

War and Psychoanalysis

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A full-length play

By Steven Lehrer

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## CAST OF CHARACTERS

PROFESSOR DOCTOR SIGMUND FREUD, age 65, immaculately coiffed and dressed in an expensive three piece suit. When we see Freud he is either holding a cigar or has a cigar in his mouth.

DR. HEINRICH ROSEN, a middle-aged doctor, almost completely blind

STEFANIE GAISMAN, a beautiful, unstable young woman; the same actress plays FRÄULEIN PETER

THE RAT MAN (Ernst Lanzer), an officer and army deserter with severe post traumatic stress disorder. He is a small man who resembles a rat, also plays SEXTON and MASKED FIGURE.

THE RAT MAN'S FATHER, a huge, hulking, brutal man, also plays RABBI, BARON GAISMAN, and MILITARY DOCTOR.

MAID, an offstage voice with two lines in scene 21.

## SETTING

The entire action of the play takes place in the Vienna consulting room of Professor Doctor Sigmund Freud. The year is 1921.

## SYNOPSIS

A middle aged obstetrician, Heinrich Rosen, blinded in a hate crime and suicidal, comes to Freud to become a psychoanalyst. Freud demands in return that Rosen find out whether one of Freud's patients, the Rat Man, was circumcised. Freud needs this information for a new theory of compulsive neurosis. At the same time, a wealthy schizophrenic young woman, Stefanie Gaisman, raped by her father, Baron Gaisman, and possessed by a dybbuk, is sent to Freud for treatment. Rosen and Stefanie meet by chance. Freud learns of the meeting and forbids Rosen from seeing Stefanie. Rosen is infuriated but finds the Rat Man, who has end stage

pulmonary tuberculosis and shell shock (post traumatic stress disorder). Rosen brings the Rat Man to Freud, who is startled to learn that the Rat Man's genitalia were shot off on the eastern front in 1914. Before Freud can question the Rat Man about circumcision, the Rat Man falls dead of a pulmonary hemorrhage. Freud and Rosen proceed to have a terrible row, in which Rosen accuses Freud of scientific fraud. Freud points to the door and orders Rosen out. Stefanie falls to the floor screaming. Freud has inadvertently exorcised her dybbuk, a feat which a miraculous Rabbi in Lemberg had been unable to accomplish. In the end, Stefanie and Rosen leave for America to begin a new life together.

#### ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The author acknowledges his debt to Prof. Dr. Sigmund Freud and his followers: Carl Gustav Jung, Sandor Ferenczi, and Woody Allen. With a nod to Siegfried Sassoon, Wilfred Owen, F. Scott Fitzgerald and *Tender is the Night*.

ACT 1

1 SCENE

1

AT RISE:

*Professor Doctor Sigmund Freud's consulting room. Dr. Freud sits in easy chair adjacent to head of couch with a cigar in his hand. Near the chair is a brass spittoon. Freud's desk is upstage left, festooned with antiquities, statuettes, and other knickknacks. Heinrich Rosen is lying on couch. He wears an eye patch over his right eye and spectacles with a coke-bottle bottom lens over his left. His white blind person's cane is propped against the couch.*

FREUD

Homosexuality is assuredly no advantage, Rosen, but it is nothing to be ashamed of, no vice, no degradation; it cannot be classified as an illness. May I question you why you want it treated?

ROSEN

I feel like a criminal, Herr Professor.

FREUD

It is a great injustice that our society persecutes homosexuality as a crime. A cruelty, too. Many highly respectable individuals of ancient and modern times have been homosexuals. Several of the greatest men among them: Plato, Michelangelo, Leonardo da Vinci.

ROSEN

I'm not great. I'm quite ordinary. I want an ordinary blind man's life.

In 2021 I'm sure homosexuality will be a lifestyle choice, nothing more. In 1921, as you say, it's persecuted and criminal. When I could see I accepted the risk, but now...

FREUD

By asking me if I can treat you, you mean, I suppose, if I can abolish your homosexuality and make normal heterosexuality take its place. The answer is, in a general way I cannot promise. In a certain number of cases I have succeeded in developing the blighted germs of heterosexual tendencies, which are present in every homosexual. In most cases that is not possible. It is a question of the quality and the age of the individual. I cannot predict the result of treatment.

ROSEN

Herr Professor, I am in awe of what you have done. Science is the most noble, exalted form of human endeavor. The scientific discoveries you have made take my breath away.

FREUD

(modestly)

I try.

ROSEN

We all try. You succeed, Herr Professor. I am willing to accept the results of your treatment.

FREUD

If you are unhappy, neurotic, torn by conflicts, inhibited in your social life, analysis may bring you harmony, peace of mind, full efficiency, whether you remain homosexual or change. At the least we will try to turn your hysterical misery into common unhappiness.

ROSEN

Sounds good.

FREUD

Do you dress in women's clothes?

ROSEN

Not anymore. You see my patched eye and these spectacles?

(Freud is silent, an awkward  
silence)

Last time I cross dressed, I winked with my right eye at an officer in uniform in a cafe. He walked up, smiled, and shoved his pen knife into my right eye.

FREUD

How much vision do you have on the left?

ROSEN

A little. Not much. I should have had the right eye immediately cut out.

FREUD

Why didn't you? You are a doctor. You know about sympathetic ophthalmia. Inflammation and blindness of both eyes from a penetrating injury of one eye.

(Rosen doesn't answer, shakes  
his head)

FREUD

Do you have vengeance fantasies?

ROSEN

A blind man versus an officer of the imperial army? If I encountered the wretch again, I'd put his eyes out.

FREUD

How would you do that?

ROSEN

Just a fantasy. Even Luzi-Wuzi couldn't do anything when he got beat up.

FREUD

You know about Archduke Ludwig Viktor?

ROSEN

I saw a colonel beat him up at the Central Bathhouse. Better not to proposition wet nude army officers you don't know.

Even if you're the emperor's brother. A small number of them are straight.

FREUD

I consulted with a colleague on the archduke's case. We might have been able to accomplish more with anyone else. But the emperor...

(Freud's discretion is  
getting the better of him)

ROSEN

Was mortified. Shut Luzi-Wuzi up in Klesheim Palace. Never let him out. He died in there.

FREUD

You are an obstetrician, I understand.

ROSEN

I was an obstetrician, Herr Professor. I don't have enough vision left to deliver a grand piano.

FREUD

You practiced gynecology too?

ROSEN

Yes.

FREUD

You did abortions?

ROSEN

On poor women with many children who could not afford another child. They begged me. How could I refuse? Even though they paid me little or nothing. My obstetric patients were poor, too. I was a poor people's baby snatcher.

FREUD

Now you wish to become an analyst.

ROSEN

Precisely.

FREUD

A training analysis is more difficult than it used to be.

ROSEN

Yes?

FREUD

How does one become a psychoanalyst?

ROSEN

By analyzing one's dreams. I read your *Five Lectures on Psychoanalysis*, Herr Professor.

FREUD

(pleased)

You are to be commended.

ROSEN

A most interesting book.

FREUD

I have broadened the requirements since I wrote that book. No psychoanalyst goes further than his own complexes and internal resistances permit. Therefore, I insist that the candidate shall begin his activity with a self-analysis and continually carry it deeper while he is making his observations on his patients. Anyone who fails to produce results in a self-analysis of this kind may at once give up any idea of being able to treat patients by analysis.

ROSEN

Your letter explained almost everything.

FREUD

My requirements are there.

ROSEN

(pulls letter from pocket,  
unfolds, holds very close to  
left eye and struggles to  
read)

*I charge 40 crowns an hour, payable each month. I will not take on anyone who cannot wait until July 15th.*

*This last condition is paramount.*

(pauses)

I didn't realize there was an element of risk.

FREUD

A training analysis will not necessarily lead one to a sinecure. It is comparable to birth, which does not perforce presage a happy life.

ROSEN

I was not expecting a sinecure.

FREUD

You should expect nothing. I demand guarantees from candidates for training analysis which are not necessary from patients. Regular analytic work has deleterious effects on one's psyche, just as work with x-rays has on one's tissues. Any harm needs to be countered by steady hard labor.

ROSEN

I intend to work. I must earn a living. If I do not succeed at psychoanalysis, I am finished as a doctor. Begging with a tin cup on street corners is the only employment left for me. Better to be dead.

FREUD

I do not require that a psychoanalyst be a doctor, you know. The Americans demand medical training but I do not. I do insist that every analyst should periodically, at intervals of five years or so, submit himself to analysis once more. He should not feel ashamed of taking this step.

ROSEN

If I'm not ashamed now, why should I be ashamed in the future?

FREUD

Do not speak about shame yet. Your analysis is only beginning.

ROSEN

I was briefly in analysis with Dr. Rank last year. I don't think he uttered a word during any of our sessions. You and I seem to be having a normal conversation.

FREUD

Do you know the story of the rabbi's goat?

ROSEN

The rabbi's goat? I haven't heard that one.

FREUD

A goat fell into a well on the Sabbath. The rabbi's followers asked the rabbi whether they were permitted to take the goat out at once, or wait till the Sabbath day was over. The pious rabbi answered that the goat must wait. But when he learned that it was his own goat in the well, the rabbi urged his followers to save it at once, because *der Rebbe meg*, the rabbi may. My followers observe the rules. I do as I please.

ROSEN

(silent for a moment)

I'm waiting for something to pop into my mind.

FREUD

Your analysis is beginning, not begun. We will begin during your next session. In the meantime, I have a small commission I wish to entrust to you.

ROSEN

(pause)

A commission, Herr Professor? What sort of commission?

FREUD

Rosen, I am about to offer you a unique scientific opportunity.

ROSEN

I have never done science. You should know that, Herr Professor. My only qualification for doing science is that I am rigidly honest.

FREUD

I am fond of honest men. There are so few of them.

ROSEN

I am one. You can trust me. I would never falsify a result or an experiment.

FREUD

There is no experiment involved here, no test tubes, no Bunsen burner.

ROSEN

What then?

FREUD

I need a final piece of information about a patient whose case I have already published.

ROSEN

Which patient, Herr Professor?

FREUD

The Rat Man.

ROSEN

The Rat Man? I read your book about him. *A Case of Obsessional Neurosis*. Your description was brilliant. Your account read like a detective story. I was fascinated.

FREUD

(A typical writer, eating up  
the praise, glowing but self-  
effacing, struggling to  
affect a modest demeanor)

Thank you, Rosen. You are very kind. It still strikes me as strange that the case histories I write should read like short stories and that, as one might say, they lack the serious stamp of science.

ROSEN

What could you possibly add? What could be left to publish?

FREUD

Let me touch on the salient points for you. Then you will know the piece of information that I expect you to get for me. I would think it a small price to pay for, as you say, your last chance at a respectable livelihood.

ROSEN

(doubtfully)

I'm all ears, Herr Professor, even if I have no eyes to speak of.

FREUD

As you know, the Rat Man was a lieutenant, very intelligent, a university educated lawyer, in the Imperial Army.

BLACKOUT.

2

SCENE

2

*The stage is in darkness. A spotlight comes up on the Rat Man, center stage, a man in his early thirties in an officer's uniform who resembles a rat. We hear Freud's voice.*

FREUD

The Rat Man had a morbid, obsessive fear of a particularly brutal, cruel form of punishment. He learned about it from a sadistic Czech captain.

The Rat Man's eyes widen with surprise, then with pain. He raises his hand to his forehead. His face contorts. He screams.

FREUD

During this punishment, a pot filled with rats is turned upside down against the victim's buttocks.

The rat man turns away from the audience. Against his bare derriere is the rat-filled pot. He turns to face the audience again.

RAT MAN

The rats are boring into my anus.

(screams)

The suckers are crawling up my ass. *Glejisamen!*

(screams more loudly)

FREUD

The Rat Man had bizarre compulsions and suicidal fantasies. The most disturbing involved a razor.

The Rat Man reaches into his tunic, pulls out and opens a gleaming, lethal-looking straight razor. He brings the razor to his throat with his right hand, as though he is about to cut his throat. His left hand grabs his right and struggles to force the razor wielding hand down, away from his throat.

FREUD

I wrote in my case study that the Rat Man's obsessive thinking and compulsions stemmed directly from masturbation.

The Rat Man turns his back to the audience, unbuckles his pants, and begins to masturbate furiously.

FREUD

His father punished him severely.

A massive hulking father enters with a cane and beats the Rat Man savagely.

RAT MAN'S FATHER

(brandishing a huge bloody  
butcher knife)

The next time I catch you will be the last. Do you understand?

RAT MAN

(weeping, cowering with fear)

Yes, father.

Father exits.

FREUD

I believed at the time I published my report that I had completely explained the Rat Man's illness. Now I am not so certain. The Rat Man had castration fantasies that I discounted at the time.

The Rat Man turns to the audience.  
His hands are dripping with blood.  
He holds a bloody amputated penis.

BLACKOUT.

3

SCENE

3

*Lights up on Freud and Rosen, as they were in Scene 1. The Rat Man is gone.*

FREUD

I now believe that castration anxieties played a large role in generating the Rat Man's obsessional neurosis.

ROSEN

Where would his fears have come from?

FREUD

In my book, I dealt at length with the causes and psychodynamics of obsessional neurosis. But looking back on the case now, I believe I have uncovered an even more fundamental cause, a *caput Nili* of all obsessional neurosis.

ROSEN

What an awful neurosis. A man filled with obsessional fantasies, grotesque recurrent thoughts of a rat torture: There is a man who needs help.

FREUD

Ordinarily, unconscious fear of penile loss originates during the phallic stage of sexual development and lasts a lifetime. When the infant boy becomes aware of differences between male and female genitalia he assumes that the girl's penis has been lopped off and becomes anxious that his own penis will be cut off by his father as punishment for desiring his mother.

ROSEN

The Rat Man's fears seem more profound than anything related to a fantasy.

FREUD

Over the years, I have noted that a great many of my most severely obsessional neurotics have been Jewish men. Now I ask you, what form of infantile trauma are male Jews habitually exposed to?

ROSEN

A Jewish mother?

FREUD

Think, Rosen.

ROSEN

Indigestible kosher food?

FREUD

No, no.

ROSEN

Hebrew school?

FREUD

Those traumas are not infantile. The trauma to which I now ascribe the Rat Man's neurosis was associated with childhood scenes of sexual curiosity.

BLACKOUT.

4 SCENE

4

*A spotlight on Fräulein Peter, an attractive young woman, lying on a couch reading a book, the Rat Man next to her. We hear only Freud's voice.*

FREUD

The Rat Man had a governess, a pretty young girl named Fräulein Peter. One evening she was lying on the sofa lightly dressed, reading. The Rat Man was beside her.

The Rat Man whispers to Fräulein Peter. She assents. The Rat Man crawls stealthily but clumsily under Fräulein Peter's billowing skirt. She giggles.

FRÄULEIN PETER

I'm ticklish.

RAT MAN

Sorry. I'm a little lost under here. It's dark.

FREUD

That night, Fräulein Peter let the Rat Man into her bed.

The Rat Man lies on the couch next to Fräulein Peter and caresses her.

RAT MAN

*Glejisamen!*

## FREUD

The Rat Man feared that his father, who had just died, might find out about his sexual activity. Therefore, sexual arousal became linked with punishment and hostility toward his father, engendering a strange ritual.

The Rat Man stands, puts on pince-nez, begins studying a textbook. Sound of knocking at the door. The Rat Man admits the ghost of his father. The Rat Man turns away from the audience, pulls down his pants, and meticulously inspects his penis.

## FREUD

While studying for an examination, the Rat Man would stay up every night until between midnight and one A.M., the hour at which his father's ghost might appear. After opening the door to let the ghost in, the Rat Man would return to the hall, turn on all the lights, undress, and look at his penis in the mirror.

## RAT MAN'S FATHER

(brandishing huge bloody  
butcher knife)

I should have sliced it off.

Rat Man, Fräulein Peter, and Rat  
Man's Father exit.

BLACKOUT.

5 SCENE

5

*Lights up on Freud and Rosen as  
they were in scene 3.*

## FREUD

This odd routine clearly demonstrates two opposing wishes: one to impress the father with hard work, the other to defy him with a disguised form of masturbation.

And yet...and yet, there was something missing, a crucial detail, a flaw marring my conclusions.

(Freud stops short, deep in thought)

ROSEN

(Quite fascinated. Freud is a marvelous raconteur)

Please go on, Herr Professor.

FREUD

The Rat Man's analysis lasted eleven months. Even after it was over, my interpretation deeply troubled me. After all, many young boys receive strong sexual stimulation, yet do not develop the weird range of obsessional thoughts that the Rat Man harbored.

ROSEN

Quite true.

FREUD

Then the fundamental cause of the Rat Man's obsessions struck me like a flash of lightning. Circumcision. There is the ultimate infantile trauma. What could be more shocking to the developing psyche? What horror must an infant feel when an adult wielding a knife assaults him and slices a piece of flesh from his member? Will the feared adult return to amputate the remainder? No doubt many little boys with oedipal thoughts think their fathers will castrate them because of their primal memories of circumcision. How helpless they were. How helpless they will be.

ROSEN

(doubtful)

Circumcision?

FREUD

Precisely, my dear fellow.

ROSEN

Was the Rat Man a Jew?

FREUD

He was.

ROSEN

Then there it is.

FREUD

Quod erat demonstrandum? The thing is not so simple, I fear.

ROSEN

Simple, Herr Professor, it's less than simple; it's trivial.

FREUD

The Rat Man was a Jew, ergo he was circumcised? Not quite. During the analysis I learned that the mother had been born a Catholic. Later, during the marriage, I believe, she had assumed the Jewish faith, though the sincerity of her conversion is questionable.

ROSEN

These points do not detract from your thesis, Herr Professor.

FREUD

I'm afraid they do. To be a Jew, a child must have a Jewish mother. A Jewish father and a Jewish upbringing are not enough.

ROSEN

A Canadian father makes a child a Canadian. A Hindoo father makes a child a Hindoo. I've never understood why a Jewish father isn't enough to make a child a Jew.

FREUD

Come, come, think about it for a minute. *Pater semper incertus, mater semper certa est*. The rabbis who codified Jewish law knew that only a child's mother could be identified with certainty. To be a Jew, a child must be born of a Jewish mother. I am not sure whether the Rat Man was baptized, or circumcised, or both, or neither. It is impossible to determine from his background. His mother's orientation is so hazy.

ROSEN

Pity he never volunteered his penile status while free associating.

FREUD

Perhaps I was remiss for not asking.

ROSEN

Do you feel that only circumcision can explain the Rat Man's neurosis?

FREUD

Not circumcision alone, no, but the combination of the circumcision and the intense early sexual stimulation. My theory is that, as alcohol is necessary for alcoholism, circumcision is needed for the formation of obsessional neurosis. Yet, as alcohol is not the sole factor in alcoholism, circumcision is not the only factor in obsessional neurosis. Not everyone who drinks becomes an alcoholic. Not everyone who is circumcised becomes an obsessional neurotic. The early, intense sexual stimulation is the necessary second factor.

ROSEN

A capital theory.

FREUD

Alas, no more than that for now.

ROSEN

Console yourself, Herr Professor. There will be other obsessional neurotics for you to study. They are so common. They should appear as regularly at your consulting room door as streetcars along the Opernring.

FREUD

(A look of vexation passes over Freud's face. He clamps his cigar tightly between his teeth, inhales deeply, and stares at the ceiling. Then he hawks loudly and spits in the spittoon.)

The Rat Man is a perfect case, a classic case of obsessional neurosis.

(addressing the ceiling  
rather than Rosen)

My critics, especially Herr Kraus, have made a good deal of what they call deficiencies in my account.

(In his annoyance, Freud bites through the end of his cigar. Growling, he spits the bitten end in a high arc toward the spittoon. But his aim is poor, and the saliva-blackened fragment lands a good distance from its intended target.)

They label my work unscientific, prurient, pornographic.

(Freud stares straight at Rosen)

I must know whether the Rat Man was circumcised. Once I find out, I will write a new version of the case. It will be the crowning achievement of my life's work. Do you not see?

(agitated, Freud tightly grips the arms of his chair)

ROSEN

Why don't you ask the Rat Man? Send him a telegram. Send him a letter.

FREUD

I tried. In August 1914, just after the declaration of war, I sent a letter to the military post office at Z. I knew the Rat Man had been billeted nearby. For weeks I received no response. Finally the letter came back to me.

(Freud goes to his desk upstage left, raises the blotter and withdraws an envelope from underneath, which he hands to Rosen)

ROSEN

(Holds envelope very close to  
left eye and struggles to  
read it)

Addressee unknown, return to sender.

FREUD

The outbreak of war threw the entire government into a state of confusion, the post office included. The mailman's visit has always been a high point of my day, and my correspondence was being delayed for days, sometimes weeks. A letter from Berlin, from Karl Abraham, took six weeks to reach me. Six weeks. I complained to the mailman. He threw up his hands. So I do not know whether the letter I sent to the Rat Man was returned by mistake or not.

ROSEN

Do you know what happened to the Rat Man? Did he survive the war?

FREUD

I think he may have been killed in 1914. I'm not sure.

ROSEN

You should speak to the military authorities, Herr Professor. Surely the War Ministry will be able to assist you.

FREUD

I treat patients from morning until night. I do not have time for government bureaucrats to shuttle me from one clerk to another in the War Ministry.

ROSEN

Obviously, finding out what you need to know about the Rat Man will be a time consuming job.

FREUD

I am afraid so. I need someone to help me.

ROSEN

(doubtfully)

Indeed.

FREUD

A trustworthy person, a rigidly honest person, someone who can be relied on. An energetic person.

ROSEN

No doubt.

FREUD

Rosen, if you can carry this little commission out successfully, you will have done more than almost anyone to advance our cause.

ROSEN

Cause?

FREUD

Psychoanalysis, the psychoanalytic movement. For yourself, you will be assured a glowing career as a psychoanalyst.

ROSEN

(stammering)

I want to do this thing for you, Herr Professor, but...but...

FREUD

But what? My friend, what troubles you? Say everything that comes into your mind.

ROSEN

Please tell me exactly what you want me to do.

FREUD

How many times must I repeat myself? I want you to determine whether the Rat Man was circumcised.

ROSEN

How will I find out?

FREUD

If the Rat Man is alive, you locate him and you ask him point blank. If he is dead, a photograph will do.

ROSEN

Of his face?

FREUD

(impatiently)

Of his member. If he was circumcised, the picture would provide irrefutable scientific documentation.

ROSEN

You want me to find out where he is buried, open his coffin, and snap the photo?

FREUD

You push the button, we do the rest.

ROSEN

This Rat Man, you say he was a lieutenant?

FREUD

Correct.

ROSEN

A cavalry lieutenant?

FREUD

Cavalry, infantry, what difference does it make?

ROSEN

I have a little problem with horses.

FREUD

Are you allergic to them?

ROSEN

I am terrified of them.

FREUD

Calm yourself, Rosen. I am certain the Rat Man was not in the cavalry. I do not believe he was in the infantry, either. I think he was an ordnance officer.

ROSEN

Ordnance?

FREUD

Guns. Bombs. Explosives.

ROSEN

That's a relief. Do you know anything else that might allow me to trace him?

FREUD

He had a girlfriend, Gisela.

ROSEN

Did you meet her?

FREUD

Not at all. I deduced her name from an anagram, *Glejisamen*, that the Rat Man invented. Gisela plus jizz plus semen. *Glejisamen* obsessed him.

ROSEN

Gisela plus jizz plus semen. Remarkable deduction, Herr Professor.

FREUD

(Freud goes to desk, pulls  
out folder, hands it to  
Rosen)

Here are my case notes for the Rat Man. I have addresses and other information.

ROSEN

I am legally blind, Herr Professor. I can't cross a street unaided.

FREUD

A negligible difficulty. You will manage. The Rat Man lost his pince-nez. A friend, a military comrade, Lieutenant A, bought the Rat Man a new pair and sent them by mail to the post office at Z. Lieutenant B was stationed there. The Rat Man developed crazy compulsions about repaying his friend. The military barracks is nearby. You certainly can get some information if you make a visit.

ROSEN

I should be able to see a military barracks.

FREUD

Get me what I need, Rosen. A brilliant scientific and professional future awaits you.

6 SCENE

6

*Freud is seated in his chair. On the couch lies Stefanie Gaisman, a beautiful, unstable young woman. She speaks in an abnormally flat, unemotional way, interspersed with sudden bursts of agitation. A textbook case of schizophrenia.*

FREUD

I'm very grateful for your father's generosity, Stefanie.

STEFANIE

Yes.

FREUD

Herr Gaisman's support will allow us to have our own psychoanalytic publishing house. We won't be reliant on the whims of commercial publishers.

STEFANIE

(shrieks)

OOoh eeeh!

FREUD

Dementia praecox is difficult to treat.

STEFANIE

(flatly)

I know I am ill.

FREUD

Tell me what treatment you have had.

STEFANIE

They took me to a miraculous rabbi in Lemberg.

BLACKOUT.

7 SCENE

7

*Stage is in darkness except for spotlight on Stefanie, Rabbi and Sexton, center stage. Rabbi is Hasidic with long thick white beard, heavy fur hat (shtreiml), black silk coat, knee length white silk stockings, a figure from the middle ages. Sexton is dressed similarly though less elaborately. Sexton holds a ram's horn in one hand. Rabbi holds two lighted black candles.*

RABBI

The girl has a dybbuk. We must perform exorcism.

(Rabbi mutters, recites prayers)

*Baruch Atah Adonai Eloheinu Melech Ha-Olam.*

(Rabbi uses the drippings of the candle and the tip of his shoe to draw a line)

Dybbuk, I draw this line you may not cross. You will not harm anyone in this room.

(Rabbi moves upstage left, opens a cabinet to reveal Torah scrolls)

Dybbuk, you are in the presence of God and His Holy Scrolls.

STEFANIE

(Gasps for breath, suddenly breaks out in wide smile and speaks in voice of dybbuk)

What you be wearin' on yo' head, grandpa? A twat?

RABBI

Dybbuk, I plead with you one last time to leave the body of this girl.

STEFANIE

(Screams in voice of dybbuk)

Watchoo be talkin' bout? You funky ol' fart, why yo' ain't shavin'?

RABBI

I will invoke the curse of excommunication upon your pathetic soul.

STEFANIE

Preacher, take them candy ass clothes to the cleaner on the corner. Yo' smell.

RABBI

Sexton, blow *Tekiah*.

Sexton blows ram's horn. Nothing happens.

RABBI

Sexton, blow *Shevurim*.

Sexton blows ram's horn more loudly.

STEFANIE

Sexton, get yo' butt to the seminary. Demand yo' money back. You awful.

RABBI

Sexton, blow *Teruah*.

Sexton blows ram's horn again. Nothing happens.

STEFANIE

Sheeit! What uh noise. Dey should hang ya from da ceiling by yo' balls sho 'nuff!

RABBI

Sexton, blow the Great Tekiah. Upon the sound of these tones, dybbuk, you will be wrenched from this girl's body. I lay upon you the final anathema of excommunication from all the world of the living and from all the world of the dead.

(pause)

Sexton, blow the Great Tekiah.

Sexton blows ram's horn again.  
Nothing happens. Pause. Stefanie farts loudly. Rabbi and Sexton exit.

BLACKOUT.

8 SCENE

8

*Freud and Stefanie as in scene 6.*

FREUD

Did you improve?

STEFANIE

I'm deaf in my left ear. The sexton ruptured my eardrum.

FREUD

(after a moment's silence)

Please go on.

STEFANIE

When I got home, I fell into a dream. I saw a poisonous black snake about to bite me. I held up my hand to fend it off.

(she holds her right hand in  
front of her face)

I looked at my hand. My fingers had turned to little snakes. The nails had become death's heads.

(becoming more agitated)

My hand turned into the head of a Gorgon. I tried to pray.

(she screams, shakes with  
fear, thrashes about, then  
falls silent)

FREUD

Did you recognize the Gorgon?

STEFANIE

She was...

(starts gasping)

She was...

(gasps more forcefully)

I can't catch my breath.

(gasps)

FREUD

(Sits in his chair, hawks  
loudly, spits into spittoon)

Did the Gorgon resemble anyone?

STEFANIE

My mother. She told me I left home without her knowledge. My father was ill. Now if I wanted I could come back. I did not want to go back. I was in a deep wood looking for the railway station. I thought I saw it but could not move. I was paralyzed with fear. I struggled. I got closer. It was not the railway station.

(pauses)

FREUD

What was it?

STEFANIE

The cemetery.

(pauses)

I was looking at my own grave.

9

SCENE

9

*Rosen on couch, Freud in chair,  
as in scene 1.*

ROSEN

I have a recurring nightmare. People in masks pursuing me.

FREUD

How long have you had this nightmare?

ROSEN

It started when I was four years old. My mother died of scarlet fever. I have only the vaguest recollection of her death. My older sister told me it was gruesome. My mother's whole body turned a bright blood red, as though she had been horribly sunburned. Her skin peeled off. Late one night, she had a severe febrile convulsion. That was the end of her.

(silence)

FREUD

Your father?

ROSEN

My father was from Tysmenitz. He came to Vienna when he was twenty. A diamond dealer.

FREUD

A coincidence. My father was also from Tysmenitz.

ROSEN

My father did well here but became estranged from my mother. My father was eager to enjoy the cultural life of Vienna, especially the opera, which he adored. My mother, though quite intelligent, was a shoemaker's daughter. She had little interest in anything save gossip. I know this is a cruel thing for a son to say, even for a son who hardly knew his mother. It is by all accounts the truth. The marriage was an arranged one. So my father was determined that his second wife should be more suitable to his station than was the first.

FREUD

Was she?

ROSEN

My stepmother, Hannelore, was the twenty-seven year old daughter of a textile manufacturer named Felix Wehrli. The Wehrlis came from a very old family. Some members had fought the Turks with Prince Eugen in the 17th century.

The offices of Herr Wehrli's company were only a block from my father's on the Mariahilferstrasse. Because of some imprudent speculation, Herr Wehrli had fallen on hard times. He had invested a considerable amount of money in a process supposed to produce Swiss cheese. In the end, the process was a failure.

FREUD

Why did it fail?

ROSEN

The Swiss cheese didn't have holes. Hardly anyone would buy it.

FREUD

I remember that cheese. My wife's sister, Minna, Fräulein Bernays, bought some.

ROSEN

Bernays? Bernays? I believe I once had a patient named Bernays.

(thinks a moment)

I did. I was working as a locum tenens in Merano. I treated a lady named Bernays in a sanitorium there. I don't remember her first name.

FREUD

Another coincidence. Like Tysmenitz. Small world.

(silent for a moment,  
uncomfortable)

Minna lives with us. She loves swiss cheese.

ROSEN

I have seen swiss cheeses just like Wehrli's, but in those days no one in Vienna would eat it. The exporters wouldn't touch it. Poor Wehrli. His creditors began hounding him. His textile business was on the verge of bankruptcy. He had already hocked everything he owned.

FREUD

That cheese Minna bought was quite delicious, as I recall.

ROSEN

My father would sell rich people like Herr Wehrli their diamonds but would also occasionally buy them back, should the purchaser have suffered financial embarrassment or be in need of ready cash. My father bought back thousands of crowns worth of jewelry he had sold the Wehrlis over the years. Finally, the banks wouldn't extend another pfennig of credit. Herr Wehrli appealed to my father for a loan. He got a son-in-law instead. Wehrli had a gorgeous blond daughter, Hannelore, a very intelligent girl, a pianist. She had attended music conservatory and had made a little debut. The music critic of the Neue Zurichische Zeitung, the only one who attended, had written that she was a banger. I can't say, since I've always had something of a tin ear. She certainly seemed to get around the keyboard well enough. But after the caustic review, Hannelore refused to play in public again, and her parents were eager to marry her off.

FREUD

To a Polish Jew?

ROSEN

Hannelore was no longer, at twenty-seven, a spring chicken, to be sure. She also had an independent streak. Nevertheless, her mother had high hopes of snaring a husband for her from the most rarefied heights of the Zurich establishment. My father's seat at the Zurich Opera was very close to the Wehrli's box, and he had met Hannelore on many occasions. He was really quite enamored of her. Her musical talent piqued his interest.

(pause)

Herr Wehrli, of course, was taken aback by my father's offer. Who had ever heard of using a daughter as collateral for a loan? My father, certainly, didn't state the thing that way. He was a cultured man, after all. But that was what it boiled down to. In the end, my father got his way. The Swiss are practical people, and here was a way for Herr Wehrli to kill two birds with one marriage.

(pause)

FREUD

Was the marriage a happy one?

ROSEN

It was not. Hannelore was a beautiful and seductive woman. My father was in his mid-fifties when he married her. He was a busy, often-fatigued businessman, who, in any event, could not have been as attentive to his young wife as could a man in his twenties. The situation was aggravated by Hannelore's longing for a child, a desire which became acute after her first few months of marriage. When it was certain that she was unable to conceive, my father took her to a professor of gynecology at the university, who immediately diagnosed a severe uterine deformity. The gynecologist recommended various measures, but they failed to help. Hannelore was as barren as a stone.

(embarrassed pause)

My first really vivid memory of childhood was of Hannelore taking me into her bed and embracing me. I couldn't have been much older than five at the time. When my father was at work during the day, she would undress me, then remove her nightgown and ask me to fondle and suck her breasts. She would kiss me and caress me, even stroke my genitalia.

FREUD

Sexually mature women will often treat young boys in this way. I hear such stories regularly. For Hannelore, you were fulfilling two needs: the need for an attentive young lover and the need for a child. In some cases, the young boy will not suffer ill effects from this kind of treatment, since the woman involved may be a maid, a governess, or a neighbor.

ROSEN

My situation was not an ordinary case. My father was a strong, dominant man, the image of a paterfamilias, and my own stepmother was helping me to turn him into a species of cuckold. Even at such a tender age, it would be difficult for a child not to perceive the inherent dangers. I suddenly developed a preternatural fear of masks. Masks pursued me in my nightmares.

FREUD

I will tell you the origin of your mask nightmare. You were in the room with your dead mother. You tried to awaken her. Her face was a mask.

ROSEN

An interesting idea. I can ask my older sister.

FREUD

Now what have you learned about the Rat Man? Did you find the post office?

ROSEN

Post office? What post office?

FREUD

What post office? The post office at Z.

ROSEN

Oh yes, oh yes, I remember now. That was where Lieutenant A was stationed.

FREUD

No, no, no. You have not read my book carefully. You did not read my notes.

ROSEN

I am a blind man. I do my best.

FREUD

Lieutenant A was not stationed at the post office at Z. Lieutenant B was on duty at the post office at Z.

ROSEN

I thought Lieutenant A was on duty. I asked for him but no one remembered him.

FREUD

Lieutenant A had formerly lived at the place Z where the post office was situated. He was in charge of the military post office there but he handed over his billet to Lieutenant B.

ROSEN

I thought Lieutenant B had been transferred to another village.

FREUD

That was Lieutenant A.

ROSEN

Are you sure?

FREUD

Rosen, Rosen. Do you want to be a psychoanalyst or do you not? Psychoanalysis is a science. At doing science you are showing yourself to be a dismal failure.

ROSEN

Herr Professor, what you ask of me is not simple.

FREUD

I attribute paramount importance to this case. I gave four progress reports to the Vienna Psychoanalytic Society on it; I made it the subject of my lecture at the First International Congress of Psychoanalysis in Salzburg; it is the only case for which I have retained day-to-day process notes. The Rat Man consulted Wagner-Jauregg, Vienna's most famous psychiatrist. The Rat Man is one of my best known cures. A complete cure, nothing less. I want to make the case a psychoanalytic showpiece. I must have the information about circumcision. If you cannot get it for me, you will be of no value to our science.

ROSEN

I am in awe of the magnificent science you have done, Professor.

FREUD

Get me what I need.

10

SCENE

10

*Freud standing at his desk as BARON GAISMAN enters. He is Stefanie's father, a huge, hulking, dangerous, brutal-looking man despite his thinly civilized veneer. Freud and Gaisman shake hands.*

*Baron Gaisman is a man who has obviously known the best of this world. He is an enormously wealthy aristocrat, dressed in lederhosen, alpenstock, and alpine hat with feather. Gaisman sits down in a chair next to Freud's desk.*

FREUD

(flexing his fingers)

You have quite a powerful grip, Baron Gaisman.

BARON GAISMAN

(doffs hat)

Sorry, Herr Professor. Sometimes I forget myself.

FREUD

(still working fingers and  
staring at his hand)

I am so pleased to see you again.

BARON GAISMAN

The pleasure is mutual, esteemed Herr Doktor.

FREUD

With your generous contribution, we have already acquired the assets of a defunct publisher, Franzbach. We will soon be producing the first issues of our *International Journal of Psychoanalysis* on the Franzbach presses.

BARON GAISMAN

Ach! The gift was a trifle. Your marvelous science will change the treatment of mental illness throughout the world. One day, I hope that everyone on earth can benefit from psychoanalysis, as I have.

FREUD

I regret that your wife does not feel the same.

BARON GAISMAN

Susanne? She deplores every *pfennig* I give you. Luckily, she is not at home much these days.

FREUD

Where is she?

BARON GAISMAN

Moscow. She has become a Bolshevik! Can you imagine? They say Lenin adores her. She is scattering her family fortune on the Steppes of Central Asia. She would have squandered Stefanie's money, had her grandfather not tied it up in family trusts.

FREUD

Have you thought of divorce?

BARON GAISMAN

I hesitate.

FREUD

Why?

BARON GAISMAN

Susanne is manic depressive. You know that. If I threw her over, she would commit suicide. She has already made three attempts.

FREUD

How much could marriage mean to a woman who spends her days cavorting in the Kremlin?

BARON GAISMAN

Only in her manic phase, Herr Professor. Then she can sleep with the entire Supreme Soviet, simultaneously and in tandem. When she is depressed, she returns to Vienna. I must care for her.

FREUD

She should not be your burden.

BARON GAISMAN

When you told me I was a latent homosexual, I was never able to grasp the meaning of my diagnosis.

I thought my only problems were my temper and my impulses.  
Yet I realized I deceived Susanne when I married her.

FREUD

Deceived?

BARON GAISMAN

(hesitates)

Perhaps not. She was already pregnant with Stefanie.

FREUD

You did not force yourself upon her?

BARON GAISMAN

(uncomfortable, shifts in  
chair)

Oh no. Most certainly not.

FREUD

Frau Elisabeth Kleinig tells me that she loves you. That she  
wants to marry you.

BARON GAISMAN

I hesitate to marry another mental case.

FREUD

Frau Kleinig is not a mental case. She's mildly  
schizophrenic, that's all.

BARON GAISMAN

I see.

FREUD

Well compensated.

BARON GAISMAN

So I gather.

FREUD

Frau Kleinig is one of my most delightful patients. I myself  
am very fond of her.

BARON GAISMAN

I'm fond of her, too. So is her husband.

FREUD

Her husband is a nebbish. She will divorce him.

BARON GAISMAN

Her husband is an arms dealer. I already received a bullet through the lung in Galicia in 1914.

(opens shirt to display ugly  
bullet wound scar on his  
chest)

I don't want to get shot again.

FREUD

Herr Kleinig has never fired a gun.

BARON GAISMAN

Are you certain?

FREUD

Frau Kleinig is herself very rich. Her father left her a fortune in toothpaste.

BARON GAISMAN

I do not need toothpaste. My teeth are in perfect shape.

(smiles broadly to reveal  
teeth)

Maybe they could use a little cleaning.

FREUD

You find it hard to accept my diagnosis of your latent homosexuality. Your complaint that you cannot grasp your homosexuality implies that you are not yet aware of your fantasy of making me a rich man. If matters turn out all right, let us change this imaginary gift into a real contribution to the Psychoanalytic Funds after your marriage to Frau Kleinig.

BARON GAISMAN

I intend to donate more.

FREUD

Your money is laughing gas to the psychoanalytic movement.

BARON GAISMAN

I shall consider seriously what you advise, Herr Professor.

FREUD

I have seen Stefanie.

BARON GAISMAN

(shaking his head sadly)

I know.

FREUD

I would like you to start from the beginning. Tell me everything.

BARON GAISMAN

There isn't any beginning, at least there isn't any insanity in the family that I know of, on either side. Stefanie's mother is a bit eccentric. She wasn't home too much. I've sort of been father and mother both to Stefanie, with the help of governesses - father and mother both to her.

(His eyes are tearing up)

FREUD

Here you are.

(Freud offers Baron Gaisman a box of tissues. Gaisman takes a tissue to wipe away tears.)

BARON GAISMAN

As a child she was a sweetheart. Everybody loved her, everybody who knew her. She was smart. She was happy. She liked to read, draw, dance, play the piano. My wife said she was the only one of our children who never cried at night.

FREUD

You have other children?

BARON GAISMAN

A boy who died.

FREUD

Cause of death?

BARON GAISMAN

(Hesitates, bites lip)

He fell, hit his head. Thank goodness we still had Stefanie.  
She was...She was...

(weepy)

FREUD

(Extending the tissue box  
again, then helping the  
teary Baron Gaisman to  
complete his sentence)

She was a perfectly normal, bright, happy child.

BARON GAISMAN

Perfectly.

(blows nose loudly into  
tissue)

About eight months ago, or maybe it was six months ago or  
maybe ten - I try to figure but I can't remember exactly  
where we were when she began to do funny things - crazy  
things. She would suddenly talk in a strange loud way.

FREUD

Her dybbuk?

BARON GAISMAN

Her what?

FREUD

In Jewish folklore, a dybbuk is a malicious possessing  
spirit, the dislocated soul of a dead person.

BARON GAISMAN

Oh yes. Kabbala. The miraculous rabbi of Lemberg. My wife was  
ardently involved in Jewish mysticism before she embraced  
Bolshevism.

FREUD

The two bear certain similarities.

BARON GAISMAN

I had a valet, with me for years. Stefanie got some crazy idea about him. She thought he was propositioning her. I believed her. I fired him. Now I'm sorry. It was all nonsense.

FREUD

Exactly what did Stefanie claim the valet was doing?

BARON GAISMAN

We asked her. She was evasive. She would give us a naughty look and say, "you know."

FREUD

Has Stefanie become worse?

BARON GAISMAN

Oh, much worse. She had a fit or seizure or something. The things she said got crazier and crazier. I wrote some of them down.

(Reaches into pocket, pulls  
out much folded, worn piece  
of paper, hands it to Freud)

Almost always about men about to attack her, men she knew, men on the street: anybody.

FREUD

Stefanie is schizophrenic.

BARON GAISMAN

Our family doctor, Dr. Sonnenschein, told us.

FREUD

She is in an acute phase of the illness. Her fear of men is one of its manifestations. The outcome is uncertain.

BARON GAISMAN

Can you do anything for her, Herr Professor?

FREUD

I will try.

BLACKOUT.

11 SCENE

11

*The stage is in darkness. We hear the voices of Rosen on the couch, Freud in chair.*

ROSEN

I had truly terrible nightmares filled with the most demoniacal masks imaginable. They were dead black, some with fiery eyes and mouths dripping blood. I still remember a particularly terrifying dream I had at the age of six. The night was stormy, with thunder and lightning, along with a good deal of wind and rain. As I was lying in my bed, a black masked figure came crashing through the gabled wall of my room.

MASKED FIGURE, wet and glistening,  
dressed like a king with crown,  
ermine cape and claw-like hands.  
The black mask is grotesque.

ROSEN

The mask spoke to me in an eerie voice.

MASKED FIGURE

(sweetly)

My dear child, I adore you. Your beautiful form arouses me. I have come to carry you off.

(angrily)

If you are not willing, I will use force.

ROSEN

The memory of this diabolical creature still haunts me.

BLACKOUT.

*Lights up on Rosen on couch,  
Freud in chair. Masked Figure is gone.*

FREUD

What did you learn from your older sister about your mother's death?

ROSEN

You are quite correct, Herr Professor. My sister told me I was the first to discover the dead body of my mother, lying in her bed.

FREUD

Your phobia, your fear of masks, is a defense against anxiety produced by repressed impulses.

ROSEN

What impulses?

FREUD

You anxiety at the sight of your dead mother has moved to an object, the mask, and then becomes the phobic stimulus. In order to not deal with the repressed conflict, the you try to avoid the object.

ROSEN

What repressed conflict? I am thinking.

FREUD

Your hour is up.

ROSEN

Damn.

FREUD

The Rat Man.

ROSEN

My repressed conflict. I just recognized it.

FREUD

That is for next time. What have you found out about the Rat Man?

ROSEN

(hesitates)

I don't think he is dead.

FREUD

(quite taken back)

What? Are you sure? How do you know?

ROSEN

Yesterday I took myself to the war ministry. At least what remains of it. It's in that ornate pile on the Schottenring. The pedestal with Field Marshal Count Radetzky on his rearing steed guards the entrance. Not much war there anymore. Mainly soldier records on index cards in long rows of card files. Drove of widows and orphans trying to find out what became of their fathers, sons, and brothers.

FREUD

(impatiently, pulling out  
watch from pocket and  
staring at it)

What did you learn?

ROSEN

The records of the ordnance officers are on the fourth floor. I had to climb four flights of stairs. A clerk in uniform demanded who I was, why I wanted information on Ernst Lanzer. I told him I was a comrade, blinded in combat. I had heard my friend Lanzer was killed and wanted to visit his grave. The clerk was sympathetic. He found Lanzer's file card.

FREUD

Please be brief. I don't have all day.

ROSEN

Lanzer was born in 1878. He had been a lawyer before he joined the military. He...

FREUD

(very impatient and curt)

I know all that. What happened to him?

ROSEN

A Russian shell exploded near him in 1914.

FREUD

It didn't kill him? That's what I had heard.

ROSEN

He was wounded. Hospitalized with shell shock.

FREUD

Where is he now?

ROSEN

Nothing else on the file card.

FREUD

(bangs chair arm with  
frustration)

*Verdammt!*

ROSEN

Sorry.

FREUD

You must find him. What about his family?

ROSEN

I was at the war ministry only yesterday. First time I had ever seen it. Very impressive: large, imposing, undeniably warlike. A fierce imperial eagle, wings outstretched, martial implements grasped in its claws, stares off majestically from the sloping roof. Stone heads of soldiers perched above heavily barred street level windows along the front. A huge...

FREUD

(interrupting, quite  
agitated)

I don't care. You are wasting my time, do you understand?

ROSEN

(apologetic)

Forgive me, Herr Professor.

FREUD

*Um Gottes Willen*, Man, use your *Verstand*. How will you psychoanalyze patients? What about Lieutenant A, who bought the Rat Man the pince-nez? What about Lieutenant B, who was stationed with him? Have you not gone over the materials I gave you?

ROSEN

I have. Some of what you published contradicts what's in your notes.

FREUD

(suddenly taken aback,  
cautious)

How so? Can you give me an example?

ROSEN

*Glejisamen*. The anagram the Rat Man invented.

FREUD

What about it?

ROSEN

You published that you used *Glejisamen* to deduce the name of the Rat Man's lady friend, Gisela. You told me the same thing.

FREUD

Correct.

ROSEN

In the notes you gave me, you wrote that you learned Gisela's name first, then used it to deduce the meaning of the anagram.

FREUD

A miniscule error. You make too much of a trifle.

ROSEN

Is the scientific record a trifle?

FREUD

We scientists are human. We make mistakes. Tiny ones, to be sure.

ROSEN

Can a scientist correct his mistakes?

FREUD

Most certainly. I believed that a repressed memory of early childhood sexual abuse or molestation was the cause of hysteria in women. I reported my theory to the Vienna Psychiatric Society in 1896. Brr, those jackasses gave me an icy reception. They can go to hell, euphemistically expressed. Krafft-Ebing called my theory a scientific fairy tale. Then I discovered that I was not able to bring a single analysis to a real conclusion. The complete successes I counted on were absent. To my surprise, in all cases, the father, not excluding my own, had to be accused of being perverse. Obviously impossible or, at least, highly improbable that perverted acts against children were so widespread. I finally recognized that the hysteric females I treated only imagined the vivid scenes of sexual abuse they related to me. They were fantasies, the result of infant sexuality. My insight has led to my theory of infant sexuality and the Oedipus complex. If I can make such a substantial correction, I assure you I can make a microscopic one.

ROSEN

I'm relieved.

FREUD

Do you wish to be relieved of the possibility of becoming a psychoanalyst?

ROSEN

Of course not, Herr Professor.

FREUD

You must work harder. Work makes life sweet. Laziness spoils everything.

12 SCENE

12

*Stefanie on the couch, Freud in his chair.*

FREUD

How can I thank you for your generous gift, Fräulein Stefanie?

STEFANIE

It was only money, Herr Professor. I have so much more than I will ever need. What you have given me is far more valuable.

FREUD

Your gift will make possible the continued publication of *Imago*. Our publisher was not making money and wanted to kill it. Now we can publish *Imago* ourselves.

STEFANIE

You were so sweet to find me the apartment next door.

FREUD

You should thank Anna.

STEFANIE

Your daughter is too kind. I only moved out of my parents' home a month ago. Already I am feeling better.

FREUD

It was time. You needed a bit of help making the decision.

STEFANIE

I enjoy taking my meals with your family. Fräulein Fichtl cooks a heavenly Tafelspitz.

FREUD

Be wary of her desserts. Especially the *Schlag*. Treacherous for the waistline.

STEFANIE

(looking at herself)

So far, so good.

FREUD

You have a lovely voice, my dear. Are you a singer?

STEFANIE

Oh no. I have never sung a note in my life. I am completely tone deaf. I can't carry a tune.

FREUD

Ah well, music has never been my strong suit.

STEFANIE

Now if my nightmare would go away. It still troubles me.

FREUD

Has it recurred every night?

STEFANIE

Not every night. Often. I am in the deep wood looking for the railway station. I see a poisonous black snake about to bite me. I try to hold up my hand to fend it off. I cannot move. I'm paralyzed with fear. I struggle to reach the railway station. It's not the railway station. It's the cemetery. I am looking at my own grave. And then...and then....I am a little girl. I am lying in my bed with my dolls...The door to my room slowly opens...My father enters...

BLACKOUT.

13 SCENE

13

*The set is in darkness except for a spotlight on the couch, which also illuminates Freud. Stefanie clutches a doll. Baron Gaisman is seated next to her. During the entire scene, Freud sits impassively.*

STEFANIE

(protesting)

Please papa.

Baron Gaisman kisses Stefanie and caresses her ever more passionately. Stefanie resists, tries to push him away, clings tightly to her doll.

STEFANIE

Please don't, papa. Please don't.

Baron Gaisman becomes more forceful, enraged. He grabs the doll away from Stefanie, rips off its head and throws it violently to the floor, assaults Stefanie.

STEFANIE

(more anguished)

Stop Papa, you're hurting me.

A brutal scene of savage rape. Baron Gaisman tears at Stefanie's clothing. Stefanie screams, claws his face. Baron Gaisman grabs Stefanie by the neck, chokes her into unconsciousness, rapes her. Baron Gaisman stands. His face and neck are clawed and bloody. He readjusts his clothes.

BLACKOUT.

ACT II

14 SCENE

14

AT RISE:

*Baron Gaisman is gone. Stefanie lies on the couch, face bruised, clothes torn and disheveled, gasping for breath, weeping softly.*

*Freud, seated in chair, is  
entirely calm, as though nothing  
has happened.*

FREUD

(picks up tissue box, hands  
the sobbing Stefanie a  
tissue)

Here you are, my dear.

STEFANIE

Thank you.

FREUD

What do you make of your dream?

STEFANIE

(sobbing softly)

My father raped me. I remember it clearly now. God, how I  
remember it.

FREUD

Memory is not always a flawless guide to the past.

STEFANIE

It's not?

FREUD

Let us examine the elements of your dream. The snake for  
example.

STEFANIE

I'm terrified of snakes.

FREUD

Why?

STEFANIE

I...I don't know.

FREUD

In a woman's dream, the snake represents the male member, the  
phallus, alive, poisonous, slimy.

STEFANIE

Dream or no dream. My father raped me.

FREUD

Dreams of rape, fantasies of rape, are common in women.

STEFANIE

Please, Herr Professor, are you trying to tell me my father didn't rape me?

FREUD

Your dream is pure fiction, Fräulein Stefanie. Your father did not violate you.

STEFANIE

He didn't? How do you know?

FREUD

Your dream was a product of your strong adolescent sexual impulses, nothing more.

STEFANIE

I have never had strong sexual impulses.

FREUD

Do you have the desire to be loved?

STEFANIE

Oh yes.

FREUD

What do you feel when your father kisses you?

STEFANIE

Yech! Whenever I see his big white teeth I feel like Little Red Riding Hood.

FREUD

Did you ever feel his erect member against you?

STEFANIE

(stammering)

I...I...

FREUD

I realize my questions are intimate. Has a gynecologist ever examined you? Like the gynecologist, I must uncover your most private parts.

STEFANIE

(loud, raucous voice of  
dybbuk)

You horny ol' bastard. You head be clean up you ass hole, cigar an' all. You be seein' daylight over you dentures an' shittin' tobacco 'fore long.

15 SCENE

15

*Rosen on couch, Freud in chair.*

ROSEN

If my fear of masks relates to my repressed conflict, what is my repressed conflict?

FREUD

Consciously you feel that only members of your own sex, men, can rouse your sexual wishes; women, and especially their sexual parts, are not an object of desire for you at all. Are the private parts of women an object of disgust for you?

ROSEN

For an obstetrician? Are you joking?

FREUD

I am not.

ROSEN

What are you suggesting, Herr Professor?

FREUD

Sexuality is a continuum. Exclusive heterosexuality is at one end, exclusive homosexuality at the other. While your orientation is toward men, you seem to lie more toward the center of the spectrum than toward the end. Your very choice of a medical specialty implies at least a latent interest in the female sex.

ROSEN

(thoughtfully)

Perhaps you are right.

FREUD

You have been doing your best to repress your interest in women. You are a latent heterosexual. Your unconscious struggles have directly led to your neurotic phobia, your fear of masks. But you unconsciously did not want to abandon any share in reproduction. Therefore, you chose obstetrics, an unusual choice, to say the least, for a man who is exclusively homosexual.

ROSEN

I think you are right.

FREUD

Do you engage in masturbation?

ROSEN

(embarrassed)

Well, I...

FREUD

Your hour is up.

ROSEN

Saved by the clock.

FREUD

Not entirely. The Rat Man. Have you located him?

ROSEN

Not yet.

FREUD

Not yet? What have you been doing?

ROSEN

In the war ministry, I learned that the Rat Man was hospitalized for shell shock.

FREUD

Where?

ROSEN

A shell shock ward at the Allgemeines Krankenhaus.

FREUD

A few blocks from here. Think of that. You must go there. Request his record.

ROSEN

I've already been there.

FREUD

Very good. We'll make a psychoanalyst of you yet. What treatment did the Rat Man get?

ROSEN

The shell shock special, with all the trimmings, I'm afraid.

BLACKOUT.

16 SCENE

16

*Stage is dark. Spotlight on the Rat Man in military uniform, lying on an examining table, downstage center, soaking wet. A MILITARY DOCTOR in uniform and white coat stands next to the table, holding and reading medical chart. The Rat Man, who has just been immersed in an ice water bath, is shivering uncontrollably.*

MILITARY DOCTOR

How did you like the ice water bath?

RAT MAN

(almost frozen to death,  
teeth chattering loudly)

Gagagagaga.

MILITARY DOCTOR

So you can't move eh? Paralyzed, eh?

Rat Man squeals, struggles to move  
but is paralyzed.

MILITARY DOCTOR

I see.

(Puts ear plugs in his own  
ears, rolls an electric  
siren next to Rat Man's  
head, throws switch, siren  
emits deafening noise.)

RAT MAN

(jolted upward)

Gagagagaga.

MILITARY DOCTOR

Can you move yet?

RAT MAN

(a gurgle)

Glejisamen.

MILITARY DOCTOR

(Grabs Rat Man's very stiff  
leg, tries to bend it. There  
is a loud cracking noise.)

Shell shock rigor. Unmistakable. Don't worry, we have a  
treatment. Electric shock.

(Rolls an electric box with  
wires next to Rat Man,  
connects wires to Rat Man's  
arms and legs. Throws  
switch. Hissing, zapping  
noise.)

Rat Man's whole body arches  
upward and backward  
convulsively.)

Are you feeling better?

RAT MAN

(Current switched off, Rat  
Man falls back to table,  
almost dead)

Gagagagaga.

MILITARY DOCTOR

We'll cure you, Herr Lieutenant. Don't worry. You'll be back  
at the front in no time.

BLACKOUT.

17 SCENE

17

*Freud seated in his chair. Baron  
Gaisman, furious, storms in.  
Gaisman enters shouting, waving a  
thick walking stick menacingly,  
but exits contritely at end of  
scene. Freud speaks throughout in  
a quiet, calm voice, as though to  
a child.*

BARON GAISMAN

You have gone too far. You have simply gone too far.

FREUD

Good day, Herr Baron.

BARON GAISMAN

I will not tolerate your meddling in my affairs. Not by any  
means.

FREUD

A pleasure to see you again.

BARON GAISMAN

I am going to kill you with my own two hands.

FREUD

(Gesturing to chair)

Please have a seat.

BARON GAISMAN

(he does not sit)

Great Doctor, are you a savant or a charlatan?

FREUD

(with a smile)

People have accused me of being both.

BARON GAISMAN

(banging his cane loudly,  
menacingly against Freud's  
desk)

What have you done with my daughter?

FREUD

I am treating her, as you requested.

BARON GAISMAN

I did not request you to move her out of my house.

FREUD

Nor did I. Fräulein Stefanie made the request.

BARON GAISMAN

For a month we have been searching for her. Today I learned she is living next door to you.

FREUD

That was her wish, Herr Baron.

BARON GAISMAN

I have come to get her. I will return her to where she belongs.

FREUD

To her schizophrenic state? Her screams? Her madness? Her dybbuk?

BARON GAISMAN

(more softly)

Is she improving?

FREUD

Markedly. Please sit down. We must talk.

BARON GAISMAN

(hesitantly sits)

Must we?

FREUD

Your daughter's health. I need to know.

BARON GAISMAN

(hoarsely)

It just happened.

FREUD

What happened, please.

BARON GAISMAN

I don't know. I don't know.

FREUD

(after a moment's silence)

Yes?

BARON GAISMAN

(beginning to weep, wipes  
eyes with back of hand)

When she was little she used to come into my bed in the morning. Sometimes when her mother was away she'd sleep in my bed.

FREUD

(after more painful silence)

I see.

BARON GAISMAN

I was sorry for her. Truly I was.

FREUD

(comfortingly)

Of course.

BARON GAISMAN

Whenever we went places in a carriage or a train we held hands. She used to sing to me.

FREUD

She sang? What did she sing?

BARON GAISMAN

Oh, anything. She is a wonderful singer. She sang all the time. We used to say, now let's not pay any attention to anybody else. Let's just have each other. You're mine. Forever.

FREUD

(after another painful  
silence)

Please go on.

BARON GAISMAN

(choking back sobs)

People thought, what an adorable father and daughter we were. They used to wipe their eyes.

(chokes back more sobs)

We were like lovers.

FREUD

(hands the sobbing Baron  
Gaisman the tissue box)

Here you are, my dear Herr Baron.

BARON GAISMAN

(hesitating to speak, pulling  
out tissues one by one,  
wiping eyes, blowing nose  
loudly, tossing tissues  
carelessly on floor)

Then all at once we were lovers. Ten minutes after it happened I could have shot myself.

FREUD

(sympathetically)

You were in a difficult situation. You were alone with a young woman in your bed.

BARON GAISMAN

(beginning to fill with joy  
on receiving Freud's  
absolution)

You don't think I'm a degenerate?

FREUD

Not at all.

BARON GAISMAN

A pervert?

FREUD

(shakes his head)

Hardly.

BARON GAISMAN

What do you think of me?

FREUD

You are...

(momentarily at a loss for  
words)

a normal man. What you need is an attentive wife at your side. Frau Kleinig. You must marry her. You need not concern yourself with her husband. I will speak to him.

BARON GAISMAN

(stands up filled with joy,  
rushes to shake Freud's  
hand)

I will marry her. Herr Professor. You are...you are a god, believe me, nothing less.

(impulsively reaches into pocket, pulls out a massive wad of money, drops it on Freud's desk)

Esteemed Herr Professor Doktor, here is a little something for your psychoanalytic movement.

(digs into other pocket, tosses huge handful of gold coins on Freud's desk)

Oh, wonderful man.

(exits)

Oh, peerless human being.

FREUD

(a moment after Baron Gaisman has left, exercising his right hand to relieve the effects of Baron Gaisman's bone crunching grip)

The Herr Baron is a worthy successor to the Brothers Grimm. No matter.

(stands, examines pile of money)

My goodness, American hundred dollar bills. Why should we publish *Imago* on paper? We'll have it printed on gold leaf.

BLACKOUT.

18 SCENE

18

*Spotlight downstage center on a small marble topped Viennese coffee house table and three chairs. Rosen and Stefanie sit facing one another, with coffee cups in front of them. Rosen's white cane is propped against the table.*

STEFANIE

Herr Professor Freud is a dear man. It's as if we're not even talking about the same person.

ROSEN

You are a patient. He's kind to his patients. At least to their faces. Especially wealthy ones.

STEFANIE

I have seen him giving money to a patient who fell on hard times.

ROSEN

Have you heard him talk about his patients?

STEFANIE

Never.

ROSEN

Patients are riffraff.

STEFANIE

Herr Professor Freud said that? I don't believe it.

ROSEN

Their only value is that they afford us a living and provide us with study material. We cannot help them.

STEFANIE

Are you certain he said that?

ROSEN

I heard him talking to Dr. Ferenczi at a Wednesday meeting of the Vienna Psychoanalytic Society.

STEFANIE

Professor Freud is helping me. I'm getting better.

ROSEN

You've moved out of your home. You have no more contact with your father. You're taking meals with the Freud family.

STEFANIE

That has helped.

ROSEN

It can't go on forever.

STEFANIE

I'm hoping it will.

ROSEN

Don't count on it.

STEFANIE

Why not?

ROSEN

The Herr Professor, as you point out, is a personally kind, generous man. A dear man, as you call him.

STEFANIE

Very true.

ROSEN

He has, alas, another side: Herr Professor Doktor Sigmund Freud, the world class scientist.

STEFANIE

Scientist? I never thought of him as a scientist. Don't scientists wear white coats and work in laboratories?

ROSEN

The Herr Professor did that sort of science when he was young. He dissected eels, looking for their testicles. Today he dissects people's psyches. He considers psychoanalysis to be as scientific as Newton's universal gravitation.

STEFANIE

I see.

ROSEN

As a world class scientist, the Herr Professor will let no one stand in his way or diminish his fame. No one. He is brutal with anyone he perceives to be a threat.

A couple years ago he had a trainee, like me, who wanted to be a psychoanalyst. Viktor Tausk. The Herr Professor decided that Tausk was a bit too independent and original for his taste. He dropped Tausk. Tausk became anguished, despondent, committed suicide. Shot and hanged himself at the same time.

STEFANIE

Do you think Herr Professor Freud might drop me?

ROSEN

I think you should try to make another life for yourself. Don't depend on the Herr Professor. When he feels that people have no more use for him, he drops them.

STEFANIE

I see that you are not following your own advice.

ROSEN

I cannot practice medicine. I need a profession. I need psychoanalysis. Otherwise I might as well be dead.

STEFANIE

(she places her hand on top  
of Rosen's on the table)

Aren't we a happy pair? A suicidal man and a psychotic woman.

ROSEN

For the Herr Professor and his scientific glory, I am stumbling along the boulevards and alleys of Vienna, looking for a man who may not be alive. I do not have enough vision left to cross a street on my own. In the past week, two cabs and a milk wagon nearly flattened me.

STEFANIE

(Her face crumples)

My life has suddenly become bleak again.

(she wipes away tears with  
the back of her hand)

ROSEN

(reaching for a tissue box on  
the seat of the third chair)

I wish you well, Fräulein Stefanie.

STEFANIE

(taking a tissue, wiping her  
eyes)

What am I to do?

ROSEN

You are young. Your life situation was in large part responsible for your illness. Your chances of recovery are good.

STEFANIE

I must get away from here. I must leave Vienna. Where will I go? Who will have me?

ROSEN

Please, do not make any hasty life-changing decisions.

STEFANIE

My mother abandoned me, left me in the lurch for Vladimir Ilyich Lenin. My father raped me. Now this.

ROSEN

Your problems will work themselves out. Give them time. I am confident.

STEFANIE

And what of your problems?

ROSEN

I am soon to have a new set of them.

STEFANIE

Oh, dear.

ROSEN

My time with the Herr Professor is drawing to a close.

STEFANIE

Is your training analysis almost complete?

ROSEN

Quite the contrary. It has hardly begun.

STEFANIE

I don't understand.

ROSEN

The Herr Professor is beginning to pick up on my attitude. He does not like what he senses.

STEFANIE

You have had words?

ROSEN

No words.

STEFANIE

What then?

ROSEN

During every session, I find myself straining to maintain self control. I don't want to end up without a profession, on the street with a tin cup. I just don't know how much longer I can go on until I explode.

19

SCENE

19

*Freud in chair and Rosen on couch  
as they were in Scene 15.*

ROSEN

The Rat Man escaped from the Allgemeines Krankenhaus.

FREUD

How?

ROSEN

No one is sure. They think he concealed himself in a shipment of dead bodies consigned to the Anatomical Institute in Währingerstrasse. His card in the war ministry lists him as a deserter, to be shot on sight.

FREUD

Shot on sight? *Gott im Himmel*, you must find him.

ROSEN

What can I do? I'm trying my best?

FREUD

Your best has not been good enough. Didn't Lanzer live someplace? Didn't he have a home?

ROSEN

After he escaped the hospital, he moved from place to place, one step ahead of the firing squad.

FREUD

(shaking head)

Poor Lanzer.

ROSEN

I was able to trace him for a time through police registration records. Viennese bureaucratic red tape saved him. Apparently the military authorities didn't talk to the police.

FREUD

Did he stay in Vienna?

ROSEN

Surprisingly, yes. His first stop was the Stumpergasse, number 29. He rented a single room in the apartment of a woman named Zakreys. What a place. A tenement. There was a single faucet in the corridor, from which eight different tenants were forced to draw water in buckets and pitchers. There was one dirty toilet for the entire floor, with a door that was almost impossible to open. Bugs were everywhere!

FREUD

I cured him with psychoanalysis. I thought I had turned his life around.

ROSEN

Frau Zakreys told me he stopped paying his rent. Moved out in the middle of the night. She said she felt sorry for him. He looked so ill.

FREUD

The shell shock?

ROSEN

What she described sounded more like a physical illness. She said he was emaciated, deathly pale with a chronic cough.

FREUD

Perhaps tuberculosis.

ROSEN

He moved to Felberstrasse number 16, across the street from the railroad station. The landlord told me the Rat Man tried to work as a porter in the station. His sick appearance frightened customers away. He collapsed when he tried to shovel snow.

FREUD

Incredible. To think, Lanzer was earning a decent living as a lawyer when I treated him.

ROSEN

The last address the police had for him was Sechshauserstrasse number 58. A worse tenement than the Stumpergasse building. The apartments have no running water; there is a single faucet for each floor, an outhouse in the back. Again the Rat Man moved out in the middle of the night. He was living in a room rented to him by a Frau Oberlechner. She gave his address to the police after he disappeared.

FREUD

Do you have any idea where he might be now?

ROSEN

None, I'm afraid.

FREUD

You must find him, do you understand? He holds the master key to our entire knowledge of compulsive neurosis.

ROSEN

In the Sechshauserstrasse police precinct, a lieutenant on duty remembered the Rat Man. The precinct captain might know more, according to the lieutenant.

FREUD

Why are you sitting here? You must talk to the precinct captain immediately.

ROSEN

You talk to him. Use your telephone. Ring up the precinct captain. Ask him where the Rat Man can be found.

FREUD

(annoyed silence)

I would never entrust such an important task to a telephone.

ROSEN

You entrust it to me. Why am I not flattered?

FREUD

When I speak to a man, I want to look him in the eye. I must know if he is telling me the truth.

(silence, then menacingly)

You are ill served by your impudence.

(overcoming his annoyance)

I realize I have given you a frustrating, difficult task.

ROSEN

Frustrating? Difficult? Impossible. I am no blind Sherlock Holmes, you know.

FREUD

Science is never easy. *Al finem respice*. Look to the end, the result. Think what you will have accomplished if you succeed, my dear fellow.

ROSEN

If I fail, my efforts, everything, will have been for nothing. No one will ever know or care.

FREUD

Ach, that's science in the flesh, the bitch goddess. You must not think of failure.

ROSEN

I am going to the Sechshauserstrasse police precinct this afternoon. I have an appointment to meet the precinct captain.

FREUD

Very good. Another matter, now, if you please.

ROSEN

Yes?

FREUD

I want you to stay away from Fräulein Stefanie.

ROSEN

I met her by accident in a store on...

FREUD

I don't care how you met her.

ROSEN

I see.

FREUD

Her prognosis is bad, very bad. The percentage of cures in women her age is small.

ROSEN

Then why do you care whether I interact with her or not?

FREUD

You might become...

ROSEN

Enamored of her? Involved with her? I am not exactly oriented in that way.

FREUD

I have told you that you are a latent heterosexual. You were dubious. Now you are proving my point.

ROSEN

I am not emotionally involved with her.

FREUD

And you will not be. She is not good for you. She will consume your life. You will become nothing but a nurse to a crazy hag.

ROSEN

Fräulein Stefanie is not a crazy hag.

FREUD

You have learned nothing during your analysis. This anger you are directing at me is transference, nothing more.

ROSEN

What about your anger at me? Isn't countertransference worse than transference?

FREUD

Do you remember the rabbi's goat? *Der rebbe meg*. The rabbi may. You must follow the rules. I do as I like.

ROSEN

Can you assure me there is no conflict of interest here?

FREUD

My only interest is the interest of a doctor in his patient. In this case two patients.

ROSEN

I must get to the Sechshauserstrasse police precinct.  
(gets up from couch)

FREUD

You will be the first blind psychoanalyst I ever trained. I still have my doubts.

ROSEN

(mildly contrite)

I am not giving up, Herr Professor.

FREUD

(reaches into his pocket,

pulls out billfold,

withdraws a few bills)

Here is some money. If you should by chance find Herr Lanzer and he is hard up, please give it to him.

BLACKOUT.

20

SCENE

20

*Stage is in darkness. Spotlight on a park bench in the Prater (amusement park), upstage center. The Rat Man is asleep on the bench in an alcoholic stupor. His head is thrown back and he snores loudly. He looks awful. He is dressed in his military uniform, but it is soiled, rumped, and torn. He is emaciated, his face deathly pale, sweaty, covered with a growth of beard. Intermittent spasms of coughing and his own screams of anguish disturb his slumber. A half empty bottle of cheap wine is next to him on the bench. In the background we hear music from the band organ of a carousel. Rosen enters, tapping his way with his white cane, and sits down on the bench.*

ROSEN

Herr Lanzer?

RAT MAN

(wakes with a start, eyes  
Rosen with alarm)

Who wants to know?

ROSEN

I am Dr. Heinrich Rosen.

RAT MAN

A doctor? Are you a skin doctor by chance? Would you look at  
this sore on my arm?

(rat man pulls up sleeve  
above elbow to reveal open  
pus filled sore on forearm  
near crook of elbow)

ROSEN

It might be a tuberculous skin lesion.

RAT MAN

Can it be treated?

ROSEN

I believe they are giving Finsen ultraviolet light treatments  
at the Allgemeines Krankenhaus. You might try them. I am a  
colleague of Herr Professor Doktor Freud.

RAT MAN

Freud? I have not seen him in a decade.

ROSEN

He is concerned about you.

RAT MAN

(seized by coughing fit)

After all these years? Think of that. He is a dear man. If he  
had been my rabbi during childhood, I would be an observant  
Jew today.

ROSEN

(hesitates)

Of course.

RAT MAN

The time I spent with the Herr Professor was the high point of my earthly existence.

ROSEN

You mean because he cured you.

RAT MAN

Oh, no. He did not cure me at all. Far from it.

ROSEN

He told me he did.

RAT MAN

Ach, I know what he says. I read his account of my case.

ROSEN

Is it not factual?

RAT MAN

(another coughing fit)

Hardly. Don't you know? He is a fiction writer. My case report is a novel.

ROSEN

I don't believe it.

RAT MAN

Using his genius, Herr Professor Freud has turned my dull tedious obsessions and compulsions into timeless literature. A detective story. He puts Sir Arthur Conan Doyle to shame. Why do you look surprised?

ROSEN

Do I?

RAT MAN

Are you in a training analysis?

ROSEN

I fear I am.

RAT MAN

My own guess is that Herr Professor Freud has never cured anyone, despite what he claims.

ROSEN

(reaches into pocket, pulls  
out some bills)

The Herr Professor has given me some money for you.

RAT MAN

(taking money, pocketing it)

Professor Freud is a darling man. Quite generous. Always has been.

ROSEN

We would both like to help you. How do you survive on this bench in the corner of an amusement park?

RAT MAN

Oh, it's a cozy spot, quite safe. During the war they wanted to shoot me on sight. Now I have a tiny veterans disability pension. God bless the Austrians.

ROSEN

Are they still pursuing you?

RAT MAN

Where have you been? The monarchy collapsed in 1918. The new government has other priorities.

ROSEN

How do you receive your checks?

RAT MAN

The manager of the carousel was my client before the war. He receives my mail. I managed to get him acquitted of a murder charge.

ROSEN

Whom did he kill?

RAT MAN

Oh, no one important. That was probably why I was able to get him off.

ROSEN

Are you here all day?

RAT MAN

I wander. I try to escape the guns in my ears. I can hear the guns. Thud, thud, thud, quite soft, they never cease, those whispering guns. Oh Christ, I want to go out and screech at them to stop. I'm going crazy; I'm going stark, staring mad because of the guns.

(Rat Man seized by fit of  
coughing and trembling)

ROSEN

Please, please.

RAT MAN

I must get hold of myself.

(He takes a swig from wine  
bottle)

I keep thinking of the firing squad. The blindfold. The crack of the rifles. The bullets thudding into my chest. I beat them. Lived in homeless shelters most of the war. No police record.

ROSEN

Thank goodness.

RAT MAN

Most often the Meidling shelter. It was the best. A warm roof, food, showers, baths. During the winter, hundreds of destitute people waited night after night in long lines to get in. Guards turned 'em away when the beds filled up. Guards on duty all night long. Outside, people slept on the sidewalk, hungry and freezing. They hoped for a chance to be admitted, poor devils. The newspapers always reported when another child froze or starved to death at the door. Nobody cared.

ROSEN

Terrible.

RAT MAN

The old city shelter and the workhouse were the worst. I got tuberculosis there.

(another fit of coughing)

ROSEN

I'm sorry.

RAT MAN

Don't be. Have you seen a man's brains splattered on a stretcher bearer's face? No? I don't want pity. My dreams drip blood, but I can drink and forget and be glad.

(takes a swig)

People don't say I'm crazy. They know that I fought for my country. Truly, no one worries a bit.

(another swig)

ROSEN

Is your tuberculosis active?

RAT MAN

Active? It's positively rollicking.

ROSEN

Are you coughing up blood?

RAT MAN

I am hemorrhaging blood. I have already had two lung hemorrhages. The doctors at the Allgemeines Krankenhaus made a chest x-ray. I saw it. I have a cavity that fills half my right lung. They told me that my next hemorrhage will be my last. Isn't that wonderful?

ROSEN

Herr Professor Freud would like to see you.

RAT MAN

(looks over himself  
dubiously)

See me? What on earth for?

ROSEN

He told me he would like to do a follow up examination.

RAT MAN

My goodness. If he knew the state I'm in, he might not be too eager.

ROSEN

You are an important case. The Herr Professor feels that any new information about you would be a service to science.

RAT MAN

(he sits up straighter, looks  
less forlorn)

How wonderful. Professor Freud is still concerned about me. I will go to him at once. Truly, I love that man.

ROSEN

(sniffing the air, trying to  
conceal distaste)

Do you perhaps have something else to wear?

RAT MAN

I have one clean change of clothes.

ROSEN

Where?

RAT MAN

The motor room of the carousel. Hanging next to the grease and lubricants.

ROSEN

Is there a lavatory where you can change, perhaps wash up?

RAT MAN

Next to the ferris wheel. Please give me twenty minutes.

BLACKOUT.

21 SCENE

21

*Freud's consulting room is empty. There is urgent knocking at the front door (offstage, downstage right). Freud enters from downstage left, followed by Stefanie. Freud is dressed in his elegant three piece suit, but has a flowing white linen dinner napkin tucked firmly under his chin. The napkin remains in place during this entire scene. Freud scowls in the direction of the front door DR when the knocking repeats. Sound of the door opening and voice off of a maid.*

MAID

(voice off)

Yes, please.

ROSEN

(voice off)

Herr Professor Doktor Freud.

MAID

(voice off)

Herr Professor Doktor Freud is having his supper.

FREUD

(with annoyance)

Come in, Rosen.

Rosen enters, tapping his way with his white cane.

FREUD

Was it necessary for you to interrupt my supper?

The Rat Man enters, coughing. He is very short of breath and has considerable difficulty walking. He is pale, sweaty, feverish. He wears his last suit of clean clothes and bow tie. The clothing is threadbare, spattered with a few oil stains. A battered Homburg is on his head. He is a pathetic figure, having gathered up his few remaining vestiges of personal dignity for a final visit to his revered Professor Freud. Freud is surprised, then shocked at the appearance of his old patient, but tries not to show it. Freud walks to Rat Man and warmly extends hand. The Rat Man grasps Freud's hand eagerly and looks unwilling to let go, as though this is his last grasp at life.

RAT MAN

(gasping for breath)

My dear Herr Professor, before the war I could take those steps outside your door three at a time. Now they feel like Mount Everest.

FREUD

Ach Lanzer, how good to see you. Remember, none of us is getting any younger. You know Herr Doktor Rosen. This charming lady is Fräulein Stefanie Gaisman.

RAT MAN

(coughing and gasping)

A pleasure, gracious Fräulein.

(He kisses Stefanie's hand; he may be dying but he is still Viennese.)

STEFANIE

Let me take your hat and coat, Herr Lanzer.  
 (she does and hangs them on  
 coat tree in corner)

FREUD

Please sit down, Lanzer. Tell me what happened to you after  
 our sessions ended.

RAT MAN

(sits)

I must think, Herr Professor. That was before the war. It  
 seems so long ago.

FREUD

What of your lady friend, Fräulein Gisela?

RAT MAN

What a memory you have. Amazing. Gisela changed her mind at  
 the last minute. Decided not to marry me.

FREUD

A pity. Why not?

RAT MAN

The day before the wedding she told me she hated lawyers. All  
 they do is make other people miserable.

FREUD

Your friend, Lieutenant A, who bought you the pince-nez. Did  
 he survive the war?

RAT MAN

(a look of horror crosses his  
 face; his voice trembles  
 with emotion and anguish)

My God, I can see him now before my eyes, crying out and  
 stumbling through the thick green gas, drowning under those  
 awful green fumes. In all my dreams, before my helpless  
 sight, he lunges at me, choking, drowning. We flung him in a  
 wagon and watched his white eyes writhing in his face. At  
 every jolt we could hear the blood come gargling from his  
 poisoned lungs.

(He is seized by a sudden  
chill, begins to tremble  
uncontrollably)

FREUD

Fräulein Stefanie, could you please get a blanket and cover  
up our guest.

STEFANIE

(Looking very upset, she  
hurries UL, disappears for a  
moment, returns with a  
blanket, very  
compassionately puts it over  
the Rat Man and tucks him  
in)

Here you are, Herr Lanzer, this will make you feel better.

RAT MAN

(trembling begins to subside)

Thank you, gracious Fräulein. You are an angel.

FREUD

(after a moment's silence)

Were you wounded at the front, Lanzer?

RAT MAN

I was in a trench when a mortar shell hit us.

FREUD

Where were you hit?

RAT MAN

My lower body.

FREUD

I am writing a monograph on the psychological relation of  
physical wounds and shell shock. Might you permit me to  
examine your wound?

Lanzer stands very slowly and  
agonizingly, as the blanket falls  
to the floor.

He turns with his back to the audience as Freud walks in front of him, and begins to unbuckle his pants.

FREUD

Would you please excuse us, Fräulein.

Stefanie turns her back to Freud and the Rat Man. The Rat Man slowly lowers his pants and underpants. Freud's eyes widen and a look of unpleasant surprise crosses his face.

FREUD

You may pull up your pants now.

The Rat Man does so and sits again.

FREUD

I have heard of such injuries, but this is my first personal experience.

RAT MAN

(bitter)

Saves me some trouble, don't you think? No need to look for another fiancée.

FREUD

Lanzer, I wish to ask a few more questions.

RAT MAN

Ask me anything, Herr Professor. Anything I can do to help you in any way, I'm willing to do. You were always so kind and generous to me.

FREUD

Your mother was Jewish, as I recall.

RAT MAN

My father was Jewish. My mother converted to Judaism when she married him.

FREUD

At the time you were born, were you...

RAT MAN

(A frightening, severe spasm  
of coughing and chills  
seizes him. Blood begins to  
spurt from his mouth)

I'm ill. I'm terribly ill.

(More blood spurts from his  
mouth)

Hospital. I must get to hospital.

(He rises slowly, painfully,  
staggers out downstage  
right. When he is gone we  
hear his last word)

Glejisamen!

There is a terrific crash and  
clatter of a table upset and vase  
breaking as the Rat Man falls dead  
offstage right. After a moment  
Freud slowly walks offstage right,  
then returns scowling.

STEFANIE

(runs after Freud, returns  
screaming)

Ambulance. We must call an ambulance.

FREUD

No need. He's dead.

STEFANIE

(weeping softly)

Poor little fellow.

FREUD

(annoyed)

This is your fault, Rosen.

ROSEN

(taken back with surprise)

My fault? I don't understand.

FREUD

You dawdled and you dithered. How many precious days did you waste, aimlessly poking hither and yon?

ROSEN

There is no way I could have found him more quickly than I did. I almost didn't find him at all.

FREUD

Why didn't you ask him about circumcision when you first found him?

ROSEN

I wanted to bring him to you, so you could see for yourself.

FREUD

Your crime is not only against me but against science. You have denied the world a definitive explanation of compulsive neurosis, perhaps forever. You are nothing but a hopeless bungler.

ROSEN

This is too much.

FREUD

I must write my final report of the Rat Man's case without the most important detail.

ROSEN

You can make it up.

FREUD

How dare you.

ROSEN

Like your other famous cases. They're all fiction.

FREUD

(very menacing and  
meaningful)

I will not really miss you, my boy. I have long realized that you could be of no further service. Quite the contrary. You constitute a grave threat to the future of psychoanalysis.

ROSEN

The Fräulein Bernays I treated in the sanitorium at Merano a few years ago. I remembered her first name. Minna. Fräulein Minna Bernays. Your wife's sister. You know what treatment I gave her? I aborted her.

FREUD

Enough.

ROSEN

How did she get pregnant? She lived in your house. You supported her. You traveled with her. You impregnated her.

FREUD

(pointing with outstretched  
arm)

You stink like the devil himself. There is the door. Out!

Stefanie suddenly screams, falls to  
the floor, screams, writhes, then  
is still.

STEFANIE

My dybbuk. It's gone. Professor Freud, you have exorcised it.

FREUD

Not the first, by any means.

BLACKOUT.

22 SCENE

22

*Railroad Station. Stage is in darkness except for spotlight on Rosen, downstage center. Behind him is a sign, ORIENT EXPRESS, PARIS, TRACK 3. Rosen's suitcase is next to him. He holds his white cane. Stefanie enters in traveling clothes, carrying a suitcase, recognizes Rosen.*

STEFANIE

Herr Doktor Rosen.

ROSEN

(recognizing her voice)

Fräulein Stefanie?

Rosen extends his hand to Stefanie, whose figure he can barely make out. She takes his hand, then embraces him briefly and affectionately.

STEFANIE

Are we on the same train?

ROSEN

Are you going to Paris?

STEFANIE

I am.

ROSEN

Finally getting out of Vienna to see something of the rest of life? Very good. You'll love Paris. It's a beautiful city.

ANNOUNCER'S VOICE

Orient Express for Paris. Now arriving track three. Leaving in five minutes. All aboard, please.

STEFANIE

I won't be in Paris very long. I change for the train to Le Havre at the Gare St Lazare.

ROSEN

What a coincidence. I'll be on the same train. May I ask what you'll be doing in Le Havre? I think I can guess.

STEFANIE

I'm boarding the SS France, bound for New York.

ROSEN

So am I.

STEFANIE

What part of the ship are you in?

ROSEN

I have a third class cabin. I share it with another man. I hope he doesn't snore.

STEFANIE

I am in first class. I reserved through Thomas Cook. The only accommodation they could get for me was a suite with two bedrooms.

ROSEN

At least there won't be anyone snoring.

STEFANIE

Would you like to stay with me? Why let the second bedroom go to waste?

ROSEN

(hesitating)

I think I may take you up on your offer.

STEFANIE

Where will you be in New York?

ROSEN

I have an uncle, David Heymann. He lives in Woodside, Queens. I'll be with him for a while.

STEFANIE

He has a house?

ROSEN

An apartment. Small but cozy. Where will you be?

STEFANIE

Fourteen east 86th Street. Off Fifth Avenue.

ROSEN

An apartment?

STEFANIE

A town house. It belonged to my grandfather. What will you be doing in New York?

ROSEN

I'll try to get started as a psychoanalyst.

STEFANIE

Even after...

(hesitates)

What happened.

ROSEN

I hear New Yorkers are mad for analysis. It's a new craze there. Like jazz.

STEFANIE

Where will you put your office?

ROSEN

I still don't know. Office space is expensive. Real estate is a blood sport in New York City, according to my uncle.

STEFANIE

I have lots of space. There are some lovely rooms on the ground floor. You would be welcome to use them for your office.

ROSEN

(deeply touched)

You are so kind, Fräulein Stefanie.

STEFANIE

You don't need to live in Woodside, Queens, with your uncle. You could have a whole floor in my townhouse.

ROSEN

Are you sure?

STEFANIE

Perfectly. I like your company. I was dreading being alone.

ROSEN

(holds out his hand, she  
shakes it)

You've found yourself a tenant.

STEFANIE

Your difficulties with Professor Freud: will they stand in the way of building a practice?

ROSEN

Not in the least, as I understand. Anyone who was with Freud for five minutes is highly sought after.

STEFANIE

Even analysts who broke with him?

ROSEN

That's no problem either. You just need a plausible reason for the break.

STEFANIE

Do you have a reason?

ROSEN

Oh yes. I broke with Freud over penis envy.

STEFANIE

Penis envy?

ROSEN

Freud insisted it should be limited to women.

## ANNOUNCER'S VOICE

Orient Express for Paris. Last call. All aboard.

They pick up their bags. Stefanie  
takes Rosen's arm as they leave for  
the train.

BLACKOUT.