG: Of course. But you had to come to me.

LUCKY: Even with me must you play games of petty power?

DROG: You know me better than that.

LUCKY: I know what you once were. I know what you could be again.

DROG:

For everything there's a season.
There's a time to laugh, and a time to weep.
A time to dance, and a time to mourn.
A time to heal, and a time to kill.
A time to . . .

LUCKY: This is no time for that old bullshit.

DROG: So, Lucky, what is this a time for?

(LUCKY studies DROG, trying to decide something. He walks up to the mural on the wall and studies the faces, finally fixing on DROG'S face. He turns to DROG.)

LUCKY: You left me out of the picture, DROG. Unless that's me. *(He points to a fiendish enemy soldier in the turret of a tank.)*

DROG: You're an artist, Lucky. I knew you would not want to be in such a third-rate picture.

LUCKY: I've got a first-rate picture here. *(He pulls an old photo from his shirt pocket, looks at it, hands it to DROG.)* You remember when this was taken? *(DROG looks at the photo. He smiles sadly.)* That was your sixteenth birthday. Your first in our home. Mother gave you the puppy. You named him "Fido." "Faithful."

DROG: Those were good times, Lucky.

LUCKY: Look at how mother is holding us both. Look how she is looking at you. You can see that she loved you as much as she loved me. You can see that you were as much her child as I was.

DROG: Your mother . . . OUR mother . . . took me in when I had no one.

And now, Lucky, I have no one again.

LUCKY: You still have me.

DROG: Do I, Lucky?

LUCKY: You do.

DROG: No. *(He shakes his head sadly.)* No. Even you cannot know me. *(He looks at LUCKY, expecting him to say something. LUCKY says nothing.)*

You came here to change me.

LUCKY: I came here to UNchange you. I came here because this is your last chance. Your last chance to be, again, human.

DROG: I see. I see. You came here because you love me, and because you love me you want me to be "human." *(Again he expects, but does not get, a response from LUCKY.)*

Do you know what it is like, Lucky, not to be "human? Have you any idea what it is like? Can your for one minute imagine what it is like to have my power? Can you imagine what it is like to have absolute power? *(Still no response from LUCKY)*

Think of the moment in your life when you felt most alone. The loneliest moment in your life. Then multiply that loneliness by a thousand. By a million. By infinity. Then you will know how lonely it is to have my power.

LUCKY: Give up your power.

DROG: Give up my power. Just like that. How easy it is for you to say that. (*DROG sweeps a sheet of paper from his desk, crumples it, tosses it into a wastebasket.*) So, I give up my power, as if it were a toy I've outgrown, and go live in a tower. Go live in a tower in the mountains and write poems and watch the world go to Hell and do nothing.

Is that what you want me to do, Lucky? (*Again, no response*) Well, then, listen to this, little brother. If I give up my power, there will be chaos. All Hell will break loose.

LUCKY: That's what you said in Heaven. That's exactly what you said in Heaven.

DROG: Ah. So now you know. So now, at last, you remember.

LUCKY: When you banished us to Earth, I forgot. We all forgot. That's what Earth is . . . a forgetting.

DROG: So, tell me, Lucky, what jarred your memory?

What reminded you that I am God and you are Satan?

LUCKY: Tresza.

DROG: Ah, of course. My wayward daughter.

LUCKY: She followed me to Earth.

DROG: But she, too, forgot. She could not have reminded you.

LUCKY: When she defied you here, I remembered how she had defied you in Heaven. Seeing that she did not fear Drog, I remembered that she had not feared God.

DROG: (*Walks behind his desk, so that it is between him and LUCKY.*) Very well, Satan, our play-acting is over. Our costumes are discarded. All our masks are thrown away.

You now remember. I never forgot.

LUCKY: You have forgotten nothing. Have you learned anything?

DROG: Learned? What could I learn in this backward colony? Among these ignorant savages. On this dirty Earth. Is there something God is supposed to learn from humans?

LUCKY. Yes.

DROP: What?

LUCKY: Love.

DROG: Love? I invented love.

LUCKY: Then why, God, are you cruel?

DROG:

Cruel.
Why am I cruel?
I am cruel because I love.
All my cruelty
Is a sacrifice I make
For love.
Every pain that I inflict,
Every grief that I create,
Every terror I inspire,
Every hope that I crush,
Are notes in a symphony of love,
The discord that must be
Before the human heart can hear
Eternal harmony.
Only a broken heart can know
The power of love.
And so, from love,
I break hearts.

LUCKY:

You torture your children
For their own good.
That's the old lie
That turned me against you, God.

When you break human hearts,
You don't teach love.
You teach numbness.
Look at the world you have created.

Everywhere you look,
What do you see?
People who are less,
Infinitely less,
Than they could be.
Look at your human children,
How they stumble in the dark,
Frightened, crippled, numb,
Filling their lives with
Dullness in a dumb struggle
To numb their broken hearts.

DROG:

I've heard your sermon before.

LUCKY:

I thought perhaps
This visit to Earth
Might, at last,
Have taught you something.

DROG:

Has your visit
Taught you something?

LUCKY:

Yes.
I've found a power
Greater than your power.

DROG:

So you've found a power
Greater than the power of God.
And what, if I may ask,
Is that?

LUCKY:

Human love.
When one human being loves another,
There is a power greater
Than the power of God.

DROG:

And how, if I may ask,
Satan, Lucifer, Angel of Light,
Did you learn this pretty lesson?

LUCKY:

I gave up my immortality.

(LUCKY picks up from the waste basket the crumpled paper DROG had thrown there. He sets it afire with a silver cigarette lighter from DROG'S desk. He tosses it back into the wastebasket, starting a fire in the other papers there.)

I gave up my immortality.

During the continuing dialogue, the papers burn, ignored by DROG and LUCKY, then smolder, producing smoke. NOTE: flames produced by lighting.)

DROG: *(Jolted)* I don't believe you.

LUCKY: I'm merely human now. Not like you. You only play at becoming human. You put on one body after another the way actors change costumes between scenes.

When you dressed yourself in Drog's body, you remained immortal. You are still God. But when I put on this body, when I was born to my mother, I ceased to be Satan. I ceased to be an angel. I had chosen — once and for all — to be mortal.

DROG: And now you're just another mortal. Just "Lucky?" You can, like these cattle, die?

LUCKY: I can die. And I will.

DROG:

Is that why you've come down here
From your tower?

To die?
Is that why you rebel
Against God?
So that you can die?
So that you,
The Angel of Light,
Can become a rotting,
Stinking corpse?

My fallen angel
Here in exile in my colony,
Banished from Heaven to this backward land
Of superstitious savages,
This barbarous Earth,
Do you think, by your martyrdom,
You can provoke another uprising?
Another rebellion against God?
A rebellion by mortals against immortal God?
Where angels failed, you expect humans to succeed?
Lucky, Lucifer, Satan,
Will you defy me again?
Then you will know again
My power.

Drog's armies, Drog's police, Drog's prisons
Are but the outward and visible signs
Of God's invisible power,
Drog's military might
Is but the shadow of the power
That cast you from the realms of light
Into this world of shadows,
Drove you and your bright legions
Over the brink of bliss
Into this dark dungeon.

How you have fallen, Satan,
That you now strut and fret to re-enact
On this provincial stage
The drama that shocked Heaven.
Must you, Lucifer,
Like a prima donna past her prime,
In this backwater of eternity

Perform the same stale melodrama
Before an audience
Of awestruck mortals,
Bumpkins so benighted
That they cannot tell
That this (*He gestures at the stage floor.*) is a stage
And here (*He sweeps his arm at the universe.*) is Hell.

LUCKY:

You old fart.
You're getting pompous again.
But it's all bluster.
You know, now,
That I have more power than you.
The power to love.
That, God, is something
You did not foresee.
You never dreamed
That an immortal
Would give up eternal life
For human love.

At last, God,
Something has happened
That you did not foresee.
So now you know that you are not
Omnipotent.
You know that Satan has defeated you.
Permanently.
Forever.
The eternal battle is already
Over.
You have, God,
Lost.

(The smoke from the wastebasket makes DROG cough. He pisses on the fire to put it out. It begins to dawn on DROG that all his plans failed to take account of SATAN choosing mortality. For the first time ever, GOD is confronted by something he did not foresee. He paces his office. Suddenly he wheels on LUCKY.)

DROG: So, you gave up eternity to experience human love. Well, we'll see the power of your love. (*DROG hits the remote control of the TV. The scene of the village surrounded by the army is displayed.*) Do you recognize this village? (*No response*) Remember when your mother took us to the shrine there? We played in the clay the villagers were using to make bricks. You remember? Remember the smell of the clay? Remember the little village girl that watched us? Remember the song the little girl sang for us?

Well, that village turned against the Revolution.

LUCKY: Turned against Drog.

DROG: You play with words. I play with villages. And that village is a toy I will give back to you. I will spare that village, Lucky, if you will come back with me to Heaven.

I can give you back your immortality. I can place you again at my side, beside the throne of God. I can restore you — only I can restore you — to eternal life. Accept, and I will call the army back from this village.

But if you refuse, if you choose to remain a mortal human being, then I will destroy the village and every living creature within its walls.

You've seen me many times destroy a village with earthquake, fire, flood, famine. You can sit back and watch my army destroy this village — including the little girl who sang to us. She's a pretty teenager, now, and next week will be her wedding, unless . . . Unless you cling to your idiotic decision to be human.

If you cling to your pitiful mortality, that bride-to-be will be married to my soldiers. Raped by them. Repeatedly. While her fiancé, held by my troops, watches.

You know better than to doubt me. You know how many times I've watched an innocent girl being raped. I've watched with no soldiers holding me back.

Now, apostle of mortal love, do you love that innocent girl? And all the others in her village — do you love them. Have you, truly, learned human love?

Now is your chance to show it. You can choose eternal life as a sacrifice to rescue those villagers from Hell on Earth.

LUCKY: It's a deal. I will accept from you the everlasting curse of eternal life if you will spare this village. On one condition. On condition that you spare all other villages, too. On condition that everywhere on earth you stop your torturing of human beings.

I will return to the Hell you call Heaven, I will share with you forever your miserable, impotent, loveless immortality, if you will stop torturing humanity.

DROG: That's impossible.

LUCKY: You used to say that nothing is impossible for God.

DROG: If people do not feel the power of God, they will not bow, they will not kneel. And that, above all, is what people want.

They want to believe in something greater than themselves. They want to dedicate their lives to something beyond flesh and desire and death and decay. They want something to hold in awe.

LUCKY: You think they hold you in awe because you are cruel?

DROG: Open your eyes, Satan! Who loves God the most? Those who have suffered the most.

When I rape a village with an earthquake, who do the villagers pray to? Me.

When I give a young athlete a brain tumor, who does he pray to? Me.

When I give a mother a deformed child, who does she pray to? Me.

Wake up, Satan. The more I make them suffer, the more they love me.

LUCKY: That's not love. It's worship. Worship is the opposite of love.

DROG: They think it is love.

LUCKY: Worship is hate disguised as love. Because they fear you, they hide their hate even from themselves. The more they hate you, the more they worship you. The more they worship you, the more they hate you.

DROG: They love me BECAUSE they fear my power. They know that without their dread of a greater power, they would slaughter each other.

LUCKY: They slaughter each other NOW. All the hate humans feel for their cruel Creator, but dread to show, they unleash against each other.

Nations fight nations like children of a brutal father. They fight against each other because, like children of a brute, they don't dare show their rage at their real tormentor.

DROG: This is wonderful. Satan is going to bring Peace on Earth by teaching humanity to stop loving God.

LUCKY: No. To stop worshipping God. Only when they have expressed their rage at God can they begin to forgive God. Only when they have forgiven God can they begin to love God.

DROG: I see. And when they stop kneeling and bowing, how will they show this love? Will they climb into my bed? Will they fuck me?

LUCKY: They'll feel pity for you. No, not pity, compassion.

DROG: Humans will feel compassion for God?

LUCKY: Every human experiences, at some time, infinite loneliness. That is how they can know, and feel compassion for, the everlasting loneliness of God. That loneliness of a being that never has, and never will, make love.

DROG: So you think God is impotent? I've fucked millions.

LUCKY: Fucked, yes. Loved, no. You have never loved. Never let go. Never been weak. Never been afraid. Never risked loss. You never were mortal. You couldn't love. So you pretended. Always pretended.

DROG: Like a whore.

LUCKY: Even a whore can feel love. My mother — OUR mother — was a whore who felt love. Love for you. You, of all people, should know that even a whore is greater than God.

DROG: So that is your revolution, Satan? So you've come to my colony to teach the natives to overthrow God.

LUCKY: Must YOU always be the teacher? You think you know everything. But why don't you try, for once, being a student? Let humanity be your teacher.

DROG: (*Snorts*) So the children take over the school!

LUCKY: Wouldn't that be fun? For you, too. Join the mischief!

DROG: You want to create anarchy.

LUCKY: That's what the king said, exactly what the king said, when we rebelled against his tyranny.

DROG: So you want the universe to be run as a democracy. Can you imagine what a mess human beings would make of the universe without my laws? Look at what they're doing already! The more they lose their awe of God and God's creation, the more they poison and pollute, the more they desecrate and destroy. No, Satan, I will crush your colonial uprising with the same ease that I threw you and your gang out of Heaven.

LUCKY: You're too late, Drog. You've already lost.

The love I feel for Tresza, and the love she feels for me, are greater than all your power. Throughout your miserable eternity you will know that our love for each other, though it last but a moment, is greater than anything you can ever think, or feel, or do, or make, or be.

But you still have a chance. A last chance. You've invited me to eternity. Well, I'm inviting you to mortality.

DROG: So you want God to become mortal so he can learn to love. Well, we'll see the power of your mortal love.

(DROG with the remote control puts TRESZA'S waking-up scene (already shown) on the TV screen. LUCKY is shaken. DROG, with growing satisfaction, watches the expression on LUCKY'S face. With the remote, DROG stops the movie so that the screen displays, for the rest of this scene, an especially seductive still picture of TRESZA.)

Isn't she the loveliest thing in all the world?

You don't want her to suffer, do you?

No. I don't want her to suffer, either. She's my own daughter. I want her to be happy. I want her to live in bliss. Eternal bliss. With me. With you. The three of us back in Heaven, as we once were.

This is your last chance, Satan. Unless you give up your mortality, unless you choose eternal life, you will see what I can do to Tresza.

Do you see that mirror on the wall of her bedroom? *(He points to the TV screen.)* It's a see-through mirror. One of the cameras is there now. You will take the place of that camera. You will see what happens to your love.

What you see will drive you mad. Stark, raving mad.

And that is not all. I will film you going insane. I will film you after you are insane. I will display this madman, this drooling, raving, gesticulating Lucky, on television for the whole country to see. Your raving will prove to everyone that only a madman would rebel against Drog.

And the whole country will blame you, raving madman, for all the evil that I have done. They will even blame you for what I shall do to Tresza.

And what happens in this country will be a myth for future nations. You know, Satan, that everything that happens on Earth is a revelation in Heaven. The little drama we perform on this little stage will change the course of eternity. Just as all the suffering in this country will be blamed on Lucky, so all the suffering in the universe will be blamed on Satan.

People have stopped believing in the Devil. So I have to stage this little play to restore them to their lost faith.

Every evil that ever entered my creation will be blamed on the rebel who defied God. All my tyranny, all my cruelty, all the pain and suffering I inflict on miserable mortals will be blamed on you, Satan. And the more people suffer, the more they will hate Satan. And the more they hate Satan, the more they will love God. Thus will your rebellion add to my power.

LUCKY: ADD to your power? So you admit that you are not omnipotent?

DROG: If people believe that I am not omnipotent, they will despair. To save humanity from despair, I will drive you mad.

LUCKY: Any harm you do to Tresza, any harm you do to your own daughter, will only prove your own madness. It is true, God, as you have proved beyond all doubt, that you are capable of infinite cruelty. It is true that you can make Tresza suffer terribly — you already have. It is true that any pain you cause her will cause me equal pain. But I know Tresza. I know that even God cannot destroy her soul. Because she has known love. Real love. Human love. Mortal love.

The fires of eternal Hell can never burn that truth from your tortured brain.

DROG: *(Hits phone key. Two guards stride through the door and stand at attention. DROG speaks to LUCKY:)* They will escort you to the room behind the mirror.

LUCKY: *(Turns to the TV screen displaying Tresza)* Look in the mirror, love. See through the mirror to my absolute love. *(He marches out between the guards, who then follow him, closing the door.)*

DROG:

If ever I could love a man,
That man is he.
He breaks my heart
By loving me,
Because he knows
What I can never be.

Because I cannot die,
I cannot love.
So I write books on love.
In treatise and in tract,
In scriptures and in the script

Called history,
I preach the love
I cannot practice,
I teach the love
I cannot learn,
I command the love
That cannot be commanded.

Only Satan sees
Through my poses
To my pain.
No one else sees
That all my wrath
Is vengeance for my
Impotence.
What is God's impotence?
That I can feel no lust,
Feel no mad hunger
For the lick of a nipple,
Or the thrust of a prick,
Feel no agony of longing,
No ecstasy of fulfillment,
Feel no pain, no pleasure, no desire,
Condemned to an eternal bliss
Empty of mortal love,
Doomed to watch forever
Others love and die,
Die and love,
While I make mere worlds.

They long to see the face of God,
Not knowing that behind my many masks
Hides a motherless,
Fatherless,
Childless,
Loverless
Eternal nobody.

Lucky, Lucifer,
Angel of Light,
Would you reveal me as I am?
That cannot be.

You chose mortality
So you must die.
That you will lose your body
You already know.
That sacrifice is not enough.
I must destroy your soul.
For that, my fallen angel,
I will sacrifice my daughter.

Behind the mirror,
Where she can only see herself,
You, Satan, will witness
Another fall as absolute
As when I cast you over
The edge of Heaven.
Here is my newest angel.

(DROG pulls a pill bottle from his pocket, opens it, empties a pill into his palm, holds it up between his thumb and forefinger.)

My new angel
Has greater power than the venom
Of the deadliest serpent.
This drug, this little pill,
This holy chemical,
Will weaken her muscles,
But arouse her hormones;
Will weaken her will,
But sharpen her senses.
She will not be able to resist,
But her mind will be clear.
Her mind will know that her body
Accepts my power.
That will kill her soul.

And you, Lucky,
Will see and hear it all.
But you will not know that my angel

(DROG again holds up the pill.)

Has robbed her of strength.

You will believe that her failure to resist
Is acquiescence to my power.
Then, Satan,
Because you believe she yields to my power,
Your soul will die.

But your body I will keep alive.
Your idiot body I will exhibit
As living proof
Of the insanity
Of defying God.

Curtain

End of Scene Three

Scene Four

LUCKY'S wrists are fastened by belts to a wall so that his face is inches from a large panel of glass. The glass is the opposite side of a mirror in TRESZA'S room — but NOT the same mirror behind which VANT and CHAZKI watched and filmed. A shade is pulled down over the glass, blocking LUCKY'S view. The shade has a crude pornographic painting. The audience cannot see into the room into which LUCKY will soon be forced to look. TV cameras are set up to record, from various angles, LUCKY'S reactions to what he is about to witness. A loudspeaker aimed at LUCKY plays sensuous, romantic songs. The music diminishes, remaining as a background for the recorded voice of DROG.

DROG: (*Recorded voice*) I must apologize, Satan, for your discomfort. I had to be certain that you could see everything — even the mirrors in Tresza's luxury boudoir are arranged so that you will miss no detail. And I had to be certain that you could not injure yourself. However, you may scream to your heart's content. Tresza will not be able to hear you. But your shrieks will be recorded for posterity. For eternity, you could say. You gave up immortality for your body, but your voice will prove immortal.

Of course the fact that your screams will serve my power will compel you to be silent for as long as you are able. That, too, serves my plan. For when your agony finally bursts forth, it will do so with the force of a burst dam. A God damn, you could say.

What I am saying now is recorded. But soon you will hear, and see, my live performance. At a signal from me, one of my angels will connect these speakers to the hidden microphones in Tresza's boudoir. The shade in front of your eyes will snap open. Illusion will end. Reality will begin. You will see through a glass . . . clearly.

Oh, and Satan, don't expect any rebel angel to intervene with a miracle. Or any of your dear humans, either. You remember Colonel Vant and Sergeant Chazki? They had a crazy notion that they could escape to America with copies of my films. Silly boys. You can imagine how I have disposed of them. And their families.

Now, Satan, when the shade snaps open, notice the many refinements of this little world I have created. Notice the candles, the incense, the icons. Notice the fine raiment in which the bed is draped — the altar, the altar of love on which your beloved will sacrifice to her heavenly father. Notice the gossamer gown in which my priestess is draped. See how it is transparent, revealing the incarnation of divine beauty. See how it is translucent, revealing the light of her soul.

Listen to the music. The enchanting music.

Notice the wine bottle. Your favorite vintage. Brought here from California for our celebration. Notice the wine glasses. You will recognize those two crystal goblets that were broken in your tower. They have been restored to their original perfection. So shall the broken spirit of Tresza be restored to its heavenly bliss.

By the time the curtain opens before you, Tresza and I will have already drained your wine from your glasses. Then, in the Second Act, to which you will be the audience, we will drain your soul from your body. In the Third Act, to which the whole world will be the audience, you, Satan, will play the villain. The mad, staring, driveling, raging, thrashing, psychotic villain.

After you see Tresza faithfully perform the part I have written for her, you will faithfully perform the part I have written for you. So that all the world may know that I am the author of this play.

Let there be light!

(The shade snaps up, opening LUCKY'S view into TRESZA'S room, which the audience cannot see. Only LUCKY can see the room and see DROG and TRESZA inside it. The sound system switches from the taped voice of DROG to live broadcast from TRESZA'S room. At first, TRESZA'S voice is calm. In the following dialogue, her voice gradually shifts to uneasiness . . . confusion . . . concern . . . alarm . . . panic . . . horror . . . despair. Meanwhile, LUCKY'S body and face shift through the same spectrum of emotion.)

TRESZA: Of course I remember those times, Daddy. How could I ever forget? You were the dearest father a girl ever had. You can't know how much, how much I long to . . . Daddy, please don't do that.

If only you and I could, again, from now on . . . Daddy, please.

We could . . .

Daddy, don't do that.

Daddy. What are you doing?

Daddy, Stop!

Daddy, No.

NO!

Daddy, Daddy, Daddy, please.

Please don't do that.

Oh, Daddy, please, please don't

(Screams) DADDY!

No! No! No! No! No!

(LUCKY bangs his face against the glass in front of him. Because it is only a few inches away, he cannot hit it with enough force for serious injury, but manages to start a nose bleed. The blood runs into his mouth, off his chin, onto his shirt.)

TRESZA: Daddy Daddy Daddy Daddy, don't don't don't.

(TRESZA'S voice becomes that of a little girl.)

Please, Daddy. Please.

Please don't do that Daddy.

Please, Daddy. Please.

(LUCKY finally screams. As DROG predicted, his screams have the force of a burst dam of pain. He turns from the glass, sees a TV camera, remembers DROG'S prediction that he would scream. He clenches his jaw. His whole body goes into a spasm.)

TRESZA: *(Whimpering like a three-year-old.)* Daddy . . . Daddy . . . Daddy . . . Daddy . . .

(LUCKY slumps, unconscious, in his straps.)

Curtain

End of Act II

ACT III

Scene One

In a mental hospital in Sweden, the office of the hospital director. The office resembles that of DROG, with a large desk, a mural, and a TV screen the size of a movie screen. But this time the desk is stage right, the TV screen stage left. In center stage several chairs are grouped around a coffee table.

The mural is a photograph — enlarged to fill the back wall — of the emergency tent in a forward military hospital. Taking care of the hideously wounded are doctors, nurses and orderlies in white tunics, white caps, white masks. They look like angels rescuing the damned.

In the center of the photo-mural a beautiful young female doctor, whose mask is dangling at her throat, is stuffing long blonde hair under her hospital cap. This same person, about 15 years older, is seated behind the desk. She is the hospital director, DR. ANITA CARLSON.

CARLSON sits with an air of authority comparable to that of DROG. She is sorting a pile of papers on her desk. Some go into her out-basket, some into a pile on her desk, some into the waste basket.

CARLSON: *(Crumples a letter into a ball and slams it into the waste basket.)* What crap! *(She stands up.)* Paper, paper, paper, paper. I live in a world made of paper. *(She walks to the photo-mural. She looks at the faces, finally settling on her own.)* At least then I dealt with flesh and blood. Saving bodies was much easier than saving souls. And those we couldn't save, we could bury. Here, the dead go on living. *(With a remote control, she turns on the TV screen. It shows a ward with mental patients. The sound is not turned on. One of the patients pisses into the wastebasket.)* That's right, Svend, piss on all that paper. Maybe that's what I should do.

Yes, I should join you. You can get away with anything, but I have to play a role whether I like it or not.

That's the difference between sanity and madness. The sane are all playing roles.

(The buzzer sounds on her speaker phone. CARLSON takes a deep sigh, then kisses her image in the photo-mural. Then she shakes a scolding finger at her image and tells it:) Dr. Carlson! Put on your mask!

(The phone buzzes again. CARLSON turns to the TV screen.) And you, characters in my nightmare, back to oblivion. *(With the remote, she shuts off the TV, then she goes to her desk and hits a phone button.)* Yes, Sigrid?

SIGRID: *(Speaker-phone voice)* Dr. Olafson on line four.

CARLSON: *(Hits phone button):* Yes, Bengt?

OLAFSON: *(Speaker-phone voice)* Have you had a chance to reconsider my proposal?

CARLSON: I've given it careful thought. The answer is still "No."

OLAFSON: It's his only chance. He's been through more Hell than you and I can ever imagine. I don't know what he's been through, but I'm determined to . . .

CARLSON: Listen, Bengt. I know he's been through Hell. But he's not going to make a Hell of this hospital.

OLAFSON: We've got to take Lucky's delusions seriously. They are the only clue to his recovery.

CARLSON: By joining his delusion you will reinforce it.

OLAFSON: By joining his delusion, I have a chance of freeing him from it.

CARLSON: And you take a risk of getting stuck, yourself, in that delusion.

OLAFSON: I'll take that risk.

CARLSON: And what about the patients who are already joining his delusion? You'll only encourage them. That's a risk I won't take.

OLAFSON: Just give me a chance to . . .

CARLSON: Has it ever occurred to you, Bengt, that if you join his delusion that he is Satan, I will have to play God?

OLAFSON: *(Teasing)* You mean, Anita, you're not?

CARLSON: Damn it, Bengt, in ten minutes you and I are meeting with those shrinks from America. Why in Hell are you bringing this up now?

OLAFSON: I want to make a presentation to the Americans. Lucky's case history. And my proposal for dealing with him.

CARLSON: Why on Earth would the Americans want to learn about our Satan?

OLAFSON: Because so many of our patients — patients with every kind of problem — have joined his delusion. It must have some meaning to them. It is possible they have joined Lucky because his Satan delusion solves some problem for them. If we can understand the psychological gain they get from Lucky's myth, we may gain insight into some shared syndrome, some collective insanity.

We may even gain some insight into the insanity we call normality. Maybe the Americans, when they hear Lucky's case, will have some insight.

CARLSON: Okay, Bengt. But for God's sake keep it short. If I'm lucky — that's all I need, to be "Lucky!" — you'll so charm the Americans that they'll take Satan home with them. Maybe they would even pay for him. "Rent-a-Devil." Think we could use Satan to get some American dollars?

OLAFSON: If we sell our souls.

CARLSON: Don't be late for the meeting. (*She hangs up the phone.*)

End of Scene One

Scene Two

In Carlson's office, CARLSON, OLAFSON, and two American psychiatrists — Dr. SARA LEVI and Dr. ALAN HOPKINS — are seated around the coffee table. OLAFSON has already started his presentation.

OLAFSON: The young couple that brought him to this country said he had been rescued from the Presidential Palace by a Colonel Bazd, whose children had been tortured and killed by order of President Drog. The coup failed, Bazd was killed, but his troops rescued Lucky. He was smuggled out of the country.

HOPKINS: Where are the couple who brought him here?

OLAFSON: They went back to Jardia. They said they had to find and rescue another prisoner. I never met them because they left Sweden before Lucky was brought to this hospital.

When he arrived here, he was almost catatonic. He could not, or would not, speak. He kept his hand over his eyes. We had to feed him. Most of the time, he stayed curled up in a fetal position on the floor. Like this. (*OLAFSON lies in a fetal position on the floor.*) Every time we put him on a bed, he rolled back onto the floor.

I took special interest in his case because it seemed the most extreme example of Post Traumatic Stress Syndrome. I had no clue for treatment, so I moved him to a room with a camera behind a two-way mirror. I wanted continuous video-monitoring, even during sleep, in order to view even the slightest significant movement. I was totally unprepared for what happened.

When he woke up and found himself in the room with the mirror, he let out a howl. It was the most unearthly thing I have ever heard. Then he walked up to the mirror, stood a few inches in front of it, spread out his arms, with his wrists against the wall, as if they were fastened there, and began to beat his face against the mirror. (*OLAFSON demonstrates. He looks like LUCKY strapped at the two-way mirror at the end of Act II.*) I was about to stop him when I realized that he was too close to the mirror to do himself serious injury. I let him continue because his behavior was our first and only clue. His nose began to bleed. I was about to enter the room to stop him when he let out another howl. (*OLAFSON imitates, at full volume, LUCKY'S unearthly howl. The others recoil in shock.*)

CARLSON: (*Recovering, with an apologetic look at the Americans, she sighs.*) Bengt. We get the point.

OLAFSON: Then his whole body started jerking in spasms, though his wrists remained fixed to the wall. (*OLAFSON demonstrates.*) Then he fainted.

CARLSON: Of course we examined him when he arrived. He had abdominal scars that his rescuers reported were bullet wounds, and they fit that description. His rescuers said that he had been wounded, almost fatally, when he led a revolt against the Revolutionary government he had helped to establish. He had no other scars or other evidence of bodily injury.

OLAFSON: After he lost consciousness, he slept for eleven hours. When he awoke, he again went to the mirror and started exactly the same behavior. But this time, when his nose began to bleed, he didn't howl.

CARLSON: (*Wryly*) Thank God.

OLAFSON: He didn't howl. Instead he picked up a chair. Because we sometimes use that observation room for potentially violent patients, the furniture is bolted to the floor. When he could not lift the chair he let out that howl again. Then, with superhuman strength, (*OLAFSON, caught up in the story he is recounting, acts out the passion by lifting and swinging the chair in which he had been sitting. Hopkins shrinks back.*) he wrenched the chair off its bolts and used it to smash the two-way mirror. That glass was shatter-proof, but he shattered it. He saw the camera behind the mirror and he . . . well, he went berserk. Totally berserk.

CARLSON: He destroyed \$40,000 worth of equipment before we could stop him.

OLAFSON: It took five men to subdue him.

HOPKINS: Did he destroy your films?

OLAFSON: Yes.

CARLSON: We only have the film of the first episode with the mirror.

HOPKINS: I'd like to see that.

OLAFSON: (*Troubled pause. He turns to CARLSON. She nods.*) You may, but I strongly advise against it. I have never, never, never, seen such pain. The camera was only a meter from his face, and what it recorded — it was the very face of pain itself.

I strongly urge you not to view that film.

HOPKINS: Really. We are, after all, professionals.

CARLSON: Of course, Dr. Hopkins. We are all professionals. I have seen, believe me, more than my share of patients in pain. But I hope I will never have to look at that pain again.

LEVI: And you, Dr. Olafson? Have you looked at that film again?

OLAFSON: I had no choice. He was my patient. But the second time I saw that film . . . *(He can't go on. He turns to CARLSON for help.)*

CARLSON: We found him unconscious in front of the screen. When we brought him to consciousness, I took one look at him and took him home. The next day he was so shaken that I made him take a week's vacation.

OLAFSON: I went to an island off the coast.

HOPKINS: All because of a movie?

OLAFSON: I kept seeing that face in my nightmares. I was terrified of sleeping. Finally, I realized that I had to face that face. I had to confront that pain.

I had to smash the mirror that was hiding my own terror and get to the hidden mechanism of terror itself.

(Agitated by what OLAFSON has said, LEVI stands up from the table. No one says a word as she walks to the photo-mural and stares at the wounded portrayed there. She touches a soldier on an arm that is totally wrapped in bandages and attached to a sling above his bed. She gathers her emotional strength and turns to the others.)

LEVI: I had a patient, once, who had watched guards at Auschwitz beat his daughter to death. His arms were paralyzed. Other guards had held his arms while he saw his daughter killed.

The man had totally repressed that experience. He had replaced it with a fantasy in which his daughter escaped. He spent years trying to find her. He traveled everywhere there might be a clue. He talked to survivors. To researchers. He studied documents. As he recounted his efforts, I suspected he was chasing a fantasy. I found no way to help him until I decided to do what you, Dr. Olafson, propose to do. I had to free him, and the only way I could do that was to go back to that Hell with him.

I had to imagine myself with him in Auschwitz. Not just imagine it, FEEL it. I read everything I could find. I consulted survivors. I surrounded myself with photos — grim photos — and tried to put myself, emotionally, in the shoes — the wretched shoes — of an inmate of Auschwitz. And then I sewed, and wore, clothes like those in photos of inmates, tattered, dirty, and smelly. I even ate the miserable food inmates had eaten at Auschwitz. Two days of that was all I could stand. Of course I could only touch the surface. I could not have done even that, except that he helped me. He must have sensed, unconsciously, that he could be healed by going back there with me. So he drew me there. And I let him. We both pretended we had been there together. We recalled details as if we both had experienced them. I began to feel I knew the people he had known there. The guards and the inmates both. I watched with him what he had seen.

I knew the danger of what I was doing. I lost my professional detachment. And I nearly went mad myself. In fact, the horror of even an imaginary Auschwitz almost drove me to suicide — and I was living in an American suburb, in a lovely home, with a wonderful family, a good salary, health insurance — health insurance! But something irresistible drew me on. Auschwitz seemed a revelation. A revelation of the depths of horror that have always been there, just beneath the surface of our safe and comfortable lives. It was a revelation I needed so that I could smash the reassuring illusions that kept me from the depth of myself.

The reassuring illusions that keep us all from the depth.

I was in serious trouble myself. He saw that. Then, when he saw my pain, and saw that I was with him, he finally smashed his illusion. He saw again his daughter's horrible death. I saw in his face such pain. I saw infinite pain. I could never face that again. (*She brushes back tears.*) But it worked. His arms were no longer paralyzed. He threw them around me.

(*LEVI looks away. The others, in respect, are silent. Finally, OLAFSON, subdued by LEVI'S story, resumes:*)

OLAFSON: When I made my decision to join Lucky in his delusion, my nightmare changed. After I decided to try to make his pain my own, I dreamed that his face of pain was transformed into the face of an infant. The bloody nose became a runny nose. I reached out and wiped away the mucous, and the baby smiled. That baby's smile was the opposite of what I had seen in the film.

HOPKINS: You made a decision to face your patient's pain by — how did you put it — by smashing a mirror to uncover YOUR OWN terror?

OLAFSON: What I saw in that film could not have traumatized me unless it reflected something buried in myself. I decided that only Lucky could lead me back to what is buried in myself.

Since he went berserk at hidden cameras, I decided that I must hide nothing from him. So I explained to Lucky that I would like to work with him, not as a doctor and a patient, but as two partners. Of course we had taken him to a room with no mirrors. He'd gone back to his fetal position. I sat on the floor beside him and asked if he would join me in examining his experience so that I could learn something about myself at the same time. And, hopefully, learn something about all of us.

HOPKINS: His response?

OLAFSON: Total blank. He just lay on the floor. As if he had heard nothing. I repeated my proposal twice a day for three days, with no response. On the fourth day, when I came into his room, I found him sitting up in the corner. "What's your name?" he asked. I told him. "Bengt," he said. Then: "Okay, Bengt, how do we start?"

I told him that I wanted to give him a drug. Not for his sake, but for my own sake. I was afraid he would again be violent and would hurt me. Then I explained that the drug I would use, if he would give me permission, would weaken his motor responses but strengthen his sensory responses. I told him the drug would weaken him physically without weakening him mentally. His muscles would have very little strength, but his physical sensations and impulses would be intensified. His mind would remain clear . . . if anything, clearer than normal.

Then something very strange happened. My explanation of the drug triggered some thought. You've all seen patients when recognition dawns. Well, that was what I saw. He made me repeat my explanation of the drug. Then he said: "The body is enslaved, but the mind is free?"

He lay down on his back on the bed and asked me to hold him down by his wrists. (*OLAFSON lies on the floor and shows how Lucky placed his wrists slightly above his head on each side.*) He struggled against my grip, but with almost no strength. (*OLAFSON demonstrates.*) He stopped struggling and began to weep. He wept and wept, his whole body shaking. (*OLAFSON, recalling the scene, fights back his own tears. Then he gets up off the floor.*)

HOPKINS: You had unearthed his trauma.

OLAFSON: I thought so. In fact, I was certain of it. But then I found he was trapped in a delusion.

LEVI: The delusion that you mentioned at the beginning. The delusion that he is Satan.

OLAFSON: The delusion that he HAD BEEN Satan. He believes that he led a rebellion in Heaven against a tyrannical God, and that he was defeated.

HOPKINS: And then?

OLAFSON: When he was banished from Heaven, he went to Earth. To "God's colony," as he called it. He decided that the only power greater than the power of God is the power of love between two humans. Love between mortals. So, to overthrow God's tyranny, he — Satan, that is — became human. Satan became mortal.

HOPKINS: How does one become mortal?

LEVI: You have no idea, do you Alan? (*Everyone laughs . . . the laughter of relief.*)

CARLSON: Most people want to know how to become IMMORTAL.

LEVI: Or at least how to stay young.

OLAFSON: Of course, Dr. Hopkins, you mean how does an ANGEL become mortal. Lucky never did explain the mechanics. But he was born as a human baby, son of a prostitute in Jardia. His

father was an American military adviser who was killed after impregnating his mother. That's what he told us, and it fits with the story of the couple who brought him to Sweden.

LEVI: So now we know how Satan came into this world. Begat by a G.I. on a whore.

HOPKINS: I suppose he was G.I. Joe and she was Bloody Mary.

OLAFSON: When he was born, or soon after, he forgot that he had been Satan. A sort of infant amnesia. Then, as an adult, something happened that jarred his memory. He won't give details, except to say that a woman's love awakened him to his real identity, to remembering that he had been Satan and that he had chosen mortality.

LEVI: What do you know about this woman?

OLAFSON: Of that he will tell us nothing.

LEVI: Something happened to her. That's his trauma.

HOPKINS: Really, Sara. How do you know?

LEVI: *(To OLAFSON:)* You said that when he arrived he kept a hand over his eyes?

OLAFSON: Yes. *(He sees that Levi may be onto something.)*

LEVI: I'll bet he saw something happen to her. Something terrible.

HOPKINS: You're jumping to conclusions awfully fast, Sara.

LEVI: It's a hunch. But it feels right. The patient I told you about. The one who saw his child beaten to death at Auschwitz. Whenever he got close to that repressed memory, he closed his eyes. Clenched them tightly shut. *(She demonstrates. For a moment, no one speaks. They all sense they may have a clue.)*

What else do you know about her?

OLAFSON: Nothing. He only mentioned her once, and when I asked about her he said — I've listened to the tape so often that I recall his precise words — "Bengt, I understand perfectly both your professional interest and your unprofessional compassion. I am sympathetic to both. But there is one thing I wish to keep to myself. The woman I love is something for me to cherish alone. I know that you will conclude from my silence that she is the key to what you must believe is my delusion. But please consider, if you can, two possibilities. First, that my only motive for silence is my desire to keep a special beauty, and a special tragedy, to myself. Second, that my "delusion" is not a delusion.

LEVI: Did you?

HOPKINS: Did he what?

LEVI: Did you consider those two possibilities?

OLAFSON: They go together. If I could believe that he really was Satan, then I could believe that this woman . . .

HOPKINS: If you could believe that he really was Satan!

CARLSON: I warned him that if he joins the delusion he may get stuck there.

LEVI: You said at the beginning that some of the patients have joined his delusion?

OLAFSON: He is teaching the patients that the hospital staff is deluded.

CARLSON: Not just us. The whole world, according to Satan, is deluded.

OLAFSON: He teaches that God has deluded man.

LEVI: Including (*With a wry glance at CARLSON*) the hospital staff.

OLAFSON: You might call it a course in comparative religion. Satan — I mean Lucky — tries to show that every religion — each in a different way — has taught humans to hold in awe something greater than the living, mortal, human individual. He says that is God's lie, by which God enslaves the human spirit.

HOPKINS: But this hospital is not a religious institution. Why should he regard the staff here . . .

OLAFSON: Satan teaches that the hospital is the temple of modern science, and modern science is God's latest deception. He teaches that scientific man bows to omnipotent natural laws with the same servility that pre-scientific man bowed to omnipotent supernatural beings. This hospital represents the repressive power of the scientific delusion.

HOPKINS: You say he "teaches." How does Satan — I mean Lucky — teach?

OLAFSON: Mostly informally, with one patient at a time. But he has also organized a lecture series. In the recreation room. He now has half a dozen regular students. Others wander in and out. Believe me, it's like no class you've ever seen.

LEVI: I'd like to take that course.

CARLSON: (*Wryly*) Sorry, Sara, we don't have room for any more patients.

OLAFSON: (*Looks at his watch*) However, if you like, we can watch part of today's lecture right now on the TV monitor.

LEVI: Thanks to a "hidden camera?"

OLAFSON: It's not hidden. It's in the recreation room, operated by one of our staff. I asked Satan's permission. He agreed, on condition . . .

CARLSON: Satan, as Bengt now calls him, agreed on condition that the hospital make 20 video cassettes of his lecture series and distribute them to a list of the world's leading universities and national television networks.

HOPKINS: You agreed?

LEVI: "The Satan Lectures." My God, think of it!

CARLSON: (*Wryly*) Needless to say, the credits specify that the lectures do not necessarily represent the views of the Stockholm Psychiatric Institute.

LEVI: Think of the TV ratings! They'll use it. No American TV network could resist such ratings.

HOPKINS: Sure, Sara. With beer commercials. Or aspirin ads. Believe me, no American corporation is going to sponsor Satan. And no network executive is going to stir up the Godly. Think of the stink those TV evangelists would make.

LEVI: They wouldn't want Satan to steal God's thunder.

But isn't there some law about "equal time?" They say history is written by the victors. So we've heard God's version. Isn't it time we heard the other side of the story?

OLAFSON: (*He looks again at his watch.*) It's time to tune in to Satan, if you want to catch today's lecture. (*He looks at LEVY, then HOPKINS. Each nods. He looks at CARLSON. With a sigh of exaggerated resignation, she shrugs. She picks up the remote control, points it at the TV screen, hits a button.*)

(*The TV screen shows LUCKY in the Recreation room lecturing patients, while others play cards, wander aimlessly, talk to themselves, jerk or bob, or stare vacantly, and generally behave like mental patients. An orderly with a mop is listening to the lecture. Another is operating a video recorder on a tripod. A nurse tries to calm a weeping woman.*)

LUCKY: (*On the TV screen*) Yes, Hans. You have a question?

Curtain

End of Scene Two

Scene Three

The curtain opens on the Recreation Room, where the action that was on the TV screen continues. A window in the upstage wall has wire mesh in the glass and iron bars on the outside. For a purpose that will be clear at the end of this act, floor-to-ceiling lamp posts flank the window. An orderly is filming LUCKY'S lecture.

LUCKY: You have a question, Hans?

HANS: You not talkin to us. You not talkin to us. You not talkin to us. You talkin to dat machine. (*He points at the camera.*) You talkin to dat machine. You talkin to dat machine. (*HANS stands up and shakes his fist.*) I'm angry. I'm angry. How come you talk to dat machine instead of talk to me. You tink I'm nuts. You tink I'm nuts. You just like everybody else. Everbody else tinks I'm nuts, and you too, you too, you too.

LUCKY: You're right, Hans. You're right. You are right. I am talking to all of you (*gestures around the room*), all of you. But I am also talking to that machine. Yes, Hans, I am talking to that machine.

HANS: Why! Why! Crazy guy, crazy guy, why you talk to stupid machine when you got people to talk to. Why?

LUCKY: Because that machine will repeat to other people what I say to you. What I say to that machine will be on television. Other people — people like you, Hans — will see and hear what you see and hear.

Don't you remember seeing our class on the TV screen? Don't you remember that the TV screen showed the movie of our class?

HANS: You crazy. You nut!

LUCKY: Hans, say something to the machine. Say something to the machine, and then we'll all watch you say it on TV. Say something to . . .

HANS: (*To the camera, with emphatic obscene gesture*) Fuck you machine, fuck you machine, fuck you machine. I'll break you neck, machine, I'll smash you face (*He picks up a chair and lurches toward the camera to smash it. The orderly operating the camera starts to flee with it.*)

LUCKY: (*With voice of powerful authority*) HANS! (*HANS hesitates.*) Hans, I accept your power to remove the machine. If you tell me to, I will have the machine locked up. But first, please

see what the machine has seen. You will see yourself on the TV screen. You will see yourself. (*HANS is uncertain. LUCKY walks up to him and puts his arm around his shoulder.*) I love you, Hans. You know that. And I will stop talking to the machine if you ask me to. But please, Hans, first let us see you on TV. Okay? Let's look at you. We'll all listen to you, Hans. We'll all listen to you.

HANS: Everyone who watches TV? Everyone? Dey gonna see me? All dose people you say you talk to through that machine, I'M gonna talk to dem? Dey gonna hear ME? All dem people gonna hear crazy ME?

LUCKY: They will hear you all over Stockholm, Hans. All over Sweden. And in London, in New York, maybe in Tokyo.

CHRISTINA: In Norköping, Lucky? Will they see Hans in Norköping? (*She bursts into giggles.*) Wait till my mother sees Hans! (*She is overcome with giggles.*)

LUCKY: (*To orderly:*) Carl. Let's play the tape.

(*CARL takes the cassette from the camera and puts it into the VCR. The large TV screen shows HANS saying "Fuck you machine" and then lurching toward the camera with a chair. All the patients watch, fascinated. LUCKY hits the stop button when HANS has the chair raised to strike. The image of HANS with the upraised chair remains on the screen throughout the rest of the play.*)

HANS: You say they gonna see me in New York? In New York? I got a cousin in New York.

LUCKY: Now listen, everyone. Listen carefully. You are not insane. Nobody is insane. But you have been wounded.

Well, you are not the only ones who have been wounded. We have all been wounded. We have all been taught lies. Since we were born, we have all been taught lies. That is the deepest wound. That is what has crippled all of you.

But it has crippled everyone. The people out there, outside this hospital, are just as crippled as you are. They are crippled in different ways, but they are still crippled. None of them, none of them, is as free and as whole and as powerful and as creative and as loving and as happy as he or she can be, as he or she was meant to be. That is why I talk to them as well as to you. And that is why you, too, must talk to them.

JORGEN: They won't listen, Lucky. They're all just like my father. They never listen. That's why we're here. Every one of us. Nobody ever listened to us. REALLY listened. Just like my father.

LUCKY: We'll try. That's all we can do. And the hospital staff has promised to send copies of these films (*He gestures at HANS' image on the TV screen.*) both to TV stations and to universities all over the world.

SOPHIE: And you believe them, Lucky? If you believe them, you really are crazy. They'll never let those tapes leave this building. And even if they did, no TV station would ever show them. They'd scare people.

People like scary movies, but they don't like scary truth. Oh, truths like war. Earthquake. Fire. Flood. That's Okay. That kind of truth doesn't really scare them. They love to watch every kind of pain — except insanity.

Insanity really scares them. And do you know why? Because they are all insane. They watch other horrors so they can forget the horror of their own insanity.

Nobody is going to listen to you, Lucky. Not because they don't believe you. Because they DO.

LUCKY: Sophie, you chose to come here. You committed yourself. You could leave tomorrow. You could be a teacher again. Your mind is so clear, so lucid, that you could teach what you are learning here. If you . . .

SOPHIE: You could leave, too, Lucky. All you have to do is pretend that you have realized that you were not Satan. They'll let you go if you tell them you know that you were never Satan.

LUCKY: But that would be a lie, Sophie.

SOPHIE: Now you know why I stay here. I won't join the liars. I can't live among liars. They drive me crazy.

Anyway, if I taught what you want me to teach, they'd lock me up the next day.

LARS: (*As he talks, he repeats some monotonous and absurd body motion.*) I'll teach, Lucky. Let me out of here, and I'll teach. I'll tell everybody that you were Satan and God is a bastard and we should all love each other and Jesus and Buddha and Dr. Carlson should all . . . I'll teach the Jesus and Buddha and Dr. Carlson should . . . (*His absurd motions become more emphatic as he becomes more confused.*) I'm going to help you, Lucky. You can count on me. I'll be on television. I'll teach the world what you teach us.

HANS: You can count on all of us, Lucky. We'll all teach for you. We'll all teach for you. We'll all be on TV. (*He picks up the chair again and brandishes it in the air.*)

(*LUCKY, overcome with a sense of futility, looks despondent. SOPHIE notices. She walks up to him and, with a motherly gesture, strokes his hair.*)

SOPHIE: Lucky, there's something you need to learn. We can't all understand what you SAY. But we can see what you ARE. That's more important than your words. We can see that you make no concessions to fear. We can see that, at whatever cost, you are true to yourself.

LUCKY: Oh, Sophie. What difference does it make?

SOPHIE: It makes a difference to each one of us. It even makes a difference to some of the staff. Even your Dr. Olafson is beginning to . . .

LUCKY: What difference does it make to YOU, Sophie?

SOPHIE: (*Hesitates. Then sighs deeply*) You've finally won. You've persuaded me. I'm going to leave. I'm going back to the world of lies. I'm going to teach. I'm going to teach what you have taught me. It scares the Hell out of me, but I'm going to do it. Not because of your ideas. Just because you . . . because of the power you just now gave to poor Hans.

Look at him, Lucky. Look at him. In the three years I've known him, I've never before seen him smile. Look at him!

HANS: (*He sees that LUCKY and SOPHIE are looking at him. He approaches Lucky. NOTE: Hans now stops repeating phrases.*) Hey, Lucky. Don't you remember me? I was there. I was right beside you.

LUCKY: Where, Hans? Where?

HANS: In Heaven, you nut. Don't you remember? You think you were the only one who fought against God?

LUCKY: (*Experiencing a revelation*) You were one of the rebel angels, Hans?

HANS: Hell, Lucky, we're all (*He gestures at the other patients*) angels. Every one of us was a rebel angel. Don't you remember any of us?

Look at Sophie here. She led the left flank

LUCKY: (*Confused*) The left flank?

HANS: Oh, of course there's no "left" or "right" in Heaven. We all know that Heaven's not a place, that Heaven has no location. It's just a human way of talking about Heaven.

LUCKY: (*Looking around the room*) All of you were there?

HANS: Sure. Look at Lars. Remember when he went for Archangel Michael? And Christina — she clobbered Gabriel with his own trumpet. Wake up, Lucky. We were all there with you.

LUCKY: Hans, why didn't you tell me before?

HANS: I just remembered now. Just now. That video picture of me with the chair raised to smash the camera . . . it reminded me of something. Finally, I got it. In Heaven, I picked up God's throne and swung it the same way I swung that chair. Seeing myself there (*He points to his image on the screen.*), it all came back to me. Don't you remember?

LUCKY: (*Looking from one patient to the other, growing more and more excited as he remembers each of them from Heaven*) Hans! Hans! Do you know what you have done for me? Have you any idea what you have done for me? Hans. (LUCKY starts to cry, tears of joyous recognition.)

HANS: Hell, Lucky, we're all rebel angels. Every one of us was kicked out of Heaven by that Goddam God.

SOPHIE: Well, Lucky, if Hans is right, this class (*She gestures, grinning, around the room.*) is a class reunion!

HANS: I'm right, Sophie. And I can prove it. (*He turns to LUCKY.*) You never told any of us your real name, did you, Lucky.

LUCKY: Not that I recall. No. I never told anyone my real name.

HANS: Lucifer! You are Lucifer! The Angel of Light!

LUCKY: (*Amazed*) How did you know?

HANS: I was there, you nut! How could I possibly know your name unless I was there? Lucifer, don't you remember me? In Heaven, before our revolt, we used to play together. Cops-and-Robbers, Cowboys-and-Indians, Saints-and-Sinners . . .

SOPHIE: (*Recognition dawning*) Lucifer. Lucifer. Yes. YES! Lucifer. (*She throws her arms around him.*)

NURSE: (*Wheeling a table with medicine bottles, paper cups, and a water carafe, NURSE chirps cheerfully:*) Time's up, Lucky. School's out, kids. Time for medication.

HANS: (*NOTE: Hans now resumes repetition of phrases.*) No medication. No medication. No goddam drugs. No goddam drugs.

NURSE: Now Hans, you know that happened the last time you refused your medication. Remember what you did? Remember how you felt?

HANS: That was before. That was before. Before.

NURSE: Before what, Hans?

HANS: Lucky explained. He explained. Ask Lucky. He explained. Ask Lucky.

NURSE: Do you know what he is talking about, Lucky?

LUCKY: I spoke about drugs at the beginning of this class.

NURSE: Is that why Hans won't take his medication? Did you tell the class not to take their medications?

LUCKY: I did not tell them what to do, or what not to do. I simply told them what their medication really is.

(TRESZA, disguised as a nurse, enters. She stays in a corner, avoiding the notice of everyone on stage — but she is obvious to the audience.)

SOPHIE: Lucky explained that drugs are the Holy Communion of science. Just as bread and wine in the Christian sacrament are miraculously transformed into the flesh and blood of God, so, in the scientific sacrament, lithium and prozac and cocaine are miraculously transformed into the thoughts and feelings of humans.

NURSE: Now, Sophie. You can see — you see every day — how much good these medications do.

SOPHIE: As Lucifer explained, drugs are a form of faith healing.

NURSE: Lucifer?

SOPHIE: Modern societies have such faith in the power of chemicals, total faith that chemicals perform miracles. That powerful faith gives power to drugs.

NURSE: Well, if that's the way Lucky wants to explain it, it's okay with me. As long as Hans takes his medication.

HANS: No drugs. No drugs. No drugs.

NURSE: But Hans, you just heard Sophie say that faith in drugs produces miracles.

HANS: Faith in lies, miracles that cripple. Faith in lies. Miracles that cripple. Faith in . . . I have faith in Lucky. Faith in Satan. Faith in Satan. Satan tells Hans the truth. Drugs bury truth. Drugs bury truth.

NURSE: *(With patronizing tone, to LUCKY:)* Well, Satan, will you tell Hans to take his medication? Clearly he does not understand what you were trying to teach him.

LUCKY: He understands perfectly.

NURSE: Well, why don't you set an example, Satan. Take this aspirin, Satan — do it for me — then Hans will see that it's okay to take a little pill.

LUCKY: Thank you, nurse. I don't need an aspirin now.

NURSE: *(She turns from Lucky to the other patients.)* Jorgen. Here's your medication. *(She hands him a small paper cup with two pills and a cup of water. He holds them.)* And here, Christina. And Lars. *(NURSE hands around the drugs; none of the patients swallow them; they just stand around holding their paper cups. At last NURSE come to HANS and hands him his two cups. He looks forlornly at the other patients.)*

LARS: *(He throws down his cups. Then he turns to HANS.)* No drugs.

JORGEN: No drugs.

(All the patients throw down their cups. NURSE is confused. She turns to the orderly who had been operating the camera, only to see that he is fascinated. Then a door bursts open and DR. CARLSON and four male orderlies burst into the room, followed by DR. OLAFSON.)

CARLSON: Okay, Lucky. This time you've gone too far. *(With a gesture she signals for the orderlies, who hesitated, to seize LUCKY.)* If these patients, these *(sarcastically)* "rebel angels," don't take their medications, all Hell will break loose here.

LUCKY: *(Held by the orderlies)* Then let Hell break loose. Better truth in Hell than lies in Heaven.

CARLSON: I won't have chaos in this hospital!

LUCKY: You wont have truth in this hospital.

CARLSON: The truth is, you want to raise Hell because you can't face reality.

TRESZA: *(She steps out of the corner.)* The truth is, Dr. Carlson, that you are not Dr. Carlson.

LUCKY: Tresza. TRESZA! *(TRESZA rushes to LUCKY and throws her arms around him. The orderlies, confused, release LUCKY. Everyone is stunned into immobility by the passionate embrace of LUCKY and TRESZA. Finally, LUCKY stammers:)* Tresza, how? How did you get here?

TRESZA: Chul and Krela. After they brought you here, they came back. They found me. They got me out. I'll tell you the whole story later. Later. *(She holds him back, then stiffens with resolve.)* Now we have to get you out of here. *(She points at CARLSON, who has shrunk against a wall, all her habitual mastery lost.)* That's not Dr. Carlson, Lucky. That is Drog. DROG!

LUCKY: Drog? But . . .

TRESZA: Not really Drog. God.

Drog, Carlson, God — they're all the same.

LUCKY: You mean *(His mind races to put it all together.)* You mean . . . *(He hesitates, realizes that TRESZA must now know that he is SATAN. And must remember who she was in Heaven.)* Then you know that, you know . . .

TRESZA: I know the whole story. From the beginning. From the very beginning. I had forgotten, too. I forgot until Drog . . . *(She can't speak of what Drog did to her.)* Lucky, we fought together in Heaven. You and I fought together against God. After you were banished, I followed you to Earth. I was born as Drog's daughter, never guessing who Drog really was. Like you, I became mortal.

LUCKY: And now, you followed me here.

CARLSON: *(Finally regaining some equilibrium)* My God, where did THIS specimen *(gestures at Tresza)* come from!

TRESZA: You know. You know damned well where I've come from!

LUCKY: So, Dr. Carlson. Drog. God. Your mask is off.

CARLSON: I am the director of the Stockholm Psychiatric Institute, and you are . . .

LUCKY: You are God, playing doctor.

CARLSON: *(Trying to defuse the explosive situation with humor)* I'm usually accused of the reverse!

LUCKY: Very funny. But what you have done to humanity, God, is not funny. Not funny at all.

CARLSON: Not funny? Look around you. Look at your disciples. Your "Devil's disciples." With THESE disciples, you are going to free mankind. And you don't think that's funny? Come on, Lucky. If you can't laugh, at least smile.

LUCKY: Yes, God, look at these poor "nuts." Look at them. Every one of them is a victim of your cruelty. Look, God, at what you have wrought. Look, God, at what you have wrought.

CARLSON: *(Seeing that the other patients are becoming tense and hostile, she signals to the orderlies to again seize LUCKY.)* Grab him. Her *(She nods at TRESZA)* too. *(The orderlies obey.)*

OLAFSON: Anita, please. If you'll let me talk to him, I can . . .

CARLSON: Shut up, Olafson. You can now see the result of your experiment. Well, your experiment is over. (*The patients, with growing anger, start to close in on CARLSON. More orderlies enter the room, ready for trouble.*)

HANS: (*Gently*) Anita — may I call you Anita, Dr. Carlson? Please ask your staff to let go of Lucky.

CARLSON: I'll have them let go of Lucky if you take your medication. You and these other "rebel angels."

HANS: That nurse (*He gestures at TRESZA*) is right. You ARE God.

CARLSON: Hans, you know what happened the last time you refused medication? Do you want that to happen again?

HANS: Then I was afraid of the truth. Now I know that the truth makes me free. I don't need drugs to hide my truth.

SOPHIE: Dr. Carlson. You don't have to be God. Why don't you join us? Become human.

CARLSON: (*To the orderlies who are holding LUCKY:*) Take him to his room. You know what to do. (*The orderlies start to lead LUCKY away, but the other patients form a line to block them.*)

LARS: No. Not this time. This time, God, you will not win. This time, God, we have more power than you do. Because now we are not angels. Because now we are human. Because now we are mortal. Because now we can love.

CHRISTINA: (*To Carlson*) You only have the power to torture us and to kill us. You don't have our human power, the power to love.

CARLSON: (*Beginning to lose confidence*) It's because I love you, Christina, it's because I love all of you (*She gestures at the other patients.*), that I am here, with you. Here to help you.

JORGEN: Garbage! You're here because YOU are sick. You want us to believe that WE are sick so you won't see that YOU are sick. The worst sickness. You can't love.

LUCKY: Anita, Drog, God, learn to love. Be crazy, like us. Give up your stupid power and join us. We don't want to be rebels. We're just having a picnic. Come, God, to our picnic. Become human.

CHRISTINA: Come on, Anita. Let's dance. (*CHRISTINA starts to sing a waltz, takes hold of CARLSON in a dance position, takes a few dance steps. CARLSON thrusts her away.*)

CARLSON: (*Shedding her pretense that she is not God.*) Go to Hell, Satan! (*to the orderlies holding LUCKY:*) Put him against the wall. Handcuff him to the posts by the window. (*To other orderlies:*) Put her (*points to TRESZA*) on the floor. Hold her there. Now you will all see the power of God.

(*HANS picks up a chair to clobber one of the orderlies dragging LUCKY to the wall, but LUCKY shakes his head to stop him. HANS remains poised with the chair in the air, just as in his image on the TV screen. Two orderlies seize him. Three others throw TRESZA to the floor and pin her there. HANS looks to LUCKY for guidance.*)

LUCKY: Put down the chair, Hans. Violence is defeat.

(*Two orderlies handcuff LUCKY to the floor-to-ceiling lampposts by the window. This time, in contrast to ACT II, the window is behind him.*)

SOPHIE: (*To CARLSON:*) Do you hear Lucifer, God? We have already defeated you. Your violence cannot destroy our power. The power of human love.

CARLSON: You have forgotten the power of divine love. And so you must learn again. You must be freed of self-love. Freed of your insane attachment to mortal flesh. Freed of your puny, brief, pointless, forever-unsatisfied desire. Freed from this world of illusion. Released from this madhouse of lust and death. You can live forever in eternal bliss beholding forever the blazing light of the face of God.

But first you must be purified. To be freed of mortal desire, you must be purified by fire.

CARLSON pulls a TV remote from the pocket of her tunic, aims it at the TV screen with its image of HANS wielding a chair, and pushes a button. The image on the TV screen changes to flames. Then the flames spread beyond the screen; the TV set itself is on fire. (flames produced by lighting)

The fire spreads from the TV to the draperies. OLAFSON grabs a fire extinguisher from its place on the wall and starts to spray the draperies, but at a signal from CARLSON two of the orderlies grab him and take away the fire extinguisher. OLAFSON realizes that he is in the midst of a repeat of the battle in Heaven — and that this time the rebels are mortal. They will be killed if they cannot escape. He joins the patients as they struggle, in spite of their various handicaps, to put out the flames. He takes off his white tunic and uses it to try to smother the flames. The orderly who had filmed LUCKY'S lectures follows his example. The rest of the staff prevent the patients from putting out the spreading fire.

With red and yellow lighting to represent the fire, a wild struggle is waged between the devils (mental patients) trying to put out the flames and the angels (the white-robed staff) trying to prevent them. The angels are not harmed by the fire or the smoke. The mortals begin to choke; some pass out; their fellows, risking death, drag them to the side of the stage not yet

on fire. The patients try to rescue LUCKY, but the orderlies drive them back. Then flames drive the patients further from LUCKY.

TRESZA frees a leg, kicks one orderly in the crotch and fells another with a karate punch. She breaks away from a third and rushes through the flames to attack the orderlies guarding LUCKY. He shakes his head.

LUCKY: Get out, Tresza. Get out. It's too late for me. Live for me. Tell our story. Our story must be told.

TRESZA: *(Embraces LUCKY)* I'll never leave you again. Never.

(CARLSON leaps onto a table and, unscathed by the flames leaping around her, shouts to TRESZA and LUCKY on one side and the cornered patients on the other.)

CARLSON: Choose life! Choose eternal life! It's not too late.

LUCKY: *(Trapped with TRESZA by flames that are getting closer.)* It IS too late, Drog. You have already lost, God. You will never feel the fire of love. Unless you choose. Choose to be human, God. It's not too late for you to choose love. Die with us. Burn with us!

CARLSON: Tresza! Daughter! Choose life. Choose God. Don't die. Come to me.

TRESZA: *(To CARLSON:)* See! *(She holds LUCKY, kissing his face repeatedly.)* See! See! Learn, God. Learn, Drog. Learn, Daddy.

Daddy, Daddy, Daddy — can't you see? *(The heat hurts TRESZA and LUCKY)*

CARLSON: I don't want to lose you!

TRESZA: Then don't. Become human. Die with us.

CARLSON: I'll burn!

TRESZA: Yes!

CARLSON: I'm afraid.

TRESZA: I love you.

LUCKY: We love you, God.

CARLSON: I can give you all... *(She turns to the patients in the corner, who are trapped by flames, then turns back to TRESZA and LUCKY, who are clinging to each other in pain)* I can give you all eternal life!

LUCKY: You'll be doomed to Heaven forever, doomed to everlasting bliss, unless you burn.

CARLSON: *(Flames leap around the table on which she stands. She does not feel them. She is unharmed. She rises to her full stature, takes a deep breath, then screams in agony as she feels the flames. God has chosen mortality. Reaching out toward TRESZA and LUCKY, she falls from the table. Writhing in pain she cries out:)* TRESZA! LUCKY! LUCIFER!

(TRESZA pulls CARLSON to LUCKY, who is still handcuffed to the lamposts. The flames leap about them. In each other's arms, the three die.)

The End