

GIRL FROM TREBLINKA

A play in one act

By Leonard David Stone

Creative support

By Betty Schaffer

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COMMEMORATION AND NOTES

Begun in commemoration of the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the ending of the Holocaust.

Piano transposition from Mahler's First Symphony by Michael and Kyung Kim

The disc (upon request) contains three piano tracks that accompany the dialogue and action on pages 16, 20, 21 and 75. Each track can be stopped at the director's discretion. The music is outside copyright protection. \*The opening music, Elohi sung by the late Israeli singer, Ofra Haza, must be negotiated with her estate

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CHARACTERS

FRIEDA BLUME, a twenty-three-year-old dark eyed Jewish woman from Berlin.

KARL BLIX, a thirty-year-old blond S.S. soldier from Stuttgart.

THE SILENT GIRL, a Jewish child from the ghetto in Lublin, Poland.

THE KOMMANDANT, a forty-year-old commander of a SS death squad.

TIME AND PLACE

Beyond the beyond where a woman's soul seeks vengeance, and peace following her murder at the Treblinka death camp in Poland in 1943.

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THE GIRL FROM TREBLINKA

STAGE IS DARK

OFF STAGE FEMALE VOICE SINGS ELOHI\*

**FRIDA BLUME**, off stage

My God, my God, you have given me my soul and days and nights of pain, pain that hasn't stopped, pain that asks for mercy since the time I was murdered. I am torn between hatred for those who did it to me, and your benevolent forgiveness, a mystery that still haunts the depths of my sorrow?

SCENE 1

STAGE LIGHT 100%

*(A soldier in a blood-stained uniform, his face streaked in grime, enters the S.S. barracks in Lublin, Poland. A dog is barking in a nearby room. The soldier faces a table littered with empty bowls, drinking glasses and plates of half-eaten bread and cheese. Outwardly exhausted, he seats himself. A young woman with a yellow star on her stained jacket enters carrying a bowl of soup and a bottle of Schnapps that she places in front of the soldier. He pours a glass full, guzzles it down then repeats the process. The servant girl exits. An officer, the Kommandant, enters the room and sits across from the soldier. He pours himself a Schnapps. The dog continues barking)*

**KARL BLIX**

Are we doing more tomorrow, Herr Kommandant?

**KOMMANDANT**

Why not? It's our job.

**BLIX**

Tomorrow is Sunday. Maybe the boys need a rest.

**KOMMANDANT**

From killing Jews? Don't even think that way. Do you want to end of on the Eastern front? Besides, you took an oath.

**BLIX**

Ja, the oath.

**KOMMANDANT**

Have you forgotten?

*(Blix cups his chin with his hand, stares at the Kommandant)*

**BLIX**

No, I haven't forgotten, Herr Kommandant.

**KOMMANDANT**

Then say it.

**BLIX**

I vow to you, Adolph Hitler, as Fuhrer and Chancellor of the German Reich, loyalty and bravery . . . absolute allegiance until death.

**KOMMANDANT**

Good. So, tomorrow we continue.

*(The dog continues barking)*

**BLIX**

You make it sound easy.

**KOMMANDANT**

It is. Take that dog. He doesn't stop barking. It's annoying. Shoot him!

**BLIX**

The dog? What's he guilty of?

**KOMMANDANT**

Nothing. That's the point. We don't need a reason. Just shoot him. That's an order.

*(Blix swallows another Schnapps, withdraws his pistol from its holster, and leaves the room)*

A SHOT

*(Blix return to the room, sheathes his pistol and sits)*

**KOMMANDANT**

You see how easy it was. Like shooting Judenrats. I'll show you. Where's the servant girl? *(Shouting)* Jew girl!

*(The girl with the yellow star of David on her jacket enters the room)*

**THE GIRL**

Who killed the dog, my dog?

**KOMMANDANT**

Clear the table, Jew bitch.

*(The girl picks up empty bowls. The Kommandant withdraws his side arm from its holster and points it at the girl)*

A SHOT

*(The girl drops to the floor. The Kommandant stands over her, looks down and then at Blix).*

**KOMMANDANT**

Now I think I will rest. See that the room is cleared before you leave. We'll have breakfast here.

DIM TO BLACKOUT

SCENE 2

*(A dim stage reveals two tables, one mid-stage right, the other - mid-stage. Two chairs are at each table. Overhead light embraces a WOMAN standing mid-stage in a dark green dress with a yellow Star of David pinned to it. She wears scuffed shoes and carries a worn suitcase that she places on the table from which she removes two candlesticks and candles. She sets them upright, then places the suitcase beneath the table. She strips out of her dress, revealing that she is clad in a blue and white striped concentration camp uniform. She hangs the dress over a chair. The light on the WOMAN slowly extinguishes.)*

*A barefoot GIRL in a white dress with a yellow Star of David pinned to it enters stage right. She approaches downstage center. A blue light falls upon her.*

*The SOLDIER in the soiled, blood stained SS uniform enters stage left, approaches the GIRL)*

**BLIX**

*(He pulls a pistol from his holster)*

On your knees!

*(The GIRL, shaking, bows her head, and kneels. The SOLDIER places the pistol at the back of her skull)*

BLACKOUT

SCENE 3

*(Stage left is Space A. Stage right is Space B. A Klaxon is heard wailing in the distance. The sides and back perimeter are draped in black. A spot explores Space A until it finds the WOMAN beside her table. Spot extinguishes as the WOMAN is lit from above. The Klaxon stops)*

**BLUME**

*(She strikes a match, lights the candles, then faces the audience)*

I know who I am . . . who I was, but who are you *(pointing to the audience)* and why are you here? If you're here to find your lost virtue, I have a story to share, a story still unfinished. But first, imagine, at least for a while, that you are in a place without beginning or end . . . except when the Sabbath arrives. You know it's the Sabbath because it is.

*(She circles her hands over the candles three times, then covers her eyes)*

Blessed are you Lord, our God, King of the Universe who has sanctified us and instructed us to light the Sabbath candles.

*(Overhead light extinguishes. Stage restores)*

**BLUME** (Cont'd)

I don't know how long I've been here. Was it by chance . . . free will at its summit . . . or part of God's plan to test me . . . to see if I can forgive *(pointing to audience)* those who showed indifference to my death?

**BLUME** (Cont'd)

*(She removes the yellow star from her dress and pins it to her camp uniform. Then she re-approaches downstage center, talking as she approaches)*

My life ended in November of nineteen forty-three at a place in Poland called Treblinka. I was murdered there in a gas chamber. *(Slowly)* Where did the courage come from to face death with a dignity that would preserve the memory of my martyrdom forever? . . . I tried not to breathe when the life-taking gas drifted down from the shower heads. I knew my next breath would kill me. After the gassing I was thrown onto a pile of corpses and set on fire until nothing remained of me except bones and ashes.

*(She touches parts of her body)*

Will I ever understand you? Will your feelings be made clear to me or will you hide behind your contempt for humanity? It doesn't matter. I just want to know if an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth is just . . . or if merciful God wants me to forgive you for having murdered me? How does one forgive such madness?

GUN SHOTS RING OUT.

*(She covers her ears, and closes her eyes)*

I was gathered from the ashes, and brought here where light is dark, and dark is light . . . where ghosts dwell in His infinite universe . . . where death can be transformed into the spirit of existence. It wasn't as if I willed myself to be born or die, but it happened . . . even as the slaughter of the innocent continues.

**BLUME** (Cont'd)

*(Nodding)* I am spirit now, but once, yes once I was the girl who friends called the Shayna Frieda, the dark-eyed Jewish girl who lived above her father's clothing shop on Gross Rosen Strassen in Berlin. . . Frieda Blume . . . the girl I once was.

*(She draws her foot along the rim of the stage, then runs her hand through her hair, and down the side of her face)*

When Hitler came to power in nineteen thirty-three, you stared at me as if the word Jew was painted on my forehead. Yes . . . a few among you tried to preserve civil contact, but as the days turned into weeks . . . the weeks into months. . . and the months into years, you became fewer and fewer.

*(Strolling the perimeter, BLUME stops randomly to stare at the tables in SPACE A and B, before continuing downstage)*

The more I walked around the Gross Rosen, the more I sensed your growing hatred toward me. I smelled it in the air, even tasted it on my tongue from every glance you cast at me. Tell me, was I truly different, Frieda the Jew . . . Frieda the socialist . . . Frieda the sub-human? Was I such a threat that you had to deny me the right to buy shoes . . . stockings, even underpants!

*(She extends one foot, stretching it out as if admiring her scuffed shoe)*

Remember how I tried to look ordinary without makeup, without bright colored clothing or jewelry?

*(She pulls an imaginary earring from her ear, and throws it into the audience)*

**BLUME** (Cont'd)

No earrings . . .

*(She rips off an imaginary necklace, and  
flings it into the audience)*

. . . No pearls!

*(She works an imaginary ring off her  
finger, and tosses it into the audience)*

*(With regret)* Even my birthstone ring! Anyway, such efforts became useless when you decreed that I had to wear a Star of David on my clothing, a yellow cloth star I could only purchase from one of your stores.

TRACK 3 OF THE MAHLER MUSIC  
BEGINS, SOFTLY.

*(She sways in place with the music)*

I was banned from public swimming pools, and even worse, I had to sneak around in the shadows to find a secret kosher butcher shop . . . Having a radio was forbidden so I would lurk beneath a neighbor's window at night to hear the Philharmonic on the wireless? Oh, how I loved music!

TRACK 3 CONTINUES FULL VOLUME.

*(She moves randomly in synch with the  
tempo until . . . suddenly . . . she hears*

SOUNDS OF GLASS SHATTERING IN THE  
DISTANCE.

*(Stage dims. Shafts of red, white and  
yellow lights hit the stage floor)*

MUFFLED            EXPLOSIONS!            MORE  
SHATTERING GLASS!

*(Light flickers. Sound of shattering glass fades. Music fades. Stage is restored)*

**BLUME** (Cont'd)

There was no music that November night in thirty-eight, just the noise of shattering glass, and explosions, the sounds of crackling flames filling my mind with the undeniable truth. Life for Jews in Germany had changed . . . and if I drifted into a dream-like state hoping it would be different, I was wrong.

MORE SOUNDS OF SHATTERING GLASS.

*(Light dims to half; spots roam the area)*

You ransacked our shops, vandalized our schools, and burned our synagogues. But most horrible was your desecration of our sacred Torah scrolls. . . What more can I say?

*(She covers her ears until the noise stops. Stage gradually restores)*

Do you remember the morning after when Papa and I came downstairs to salvage what we could, or have you forgotten the look on his face as Papa stood in front of our shop pointing to where windows had once been?

*(She kicks at an imaginary shard)*

It would be forever remembered as Kristallnacht, the night of broken glass . . . the first organized Nazi demonstrations against Jewish property. It was also the night when my hatred for you and the others who caused it became unalterable.

*(She throws her head back, and raises an arm skyward)*

**BLUME** (Cont'd)

*(Pleading)* Oh, God, my God who knows my loathing for those who did that to us . . . must I forgive them! Once, I was more than a bottomless spirit you see before you wrapped in a camp uniform. *(Nodding)* Yes, once I was flesh and blood with long dark hair that fell to my shoulders . . . and dark eyes that sparkled like diamonds in the moonlight.

*(She draws her hands down along her body, and nods again)*

I was raised to honor my parents, respect the traditions of our people, and marry a good man with whom I would have a family. I know that you *(pointing to audience)* did not promise me tomorrow, but anyone with eyes to see knew that life after Kristallnacht would never be the same in your anti-Semitic world.

## SOUNDS OF MORE BREAKING GLASS

Kristallnacht scorched my memory, but not even that catastrophe could foretell the calamity about to happen, or the nature of the messengers who would bring it.

OFF-STAGE FEMALE VOICE

Frieda, I'm going to New Jersey!

**BLUME**

Meira, my best friend, had relatives in America willing to sponsor her family. Soon, Meira would be gone. *(Shouting)* Meira . . . where is New Jersey?

OFF-STAGE FEMALE VOICE

Near the Statue of Liberty!

**BLUME**

I was glad for Meira . . . yet unhappy about her leaving . . . sacrificing, so it seemed, those who stayed behind still yearning for the Jewish life in Germany that was once theirs. And then I felt ashamed. If Meira had a chance to live beyond Hitler's reach, wasn't that something to celebrate? *(Shouting)* Mutti, do we have relatives in New Jersey? I could learn English and get a job in America.

*(She circles her table slowly, keeping her gaze toward the audience as she points upward, and cries out)*

America! America! *(Sitting)* Many friends left, some going to America, others to England or Canada . . . even to faraway places in South America. *(Sighing)* But we stayed because of Papa's hope for a better tomorrow even in face of the growing hatred facing us.

## OFF-STAGE MALE VOICE

Daughter, our synagogue is here. Our shop is here, and we are here . . . proud German Jews guilty of nothing. Do you hear me daughter? *(Trailing off)* Do you hear me?

**BLUME**

Oh, Papa! Papa! *(Sighing again)* Couldn't he see that we existed in a world of vanishing hope; that the nightmare would never run its course; that we would never live again as free German Jews while the Nazis held power? When there was news about neighbors who had disappeared during the night, Papa and Mutti became hysterical. I just wanted to scratch out the eyes of the men and boys marching in the street shouting Jude, Jude, Jude!

*(Approaching the edge of the stage, BLUME presses a finger against her yellow star, and nods several times)*

**BLUME**

Yes, I am Jude! In Nazi eyes, if one had three Jewish grandparents, they were a Jew. I had four, all dead, but there was no question. A non-Jew in a mixed marriage was considered part Jewish. Which part, I wondered, the arm . . . the leg, or perhaps the nose and ears? (*Hand on her bosom*) The heart?

## OFF-STAGE MALE VOICE

Remember daughter, we obey the law, their law . . .  
 . and God's law.

**BLUME**

A few girlfriends rushed out to get married, hoping as if by some miracle a husband would shield them from a world that had grown smaller, and darker. But the truth was clear; one left or stayed to face the future you (*pointing to audience again*) planned for us. Jews were disappearing nightly from Gross Rosen Strasse and you knew it, didn't you?

## TRACK 1 OF THE PIANO MUSIC BEGINS

*(BLUME sways in synch with the music, running her fingers through her hair, then along the sides of her face. She clenches her fingers before her face as if holding prison bars. The music ends)*

You painted the word Jude . . .

*(She traces the word in exaggerated imaginary letters before her face)*

**BLUME** (Cont'd)

. . . Jude on the windows of Papa's shop, windows he had replaced with his own money. After Kristallnacht, you sent Polish Jews living in Germany to places called concentration camps. I couldn't imagine the hell they had been sent to. . . But despite the hollow ache in my gut, something in my soul said I would never become sub-human. Every thought . . . every feeling deep inside me was Jewish, shaped by an observant, and charitable people of my community who existed to sanctify the name of God.

TRACK 2 OF THE PIANO MUSIC BEGINS  
VOLUME LOW

-

Perhaps I was young and foolish, but I had to breathe, and hold pleasure in my hands again. So, one night, I left Gross Rosen without the star, and went to a party where I danced until the moon vanished, and the dawn appeared. I was in love, madly in love with a life I would never know again. Would I ever leave this place, (*pointing to the floor*) or was I destined to remain here, doomed forever in desolate anguish?

TRACK 2 REACHES FULL VOLUME.

*(BLUME dips forward, then backwards as if allowing moonlight to wash over her. Reaching the edge of Space A, stage right, she freezes).*

BLACKOUT

SCENE 4

*(The stage is dark, except for a spot revealing a pair of jackboots in Space B)*

**BLUME**

Mein Gott!

*(Stage restores revealing BLIX at the table in Space B, waving a pistol in front of his face)*

**BLUME** (Cont'd)

*(Facing BLIX)* Since that night in Berlin, I have waited for you, and finally . . . you are here.

**BLIX**

*(Arrogantly)* Is this the killing ground?

**BLUME**

Is that what you want it to be?

**BLIX**

From you're clothing, I see you're a Jew-bitch . . . a Judenrat, nice-looking, but still a Judenrat, and that disturbs me.

*(BLIX points his pistol at BLUME)*

**BLUME**

Do you think you can destroy me with that?

**BLIX**

Why not? It always worked before - -

**BLUME**

-Before doesn't matter. It won't work now because God won't allow you to murder me again. . . Only vengeance or forgiveness happens here, and only He decides, Herr . . . whoever you are. Who are you?

**BLIX**

Who am I?

*(He checks his tunic pockets, and removes a cigarette that he wedges between his lips)*

As you see, I am a soldier with cigarettes, *(waving the pistol)* and a pistol, and no concern about God. *(Arrogantly)* I am only concerned with my duty and leaving this place.

**BLUME**

Where do you think you can go? You can't leave until you experience God's vengeance! This is His place.

**BLIX**

His vengeance?

**BLUME**

Yes, His vengeance!

**BLIX**

*(Raising his voice)* Is that what you've been waiting for?

**BLUME**

*(Shouting)* Yes.

**BLIX**

*(With disdain)* Then you've wasted your time.

**BLUME**

Time is all I have,

**BLIX**

You have never known me, and I never had anything to do with you!

**BLUME**

*(Scornfully)* Oh, you know me, you know me well.

**BLIX**

*(BLIX lunges forward, his arm extended and pulls the trigger of his pistol. Nothing happens).*

Sheise!

*(He pulls the trigger a second, and third time)*

*(Shouting)* Sheise! Sheise! Sheise!

**BLUME**

*(With contempt)* You see, Jew-hater, God doesn't allow it. You no longer own me, and I am not afraid. Besides, what purpose would you have without a Jew to hate? You must have at least one to hate, isn't that so?

**BLIX**

I didn't come into the world hating you, but I know my purpose, and like them, *(pointing to audience)* I know you must be destroyed.

*(He examines the pistol, then sheaths it)*

**BLUME**

No one who knew me hated me.

**BLIX**

Personally, I had nothing against you - -

**BLUME**

-No? It must have been invisible ether that turned you into a depraved monster . . . Herr?  
- -

**BLIX**

- *(Raising his voice)* Herr Blix, Fraulein . . .  
. S. S. Unteroffizier Karl Blix, not a depraved monster.

**BLUME**

No?

**BLIX**

*(Bracing himself)* Jawhol, Fraulein, not a monster but a soldier whose honor was devotion to his orders,

**BLUME**

Orders!

**BLIX**

*(With certitude)* Orders you hated . . . orders patriotic Germans agreed with Frau . . .?

**BLUME**

Fraulein, Herr Blix . . . Fraulein Frieda Blume who doesn't think patriotism had anything to do with your depravity.

**BLIX**

Well, not exactly.

**BLUME**

That's right, not exactly. It was the fault in your German character . . . the flaw that allowed you to embrace evil without question.

**BLIX**

*(Shouting)* Who gave you the right to judge? You are scum, rotten, filthy scum that sucked the blood from our German soul!

**BLUME**

*(Raising her voice)* I am not the judge. God judges here, and if you see me as scum, tolerate it.

**BLIX**

*(Raising his voice)* Why should I see you differently now? I would be a traitor If I'm not faithful to my honor

**BLUME**

I was never a rat, and they (*pointing to audience*) knew it. I was flesh and bone . . . a beautiful face with dark eyes you should have accepted as a German woman, and nothing else.

**BLIX**

Accept? We did once . . . when you persuaded us to sign that humiliating armistice in nineteen-eighteen. (*Shouting*) But Hitler knew what had to change. He knew how to make Germany great again - -

**BLUME**

-By eliminating us?

**BLIX**

Any way possible!

**BLUME**

And how did you do it, Herr Blix?

**BLIX**

I joined the Schutzstaffel - -

**BLUME**

-And become a monster!

**BLIX**

Nein! I am just the SS soldier standing before you with a weapon I used with pride, and confidence in the new order. But don't think it was easy. I had to be evaluated by the quality of my ancestors. Not everyone was selected.

*(BLIX holds his hand up, and spreads his fingers apart)*

**BLIX** (Cont'd)

Five generations mind you . . . five generations of pure German blood! One drop of the Jew, and I would have been finished. Racial superiority was more than just a splash of red.

**BLUME**

*(Leaning toward audience)* Why does he tell me as if I need to know, or even want to?

**BLIX**

I didn't accept you as a German woman *(raising his voice)* because you were the mongrel who corrupted our purity. You needed to be eliminated! *(Shouting louder)* Were you blind? Couldn't you see the wave sweeping over Germany, the new, strong Germany the world admired, and feared?

**BLUME**

*(With disdain)* I only saw an evil tide that turned men like you into depraved monsters -

**BLIX**

*(Shouting)* -Nein, Fraulein! . . . Monsters forget what they did, but I remember. I remember exactly what happened, and what I did - -

**BLUME**

*(Shouting back)* -Then you know how good turned into evil.

**BLIX**

What I remember is winning, but how could you understand? We were young . . . and victorious. Soon . . . soon I thought I would return to Germany, and reunite with my Frau, but never mind that. We were winning and eradicating Jews.

**BLUME**

So, it was all agreeable to you?

**BLIX**

Why not? Every shot meant another dead Judenrat, another moment closer to victory, another step closer to home - -

**BLUME**

-But we were not an opposing army.

**BLIX**

You were the enemy, Fraulein, and the more we killed, the sooner I could return home to Stuttgart, and the circumstances waiting there. Killing was the end of you, but a new beginning for me . . . and freedom to be who I was . . . who I am.

*(BLIX sits at his table in Space B)*

**BLUME**

*(Leaning toward BLIX)* You knew what the SS was capable of. How was it possible to join such a ruthless, heartless group unless you were like them?

*(She returns to her table, and sits)*

**BLIX**

*(BLIX stands, and shouts at audience while pointing at BLUME)*

Do you think that bitch has any concept of the courage it took to surrender my personal freedom and follow orders without question, orders to shoot unarmed people day after day? She could never imagine what it meant to be .

. . .

*(He stands, his leg spread apart, hands akimbo)*

**BLIX** (Cont'd)

. . . worthy of the Fuhrer, and his new Germany? *(He approaches BLUME)* I could have been a successful Judenrat. I'm cunning and I know a few things about cheating. It would have been easy, except having to live among you. You think of vengeance, but I think of purity, German purity . . .

*(He draws the pistol from his holster, and taps it against his temple)*

. . . and a Europe without Jews . . . not even one! *(Raising his voice)* When my pistol functions again, I will fulfill my oath, and leave this place!

*(He sheaths the pistol, then returns to his chair)*

**BLUME**

*(Approaching BLIX)* Herr BLIX, you will never leave, but you will encounter God's judgement.

**BLIX**

You can't imagine how waiters and doormen respecting this uniform *(tapping his chest)* . . . how women gave me a second glance . . . how boys stared with worshiping eyes.

*(He approaches the edge of the stage, and grins at the audience)*

Tell me, what harm was there in eliminating a few Judenrats? It's not as if we would take a Schnapps with them. *(With certitude)* You remember the power I had . . . the power to make them disappear as if they never existed; to turn their synagogues into hollow shells overnight . . . which I did . . . even the authority to suspend operations and provide false hope that things would become normal again . . . Ja, I know it was a cruel joke, but we needed a good laugh now and then, didn't we?

*(He returns to his table)*

**BLUME**

*(BLUME approaches the edge of downstage center)*

Sometimes . . . for reasons Blix just mentioned, an unexpected quiet came over Gross Rosen, a quiet that made Papa believe he could even visit his parents' graves without incident.

## OFF-STAGE FEMALE VOICE

*(Screaming)* No!

**BLUME**

It was a scream that conveyed horror and fear.

*(BLUME, runs to the edge of downstage right)*

I ran outside and saw Meira pointing to her door.

*(BLUME returns to downstage center)*

Then . . . one night, the great anxiety in my heart came true.

*(She turns and points to an imaginary door downstage right, and then returns to her table)*

The notice on the door was clear.

**BLIX**

*(Facing the audience)* Ja, it was clear. Pack one suitcase and make a list of everything left behind. Be ready to relocate in three days.

**BLUME**

*(She stands her suitcase upright beside her chair, glances toward the audience and then extends her arms out)*

**BLUME** (Cont'd)

How shall I describe my feelings that last night in Berlin? Was it the pain of losing treasured possessions . . . memories of Sabbath candles casting dancing shadows on the walls, or footsteps . . . the horror of footsteps coming nearer and growing louder? We left with dignity despite terrified feelings, especially Mutti, whose goodness radiated more than gold itself. No words were spoken. Mutti sobbed, Papa held his head high, and I despaired when our clothing and suitcases were searched; the jewels, and money hidden inside discovered.

*(Cupping her hands over her head)*

The Gruppenfuhrer in charge said we were being sent to a place in Czechoslovakia called Theresienstadt . . . that we were lucky it wasn't Poland. Oh yes, we heard rumors of things in Poland, and if they were true, one had to imagine what the future would be like.

**BLIX**

The Gruppenfuhrer was right. Only a feeble mind could think of leaving Poland alive. *(Approaching BLUME)* Why didn't you tell them *(waving arms toward audience)* that life in Theresienstadt wasn't so bad?

*(He steps toward the audience. BLUME remains in place)*

My time in Poland began outside Lublin . . . where Jews once lived. They had been living there for centuries. Our job was to eliminate them. Going to Lublin was easy. Staying, and carrying out the work wasn't so easy. But still . . . we were protecting the purity of the Arian race, something we would be remembered for. I think of Lublin as the good old days - -

**BLUME**

- *(Stepping beside BLIX)* How can you talk about good old days without shame or guilt?

**BLIX**

*(He adjusts his tunic, his Swastika armband, and faces BLUME).*

Don't think it was easy, Fraulein. Facing the first victim of the morning always required an adjustment. One set aside emotion and the raw tension when I pulled the trigger. To weaken or resist could have meant going home . . . in a coffin. Questions would have been asked of my Frau . . . maybe our circumstances revealed. That possibility gave me greater enthusiasm for our task . . . greater than most of the other komaraden.

*(He draws a cigarette from his tunic pocket and steps closer to the audience while BLUME returns to her table)*

I think it should be easy to make up your mind who was the better soldier, the one who obeyed orders no matter the cost, or the one who didn't because of his doubts? . . . At first, I wondered if shooting defenseless strangers, even Judenrats, violated the soldier's code. During the first cigarette break, I poured Schnapps into my coffee to steady my nerves. Soon, the thrill of shooting returned, and I could feel the extraordinary satisfaction flowing through me again.

*(He returns to his table, lights his cigarette, and faces BLUME)*

So, Fraulein, that's how it was, day after day . . .

*(He pulls out his pistol, extends his arm and draws it across the audience, and pulls the trigger again, and again).*

. . . week after week until it stopped feeling extraordinary, just a normal experience made possible by an endless supply of victims. *(He exhales slowly)*

DIM TO BLACKOUT

SCENE 5

*(The stage is dim as BLUME, followed by a spot, moves along the perimeter. BLIX sits at his table in Space B)*

**BLUME**

My passage from dark eyes to ashes began with that journey east, our future uncertain, our minds filled with stories about events in Poland . . . Ukraine . . . and Russia, shocking stories that by comparison made our existence in Theresienstadt bearable even though we lived in constant fear. We were told that the Red Cross would be arriving with better food, and much-needed medical supplies. But I never saw them, or the new provisions.

*(She stops at the edge of downstage center and drops to her knees. Stage restores. The spot extinguishes).*

LIGHT RESTORES TO FULL

Mutti began to fail soon after our arrival at Theresienstadt.

*(She circles her hands over the stage floor as if shaping an earthen mound. Then, clutching her shirt collar, begins to sob)*

Night after night I held her close, her hands and cheeks growing colder with the passing hours. I struggled through her favorite Yiddish melodies until she closed her eyes, took one final breath, and ripped my heart apart.

*(She sits on her haunches, cradles her arms, and sways from side to side)*

Forgive me Mutti if I didn't love you enough or know more of your goodness before I placed you down. Your love was without end and stronger than death itself.

**BLUME** (*Cont'd*)

*(She wipes her hands on her breasts, and leans forward to touch the imaginary grave once more)*

Papa . . . dear, sweet Papa. He collapsed a few days later, his own heart unable to bear life without Mutti. Heaven's tears fell that night, and mingled with my own as I struggled to accept the emptiness and finality of what had happened to the Blume family . . . I even thought of suicide knowing I could never do it.

**BLIX**

*(He approaches BLUME, and looks down at her)*

I assure you Fraulein my actions were never personal. I did not choose one person over another. Nein, that would have slowed the process. I just wanted to finish the day's work and return to the barracks for my sausages and Schnapps. But my damn superiors! *(Shouting)* Do you think those bastards would take time to drink with the boys? We were all part of the bloody mess.

**BLUME**

*(Looking up at BLIX)* So, Herr Blix, even with doubts you obeyed orders. God doesn't provide Schnapps here!

**BLIX**

Never mind, Fraulein. It doesn't matter. I have memories. I don't need Schnapps.

**BLUME**

*(Shouting)* But it does matter! You were eager to kill . . . you and the rest of your komaraden.

**BLIX**

All? Nein, Fraulein! Maybe the young, but I saw grown men weep while they shot . . . I saw them stop shooting, dry their eyes, then shoot again until the pile of arms and legs reached the top of the ditch. Ja, I saw such things.

**BLUME**

Did you weep, Herr Blix?

**BLIX**

Nein!

**BLUME**

If you didn't weep, what did you feel? You can tell me. I am no longer easily frightened.

**BLIX**

We'll see, Fraulein. We will see.

*(He extends his arm toward BLUME. She waves it off. He returns to his chair, and looks over his shoulder at her)*

I carried out my orders without concern for the emotional burden. Mind you, I will say it was incredible to see the Jews coming forward all day as if they knew what was going to happen was their destiny. We had to keep the lines moving, and - -

**BLUME**

-Without thoughts or feelings about what you were about to do?

**BLIX**

I was only concerned about the Kommandant, and his thoughts. *(Lighting another cigarette)* But never mind. Tell me, did you have a job at Theresienstadt?

**BLUME**

*(She approaches her table, takes hold of her chair, and moves it closer to Space B. She sits)*

I worked in the tailor shop.

**BLIX**

*(With a patronizing air)* A job Jews were qualified for, ja?

**BLUME**

*(Feigning laughter)* Sometimes I took a tunic to the toilet and . . . *(shouting)* wiped my ass with the sleeve.

**BLIX**

*(Sniffing his sleeve)* Not mine.

**BLUME**

*(Leaning toward him)* Why don't you have the courage to tell me how you felt when you killed someone?

**BLIX**

Feelings? There was no time to worry about feelings. We just lined them up, pulled the trigger, and watched them drop into the ditch.

**BLUME**

Even the children?

**BLIX**

What life could they have without parents? Besides, we would need to kill them when they grew up, ja? So why wait?

**BLUME**

Did you shoot a child?

**BLIX**

*(He places his hands behind his head, and arches backwards)*

Do you think I am the kind of man who would?

**BLUME**

Yes, I think you are the kind of man who would kill a child.

**BLIX**

*(Shouting)* Well, you are wrong. I did not, but I remember a boy screaming, "Schnell . . . schnell!" I wanted to grant his wish. The orders were clear. Shoot the young first so the parents could see them suffer. But I didn't. Someone else finished him off, *(raising his voice)* and I was glad . . . I think. *(Stretching)* So that's how it was, bodies falling over until the ditch was full.

**BLUME**

Everyone left for dead.

**BLIX**

If we heard a cry . . . we looked around and delivered the mercy shot. Then we covered the bodies with earth and sand, and the day's work was finished, or so we thought.

**BLUME**

Wasn't it?

**BLIX**

Sometimes something unbelievable happened. The earth began to move.

**BLUME**

Moved? - -

**BLIX**

- Jawhol, it moved.

**BLUME**

The hand of God!

**BLIX**

God had nothing to do with it. They were Jews buried beneath the earth, wounded Jews still alive and struggling to crawl out from their grave.

*(BLUME covers her mouth and begins to gag).*

**BLIX** (Cont'd)

Try not to vomit, Fraulein. The smell disgusts me.

*(Withdrawing his pistol, he aims it at the audience, then examines the sight, wipes the weapon against his sleeve and restores it to its holster).*

*(BLUME drags her chair back to Space A, and rests her head on the table)*

**BLIX**

*(He approaches BLUME and removes his tunic jacket)*

Looking at you . . . how I shall say, reminds me of my Frau. Hannah has dark eyes . . . and dark hair . . . just like you.

**BLUME**

Do you know what happened to her?

**BLIX**

Poland was not my choice for deployment. I hoped it would have been Norway where Hannah could join me. Our plan was to slip into Sweden and hide there until the war ended. But . . . My only contact was by letter, very few letters.

*(He flings his tunic at BLUME).*

Put it on if you are cold.

**BLUME**

*(BLUME throws the tunic back at him).*

*(With certitude)* I don't need a blood-stained Nazi tunic!

**BLIX**

No? Doesn't even a Jew-bitch get cold?

*(BLIX returns to his table, picks up an imaginary pen, and speaks an imaginary letter)*

My beloved Hannah. . . In these uncertain times when survival demands a maximum effort, I think of you with a tender heart. Life is precious, so do not hesitate to rush into the bomb shelter when there is an alarm. Most of the unit suffers from diarrhea and colds, but don't worry. I am fine. Remember, Hannah, you are my life's blood, and nothing else matters . . . nothing.

**BLUME**

There is no post here. She will never get it.

**BLIX**

It made me feel normal again . . . even if she never gets it.

**BLUME**

Why didn't you tell your Frau about the boy begging you to kill him?

**BLIX**

The censor wouldn't allow it. Anyhow, we don't have children so it would be of no interest to Hannah. But I would like to know if she still lives. I must know that. It is my only concern other than eliminating you!

**BLUME**

*(Shouting)* You are crazed . . . you, the censors, and that madman you blindly follow.

**BLIX**

Blind? Who is blind, Fraulein, me who knows what the Fuhrer achieved, or you, who can't see, and never tried?

**BLUME**

I saw! We all saw! Everyone saw!

**BLIX**

Then you know! *(Stiffening)* Austria and the Sudeten land without a shot. Poland in three weeks, Norway in eight? Who but a genius could defeat Holland, Belgium and France so quickly . . . ?

*(Stabbing the air with his fist)*

. . . France, mind you! *(Shouting)* France in forty-five days!

**BLUME**

*(Shouting)* Did it matter how long it took? You were fanatics . . . killers . . . rapists!

**BLIX**

*(Shouting back)* That's not true! I never raped anyone . . . not even a Jew. . . You wanted to know how it was for me, and now you know!

**BLUME**

But why? Why?

**BLIX**

Because I loved Germany . . . and the Fuhrer - -

**BLUME**

*(Shouting)* How could you love a country that went madly insane unless you were a machine, and not human?

**BLIX**

*(Waving his arms)* Is that what you think, that I was a machine? Maybe some expected me to function like one, and ignore human feelings, but I was not a machine, and *(shouting)* not a rapist! I was a soldier who waited at the edge of the woods until the trucks brought our ammunition, and the first Jews who dug the ditches before the rest arrived.

**BLUME**

The Jews who dug, they knew they were digging their own graves, didn't they?

**BLIX**

*(Facing Blume)* Lublin wasn't a combat zone so what use could there be for long, deep ditches? Some of the diggers tried to escape. A few did . . . very few. The rest dug until the ditches were deep enough. *(Approaching the audience)* You should have seen our Komandant walking around, leering at the women who had stripped. Don't imagine it was easy to work for him! But still . . . it was a responsibility we could take pride in - -

**BLUME**

*(Shouting)* -Pride?

**BLIX**

*(Facing BLUME)* Jawhol, Fraulein, pride in our ability to adjust when the circumstances demanded.

*(He looks over the rim of the stage, then at the audience)*

I think the Jews approached their destruction . . . how I shall say . . . with a "mystical dignity," some carrying their clothes as if they would have need of them. I could have shot them where they stood, but I allowed them to stand in place . . . ja, another moment of life until those in front fell, and it was their turn.

**BLUME**

Without a moment of sympathy?

**BLIX**

*(He returns to his table)*

Sympathy? Fraulein, if I had sympathy, it ended when I saw how meekly they surrendered to their destiny. I invent no words to describe what my eyes saw, and - -

**BLUME**

-And then you shot them.

**BLIX**

Not immediately. Sometimes I just watched while they pushed against one another trying to protect . . . maybe even comfort the person next to them. I make nothing up. . .  
*(Affectedly)* Then we shot them.

**BLUME**

But you, you Unteroffizier Blix . . . what were you thinking when you pulled the trigger?

**BLIX**

There was no time to think, and besides, why would you want to know?

**BLUME**

Because I know what you did before vengeance is brought upon you. I want to know what you felt, if you felt anything.

**BLIX**

*(He wipes the back of his hand across his mouth)*

Stand up and go there! *(Pointing to downstage center)*

**BLUME**

STAGE DIMS

*(BLUME stands. A spot follows her to the edge of the downstage center).*

Here?

**BLIX**

*(BLIX approaches, and places a hand on her shoulder)*

Jawhol, here!

*(Spot extinguishes. An overhead light illuminates both).*

**BLIX** (Cont'd)

Now . . . you are standing at the edge of the ditch with your eyes closed.

*(He lifts his hand from her shoulder, reaches around, and covers her eyes)*

**BLIX** (Cont'd)

Keep your eyes shut!

*(Withdrawing his hand, BLIX pulls the pistol from its holster, and presses the barrel against the back of BLUME'S neck. She trembles)*

Don't worry, Fraulein. Didn't you say nothing is destroyed here without your God's permission? Your eyes . . . keep them closed! So . . . now . . . everything is in order like it was in Lublin.

**BLUME**

*(Insisting)* But what are you thinking?

**BLIX**

Don't worry, I will tell you, and show you . . . exactly as it was in Lublin.

**BLUME**

Then do it. *(Shouting)* Pull the trigger.

**BLIX**

*(He steps backwards, his arm still extended, the pistol still pressed against the back of her skull)*

So, I hold my weapon against your skull . . . just as I did in Lublin.

**BLUME**

But what are you thinking? *(Shouting)* You must be thinking something.

**BLIX**

About the clean kill, Fraulein . . . and only the clean kill. If I stand too close, your brains and blood will splash on my face. It always happened when the skull shatters.

**BLUME**

Are you standing back far enough?

**BLIX**

Jawhol, Fraulein.

**BLUME**

You weren't afraid in Lublin. *(Shouting)* Do it!

**BLIX**

*(He steps in front of BLUME, and leans toward the audience)*

Do you *(pointing to the audience)* remember how good it felt to have such power, how it felt to watch the Judenrats tremble on the edge of death?

*(A Klaxon howls in the distance. BLUME covers her ears. The siren screams louder . . . louder)*

**BLUME**

*(Shouting)* Shoot! Shoot!

*(The Klaxon rages. BLUME buckles at the knees. BLIX twists around, struggling to hold the pistol against the base of BLUME'S skull. He screams over the Klaxon)*

**BLIX**

Now, my Fuhrer, I will squeeze the trigger, and your wish is fulfilled!

*(BLUME collapses face down, her hands spread apart. The Klaxon stops)*

Sheise! Again, it doesn't work. *(Shouting)* When will the damn pistol work? *(He sheaths the pistol)* So, Fraulein, you are now face down in Polish mud with a hole in the back of your skull.

*(BLIX forms his fingers into the shape of a large hole)*

**BLUME**

*(Looking up at BLIX)* You hoped the pistol would work, didn't you?

**BLIX**

If I wanted to kill you now, why would I do this?

*(Blix pulls a clip of bullets from his pocket and waves it at Blume.)*

**BLIX** (Cont'd)

You see, Jew bitch, the pistol was empty.

**BLUME**

*(Still looking up at him)* And then?

**BLIX**

And then the Kommandant passes pills around that made me feel indifferent to what I did the rest of the day. Sometimes, I swallowed too many, and everything became blurred.

*(He begins to sway in a circular motion.)*

STAGE DIMS.

*A spot follows BLIX into the audience. Holding his pistol in one hand, he places a foot on a patron's armrest. BLUME remains prostrate on the stage)*

I wandered into the nearby woods, woods just like these. So, now we are together. Are we not alike . . . hands, feet, the clothing over us . . . someone to sit with, and enjoy a Schnapps? Tell me, meine Freune, who had the greater responsible for eliminating the Judenrats . . . me, or you who stayed in your houses, and did nothing to stop me? I didn't want them, *(shouting)* and you wouldn't take them. So, now, the Jew-bitch condemns me. Why?

**BLIX** (Cont'd)

*(Raising voice again)* Because I did what had to be done . . . what the rest of the world didn't have the courage to do! For me it wasn't just about killing Jews. It was about impressing the Kommandant . . . becoming someone in his eyes. He loved slaughtering Jews. We called him the Kosher Butcher of Lublin.

*(He takes a few more steps into the audience)*

Mind you, it wasn't easy. We didn't even have a toilet. If you needed to crap, you felt like shitting on the dead Jews . . . but that slowed things down. So, I dropped my trousers, and shit right here *(pointing to the floor)* in the woods . . . A recruit who couldn't wait, crapped all over the Jews. I thought the Butcher would kill him on the spot . . . and let him rot with the Jews in his own shit.

*(Followed by the spot, BLIX re-approaches the stage, stops, and glances back at the audience)*

There was an old man resting on his knees. Blood was pouring from his nose and ears, and he was moaning . . . maybe praying. I can't say. I ended his suffering with a bullet between his eyes . . . my best shot of the day. And then . . . then I wondered *(nodding slowly)* if such an old man could be my enemy. So, is the Fraulein right? Am I controlled by a madman, my actions the instrument of his will?

*(BLIX mounts the stage. Light restores. Spot extinguishes. He wipes his mouth, and approaches BLUME)*

**BLUME**

*(Standing slowly)* And the children, the children you shot?

BLIX

*(Shouting)* Children? *(Lowering his voice)* I didn't kill any, but I could have. There was a mother at the edge of the ditch clutching her child to her breast. They always protect their children that way. The Butcher looked at me. I shook my head, so he ordered the recruit to shoot the child. The recruit shook his head. The Butcher jammed his pistol against the rookie's neck . . .

A SHOT

**BLIX** (Cont'd)

. . . There were two more shots. Then the Butcher kicked the recruit, the mother and her child into the ditch . . . I turned away.

**BLUME**

So, maybe you had pity for them?

**BLIX**

Fraulein . . . we hunted them down, brought them to the fields, and finished them off. Pieces of skulls and brains were flying everywhere. If I had pity for anyone, it was for me. I had to do it!

**BLUME**

Were you not more than that, Herr Blix? Were you not more than just a killer of Jews because they were Jews?

**BLIX**

*(With hesitation)* I was part of the Fuhrer's dream, Fraulein, a Juden frei Europe. But anyway, it was a long day, and we had enough.

GUN SHOTS

**BLIX** (Cont'd)

The Butcher always emptied his last rounds into any corpse sticking over the top of the ditches. He called it insurance against Jewish ghosts walking around Lublin that night.

*(BLIX and BLUME return to their respective tables)*

**BLUME**

*(Leaning toward BLIX)* Did you see one?

**BLIX**

Nein!

**BLUME**

Why lie now if you saw one.

**BLIX**

But I saw nothing!

**BLUME**

Ghosts follow their murderers. You can't escape them. Was it the boy who begged to be killed . . . the old man you shot between the eyes . . . or a child, any Jewish child?

**BLIX**

There was no child!

**BLUME**

*(Raising her voice)* Are you certain, Herr Blix . . . a barefoot girl a yellow Star of David pinned to her white dress?

**BLIX**

*(He approaches downstage edge of Space B, stares at the audience, taps the side of his head, and then approaches BLUME)*

**BLIX** (Cont'd)

*(With reluctance)* Yes, a girl . . . a girl in a white dress . . . a white dress with a Star of David. The day was almost over when she walked out from the woods . . . a blondie in the snow without shoes.

*(Stage dims. A GIRL emerges from the upstage perimeter, and approaches Space B. Barefoot, she shivers in her sleeveless white dress, a white dress with the yellow Star of David pinned to it. She approaches downstage center. An overhead light highlights her).*

**BLUME**

Was she alone?

**BLIX**

*(Facing BLUME)* I can't say. Maybe she hid in the back of a truck and fell out. I can't say.

**BLUME**

Did you try to help her . . . show her a moment of kindness . . . something?

**BLIX**

She had big, wide-opened eyes, eyes that stared at mine with questions of an innocent heart. *(Half sobbing)* What could I do? She was a Jew, and we were killing them. Besides, the Kommandant was nearby.

**BLUME**

*(With anger)* She was a child in the snow without shoes. You could have wrapped your tunic around her.

**BLIX**

*(BLIX approaches the GIRL, his arm extended)*

Daughter . . . don't be afraid.

OFF-STAGE MALE VOICE

Load . . . aim . . . shoot!

SHOTS RING OUT

*(The GIRL covers her ears)*

**BLIX**

*(Glancing toward BLUME)* The Jews at the ditch were done for. Only the blondie remained alive.

*(Returning his gaze to the GIRL, he extends his arm again)*

**BLIX** (Cont'd)

Daughter . . . don't be afraid. I won't hurt you.

*(Glancing back at BLUME)*

You should have seen those eyes, eyes of a thousand questions.

*(Returning his gaze to the GIRL)*

Daughter . . . show me where you want to go, and I will take you there.

*(The GIRL points to stage left).*

*(BLIX approaches, binds his scarf around her eyes, and takes her hand).*

**BLIX**

Come, daughter.

*(He leads her offstage).*

A SHOT

BLACKOUT

SCENE 6

*(Light restores. BLUME approaches BLIX sitting at his table)*

**BLIX**

*(Gazing up at her)* The Butcher mocked me and said God would not forgive me.

**BLUME**

Why should he? Too forgive you is to betray the memory of the innocent. God wouldn't. I don't. Not one Jew would . . . not one.

**BLIX**

There must be one. Anyhow, it doesn't matter. All I wanted was a hot meal and Schnapps.

**BLUME**

Is that all you cared about?

**BLIX**

Not exactly, Fraulein. Maybe I did have some feelings beyond nothingness? I just needed food, but all we had that night was black bread, stinking butter, and Schnapps . . . so much Schnapps that I got drunk. I even fought the Ukrainian boys brought in to help us. Those bastards! They were stealing the Jews' possessions, good goods belonged to us, not them! I showed them a lesson they wouldn't forget - -

**BLUME**

- You showed them how to eliminate the helpless, how to steal their possessions, and how to get drunk.

**BLIX**

*(Defiantly)* Don't be too quick to judge. Do you think those boys had any understanding of what we were trying to do? They just needed to be broken, and I did it.

**BLUME**

They weren't children who couldn't see right from wrong. They wanted to be monsters like you, and your komoradan.

**BLIX**

Have you finished?

**BLUME**

No, I've just started, *(raising her voice)* and I still want to know why you couldn't tell your Frau about Lublin, and what you did there.

**BLIX**

What could be gained by telling her? I was the rock Hannah rested on. She didn't need to know about such things. *(Pointing at BLUME)* But if you knew me the way she did, you would not call me a monster. Perhaps you would have seen me . . . how shall I say, as an obedient artist!

**BLUME**

An artist?

**BLIX**

Jawhol, Fraulein, *(arrogantly)* an ordinary soldier who turned killing into an art with the least amount of human suffering.

*(Stage dims. BLUME exits stage left. BLIX approaches the audience. He is lit from above)*

**BLIX** (Cont'd)

After my fight with the Ukrainians, I wandered into the night without remorse. But I must admit that the Jew-bitch tested my mind. Why couldn't I tell Hannah about Lublin?

*(An unadorned wooden cross lit by an overhead blue light is lowered upstage, stopping four feet above the floor. BLIX approaches, places the flat of his palm against it, and stares at the top)*

*(After staring a moment, he turns away, then, glancing over his shoulder, looks up at the cross again)*

Jesus . . . you know I killed Jews, don't you? The Fraulein says I cannot be forgiven. Do you forgive me? Am I being forgiven . . . now?

*(Pointing to the top of the cross)*

**BLIX** (Cont'd)

. . . I didn't hang you there. It was the Jews, and I was eliminating them. You understand that, don't you? *(Shaking his head)* Why am I am talking to you as if I cared what you think?

*(The cross is slowly raised. A shimmering cascade of white and blue light pours down on an area upstage center revealing the Pieta-like image of BLUME - her head draped in a shawl, the GIRL in a blood-stained white dress, and scarf wrapped around her head sprawled across her lap. The GIRL'S arm dangles beside BLUME'S leg. BLIX approaches, removes the scarf from the GIRL, and buries his face in it).*

DIM TO BLACKOUT

SCENE 7

*(Stage is dark. An overhead light gradually illuminates BLUME and BLIX standing back-to-back downstage center)*

**BLUME**

Herr Blix.

**BLIX**

Ja.

**BLUME**

Do you dream?

**BLIX**

Nein!

**BLUME**

I dream . . . I dream of Mutti and Papa, and still ask why God didn't protect them. I can't make sense of it. I want to know, or must I always suffer without an answer.

**BLIX**

Why dream about things you should forget?

**BLUME**

Because my suffering needs to be remembered.

**BLIX**

So, you will suffer?

**BLUME**

Yes, since I got here, but I don't remember how long it's been.

**BLIX**

A day, a week . . . maybe a year or longer.  
*(Raising his voice)* I don't know, and what's  
 more, I don't care. . . I would only like to  
 know if we got all the Jews, and if my Frau  
 is alive. Ja, I would like to know such  
 things.

**BLUME**

*(She turns around, and faces BLIX)*

Do you remember when you died?

**BLIX**

*(He turns around, and faces BLUME)*

December of forty-three . . . in Trieste,  
 after the job in Poland was finished. I was  
 unlucky, *(touching his temple)* a bullet to  
 the head.

**BLUME**

Like the girl in the white dress?

**BLIX**

Why mention her?

**BLUME**

*(With resolve)* Because she is someone you must  
 never forget.

**BLIX**

*(Raising his voice)* Lublin is finished,  
 Fraulein, finished, and people will not  
 remember. They won't remember, and they won't  
 care.

**BLUME**

*(With certitude)* Oh how wrong you are! Do you  
 think I became ashes so people could forget?

**BLIX**

Fraulein . . . I assure you they will forget  
. . . all of them - -

**BLUME**

-Is remembering so terrifying? Tell me, Herr  
Blix, who will remember the brave  
Schutzstaffel who shot innocent people in the  
back of the head . . . the Schutzstaffel who  
worried more about sausages and Schnapps than  
the lives he destroyed? (*Shouting*) Tell me,  
who?

**BLIX**

What about the Jews who collected the bodies  
from the gas chambers?

**BLUME**

What about them?

**BLIX**

Are they worth remembering?

**BLUME**

I can only hope - -

**BLIX**

-Hope for what? Don't waste your time. Those  
men just wanted to get the job done . . .  
have their soup and bread, some rest - -

**BLUME**

-And live another day . . . another hour.

**BLIX**

Why think about things you cannot change? We  
are what we were, nothing more . . . nothing  
less!

**BLUME**

But you think about your Frau! You remember  
her, don't you?

**BLIX**

I don't know if Hanna lives, or rests in a grave.

**BLUME**

So much life destroyed . . . (*shaking her head*) Maybe she rests in a grave.

**BLIX**

Why so cynical . . . so heartless?

**BLUME**

(*Shouting*) What choice is left to a heart broken into pieces?

DIM TO BLACKOUT

SCENE 8

*(Stage is dim. Yellow and white light pours down on Space B where BLIX rests, his head on his table. BLUME hauls her suitcase toward him. Drawing near, she stops, and faces the audience)*

**BLUME**

The end of my life began when they marched me through the snow to a nearby train. Jews were being taken away nightly from Theresienstadt without any explanation, or knowledge of their destination. The old and sick who couldn't reach the train were dragged off and shot. I prayed whenever I heard a shot.

*(Sinking to her knees, she rests an elbow on the suitcase, and reaches out to the audience).*

*(Plaintively)* Did God abandon me too?

TRAIN WHISTLE SOUNDS

**BLIX**

*(At his table)* I heard a train.

**BLUME**

*(Looking at BLIX, she pulls herself up).*

Yes, the train that took me away from Theresienstadt . . . away from Matti and Papa's graves, and the last clean air I would ever breathe.

**BLIX**

Did you know where you were going?

**BLUME**

Someone mentioned Poland . . . . *(with hesitancy)* to a place called Treblinka.

*(She stares at the Star of David pinned to her bosom, then presses the flat of her hand against it).*

**BLIX**

*(Pointing to the star)* Just like the stars over the doors at Treblinka. Ja . . . like Treblinka.

**BLUME**

*(Pressing against her breast).*

This star is me.

**BLIX**

It's just a piece of yellow cloth.

**BLUME**

*(With sudden shock)* Herr Blix! How did you know it was just like the doors at Treblinka?

**BLIX**

*(Cagily)* Know what?

**BLUME**

The stars, the stars over the doors at Treblinka, unless . . .

*(Raising her voice accusingly and pointing to BLIX).*

. . . unless you were there.

**BLIX**

It was a joke on the Judenrats. Everyone knew about it even if you weren't there.

**BLUME**

*(Judgmentally)* I knew you were my murderer even before you tried to shoot me. Even then, I knew. *(Shouting)* Why don't you confess that you murdered me?

**BLIX**

*(Guardedly)* Didn't I tell you when the job at Lublin was done, I was sent to Treblinka. . . before going to Trieste - -

**BLUME**

-*(Derisively)* No, you didn't- -

**BLIX**

-Then let me finish - -

**BLUME**

-You don't have to.

**BLIX**

*(With persistence)* But I insist! I was not personally responsible for actions against you at Treblinka. You should know that.

**BLUME**

*(Shouting)* If you were there, you were responsible!

**BLIX**

*(Shouting back)* I do not accept such accusations! Lublin was over with, finished, and we had to be deployed somewhere. So, I became a camp guard at Treblinka, and had nothing to do with the killing.

*(He steps in front of BLUME and faces the audience).*

**BLIX**

We were fighting Russians and eliminating Judenrats at the same time. There were so many Jews I thought the mission in Poland would never end. It was clear that Killing them one by one was a waste of precious ammunition. We needed a better system, one that spared us the close-up experiences at Lublin.

**BLUME**

*(All lights flicker)*

CLICKING SOUND OF WHEELS ON RAILS

*(The light restores. BLUME emerges from behind BLIX, and faces him)*

Your komoradan crammed me into a cattle car with a hundred people . . . maybe more. I don't know. There was hardly space to breathe. At first, everyone was quiet except for an infant who cried for hours.

SOUND OF CHUGGING LOCOMOTIVE . . .  
A TRAIN WHISTLE

**BLIX**

*(Still facing audience)* I had to breathe too. Don't imagine the experience at Lublin disappeared as if it never happened, or that I left without memories. Maybe some did, but I didn't. I can still remember the smell of bodies rotting in the streets, and gutters. Ja, I remember.

**BLUME**

*(Grabbing her suitcase, BLUME moves warily along the upstage perimeter, finally reaching downstage center. She faces the audience).*

**BLUME** (Cont'd)

The train rolled on, stopped, and then continued like that hour after hour. Whenever it stopped, I thought . . . I hoped they would let us out for fresh air. Never! Blix had his Schnapps and sausages. I had pails of excretion, urine, and vomit.

CONTINUOUS SOUND OF WHEELS GRINDING  
ON RAILS

*(Streaks of light flashing on the upstage perimeter as if coming through cracks in the cattle car's siding)*

I peered through the cracks hoping to see stars, or sunlight . . . a bird . . . anything. I wanted fresh air, but even that desire was numbed by the monotonous sounds of wheels turning on the tracks.

CHUGGING SOUND FADES

**BLIX**

*(He steps beside BLUME, hands on hips, legs spread apart, and engages the audience)*

And then . . . it happened, Treblinka! Reich-Fuhrer Himmler gave us the finest extermination camp in the system. It could accommodate more people in one hour than we eliminated at Lublin in a week . . . one hour, mind you without wasting a single bullet!

*(He raises his hand in the Nazi salute)*

You see, I still salute the Reich Fuhrer!

*(Stage dims. A narrow spot hits BLUME standing perpendicular to the edge of stage left, her face half in shadows. She turns toward the audience. Stage restores)*

**BLUME**

After many hours, or days . . . I don't know how many, the train came to a full stop, and remained in place. Only the sound of urine splashing into the pails broke the silence. Even the infant was quiet. Was it alive, or had it suffocated? Maybe we all had! Finally, when the first light of dawn squeezed through the cracks, the doors were opened. How, I wondered, would our guards have reacted if they found us dead, their pleasure taken by a merciful God?

**BLIX**

*(Still facing audience)* When I got to Treblinka a shipment of Jews was still waiting outside the perimeter until those already inside had been dealt with. Smoke filled the air with a foul stench, the smell of burning flesh. Breathing was disagreeable, but the facility was working at maximum capacity.

*(He exhales deeply, and then spreads his arms apart as if encompassing the entire vista)*

If you were looking for it, Treblinka was not easy to find. The facility was well-hidden by pine branches folded into the barbed-wire fence surrounding the camp. Several guard towers looked down on the wooden buildings where Jews worked . . . and the chambers where they were gassed. Corpses littered the ground, one here . . . two or three over there, some already in a state of decay. But who gave a shit! They were only Jews.

**BLUME**

For an instant, the stench from the cattle car vanished until another, one even more repugnant and sickening filled my nostrils. The wind whistled in my ears, and I felt light-headed . . . without a sense of myself . . . or the world around me. I remember turning my face to the sky, and the blinding sunlight that dazzled my mind with images of burning corpses, or angels floating above them.

**BLUME** (Cont'd)

*(Her knees buckle. She struggles to compose herself and straighten).*

Exhausted, and aching with pangs of hunger, I fell into a pitiable line of people thinking by some miracle, that they knew how to reach salvation . . . even when everything around me cried out differently.

*(She raises her hands and shields her head).*

A woman wearing a Red Cross armband beat me on the head. Was she from the Red Cross, or a sadistic imposter who threatened to shoot me if I fell? Still, I had a thirst for life, and if I had wings, I would have flown from the fate awaiting me.

*(She clutches her suitcase against her bosom).*

. . . I knew I would never touch familiar things again: a door handle, a lamp shade . . . the Menorah on our mantle. I was trapped in memories from which there was no escape. Why did they matter? *(With despair)* I was ordered to strip, told I would be deloused, and given fresh clothing.

## OFF-STAGE MALE VOICE

Women and children to the left! Men to the right!

**BLIX**

*(Facing BLUME)* When the women and girls undressed, I began to think how long it had been since I saw one naked.

**BLUME**

Did you take a good look?

**BLIX**

Not at first, but soon my eyes fixed on a young Jew-bitch . . . and I wondered how she would have been . . . even for a short time.

*(BLIX returns to his table and sits)*

**BLUME**

*(Facing BLIX)* I removed my shoes, tied them with pieces of string given to me and stripped as ordered.

*(She presses her knees together, puts one arm across her breast, the other between her thighs)*

So, Herr Blix, there I stood beside other naked women, and young girls shivering in our nakedness, praying, sobbing . . . the pitiful sounds of anguish, and our failure to understand how men could do that to us . . . and why God allowed it.

ENGINE NOISE RUMBLES IN THE DISTANCE

What did it mean? Where was the noise coming from? Everyone appeared as if they were ready to collapse.

*(She raises her hand skyward, looks up, and cries out)*

Elohim, do you hear me? *(Lowering her head)*  
Did anyone? Did anyone try?

*(She returns to her table and fixes her gaze at BLIX).*

**BLIX**

Did you feel eyes on your naked body?

**BLUME**

Yes . . . the eyes of an old Jew who began cutting my hair, and whisper that he was ashamed, and sorry for what he had to do. *(With torment)* But I wasn't angry. He was trying to survive even as he began to deconstruct me.

*(Tilting her head back).*

. . . A guard shoved his hand into my mouth to see if I was hiding anything . . . a ring or maybe a valuable jewel. Some women passed out while others were dragged off. Where?

*(Stage dims to half. BLUME rests her head on the table, her hands covering her head).*

**BLIX**

*(He approaches BLUME, he looks down at her)*

*(Emphatically)* You should know that I did not kill anyone at Treblinka. No one waited for me to shoot them in the back of the skull. . . I had nothing to do with operating the gas engines.

*(Arms akimbo, BLIX takes three steps downstage, and faces the audience).*

If the mission was the total elimination of the Jews, Treblinka was the perfect solution: ten cells in each chamber, each holding a hundred Jews . . . maybe more. If you tried to picture hell, just imagine what happened inside those cells. *(Turning toward BLUME)* But never mind, there were no eyes looking back at mine.

**BLUME**

*(Standing and shouting)* How dare you look at mine with eyes that witnessed such horrors!

**BLIX**

*(Re-approaching BLUME)* Am I? I didn't think about it. *(Bending toward her)* Treblinka was working, Fraulein and the more it worked, the sooner I would return to Germany, and my Frau. That's all I cared about.

**BLUME**

*(Approaching the audience)* The women guards shoved me along a snow-covered trail stained with blood.

**BLIX**

*(Looking over his shoulder at the audience).*

It was the path we called the tube . . . the tube to death.

**BLUME**

*(With anguish)* They whipped me, and anyone who refused to go on, or couldn't, was clubbed to death where they fell. Somehow . . . even with my strength nearly gone . . . I managed to stay upright with the pain ripping through my body.

**BLIX**

*(Still glancing at the audience)* The tube was camouflaged by the small trees and branches stuffed between the wires, so thick I couldn't see inside.

**BLUME**

*(Looking at BLIX)* Not even the blood-stained sand?

**BLIX**

Not even the blood-stained sand.

**BLUME**

*(Shouting)* But my blood was there, Unteroffizier Blix! *(Touching her forehead)* Not much . . . but some . . . blood free of my tormentors, free from the monsters who brought me there.

THE STAGE DIMS. FOUR OVERHEAD RED LIGHTS STRIKE THE FLOOR, MARKING CORNERS OF A SIX BY TEN-FOOT RECTANGLE

*(BLUME approaches the imaginary edge of the rectangle, then turns toward BLIX).*

The path you didn't want to see ended at a building with a Star of David painted above the doorway . . . *(with desolation)* the star you mentioned. *(Arching backwards, she looks up)*. How many, I wondered, had stood there before me torn between hope and submission . . . and how many would come after me half in love with the idea of dying because death was inevitable? . . . I dared to ask the guard if death would come quickly. He grinned and said I would catch a death of a cold if I stood naked outside.

*(Advancing awkwardly, one foot in front of the other, she reaches the center of the rectangle).*

ENGINE NOISE RUMBLES

The chamber was packed with women and children who held onto each other as if clinging to life itself. My nostrils flared from the reek of bleach pooled on the floor. Then I noticed a blood-stained hand print on the wall and placed mine over it.

*(Extending her arm with her palm facing the audience).*

**BLUME** (Cont'd)

It was a match. I leaned against the woman beside me, and reached out for others, Jews women forever united in the act of dying.

*(Twisting her torso, she pulls her elbows in, then pushes them out).*

Two overhead vents gaped at me. Shower heads hung from the ceiling.

*(She lifts one foot, advances, then lifts the other before bending forward).*

The door was shut. There was another at the back of the cell. Where did it lead? Then . . . I heard it being sealed.

*(Lights dissolve to yellow).*

Stripped of dignity, and terrified, I stood in my concrete coffin, touching, shoving and knowing that I would not die alone.

*(She twists in place . . . slowly).*

ENGINE NOISE INCREASES, THEN STOPS

I expected water from the showerheads. Instead . . . the lights went out. A silence gripped the chamber with a stillness that held me in its noiseless grasp until the light came on again. Except for my searching eyes I stood motionless trying to imagine what came next. Finally, I took a deep breath, and filled my lungs as if I knew it would be for the last time.

ENGINE NOISE RUMBLES AGAIN

*(BLUME lurches forward, then, standing in place, sways from side to side drawing her hands into her chest, her elbows against her hips).*

**BLUME** (Cont'd)

Someone began choking . . . then another, and soon everyone was struggling to breathe. *(Pointing to vents)* Something invisible was coming from the vents . . . and I trembled . . . not from the cold, but from fear . . . normal, human fear.

*(Hand beneath her chin, the other on her forehead, she gulps for air).*

*(Shouting/sobbing)* I couldn't breathe, or remember what anyone looked like, Mutti . . . Papa . . . Meira . . . none of them . . . all of them. But didn't I have to survive? Wasn't I all that was left? I was confused . . . my goodbyes left unsaid, my eyes useless . . . my brain dying . . .

ENGINE NOISE GROWS LOUDER.

*(Bending over, BLUME gags, and clasps her mouth as if trying to retain her vomit. She wipes her hands on her hips while approaching downstage center and presses them against her cheeks while swaying in a circular motion. Multiple bursts of light strike both stage, and audience. BLUME sinks to her knees and cries out)*

ELOHIM! ELOHIM!

*(A streak of blue light strikes her).*

*(Shouting)* His spark touched me releasing my soul to eternity, the Shayna Frida adrift in immortality.

BLACKOUT

SCENE 9

*(Overhead lights reveal BLUME and BLIX at their tables facing one another).*

**BLUME**

And so, the final destruction of my body began when the second door opened. *(Pointing to stage right)* My body tumbled onto a mass of twisted, lifeless arms and legs . . . bodies with wide-eyed faces, and gaping mouths. You did that, Herr Blix. It was you.

**BLIX**

*(Half stuttering)* It's not true to assign that responsibility to me. I was several meters from the gas chambers. It was not me Fraulein, and you are not fair!

**BLUME**

*(Approaching BLIX)* But you knew what happened inside those chambers.

**BLIX**

*(BLIX cups his chin with his hands, lowers his head, then massages his forehead)*

Fraulein, I could never have imagined it would be so horrible. I thought it would be quick, and without suffering as if you were going to sleep. It was - -

**BLUME**

*(Shouting)* - Without suffering! What else would you call it?

**BLIX**

*(Defensively)* It was the systematic elimination of the threat to our German purity. That's all it was. That's all it was meant to be. Would it have been better if you were shot in the back of the head?

**BLUME**

At least it would have been quicker.

**BLIX**

*(Waving his hand)* So, I am condemned because you suffered, and equally condemned if death had been quicker, and more merciful!

**BLUME**

*(With disdain)* Herr Blix, you condemned yourself when you raised your hand for the first time and said Heil Hitler! *(Approaching him)* Tell me, would you have eliminated me if you hadn't taken that oath? Tell me before you forget, or is your Fuhrer addiction beyond escape?

**BLIX**

*(He stares at BLUME and shakes his head in despair).*

It was a way to survive, a way to stay alive.

**BLUME**

No, Herr Bix. To think . . . to sense life is to be alive. But I knew I was dead when two ghost-like men tossed my corpse onto a wagon and pushed me toward a fire pit. The flame you lit on Kristallnacht consumed my corpse until the fluids inside me burst . . . *(exhaling deeply)* stinking, boiling blood, *(exhaling)* my bones cracking, my flesh melting like snow in the sun.

**BLIX**

*(With empathy)* Ja, *(nodding)* It would have been more humane if someone put a hole in the back of your head.

**BLUME**

*(Returning to her table, glancing back at BLIX)*

Or done nothing, Herr Blix . . . nothing at all.

**BLIX**

Don't you understand that you lost yourself looking for the burning bush; that you became ashes and smoke?

*(Approaching her table; leaning into her face)*

Who was this God who never revealed himself when you cried out to him? Was he the God of creation, the God of protection, or a God incapable of saving His chosen people? When you needed him at Treblinka, why didn't He reveal himself? Why? *(Vindictively)* Because He doesn't exist!

**BLUME**

If he doesn't exist, then who gathered me from the ashes?

**BLIX**

- I assure you, Fraulein, God is not necessary!

*(He backs toward stage right. Stage dims)*

**BLUME**

*(Sighing, shaking her head, and facing the audience)*

The last train arrived . . . the last corpse became ash . . . the fires extinguished. Winter ended, and the faithful grass returned to Treblinka where madness had once reigned . . . where I changed and became beautiful again in my soul.

## TRACK THREE OF THE PIANO MUSIC

*(Stage restores. BLUME, in moving tempo with the music, and feeling joyful, raises her hands above her in a display of triumphant ecstasy. BLIX'S turns his head follow her as she glides around. He then draws the pistol from its holster, and places it with a flourish on the table next to BLUME'S candlesticks).*

**BLIX**

*(He glides toward BLUME, and reaches out for her)*

Frida, why did we wait so long?

**BLUME**

*(Shouting)* It's too late Karl, too late.

**BLIX**

Why? There's nothing to be afraid of.

*(BLIX reaches for BLUME'S uplifted hands and touches her as the music evolves into a thematic Jewish mode. She circles away, hands still above her head. BLIX raises his arm in the Nazi salute)*

**BLIX** (Cont'd)

Seig heil, Hannah, Seig heil!

*(The sound of people cheering covers the piano music. Hitler's raging voice is heard screaming in the distance. BLIX leaps toward BLUME, grabs her by the throat, and forces her onto the table. Hitler's rants continue. BLIX pulls her trousers down to her ankles, and wraps his leg around her)*

**BLUME**

*(Screaming and struggling)* Rapist! Murderer!  
Let go! Get off!

*(Hitler's voice grows louder. BLUME uttering a deep groan, reaches behind her head, grabs a candlestick, and smashes it against BLIX'S head. Piano music and Hitler's rants ends.)*

BLACKOUT

SCENE 10

*(Stage is dark except for two overhead lights that reveal BLIX kneeling beside his table, and BLUME collapsed on her chair, massaging the insides of her thighs. She stands, and raises her hands in front of her face, fingers barely touching)*

**BLUME**

*(With pleading reverence)* Help me God. Show me your mercy.

**BLIX**

*(Looking up at BLUME)* You ask God for mercy, ja? Am I not a victim! I lost the Germany of my youth, the Germany I lived in. And when I found the new Reich, I got a bullet in the head. Do you understand that I'm not the man you think I am.

**BLUME**

*(Lowering her hands)*

You are the man I think are! You never lived in Germany. You lived for it, and everything about it that was dark, and horrible - -

**BLIX**

-But it was never my intention to personally hurt you.

**BLUME**

*(Facing BLIX)* Then why didn't you show any kindness instead of death?

**BLIX**

*(Reaching toward BLUME)* If I had any power left, I would use it to make you understand that I want forgiveness and freedom, freedom to leave this place . . . I want to find my Frau.

**BLUME**

Do you think your mortal sins are forgiven without admitting your guilt? Do you think I am swayed by false repentance? God reigns here, and I can only forgive according to His judgement.

**BLIX**

*(He wipes the back of his skull, then tucks his handkerchief into his tunic pocket)*

*(Disingenuously)* Frieda Blume, do you really believe I wanted to hurt you, or destroy your dignity?

**BLUME**

You no longer have the power to do that, and -  
-

**BLIX**

*(Again, disingenuously)* -But why don't you understand it was never my intention?

**BLUME**

Then why don't you accept that God won't allow it again, that He rejoices in me . . . that He has compassion for me?

**BLIX**

*(With reluctance)* If I did, would He have pity on me?

**BLUME**

What's left to pity?

**BLIX**

What's left? The man I should have been, the man who wanted to share in your joy - -

**BLUME**

- *(Boldly)* By raping me? No, Herr Blix, to share joy with me is to value me as I was, not the naked girl who died in the gas chamber. *(Shouting)* I was the Jewish girl from Gross Rosen Strasse who loved life and God because God is life!

*(She leans toward BLIX)*

*(Screaming with contempt)* You stupid, cold-heated . . . Why couldn't you see me as I was?

**BLIX**

*(Facing BLUME)* Fraulein, if mankind wants to know what happened, and why, there must be understanding . . . sunlight, and forgiveness.

**BLUME**

*(With conceit)* I am the sunlight, Herr Blix, and I offer no forgiveness, only misery and damnation! *(Screaming)* Your victims never had a chance to seek vengeance. But I do, and this is how!

*(She stands, turns her back to BLIX, strips from her concentration camp uniform, and then slips into the green dress that had been hanging on the chair)*

**BLIX**

What are you doing? Why are you doing this?

**BLUME**

God hears me. My desires will be fulfilled. He will take me from this place, and from you, Herr Blix. You will be alone unable to leave, and never to know if your Frau is alive . . . if she ever existed. *(Pounding her bosom)* I will return to Treblinka, and say the Kaddish for those who died there - -

**BLIX**

-But you can't. *(Shouting)* You're dead!

**BLUME**

*(Shouting back)* Can't I? My spirit is filled with the breath of God. Doesn't that make everything possible?

**BLIX**

*(He leaps toward BLUME, grabs her wrist, and pulls her toward him)*

Do you think you are mankind's conscience . . . that you can leave without forgiving me and setting me free? I want to be free of guilt . . . free to leave this place, and free to see a child again without regret! *(Shouting)* What happens to me when you are gone?

**BLUME**

*(Struggling free, shouting back)*

I am the conscience of the world, and what happens to you is not my decision.

**BLIX**

Then who decides? Tell me . . . who decides?

**BLUME**

*(Shouting again)* Not me. Maybe another Jew, if there is one - -

**BLIX**

Just one?

**BLUME**

One!

**BLIX**

*(Ripping off his swastika armband, and throwing it to the floor)*

There is one!

**BLUME**

Who?

**BLIX**

I can't say.

**BLUME**

Can't?

**BLIX**

*(Sinking to his knees)* If I poured my guts out with honesty, would you forgive me, or remain a cold-hearted bitch?

**BLUME**

Who is the Jew that speaks for you? *(Screaming)*  
Who?

**BLIX**

*(Kneeling, then prostrating himself, BLIX crawls toward BLUME, one arm stretched toward her)*

It's the secret I've kept, the secret you wouldn't accept even if I told you.

**BLUME**

*(BLUME steps on BLIX'S hand and forces it to the floor)*

You can only hope I will believe. You have no other choice.

**BLIX**

*(Withdrawing his hand slowly, BLIX stands and straightens his tunic)*

Hannah, my Frau . . . she would speak for me.

**BLUME**

*(Shouting)* I said a Jew!

**BLIX**

*(Shouting back)* I know what you said. Hannah's mother was a Jew and Hannah is mixed blood . . . a Mischling, a Jew in your eyes . . . even in Nazi eyes!

**BLUME**

*(With disbelief)* Your Frau . . . a Mischling!

**BLIX**

Ja, from a Jewish mother who died at childbirth, and a Christian father unwilling to raise a Mischling. He put her into an orphanage that eventually turned her out telling her it was unsafe to harbor a Jew, even a half-Jew.

**BLUME**

*(With indignation)* How did you escape your own the laws?

**BLIX**

*(Sobbing between words)* I didn't fall in love with Hannah to share a daring adventure. She was only a café waitress, but in my eyes, she was perfect.

**BLUME**

But how did you manage it?

**BLIX**

We were attracted to each other quickly . . . very quickly. *(Still sobbing)* Hannah had the courage to embrace her feelings, and when she revealed them it was too late to ignore my own. I didn't care if the system considered her a full Jew, or half, *(shouting)* I didn't feel I had fallen in love with the enemy!

**BLUME**

How does a man trained to kill know anything about love?

**BLIX**

But she was sacred to me. *(With passion)* I saved her from the camps, Fraulein. Is that not worthy of salvation? - -

**BLUME**

-But how did you fool the Shutzstaffel . . . the Gestapo?

**BLIX**

*(Trembling voice)* By daring to think the unthinkable, a secret life in full view of those who would condemn us if they knew. It was after the Nuremberg Decrees. I spent my savings for the correct papers, *(Stepping toward BLUME)* and used my standing in the unit to hide the one thing the SS hated most . . . a Jew, even a half-Jew. Ja, it was insane, *(feigning laughter)* but it worked. Who would suspect it? *(Pointing at BLUME)* You didn't. . . Obey orders, I said to myself. Do not complain, and be proper in your conduct - -

**BLUME**

-Do you think such a marriage frees you of responsibility? Freedom comes through salvation, and salvation only happens when you admit you were wrong and renounce your Nazi oath.

**BLIX**

*(Sniveling)* That was my challenge, Fraulein, keeping my honor to the Fatherland, and fidelity to the half-Jew I loved. *(Raising his voice)* In that way, maybe you were right! Maybe I was a monster. Someone must accept as true that I would bring them all back if I could no matter what I have said or done. Can't you see I was protecting Hannah.

**BLUME**

Didn't she suspect why you went to Poland?

**BLIX**

*(Wiping his eyes on his sleeve)*

I told her our relationship would bring her no harm; that our shield was beyond the regulations . . . beyond the German imagination. What interest could anyone have in a café waitress whose SS husband was fighting in the East?

**BLUME**

God knew.

**BLIX**

*(Waving his arms at BLUME, and shouting)*

Is that your answer to everything? Have you found Him yet? *(Raising his voice)* Has He revealed Himself?

*(Wisps of fog emerge in front of the upstage drape, and rise upward)*

**BLUME**

*(Approaching BLIX)* If Treblinka was my tragedy, only remembering its victims can be your redemption . . . I will go back to the soil of the blood and worship in God's eyes . . . and I will say the Kaddish for the victims . . . all the world's victims.

**BLIX**

Why pray for them? They're dead, all dead!

**BLUME**

For their souls, Karl . . . their souls - -

**BLIX**

-And the souls of those Germans who didn't participate? What about them? They were not without feelings. It had to cost them something.

**BLUME**

*(She stands, and speaks with an indicting certitude)*

If you signed orders, and saw them carried out, you were guilty! And if you burned our books, and stood by when they took us away, you were guilty. Guilty . . . all of you, guilty!

*(The GIRL in the blood-splashed white dress emerges from the fog, and approaches BLUME)*

Daughter lift your head. Let me see your eyes.

*(The GIRL raises her head. BLUME embraces her)*

Are you God's instrument?

*(The GIRL shrugs)*

How are you called?

*(The GIRL shrugs again. BLUME glances at the pistol on the table, then at BLIX)*

**BLIX**

*(Shouting)* Frieda, this doesn't make sense. You need to forgive me now, or I will never leave . . . and never see Hannah again.

**BLUME**

*(Looking at the GIRL)* I will call you Hope and my redemption. You know what you must do.

**BLUME** (Cont'd)

*(She cradles the GIRL'S face in her hands, kisses her on the forehead, and then turns toward BLIX)*

Without hope, Karl, does anything make sense?

*(Stage dims. A spot picks up BLUME retrieving her candlesticks. She walks into the fog, turns toward the audience, and raises the candlesticks above her head. Spot narrows until only the candlesticks are visible.)*

DARK! . . . A PAUSE . . . STAGE RESTORES.

*The GIRL approaches the table, picks up the pistol, and points it at BLIX)*

**BLIX**

*(Noticing the GIRL holding the gun, and speaking in a kindly voice)*

Daughter, the pistol . . . give it to me. It doesn't work. Show me where you want to go, and I will take you.

*(The GIRL shakes her head, and backs away, hiding the pistol behind her back)*

Daughter, don't you remember me? I won't hurt you.

*(Arm extended, BLIX steps toward the Girl, and shouts)*

Give me the pistol . . . now!

BLACKOUT AND A SHOT SIMULTANEOUSLY

**BLUME OFF-STAGE**

Y'tkidal. . . V'yitkadash . . . Sh'mai Raba.  
Sanctified, and great is the name of God.  
(*Slowly*) Y'tkidal . . . V'yitkadash.

**The End**