

SAMUEL FRENCH SAMPLE PERUSAL

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BENT

by Martin Sherman

A SAMUEL FRENCH ACTING EDITION



New York Hollywood London Toronto

SAMUELFRENCH.COM

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The music composed by Stanley Silverman is available for purchase from Samuel French, Inc. at a cost of \$2.25, plus postage. Music royalty for *amateur* presentation is \$2.50 for each performance. *Stock* music royalty quoted on application.

MAX: He is a thirty-four year old homosexual "wheeler-dealer" who leads a dissolute life of drink, drugs, and sporadic sex until the horrors of Nazi Germany intervene and effectively put an end to his hedonistic, alcoholic life style. Max will make a deal with anyone, even with his Nazi captors. He is a survivor; he firmly states "I'm going to stay alive," and he does everything within his power to keep that pledge. Max is a tormented individual . . . tortured by the memory of his reprehensible actions, but he never loses his basic humanity. He is not at all a coward, but rather a pragmatist, one who takes risks for those dear to him if he thinks he can get away with it. Realizing that the Nazis particularly hate "fluffs", Max masquerades as a Jew, denying his homosexuality to better his chances of survival. However, when his friend and lover, Horst, is killed, Max "comes out of the closet" . . . declaring his homosexuality in an intrepid gesture of bravery . . . LEAD (1-1-1).

HORST: In his twenties, Horst has a relatively muscular physique and a kind nature which leads him to assist Max on the prison train . . . he cautions Max not to try to help his lover or he will be killed. Horst is a "pink triangle", incarcerated in the death camps of Dacheu because of his homosexuality. Horst is a sensitive man; he is strongly affected by Max's torment, and falls in love with him. They form a deep, psychic bond . . . gradually coming to rely upon one another for affection and support. After falling ill, Horst bravely warns Max not to help him, realizing it could mean his friend's death. Horst is eventually exterminated by the Nazis. . . (1-5-33) THIS ROLE IS THE SECOND LEAD. DON'T LIMIT SUBMISSIONS. (POSSIBLY A CHARACTER ACTOR.)

RUDY: Rudy is a bespectacled, thirty-year old homosexual dancer . . . a rather gushy, effusive, homebody type who has a great love for Max and his precious household plants. He tends to become a trifle hysterical at times, dramatically insisting that Max despises him and wants him dead. He and Max flee the Nazis together, and Rudy does his best to provide them with food and comforts while on the run, but they are captured by the Nazis, and he is killed. . . LEAD (1-1-1).

GRETA: In his late thirties, Greta is a man dressed as a woman, in silver dress, top hat, and cane . . . he/she presents an appearance that is at once elegant and bizarre. He is the tough, practical proprietor of a gay nightclub who entertains the patrons by singing in a smoky, seductive voice. However, since the onslaught of the Nazis, "queen clubs are no longer cool" . . . so Greta's decided to go back to his wife and kids. . . (1-1-13)

UNCLE FREDDIE: He is an aristocratic, well-dressed gentleman in his early fifties. Max's uncle, he is a "closet fluff" . . . a homosexual who masks his predilections with a wife and children for the sake of his prestigious family name. He tries to convince Max to desert his lover Rudy and return to his family, to no avail. . . (1-3-21)

5 GERMAN SOLDIERS: rough, menacing, intense features, late 40's.

STORY LINE

Max and Rudy, homosexuals in Nazi Berlin, make an unfortunate choice of a pick-up partner, and invite a person on the Nazi's wanted list into their home. They are guilty by association, and also because they are homosexuals, whom the Gestapo are hunting down as ardently as the Jews. They manage to elude capture for two years, and Max beseeches his **UNCLE FREDDIE** to secure two tickets to Amsterdam, but Max and Rudy are captured by the Nazis. En route to Dachau, Rudy is slain, and the horrified Max is forced to assist in his lover's death. Max is befriended by the kindly, "pink triangle (homosexual) **HORST**, who schools Max in the brutal realities of war. Max denies that he is a homosexual, preferring to wear the badge of the less hated Jews instead. He and Horst form a strong, psychic bond, and although they cannot touch one another on fear of death, they manage to become lovers through a vivid, imagination "lovemaking." They rely upon each other for companionship, affection, and simply to maintain their sanity. Eventually, Horst is exterminated, and Max, in a brave gesture, dons his friend's uniform jacket . . . the one with the "pink triangle" which brands the wearer as a homosexual. . .

for

Alan Pope and Peter Whitman

CAST

(in order of appearance)

MAX	<i>Richard Gere</i>
RUDY	<i>David Marshall Grant</i>
WOLF	<i>James Remar</i>
GUARD	<i>Kai Wulff</i>
GUARD	<i>Philip Kraus</i>
GRETA	<i>Michael Gross</i>
UNCLE FREDDIE	<i>George Hall</i>
OFFICER	<i>Bryan E. Clark</i>
GUARD	<i>John Snyder</i>
HORST	<i>David Dukes</i>
CAPTAIN	<i>Ron Randell</i>
DIRECTOR	<i>Robert Allan Ackerman</i>
MUSIC	<i>Stanley Silverman</i>

OPENING NIGHT: DECEMBER 2, 1979

NEW APOLLO THEATRE

OPERATED BY MIDTOWN THEATRE CORPORATION

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SCHLISSEL STEINLAUF
present

RICHARD GERE

in

BENT

by

MARTIN SHERMAN

also starring

DAVID DUKES

with

RON RANDELL GEORGE HALL
JAMES REMAR MICHAEL GROSS

Bryan E. Clark Phillip Kraus John Snyder Kai Wulff

and **DAVID MARSHALL GRANT**

Settings by	Lighting by	Costumes by
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Music by Stanley Silverman

Co-Produced by LEE MINSKOFF and PATTY GRUBMAN

Directed by

ROBERT ALLAN ACKERMAN

Initially presented by the National Playwrights Conference
at the Eugene O'Neill Memorial Center

BENT

ACT ONE

Scene One

(The living room of an apartment. Small. Sparse furniture. A table with plants. A door on left leads to the outside hall. Nearby is an exit to the kitchen. At right, an exit to the bedroom, and nearby an exit to the bathroom.)

(MAX enters from bedroom wearing a bathrobe and is staggering from a hangover. He is having great difficulty dealing with the reality of being awake. He bumps into the plant stand. He works his way stage left along the upper wall. He turns off the radio, goes into the bathroom, turns on the light.)

MAX. Oh God! *(Sees himself in the mirror)* Oh God!

(RUDY enters from the kitchen, looks about the room. He goes to the side table SL, picks up bottle and 2 glasses. MAX gargles and spits. RUDY notices and, as he exits with glasses and bottle, he turns on radio. As RUDY exits into kitchen MAX comes out of bathroom. He turns off radio and staggers to footstool. He manages to sit on stool, winces and stands as he feels bruise on right buttocks. He falls into armchair, placing cushions beneath him. As he settles into chair, RUDY enters from kitchen with cup of coffee. He comes above side table and offers coffee. MAX does not react.)

RUDY. Here. (*Hands MAX the cup; MAX stares and doesn't take it*) Here. (*RUDY passes coffee under MAX'S nose*) Coffee!

MAX. (*MAX takes coffee*) Thanks.

(*RUDY leans over and kisses MAX. MAX sips at coffee.*

RUDY surveys the apartment, slaps his hands together. He is deliberately irritating MAX, successfully.)

RUDY. It's late. It's almost three. We really slept. (*RUDY crosses his arms. Looks about. His chatter is constant*) I missed class. (*RUDY crosses to lower L corner of chaise, picks up glass*) I hate to dance when I miss class. Bad for the muscles. And there's no place to warm up at the club. (*RUDY crosses to above side table L with glass. He empties the ash tray into the glass — loudly. MAX reacts*) I hate that nightclub anyhow. The floor's no good. It's cement. You shouldn't dance on cement. It kills my ankle. They've covered it with wood. Last night, before the show, I pounded on the wood — real hard (*RUDY stomps his foot three times. MAX shudders at each stomp*) — and I could hear the cement. I'm going to complain. I really am. (*RUDY tosses metal ash tray on side table. MAX reacts. RUDY turns to radio, picks up glass on radio, turns on radio and exits into kitchen*)

(*MAX sits in silence and stares.*)

MAX. Oh God.

(*MAX reaches for radio. Cannot reach knob. RUDY returns from kitchen with watering pitcher. He moves DS, smiles at MAX, who returns his smile weakly. RUDY crosses to plants. Sees plants and screams. MAX startled.*)

RUDY. The plants are dying. (*RUDY shows MAX a plant from DS of stand*) The light's bad in this apartment. (*RUDY returns the plant to the stand and waters*

each plant on top shelf as he chatters) I wish we had a decent place. I wish one of your deals would come through again. Oh, listen to me, wanting a bigger place. (RUDY *kneels and waters plants on lower shelf*) Rosen's gonna be knocking on our door any minute now, you know that, wanting his rent. We're three weeks overdue. He always comes on a Sunday. What's three weeks? He can wait. Well, at least I got the new job. (RUDY *crosses to radio and waters plants on radio*) I'll get paid Thursday. If Greta keeps the club open. Business stinks. Well, I guess it means I can't complain about the cement, huh? The thing is, I don't want to dance with a bad ankle. (RUDY *crosses to kitchen door. He turns to MAX*) More coffee?

(MAX *holds out cup. RUDY gets cup and exits into kitchen. MAX takes his feet off footstool, tosses pillows DSL, leans back, closes eyes, takes a deep breath.*)

MAX. One. Two. Three. Four. Five. (MAX *takes second deep breath. Feet on footstool*) Six. Seven. Eight. Nine. Ten.

(RUDY *returns from kitchen, gives MAX cup of coffee. RUDY crosses DSR whistling. He waters plants DR.*)

MAX. O.K. Tell me.

RUDY. What?

MAX. You know.

RUDY. No.

MAX. Come on.

RUDY. I *don't* know. (RUDY *sits right side of chaise*) Listen, do you think I should ask Lena for the rent money? She's such a good person. No feeling for music though. Which is crazy, she's got such a good line. (RUDY *extends right leg in full extension*) Perfect legs.

(RUDY crosses to footstool on next lines) Teddy wants to do a dance for her in total silence. You think that's a good idea? (RUDY sits on DS side footstool, pushing MAX'S feet off stool) There's no place to do it though. There's no work. Lena lost that touring job. So she must be broke. So she can't lend us the money. (RUDY stands and starts US to kitchen. MAX grabs his right arm. RUDY leaves watering pitcher at right of footstool) Want some food?

MAX. Just tell me.

(Through next lines they have a tug of war)

RUDY. What?

MAX. Must really be bad.

RUDY. What must?

MAX. That's why you won't tell me.

RUDY. Tell you what?

MAX. Don't play games.

RUDY. I'm not playing anything.

MAX. I'll hate myself, won't I? (Silence) Won't I?

RUDY. I'll make some breakfast. (RUDY crosses to kitchen door. Turns to MAX.)

MAX. Was I really rotten?

RUDY. Eggs and cheese. (RUDY exits into kitchen)

MAX. I don't want eggs.

RUDY. Well, we're lucky to have them. I stole them from the club. They don't need eggs. (RUDY enters from kitchen and crosses UC) People go there to drink. And see a terrific show. Oh boy that's funny, cause that show stinks. You know, I'm so embarrassed, I have to think of other things while I'm dancing. (RUDY crosses to chaise and picks up clothes, hangs shirts on front door hooks. Moves L of C folding trousers) I have to think of grocery lists, they can tell, out there, that you're not thinking about straw hats or water lilies —

MAX. Stop!

RUDY. I mean, it really shows; particularly when it's grocery lists. Your face looks real depressed, when you can't afford groceries . . .

(MAX moves behind RUDY. He embraces RUDY, hand over RUDY'S mouth. MAX'S head right of RUDY'S.)

MAX. Stop it.

(RUDY tries to speak. MAX tightens hand on mouth.)

MAX. Stop it! I want to know what I did.

(MAX releases his hand from RUDY'S mouth. RUDY kisses MAX.)

RUDY. (Smiles) I love you.

(RUDY exits into kitchen with trousers. MAX pauses for a moment then, on next line, he crosses to planter stand, takes one plant in each hand and crosses UC.)

MAX. Rudy! Your plants! I'll pull the little bastards out by the roots unless you tell me.

(RUDY enters from kitchen, crosses DS, below and right of MAX as MAX holds plants behind him and counters left. Through next lines RUDY attempts to get plants by reaching behind MAX. They circle once.)

RUDY. No you won't.

MAX. Like to bet. I did last week.

RUDY. You killed one. That was mean.

MAX. I'll do it again.

RUDY. Don't touch them. (RUDY grabs plants, turns and faces DR, talking to the plants) You have to be nice to plants. They can hear you and everything. (To the plants) He's sorry. He didn't mean it. He's just hung over.

MAX. (MAX leans into RUDY'S left) What did I do?

(Silence.)

RUDY. (RUDY returns plants to stand. Through next speech he crosses above MAX to left side table, picks up cup.) Nothing much.

MAX. I can't remember a thing. And when I can't remember, it means . . .

RUDY. It doesn't mean anything. You drank a lot. That's all. The usual.

(From CS MAX faces RUDY and lowers left shoulder of his robe to expose a bruise.)

MAX. How'd I get this?

RUDY. (RUDY puts down cup and crosses to MAX. He examines the bruise) What's that?

MAX. Ouch! (MAX pulls away) Don't touch it.

RUDY. I want to see it.

MAX. So look. You don't have to touch.

RUDY. What is it?

MAX. What does it look like? A big black and blue mark. (MAX turns around to RUDY. He pulls up robe and shows RUDY bruise on his left buttocks.) There's another one here. (Shows a mark on his arm)

RUDY. Oh.

MAX. How did I get them?

RUDY. You fell. (RUDY removes and cleans his glasses with his robe.)

MAX. How?

RUDY. Someone pushed you.

MAX. Who?

RUDY. Some guy.

MAX. What guy?

RUDY. Nicky's friend.

MAX. Who's Nicky?

RUDY. One of the waiters at the club.

MAX. Which one?

RUDY. The red head.

MAX. (MAX *crosses to the chaise*) I don't remember him.

RUDY. He's a little fat.

MAX. (MAX *reclines on the chaise — on his left side, protecting his right buttocks*) Why'd the guy push me?

RUDY. (RUDY *crosses to left of chaise*) You asked Nicky to come home with us.

MAX. I did?

RUDY. Yeah.

MAX. But he's *fat*.

RUDY. Only a little.

MAX. A threesome with a fat person?

RUDY. Not a threesome. A twelvesome. You asked *all* the waiters. All at the same time too. You were standing on a table, making a general offer.

(RUDY & MAX *laugh at this. MAX is enjoying this story. He lies back, still protecting his buttock.*)

MAX. Oh. Then what?

RUDY. Nicky's friend pushed you off the table.

MAX. And . . .

RUDY. You landed on the floor, on top of some guy in leather.

MAX. What was he doing on the floor?

RUDY. I don't know. (RUDY *picks up paper from floor and folds it*)

MAX. Was Greta mad?

RUDY. Greta wasn't *happy*. (Pause) It was late. Most everyone was gone. And you were very drunk. People like you drunk. (RUDY *pats MAX on head with newspaper, crosses to left side table, gets cup.*) (Pause) I'll make some food. (RUDY *goes to the kitchen door*)

MAX. I don't want food. Why didn't you stop me?

RUDY. (RUDY stops and turns to MAX) How can I stop you.

MAX. Don't let me drink.

RUDY. Oh. Sure. When you're depressed?

MAX. Was I depressed?

RUDY. Of course.

MAX. I don't remember why.

RUDY. Then drinking worked, didn't it?

(RUDY exits into kitchen. Pause. WOLF enters from bedroom, crosses to USL of chaise. He faces MAX, stretches and smiles. He is naked. MAX stares at him.)

BLOND MAN. Good morning.

(WOLF goes into bathroom. MAX sits up and stares at bedroom. Pause.)

MAX. Rudy!

RUDY. (RUDY enters from kitchen, carries dish cloth, stops just inside door) What?

MAX. Who was that?

RUDY. Who was what?

MAX. (MAX stands and crosses, pointing to bathroom) That! That person!

RUDY. Oh. Yeah. Him. Blond?

MAX. Yes.

RUDY. And big?

MAX. Yes.

RUDY. That's the one you fell on.

MAX. The guy in leather?

RUDY. Yes. You brought him home. (Goes into kitchen)

MAX. Rudy! Your plants!

RUDY. (RUDY enters from kitchen & moves several steps DS) You brought him home, that's all. He got you going. All that leather, all those chains. You called him

your own little stormtrooper. You insulted all his friends. I don't know why they didn't beat you up, but they didn't. They left. And you brought him home.

MAX. And we had a threesome? (MAX *leans against door, hides himself in clothes*)

RUDY. (RUDY *crosses left of door*) Maybe the two of you had a threesome. Max, there is no such thing. You pick guys up. You think you're doing it for me too. You're not. I don't like it. You and the other guys always end up ignoring me anyhow. Besides, last night, you and your own little stormtrooper began to get rough with each other, and I know pain is very chic just now, but I don't like it, cause pain hurts, so I went to sleep. (RUDY *crosses to left side table, picks up cup and pours coffee in plant on side table*) Here, Walter, have some coffee.

MAX. Walter?

RUDY. I'm naming the plants. They're my friends.

(RUDY *exits with cup into kitchen. WOLF enters from bathroom, wrapped in a towel. He has a towel around his neck. He stops left of kitchen door. He smiles at MAX. MAX covers his head with shirt from hook.*)

MAX. Rudy!

(RUDY *enters from kitchen with watering pitcher. He stops short at door when he sees WOLF.*)

RUDY. Oh. There's a bathrobe in there — in the bedroom.

(RUDY *points to bedroom. WOLF pats RUDY'S right cheek. He crosses below & right of MAX, turns, smiles, flips at MAX'S buttock with neck towel, laughs and exits into bedroom. There is a moment's silence then RUDY crosses to footstool and sits. MAX lets shirt fall.*)

MAX. I'm sorry.

RUDY. It's O.K.

(MAX *drops to his knees and crawls to RUDY on line. He puts his head on RUDY'S right shoulder.*)

MAX. I'm a rotten person. Why am I so rotten? Why do I do these things? He's gorgeous though, isn't he?

(RUDY *caresses MAX'S head.*)

I don't remember anything. I don't remember what we did in bed. Why don't I ever remember? (MAX *sits in armchair*)

RUDY. (RUDY *embraces watering pitcher*) You were drunk. And high on coke.

MAX. That too?

RUDY. Yeah.

MAX. Whose coke?

RUDY. Anna's.

MAX. I don't remember.

RUDY. You made arrangements to pick up a shipment to sell.

MAX. A *shipment*?

RUDY. Yeah.

MAX. Christ! When?

RUDY. I don't know.

MAX. That can be a lot of rent money.

RUDY. Anna will remember.

MAX. Right. (MAX *taps RUDY on the arm*) Hey — rent money. (MAX *indicates WOLF in the bedroom*) Do you think . . . maybe . . . we could . . .

RUDY. What?

MAX. (MAX *crosses UC*) Ask.

RUDY. Who?

MAX. *Him.*

RUDY. You're kidding.

MAX. Why not?

RUDY. We don't know him.

MAX. I slept with him. I think. I wonder what it was like.

RUDY. You picked him up, one night, and you're going to ask him to loan you the rent money?

MAX. Well, you know how I am.

RUDY. Yeah.

MAX. I can talk people into things.

RUDY. *Yeah.*

MAX. I can try.

RUDY. It won't work. He thinks you're rich.

MAX. Rich?

RUDY. You told him you were rich.

MAX. Terrific.

RUDY. And Polish.

MAX. *Polish?*

RUDY. You had an accent.

(RUDY laughs, sets pitcher right of footstool and exits into kitchen. WOLF enters from bedroom and crosses DR of MAX. Pause. MAX look at him.)

MAX. Hi.

MAN. Hi. The robe is short. I look silly.

MAX. You look o.k.

MAN. Yes? You too. *(WOLF crosses to MAX, holds him by the buttock and starts to nibble his chest, goes to bite left nipple. MAX fights him off) Ummm . . .*

MAX. Not now.

(WOLF backs off. MAX straightens robe and crosses to chaise. He reclines on chaise, protecting right buttock.)

MAN. Later then.

MAX. Yes. Later.

MAN. In the country.

MAX. The country?

MAN. Your voice is different.

MAX. Oh?

MAN. You don't have an accent.

MAX. Only when I'm drunk.

MAN. Oh.

MAX. Last night — was it good?

MAN. (*WOLF crosses to left of chaise*) What do you think?

MAX. I'm asking.

MAN. Do you have to ask?

(*WOLF stares at MAX. RUDY enters from kitchen with cup of coffee. He crosses UC, holds out coffee in right hand.*)

RUDY. Some coffee?

MAN. Yes. Thank you.

(*WOLF does not break stare. He holds out left hand to RUDY. RUDY does not move. Pause. WOLF turns to RUDY, who shifts cup from right to left hand and holds it left. WOLF smiles, gets coffee and crosses to sit on armchair. He sips coffee then . . .*)

This place . . .

MAX. Yes?

MAN. It's really . . . (*Stops — silence*)

MAX. Small?

MAN. Yes. Exactly.

MAX. I guess it is.

MAN. You people are strange, keeping places like this in town. I don't meet people like you too much. But you interest me, your kind.

MAX. Listen . . .

MAN. Oh look, it doesn't matter, who you are, who I am. I'm on vacation. *That* matters. The country will be nice.

(WOLF rises and crosses to chaise with cup. He places cup on right side table, kneels US by MAX, pulls MAX up against him and massages MAX'S neck. RUDY crosses to footstool and sits DS edge.)

MAX. What's the country?

MAN. The house. Your house. Your country house.

(MAX looks at RUDY through next 9 lines.)

MAX. My country house?

RUDY. Oh. That. I forgot to tell you about that. We're driving there this afternoon.

MAX. To our country house?

RUDY. *Your* country house.

MAX. How do we get there?

RUDY. Car.

MAX. Mine?

RUDY. Right.

MAX. Right. Why don't we stay here?

(MAX attempts to sit up. WOLF pulls MAX back against him by shoulders.)

MAN. Don't make jokes. You promised me two days in the country.

MAX. Your name.

MAN. Yes?

MAX. I forgot your name.

MAN. Wolf.

MAX. Wolf? (Looking at RUDY, MAX laughs) Good name.

WOLF. I didn't forget yours.

(WOLF pulls MAX up by supporting under arms.)

MAX. Down, down, Wolf.

(WOLF releases MAX who then slides down and leans against WOLF'S thighs.)

Look, Wolfie, I don't have a car.

WOLF. Sure you do.

MAX. No.

WOLF. You showed me. On the street. Pointed it out.

MAX. Did I? It wasn't mine.

WOLF. Not yours?

MAX. No. I don't have a house in the country either.

WOLF. Of course you do. You told me all about it.

MAX. I was joking.

WOLF. (WOLF *pushes MAX upright and kneels up.*) I don't like jokes. You don't want me with you, is that it? Maybe I'm not good enough for you. Not rich enough. My father made watches. That's not so wonderful. (WOLF *rises and stands left of chaise*) Is it, Baron? (Pause)

(MAX *looks at RUDY. They both laugh.*)

MAX. Baron?

RUDY. Don't look at me. *That one I didn't know about.* (RUDY *swivels US holding face*)

MAX. Baron.

(MAX *starts laughing as he lies back. There is a knock on the door*)

RUDY. (RUDY *rises and crosses to chaise, gets paper, folds it*) Rosen!

MAX. Shit!

(RUDY *crosses to left side table, gets ashtray.*)

WOLF. You like to laugh at me, Baron?

(MAX *crosses to door and checks lock. RUDY exits into kitchen with newspaper and ashtray. Another knock.*)

(MAX *crosses to left of WOLF. WOLF is facing MAX.*)

MAX. Listen, Wolf, darling, you're really very sweet and very pretty and I like you a lot, (RUDY enters from kitchen and crosses $\frac{3}{4}$ to footstool) but you see, I'm not too terrific, because I have a habit of getting drunk and stoned and grand and making things up. Believe me, I'm not a Baron. (MAX crosses above and puts arm around RUDY) And this is not a Baroness. There is no country house. There is no money. I don't have any money. (MAX crosses R of C) Sometimes I do. Sometimes I sell cocaine, sometimes I find people to invest in business deals, sometimes . . . well, I scrounge, see, and I'm good at it, and in a few weeks, I will have some money again. But right now, nothing. (MAX crosses to above RUDY, embraces RUDY) Rudy and I can't pay our rent. This rent. Right here. This lousy apartment. That's all we have. And that man knocking at our door is our landlord. And he's going to throw us out. Because we can't pay our rent. (MAX crosses to left of WOLF) Out into the streets, Wolf, the streets (MAX embraces WOLF) Filled with filth, vermin. (MAX kisses WOLF) And lice. (MAX kisses WOLF) And . . . urine. (MAX kisses WOLF) Urine! (MAX kisses WOLF) Unless someone can help us out. Unless someone gives us a hand. (MAX kisses WOLF) *That's the truth.*
(MAX breaks the embrace and crosses to left of door.)

WOLF gets up and counters DS of chaise.)

Look, you don't believe me, I'll show you. Right out there we have, just like in the movies, the greedy landlord. (MAX grabs doorknob and bolt lock) Fanfare please.

(RUDY makes fanfare noise while blowing on the spout of pitcher.)

Here he is, the one and only, Abraham Rosen!

(MAX slides bolt and opens door. GUARD 1 & GUARD 2 are standing outside (-1 SL -2 SR). MAX sees them and slams door closed.)

That's not Rosen!

(GUARDS *push door open*. MAX *stumbles back to above RUDY*. GUARDS *enter*. GUARD 1 *looks around, sees WOLF and points to him*.)

CAPTAIN. *HIM!*

(GUARD 2 *starts for WOLF*. WOLF *throws coffee in his face*.)

WOLF. No!

(WOLF *starts for bedroom*. GUARD'S *make for him*. WOLF *pulls plant stand between them and exits bedroom*. GUARD'S *throw plant stand out of the way and exit bedroom*. MAX *starts for door*. RUDY *stands frozen*.)

MAX. Idiot! Run!

(MAX *looks at RUDY, goes to him, grabs pitcher, throws it at chair, grabs RUDY and pulls him off front door*. *Beats*. *Gunshot*. WOLF *stumbles out bedroom, pulling curtain off the rod*. He *falls on chaise with head at DS end*. GUARD 1 *enters followed by GUARD 2*. GUARD 1 *goes to WOLF, straddles him, pulls his head up by the hair, pulls out knife*.)

CAPTAIN. Wolfgang Granz, we have an order for your arrest. You resisted. Too bad.

(GUARD 1 *leans WOLF'S head back and slashes his throat*. WOLF *falls back*. GUARD 1 *puts knife in sheath and exits front door, followed by GUARD 2*.)

End of Scene One

ACT ONE

Scene Two

(GRETA sits on the trapeze. She sings in a smoky, seductive voice.)

GRETA. Streets of Berlin

I must leave you soon

Ah!

Will you forget me?

Was I ever really here?

Find me a bar

On the cobblestoned streets

Where the boys are pretty.

I can not love

For more than one day

But one day is enough in this city.

Find me a boy

With two ocean blue eyes

And show him no pity.

Take out his eyes

He never need see

How they eat you alive in this city.

Streets of Berlin

I must leave you soon

Streets of Berlin

Do you care?

Streets of Berlin

Will you cry out

If I vanish

Into thin air?

Streets of Berlin
Will you cry out
If I vanish into air?

O.K. Victor, cut the spot. (GRETA enters door, pulls down shade, turns on lights) My heroes! Where are you? Schmucks!

(GRETA crosses C on line. As GRETA goes to dressing table, pours coffee then adds brandy to coffee and sits at chair MAX crosses to door and peers out through right side of shade. MAX sits on chaise about RC. GRETA begins to freshen make-up and removes shoes. RUDY steps toward GRETA.)

RUDY. Is it safe?

GRETA. What?

RUDY. For us to go home?

GRETA. You fucking queers, don't you have any brains at all? No, it's not safe.

RUDY. I want to go home.

GRETA. You can't. You can't go anyplace.

(RUDY turns and starts for MAX.)

RUDY. I have to get my plants.

GRETA. Oh Jesus! Forget your plants. You can't go home. You can't contact friends, so don't try to see Lena. She's a good kid, you'll get her into a lot of trouble. And you certainly can't stay here. (GRETA stands, left leg on chair, unhooks garter, removes hose) You understand? You have to leave Berlin.

RUDY. Why? I live here, I work here.

GRETA. No, you don't. You're fired.

RUDY. I don't understand. What did we do? Why should we leave? (RUDY sits on stool)

GRETA. Don't leave. Stay. (GRETA crosses to L end rack, deposits run hose on shelf and gets fresh hose, returns to chair, sits and changes hose) Be dead schmucks. Who gives a damn? I don't.

MAX. (MAX looks up.) Who was he?

GRETA. Who was who?

MAX. The blond?

GRETA. (GRETA stops) Wolfgang Granz. (GRETA resumes hose routine)

MAX. What's that mean?

GRETA. He was Karl Ernst's boyfriend.

MAX. Who's Karl Ernst?

GRETA. What kind of world do you live in? Aren't you guys ever curious about what's going on?

MAX. Greta, don't lecture. Who's Karl Ernst?

GRETA. Von Helldorf's deputy. You know Von Helldorf?

MAX. The head of the stromtroopers in Berlin.

GRETA. I don't believe it. You've actually *heard* of someone. Right. Second in command at the SA, immediately under Ernst Rohm.

RUDY. Oh. Ernst Rohm. I know him.

(GRETA & MAX stare at RUDY)

He's that fat queen, with those awful scars on his face, a real big shot, friend of Hitler's, runs around with a lot of beautiful boys. Goes to all the clubs; I sat at his table once. He's been *here* too, hasn't he?

MAX. Rudy, shut up.

RUDY. Why?

MAX. Just shut up, o.k.? (To GRETA) So?

GRETA. So Hitler had Rohm arrested last night.

MAX. You're kidding. (MAX crosses left of GRETA) He's Hitler's right-hand man.

GRETA. Was. He's dead. Just about anyone who's high up in the SA is dead. Your little scene on top of that table was not the big event of the evening. (GRETA

rises, crosses UC & gets dress from rack) It was a bloody night. The city's in a panic. Didn't you see the soldiers on the streets? The SS. How'd you get here in your bathrobes? Boy, you have dumb luck, that's all. (*GRETA tosses dress on chair, gets cane and tosses it on dress*) The talk is that Rohm and his stormtroopers (*MAX sits at GRETA'S chair*) Von Helldorf, Ernst, your blonde friend, the lot — were planning a coup. I don't believe it. What the hell, let them kill each other, who cares? (*GRETA plays with boa and with cane*) Except, it's the end of the club. As long as Rohm was around, a queer club was still o.k. Anyhow, that's who you had, baby — Wolfgang Granz. I hope he was a good fuck. (*GRETA crosses to chair, snaps fingers indicating to MAX to get up. MAX does and crosses UL of C*) What's the difference? You picked up the wrong guy, that's all.

(*GRETA sits in chair and begins with make-up. MAX crosses to chaise.*)

(*RUDY crosses right of MAX. He puts his left hand on MAX'S right shoulder.*)

RUDY. We can explain to somebody. It's not like we knew him.

GRETA. Sure. Explain it all to the SS. You don't explain. Not anymore. You know, you queers are not very popular anyhow. It was just Rohm keeping you all safe. Now you're like Jews. Unloved, baby, unloved.

RUDY. How about you?

GRETA. *Me?* Everyone knows I'm not queer. I got a wife and kids. Of course that doesn't mean much these days, does it? But — I still ain't queer! As for this . . . (*GRETA does "drag" take*) I go where the money is. Was. (*GRETA picks up hand mirror, faces UC and adjusts make-up*)

MAX. (*Gets up*) Money.

GRETA. Right.

MAX. Money. (MAX *moves US of RUDY to left of GRETA.*) Ah! Greta!

GRETA. What's with you?

MAX. How much?

GRETA. How much what?

MAX. How much did they give you?

GRETA. (*Laughs*) Oh. (GRETA *removes flowers from vase and takes out a roll of money and holds it up to MAX*) This much.

MAX. And you told them where Granz was?

GRETA. Told them, hell—I showed them your building.

RUDY. (RUDY *crosses to sit right chaise*) Greta, you didn't.

GRETA. Why not? You don't play games with the SS. Anyhow, it's just what he would do, your big shot here. (MAX *crosses to lean on shelf of rack*) He likes money too. He just isn't very good at getting it. Me, I'm dynamite. Here. I'll do you a favor. Take it. (GRETA *peels off bills*)

RUDY. Don't take it.

GRETA. It will help.

RUDY. We don't want it.

MAX. (MAX *crosses left of GRETA*) Shut up, Rudy.

RUDY. Stop telling me to . . .

MAX. Shut up! (MAX *takes money, counts it and throws it on dressing table*) It's not enough. We want more.

GRETA. So get more.

MAX. (MAX *crosses C, turns, points to GRETA*) If they catch us, it won't help you.

GRETA. Oh? A threat? (*Pause*) Tell you what. I'll do you a favor. Take some more. (GRETA *crosses to left of door, pauses, peels a few more bills off, offers them. MAX holds*) I've made a lot off your kind, so I'm giving a little back. Take it all. (GRETA *offers it all*)

MAX. O.K.

(MAX crosses to GRETA and takes money. GRETA opens door and crosses to right end of rack.)

GRETA. Now get out.

MAX. (To RUDY) Come on . . .

RUDY. Where? (RUDY turns DS) I'm not leaving Berlin.

MAX. We have to.

RUDY. We don't have to.

MAX. They're looking for us.

RUDY. But I live here.

(MAX shuts door.)

MAX. Come on . . .

RUDY. I've paid up for dance class for the next two weeks.

MAX. Jesus! Come on!

RUDY. (RUDY crosses DR of C) If you hadn't gotten so drunk . . .

MAX. Don't.

RUDY. Why'd you have to take him home?

MAX. How do I know? *I don't remember.*

RUDY. You've ruined everything.

MAX. Right. I always do. Tell you what. Why don't we just split up right here? (MAX crosses left of RUDY) So you go off on your own, o.k.? Go back to dance class. They can shoot you in the middle of an arabesque. Take half. (MAX offers RUDY bills)

RUDY. I don't want it.

MAX. Then fuck it! (MAX stuffs money in his pocket and crosses to the door)

(GRETA crosses to left of UC. MAX stops at door.)

GRETA. Max. This one can't handle it alone. Look at him.

(GRETA looks at RUDY. MAX looks at RUDY. Then GRETA looks at MAX then to RUDY. GRETA snaps his fingers to RUDY.)

Take his hand, schmuck.

(RUDY crosses to MAX. He puts his head on MAX'S right shoulder. RUDY takes MAX'S left hand with his right hand. GRETA counters right.)

That's right. (GRETA crosses to dressing table to get brandy)

RUDY. Where are we going to go?

GRETA. (GRETA stops and turns to them) Don't. Don't say anything in front of me. Get out.

(MAX and RUDY exit. GRETA crosses to door, closes it, leans against it, takes off wig and tosses it on chaise. Rides wagon off.)

BLACKOUT

End of Scene Two

ACT ONE

Scene Three

Lights up on a park in Cologne.

(FRED sets reading a newspaper on right end of bench. MAX crosses UC, crosses above left of bench, sees FRED. MAX crosses above and right of bench, lights cigarette & crosses left of bench. MAX stops pacing.)

FREDDIE. Sit down.

(MAX sits left of bench. Both stare ahead. FRED folds newspaper and places it on lap. They tip hats.)

Pretend we're strangers. Having a little conversation in the park. Perfectly normal. Do something innocent. (FRED *doesn't* look at MAX. *He reads*) Feed the pigeons.

MAX. There aren't any pigeons.

(FRED *slides envelope to MAX across bench. He shifts position to look at MAX.*)

FREDDIE. Here.

(FRED *reads. MAX puts envelope inside his coat.*)

MAX. You look good, uncle Freddie.

FREDDIE. You look older.

MAX. What's in this?

FREDDIE. Your papers and a ticket to Amsterdam.

(FRED *puts paper on lap*)

MAX. One ticket?

FREDDIE. Yes.

MAX. Shit.

(FRED *is frightened and looks around.*)

FREDDIE. Keep your voice down. Remember, we're strangers. Just a casual conversation. Perfectly normal.

MAX. One ticket. I told you on the phone . . .

FREDDIE. (*Firmly*) One ticket. That's all.

MAX. I can't take it. Damn it, I'd kill for this. Here.

(MAX *slides envelope back to FRED. He gets up and crosses left*) Thanks anyway.

FREDDIE. (FRED *covers envelope with newspaper*) Sit down. It wasn't easy getting new papers for you. If the family finds out . . .

(MAX *sits right end bench.*)

I have to be careful. They've passed a law, you know. We're not allowed to be fluffs anymore. We're not even allowed to kiss or embrace. Or fantasize. They can arrest you for having fluff thoughts.

MAX. (MAX *laughs gently*) Oh, Uncle Freddie.

FREDDIE. It's not funny.

MAX. It is.

FREDDIE. The family takes care of me. But you. Throwing it in everyone's face. No wonder they don't want anything to do with you. Why couldn't you have been quiet about it? Settled down, gotten married, paid for a few boys on the side. No one would have known. Ach! Take this ticket. (FRED *slides newspaper and envelope across bench.*)

MAX. I can't. Stop giving it to me.

(FRED *picks up newspaper and envelope and puts it on lap.*)

FREDDIE. Look over there.

MAX. Where?

FREDDIE. Over there. (FRED *indicates off right*) See him?

MAX. Who?

FREDDIE. With the moustache.

MAX. Yes.

FREDDIE. Cute.

MAX. I guess.

FREDDIE. Think he's a fluff?

MAX. I don't care.

FREDDIE. You've been running for two years now. Haven't you? With that dancer. The family knows all about it. You can't live like that.

(FRED *puts newspaper with envelope on bench & pushes it toward MAX. MAX reaches down. He touches FRED'S hand.*)

Take this ticket.

MAX. (MAX *looks at FRED*) I need two.

FREDDIE. (FRED *looks at MAX*) I can't get two.

MAX. Of course you can.

FREDDIE. (FRED *pulls hand away and looks off right*)
Yes. I think he is a fluff. You have to be so careful now.
What is it? Do you love him?

MAX. Who?

FREDDIE. The dancer.

MAX. Jesus!

FREDDIE. Do you?

MAX. Don't be stupid. What's love? Bullshit. I'm a grown up now. I just feel responsible.

FREDDIE. Fluffs can't afford that kind of responsibility.

(MAX *laughs.*)

Why are you laughing?

MAX. That word. Fluffs. Look, do you think it's been a holiday? (MAX *stamps out cigarette*) We've tramped right across this country; we settle in somewhere and then suddenly they're checking papers and we have to leave rather quickly; now we're living outside Cologne, in the goddman forest! In a colony of *tents* — are you ready for that? *Me* in a tent! With hundreds of very boring unemployed people. Except most of them are *just* unemployed; they're not running from the Gestapo. I'm not cut out for this, Uncle Freddie. I was brought up to be comfortable. Like you. O.K. I've been fooling around for too long. You're right. The family and I should make up. So. How about a deal? *Two* tickets to Amsterdam. And two new sets of identity papers. Once we get to Amsterdam, I ditch him. And they can have me back.

FREDDIE. Maybe they don't want you back. It's been ten years.

MAX. They want me. It's good business. I'm an only son. (*Pause*) Remember that marriage father wanted to arrange? Her father had button factories too. I just read about her in the paper; she's an eligible widow, living in Brussels. Make the arrangements again. I'll marry her.

Our button factories can sleep with her button factories. It's a good deal. You know it. And eventually, when all this blows over, you can get me back to Germany. If I want a boy, I'll rent him. Like you. I'll be a discreet, quiet . . . fluff. Fair enough? It's what father always wanted. Just get us *both* out alive.

FREDDIE. I'll have to ask your father.

(MAX turns bodily to FRED. Hard eye contact.)

MAX. Do it. Then ask him.

FREDDIE. I can't do things on my own. Not now.
(FRED indicates envelope on bench) Just this.

MAX. I can't take it.

(FRED picks up newspaper & envelope & puts them on his lap. He looks off right.)

FREDDIE. He's looking this way. He might be the police. No. He's a fluff. He has fluff eyes.

(MAX turns DS.)

Still. You can't tell. You better leave. (FRED puts envelope in coat) Just be casual. Perfectly normal. I'll ask your father.

MAX. Soon?

FREDDIE. Yes. Can I phone you? (FRED reads)

MAX. In the forest?

FREDDIE. Phone me. On Friday.

(MAX stands & turns left of bench. He turns back to FRED and faces DS.)

MAX. You look good, Uncle Freddie.

(FRED looks at MAX & tips hat. Goes back to reading.
MAX tips hat to FRED. Pauses. He exits UC. As

MAX exits, FRED drops paper. He looks off right. Small smile. He rides wagon off.)

BLACKOUT

End of Scene Three

ACT ONE

Scene Four

The Forest.

In front of a tent.

(RUDY enters UL, crosses to DR of C placing ruck sack right of the fire area. He crosses R of C then crosses to behind left trees, gets wood, brings it to flame area, tosses it in and lights fire. He sits. Pulls out cheese, apples and knife from pockets. They are wrapped in napkins. He smooths napkins on lap. Blows on fire.)

RUDY. (Cuts first slice of cheese and leaves on point of knife. Places apples on ground) Cheese! Max!

(MAX enters from tent ULC carrying dufflebag. He tosses bag on ground left of fire. He stands behind it with left foot on bag. RUDY offers him cheese on knife.)

(RUDY eats cheese. MAX steps over bag, sits on it across from RUDY. He warms himself.)

MAX. Where'd you get the cheese. Steal it?

RUDY. I don't steal. I dug a ditch.

MAX. You *what*?

RUDY. (RUDY *eats*) Dug a ditch. Right outside of Cologne. They're building a road. You can sign on each morning if you get there in time. They don't check your papers. It's good exercise too, for your shoulders. I'm getting nice shoulders. But . . . no more dancing feet. Here. (RUDY *gives MAX a piece of cheese.*) Eat!

MAX. I don't want food. (MAX *eats cheese*) You shouldn't have to dig ditches. I want some real food, for Christ's sake. (Takes the cheese) Look at this. It's lousy cheese. You don't know anything about cheese. Look at all these tents. There's no one to talk to in any of them. (MAX *eats cheese. Spits it out and holds out cheese in right hand*) It has no flavour.

RUDY. (RUDY *grabs cheese and eats it*) Then don't eat it. I'll eat it. I have apples too. (RUDY *juggles two apples*)

MAX. I hate apples.

RUDY. Then starve. (RUDY *stops juggling, then resumes*) What did you do today, while I was ditch digging?

MAX. Nothing.

RUDY. You weren't here when I got back.

MAX. Went to town.

RUDY. Have fun?

(*Quick check around. MAX leans in to RUDY.*)

MAX. I might get us new papers and tickets to Amsterdam.

RUDY. You said that in Hamburg.

MAX. It didn't work out in Hamburg.

RUDY. You said that in Stuttgart.

MAX. Are you going to recite the list?

RUDY. Why not? I'm tired of your deals. (RUDY *stops juggling and eats a piece of cheese*) You're right. This cheese stinks. (RUDY *puts cheese on ground*) I don't want to eat it.

(MAX picks up cheese and gives it to RUDY)

MAX. You have to eat.

RUDY. Throw it out. (RUDY puts cheese on ground)

MAX. You get sick if you don't eat.

RUDY. So what?

MAX. O.K. Get sick.

RUDY. No. I don't want to get sick. (RUDY picks up cheese and eats it) If I get sick, you'll leave me behind. You're just waiting for me to get sick.

MAX. Oh — here we go.

RUDY. You'd love it if I died.

MAX. (MAX stands) Rudy! (MAX sits)

RUDY. (RUDY crosses over and sits US of MAX on bag.) You know what I keep asking myself?

MAX. What?

RUDY. If we had just talked to the SS that day and explained everything—could it have been worse than this?

MAX. Maybe not.

RUDY. Maybe not. (RUDY crosses and sits on rucksack) You're supposed to say yes, *much* worse. Don't tell me maybe not. That's what you want. You want me to kill myself. (RUDY peels apple)

MAX. I just want to get us out of here. These awful tents. There's no air. We're *in* the air, but there's still no air. I can't breathe. I've got to get us across the border.

RUDY. Why don't we just cross it?

MAX. What do you mean?

RUDY. This guy, on the job today, was telling me it's easy to cross the border.

MAX. Oh, sure, it's simple. You just walk across. Of course, they shoot you.

RUDY. He said he knew spots.

MAX. Spots?

RUDY. Spots to get through. I told him to come talk to you.

MAX. *Here?*

RUDY. Yes.

MAX. (MAX *crosses US above RUDY. Leans in to RUDY.*) I told you we don't want anyone to know we're here, or that we're trying to cross the border. Are you *that* dumb?

RUDY. I'm not dumb.

MAX. He could tell the police.

RUDY. O.K. So I *am* dumb. Why don't we try it anyway?

MAX. Because . . .

RUDY. Why?

MAX. A deal.

RUDY. What?

MAX. (MAX *returns to sit on bag*) I'm working on a deal.

RUDY. Who with?

MAX. I can't tell you.

RUDY. Why not?

MAX. It spoils it. If I tell you about it before it happens. Then it won't happen. I'm superstitious.

RUDY. When why'd you bring it up?

MAX. So you'd know that . . .

RUDY. What?

MAX. That I'm trying.

RUDY. This is crazy. We're in the middle of the jungle . . .

MAX. Forest.

RUDY. (*Shouting*) Jungle. I'm a dancer, not Robin Hood.

(MAX *indicates to RUDY to lower voice.*)

I've walked my feet away. But you don't mind. You're working on deals. You worked on deals in Berlin, you work on deals in the jungle.

MAX. Forest.

RUDY. Jungle. I want to get out of here. I could have. I met a man in Frankfurt. You were in town "working on a deal." He was an old man, rich too. I could have stayed with him. I could have got him to get me out of the country. He really wanted me, I could tell. But no, I had to think about you. It wasn't fair to *you*. You're right, I'm dumb. (RUDY *throws food on ground*) You would have grabbed the chance. You're just hanging around, waiting for me to die. (RUDY *pulls coat up around ears*) I think you've poisoned the cheese.

MAX. It's *your* cheese. Choke on it. Please, choke on it. I can't tell you how much I want you to choke on it. Christ! (MAX *picks up knife, apple and cheese and puts in pocket*)

(RUDY *puts US hand on MAX'S US leg pulling at coat.*)

RUDY. Tell me about the deal.

MAX. No.

RUDY. Come on.

MAX. No. Absolutely not! Trust me, just trust me.

RUDY. Where are you going? (RUDY *turns away R*)

(MAX *tosses knife down on stage and crosses DR in front of trees, moving above RUDY.*)

MAX. I have to get out of here. I can't breathe. I'm going for a walk.

RUDY. (RUDY *stands*) You can't. There's no place to walk. Just tents and jungle.

MAX. I have a fever.

RUDY. What?

MAX. I have a fever! I'm burning up.

RUDY. It's a trick.

(RUDY *crosses to left of MAX to feel his forehead with left hand. MAX pulls away right.*)

MAX. I know. I'm lying. Get away.

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