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REUNION IN VIENNA

BY ROBERT EMMET SHERWOOD

REUNION IN VIENNA

THIS IS NEW YORK

THE VIRTUOUS KNIGHT

WATERLOO BRIDGE

THE QUEEN'S HUSBAND

THE ROAD TO ROME

CHARLES SCRIBNER'S SONS



REUNION IN VIENNA

A PLAY IN THREE ACTS

BY

ROBERT EMMET SHERWOOD

"Wonder," says he, "is the basis of Worship: the reign of wonder is perennial, indestructible in Man; only at certain stages (as the present), it is, for some short season, a reign *in partibus infidelium*." That progress of Science, which is to destroy Wonder, and in its stead substitute Mensuration and Numeration, finds small favor with Teufelsdröckh, much as he otherwise venerates these two latter processes.

—SARTOR RESARTUS.

NEW YORK

CHARLES SCRIBNER'S SONS

1932

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**TO
MY WIFE**



PREFACE

This play is another demonstration of the escape mechanism in operation.

There is no form of mechanism more popular or in more general use in this obstreperously technological period—which is a sufficient indication of the spirit of moral defeatism that now prevails. It is a spirit, or want of spirit, that can truthfully be said to be new in the world—for the reason that in no previous historic emergency has the common man enjoyed the dubious advantages of consciousness. However unwilling, he is now able to realize that his generation has the ill-luck to occupy the limbo-like interlude between one age and another. Looking about him, he sees a shell-torn No Man's Land, filled with barbed-wire entanglements and stench and uncertainty. If it is not actual chaos, it is a convincing counterfeit thereof. Before him is black doubt, punctured by brief flashes of ominous light, whose revelations are not comforting. Behind him is nothing but the ghastly wreckage of burned bridges.

In his desperation, which he assures himself is essentially comic, he casts about for weapons of defense. The old minds offer him Superstition, but it is a stringless bow, impotent in its obsolescence. The new minds offer him Rationalism, but it is a boomerang. He must devise pitiful defenses of his own, like a soldier who spreads a sheet of wrapping paper over his bivouac to keep out the airplane bombs. In Europe, this manifests itself in the heroic but anachronistic attempt to recreate the illusions of nationalism: people drugging themselves with the comforting hope that to-morrow will be a repetition of yesterday, that the Cæsars and the Tudors will return.

In America, which has had no Cæsars or Tudors, nor even any Hohenzollerns or Habsburgs, the favorite weapon of defense against unlovely reality is a kind of half-hearted cynicism that is increasingly tremulous, increasingly shrill.

Observe it in operation:

"Fear not, for God will provide."

"Oh, yeah?"

"The economic structure is fundamentally sound."

"Oh, yeah?"

"Two plus two equals four."

"Oh, yeah?"

As an alternative to cynicism is the sentimentalism which derives exquisite anguish from an acknowledgment of futility. Consider the "Hollow Men" in T. S. Eliot's terrible verses: "shape without form, shade without colour, paralyzed force, gesture without motion." Eliot is among the few authorized spokesmen of his time.

*"This is the way the world ends
Not with a bang but a whimper."*

"Oh, yeah?"

Here is another spokesman, a tabloid newspaper, *The New York Daily News*, which gives true statement of a present problem:

"Which is better—to live in fear of kidnapers, stick-ups and blackmailers whom the

law can't touch, or to trade our remaining liberties of speech and action for the security which a strong ruler (Mussolini or Stalin) can guarantee? We feel sure we can answer that question for any American mother, at least. She would be glad to trade her remaining American liberties for the knowledge that she could put her baby in its crib to-night and find it there safe to-morrow morning."

Democracy—liberty, equality, fraternity, and the pursuit of happiness! Peace and prosperity! Emancipation by enlightenment! All the distillations of man's maturing intelligence have gone sour.

The worst of it is that man had been so full of hope. He had complete confidence in the age of reason, the age of the neutralization of nature, for it was his own idea. It differed from all previous ages in this great respect: it was not caused by the movements of glaciers, the upheaval or submersion of continents, the imposition of prolonged droughts: it was the product of man's restless thought and tireless industry, planned and developed by him not in collaboration with nature but in implacable opposition to it. The reasonings of such as Roger Bacon, Copernicus, Galileo and Newton started the assault upon ignorance, and it has been carried on by countless thinkers and talkers from Voltaire and Rousseau to Shaw and Wells.

This is the career of the age of reason:

The eighteenth century knew the excitements of conception, culminating in the supreme orgasm of the French Revolution.

The nineteenth century was the period of gestation, marred by occasional symptoms of nausea and hysteria and a few dark forebodings, but generally orderly and complacent.

For the twentieth century have remained the excruciating labor pains and the discovery that the child is a monster; and as modern man looks upon it, and recalls the assurances of the omniscient obstetricians, he is sore distressed. He wishes that with his eyes he could see not, that with his ears he could not hear. But his senses are remarkably acute.

After Darwin, it all seemed so easy. Huxley preached the gospel, Pasteur peered through his microscope and detected the destroyers, Edison and Freud began to see the light. Science conferred its blessings at a bewilderingly extravagant rate. It was then that Victor Hugo expressed man's ascendant optimism:

"Give time for the realization of the acme of social salvation,—gratuitous and compulsory education. How long will it take? A quarter of a century; and then imagine the incalculable sum of intellectual development. . . . Look! raise your eyes! the supreme epic is accomplished. The legions of light drive backward the hordes of flame."

Twenty-five years! But exactly twice that number of years after Hugo's prophecy the legions of light converged upon Flanders, and the process of dissolution—political, economic and ethical—had begun. Twelve million soldiers died for democracy, but now *The Daily News* announces that mothers would rather have their babies safe. But it is doubtful that the mothers or their sons will derive much joy from consideration of the proffered panaceas. Man is a sick animal, and the chief symptom of his malady is embittered distrust of all the physicians who would attempt to heal him.

The discredited vicars of God believe they can be helpful. They say, "Go back to the faith of your fathers!"

They might as well say, "Crawl back into the wombs of your mothers."

The discredited ideologs of the laboratory believe that they can be helpful. They say, "Be aware! Be confident! Go forward with firm tread through the entanglements (which are purely psychological), inspired by the assurances of our continued research. If you feel that you suffer from a plethora of science, then the only cure for it is more science." They even go so far as to suggest that the physicists might mark time for a while, to allow the biologists, psychologists and sociologists to catch up. The human organism must be reconstructed so that it will be as foolproof as the adding machine.

Man is, for the moment, scornful of the formulæ of the scientists, for he believes that it was they who got him into this mess. To hell with them, and their infallible laws, their experiments noble in motive and disastrous in result, their antiseptic Utopia, their vitamins and their lethal gases, their cosmic rays and their neuroses, all tidily encased in cellophane. To hell with them, says man, but with no relish, for he has been deprived even of faith in the potency of damnation.

In *The Modern Temper*, Joseph Wood Krutch has spoken as eloquently for his generation as Hugo did for his. He has written: "We went to science in search of light, not merely upon the nature of matter, but upon the nature of man as well, and though that which we have received may be light of a sort, it is not adapted to our eyes and is not anything by which we can see."

Or perhaps it is a light which enables us to see all too clearly the destination of civilization as directed by science. Perhaps at the end of the long, straight road we see the ultimate ant-hill, the triumph of collectivism, with the law of averages strictly, equably enforced. It may well mean fulfillment of the dreams of all the philosophers: the Perfect State.

It is a prospect of unrelieved dreariness. "I could not imagine writing a paragraph about a reformed world," Joseph Hergesheimer has confessed, and he might have added that before man could even live in such a world, he would have to be deprived of the very power to imagine, a sort of intellectual castration resulting in loss of the one attribute which has made survival worth all the required effort and pain.

It is this prospect which provokes the wailing that sounds throughout all the literature of this period, and it should provide great amusement for our descendants—provided they *are* our descendants, rather than laboratory products, and also provided our literature lives that long, which is doubtful. It would seem that the only subjects now available for man's contemplation are his disillusionment with the exposed past and his disinclination to accept the stultifying circumstances of the revealed future. The one substitute for the vanished solace of religion, for the frustrated idealism of democracy, and for the demolished security of capitalism, is abject submission of body and mind to the dictatorship of pure theory. There can be no possibility of choice in the matter. Science permits no compromise: a formula is either correct or it is incorrect, and only one scientific formula for the organization of life on earth has as yet been conceived, and it is Marxism. The attempt to mitigate this formula, to soften its impact, to introduce into it loop-holes for the admission of some of the more desirable of the old ideas (such as poetry, the luxury of leisure, etc.) is as absurd as the pathetic attempts of the theologians to adapt their dogmas to the exigencies of modernism. When man accepts the principles of collectivism, he accepts a clearly stated, clearly defined trend in evolution, the theoretic outcome of which is inescapable. He is enlisting in the great army of uniformity, renouncing forever his right to be out of step as he marches with all the others into that ideal

state in which there is no flaw in the gigantic rhythm of technology, no stalk of wheat too few or too many, no destructive passion, no waste, no fear, no provocation to revolt—the ultimate ant-hill. Man is afraid of communism not because he thinks it will be a failure but because he suspects it will be too complete a success.

So man is giving loud expression to his reluctance to confront the seemingly inevitable. He is desperately cherishing the only remaining manifestation of the individualism which first distinguished him in the animal kingdom: it is the anarchistic impulse, rigorously inhibited but still alive—the impulse to be drunk and disorderly, to smash laws and ikons, to draw a mustache and beard on the Mona Lisa, to be a hurler of bombs and monkey wrenches—the impulse to be an artist and a damned fool. It was this impulse which animated Galileo in the face of Romanism and Lenin in the face of Tsarism, but the disciples of both of them are determined to exterminate it and can undoubtedly do so, with the aid of the disciples of Freud. There is no reason why the successful neutralization of nature cannot be extended to include human nature.

Man has been clinging to the hope that has been his since he was delivered from feudalism—hope that he may live a life which is, in the words of Whitman, "copious, vehement, spiritual, bold." He is seeing that hope destroyed by instruments of his own devising, and the reverberations of his protest are shaking his earth.

Perhaps this protest is only the last gasp of primitivism. Perhaps man feels that the traditions of his race demand of him a show of spirit before he submerges himself in the mass and that, when the little show is over, he will be glad enough to fall meekly into line.

And then again—perhaps he knows that he is doomed anyway, that he is riding to oblivion in a vehicle of antiquated design. For there is still space, and the infinite mysteries thereof. The most advanced of all the scientists are now considering it, gravely, and they are not optimistic as to the results of their ruminations. One of them, Sir James Jeans, has said:

"Science knows of no change except the change of growing older, and of no progress except progress to the grave. So far as our present knowledge goes, we are compelled to believe that the whole material universe is an example, on the grand scale, of this. It appears to be passing away like a tale that is told, dissolving into nothingness like a vision. The human race, whose intelligence dates back only a single tick of the astronomical clock, could hardly hope to understand so soon what it all means."

So there is hope, after all. Man may not have time to complete the process of his own undoing before the unknown forces have combined to burst the bubble of his universe. . . .

All of which is used as preface to *Reunion in Vienna* because it provides confession of the apprehensions from which, with the help of God and a few Lunts, I have been attempting in this play to escape. It is relieving, if not morally profitable, for an American writer to contemplate people who can recreate the semblance of gaiety in the face of lamentably inappropriate circumstances.

R. E. S.

REUNION IN VIENNA

Presented by the Theatre Guild at the Martin Beck Theatre, New York City,
November 16, 1932, with the following cast:

KATHIE	Mary Gildea
ERNEST	Stanley Wood
ELENA	Lynn Fontanne
DR. ANTON KRUG	Minor Watson
ILSE	Phyllis Connard
EMIL	Lloyd Nolan
OLD KRUG	Henry Travers
FRAU LUCHER	Helen Westley
COUNTESS VON STAINZ	Virginia Chauvenet
COUNT VON STAINZ	Edward Fielding
POFFY	Edouardo Ciannelli
BREDZI	Bela Loblov
JANSEI	Morris Nussbaum
STRUP	Otis Sheridan
TORLINI	Bjorn Koefoed
POLICEMAN	Murray Stevens
CHEF	Leonard Loan
RUDOLF MAXIMILLIAN	Alfred Lunt
GISELLA	Cynthia Townsend
GENERAL HOETZLER	Frank Kingdon
TALISZ	Owen Meech
SOPHIA	Justina Wayne
KOEPPKE	William R. Randall
VALET	Joseph Allenton
BELLBOY	Noel Taylor
Bus-Boys	{ Ben Kranz Hendrik Booraem
Waiters	{ Charles E. Douglass Samuel Rosen

Directed by Worthington Miner

Settings by Aline Bernstein

REUNION IN VIENNA



CAST

KATHIE

ERNEST

ELENA

DOCTOR ANTON KRUG

OLD KRUG

ILSE

EMIL

FRAU LUCHER

COUNT VON STAINZ

COUNTESS VON STAINZ

POFFY

A PORTER

ANOTHER PORTER

STRUP

BREDZI

TWO WAITERS

TWO BUS-BOYS

A BELL-BOY

TORLINI

A POLICEMAN

CHEF

RUDOLF MAXIMILLIAN

GISELLA VON KRETT

GENERAL HOETZLER

SOPHIA

KOEPPKE

TALISZ

A VALET

JANSEI

SCENES

ACT I.—*The drawing-room in the house of Doctor Anton Krug, in Vienna.*
Late afternoon.

ACT II.—*The ante-room of the Imperial Suite, Hotel Lucher, in Vienna.*
Early
evening.

ACT III.—*Same as Act I. Late evening.*

(The curtain is lowered during Act III to indicate the passage of several hours.)



Time: August 18th, 1930.



ACT I



REUNION IN VIENNA

ACT I

The scene is the living room in the home of PROFESSOR DOCTOR ANTON KRUG in Vienna. It is late in the afternoon of August 18th, 1930, a date which marks the one hundredth anniversary of the birth of the late Emperor Franz Joseph I.

The room is ultra-modernistic in the style of its decorations and furnishings, but there is conveyed through the colors of the curtains and upholstery a suggestion of old-fashioned warmth.

At the right, down-stage, is a double door, leading to a hall and the staircase. In the up-stage right angle of the scene is a long window, looking out upon a sea of horse-chestnut trees. At the back of the room, in the centre, a few steps lead up to a little landing; on this open the door leading to FRAU KRUG'S boudoir and, to the left of it, the entrance to the hall which leads to the bedrooms.

Up-stage left is the door leading to DR. KRUG'S offices, and, down-stage left, a fire-place.

Before the fire-place is a seat. Slightly to the left of stage-centre is a large couch, the back of which forms a bookcase. Toward the right is a thickly upholstered easy-chair, and two or three chairs that are not so easy. There is a window seat, and between it and the landing at the back is an American radio cabinet.

As the curtain rises, the stage is empty, but from the radio come the sounds of a jazz tune.

After a moment, the door at the right opens and KATHIE comes in. She is a stout, competent, middle-aged servant. Behind her comes ERNEST, a venerable, jovial laundryman, bearing a brimming hamper of clean linen.

KATHIE

Put it down there. *(She indicates the couch, then goes up to the radio.)*

ERNEST

Yes, my dear. *(He puts the laundry basket by the sofa.)*

KATHIE *(muttering as she turns off the radio)*

He always goes out and leaves it on when he knows it annoys the Herr Doctor. *(She goes up the steps and knocks on the door of FRAU KRUG'S room.)* Frau Krug.

ELENA *(from offstage)*

Yes?

KATHIE

The laundry's here. *(She comes down and addresses Ernest in a peremptory tone.)* She wants to count it herself—and heaven help you if there's anything missing.

ERNEST

Not so much as a doily, upon my word.

(ELENA comes out of her room, and walks quickly down to the couch. She is thirty-two years old, slim, serene, self-possessed and almost imperceptibly malicious. Unquestionably above reproach as the envied wife of the distinguished DR. KRUG, ELENA remains a lively subject for speculative discussion. There is no doubt that she is a lady of fashion—was born so, indeed—though she is now wearing a severely simple apron smock and appearing as a model of brisk, house-wifely competence. She smiles amiably at ERNEST.)

ELENA

Good afternoon, Ernest.

ERNEST (*bowing*)

Frau Krug! Good afternoon. Warming up a bit, isn't it?

ELENA

Yes—it's lovely. . . . All right, Kathie. I have the list.

(KATHIE starts taking the folded pairs of drawers from the basket, pair by pair, and putting them on the couch. ELENA holds a laundry book and pencil with which she confirms the numbers of items announced by KATHIE.)

KATHIE

Seven pairs of drawers.

ELENA

Seven. That's right. . . . Here—let me see how they've been done.

(KATHIE hands her a pair, which ELENA unfolds and inspects.)

ERNEST

Beautifully laundered, Frau Krug, with creamy softness to caress your skin.

ELENA

Not my skin—my husband's.

ERNEST (*bowing*)

Ten thousand pardons.

ELENA

How about the shirts?

KATHIE (*piling them up*)

One—two—three—four—five—six—seven.

(DR. ANTON KRUG *has come in from the left. He is a tall, powerful, handsome man of forty-five, bespectacled, correctly dressed in an essentially Teutonic morning coat with striped trousers. His hands are those of a peasant rather than of a deft surgeon, and he is conscious of them. He speaks quietly, but in his deep voice is the resonance of assurance. He knows whereof he speaks.*)

ANTON

Elena . . . What are you doing? (*He comes close to ELENA.*)

ELENA

Now don't bother me, Anton. How many undershirts?

KATHIE

Two—four—six—seven.

ELENA

Seven. That's right. (*To ANTON*) I'm counting the laundry.

(*KATHIE begins to count out socks.*)

KATHIE

One pair, two—three—four—(*She goes on.*)

ANTON (*smiling*)

Forgive me, Elena—but will this great task keep you occupied for very long?

ELENA

No. Why?

ANTON

There are a couple of students of mine out there.

KATHIE (*mumbling*)

Eleven pairs socks.

ANTON

Would you mind talking to them while they're waiting? I want them to have a good look at you.

ELENA

No, dear, by all means, send them in. Did you say eleven?

KATHIE

Yes, ma'am. Five woollen, six silk.

ELENA

That's right. I'd better not let them see me with all this wash.

ANTON (*smiling*)

No, it might disillusion them. They imagine you as glamorous, regal.

ELENA (*interested*)

Ah! *Do* they?

ANTON

Where they got such ideas, I don't know.

ELENA

Perhaps they're very young?

(KATHIE *is putting the laundry back into the basket.*)

ANTON

They are—young, and painfully earnest. They're badly in need of a few lessons in the cultivation of grace.

ELENA (*rising*)

This apron isn't very glamorous, either.

(Old KRUG *ambles in from the right, carrying the evening paper. He is ANTON'S father, a gentle old man, an ex-cobbler, who doesn't entirely like the way things have been going since Austria was made safe for democracy.*)

ANTON

No, I'm reasonably sure you can do better than that.

KRUG

Better than what?

ELENA

If you can keep them waiting a little while I *shall* do better. (*She goes up to the steps at the back.*)

ANTON

Thanks, Elena. I'll deposit them in here. (*He goes out at the left.*)

KRUG

Deposit who? What's happening?

ELENA (*at the door to her room*)

Bring the laundry in here. (*She goes out, leaving the door open.*)

ERNEST

Gladly, Frau Krug. (*He lifts the basket. KATHIE picks up the folded drawers and shirts from the couch and goes into the room. ERNEST is following her, but old KRUG intercepts him.*)

KRUG

Oh, Ernest!

ERNEST (*turning and bowing*)

Herr Krug!

KRUG (*excitedly*)

Have you heard any more about to-night?

ERNEST (*importantly*)

I have! I was just over at Lucher's Hotel, and they're in a great state about it. They expect upwards of a hundred people!

KRUG (*impressed*)

A hundred! The police aren't going to stop it, are they?

ERNEST (*with assurance*)

Noooo! Old Frau Lucher has bribed the authorities.

(*KATHIE appears in the bedroom door.*)

KATHIE (*from the landing*)

She told you to come in here!

ERNEST

Coming! (*He winks at KRUG, and goes out with his basket. KRUG goes over to the radio, twists the dials, then turns it on. A speech in Russian is coming through. He listens attentively. ANTON comes in from the left, followed by the students, EMIL LOIBNER and ILSE HINRICH. EMIL is dark, bespectacled, poorly, carelessly dressed. ILSE might be blondly beautiful if she cared to be. She is eager and ambitious, but a trifle bewildered.*)

ANTON

Right in here, please.

ILSE

I hope we're not disturbing Frau Krug.

ANTON

No, no! She's eager to meet you.

EMIL

She's very kind.

ANTON (*to old KRUG*)

Father! Turn that off!

KRUG

But it's that trial in Moscow.

ANTON

Yes, and you can't understand a word of it. Turn it off!

KRUG (*with dejected resignation*)

Oh, very well. (*He does so.*)

ANTON

This is my father. (*ILSE and EMIL bow and murmur: "Herr Krug—How do you do?"*) Two of my students—Ilse Hinrich and Emil Loibner. (*KRUG mumbles a churlish greeting and ambles up to the window seat whereon he sits to read his paper.*) My wife will be here in a minute. I have one more patient to see before we can begin our work. A dreadful woman! She came all the way from—where is it?—Pennsylvania, to learn about the more elementary facts of life. She's married too. (*He laughs.*) What sort of husbands do you suppose they have in Pennsylvania that their wives must come all the way to Vienna to learn the facts? (*EMIL and ILSE laugh obediently at the Professor's little joke.*) Now when my wife comes in I want you both to be very charming—rather than scientific. Do you understand that?

EMIL

You don't need to tell us that, Herr Professor.

ANTON

Of course not. You're already a good psychiatrist. And you too, Ilse.

ILSE

Oh, I don't know anything yet.

ANTON

You stick at it for two or three years and you'll know everything—as Emil does. (*He slaps EMIL'S shoulder and goes out at the left. Ill at ease, ILSE sits down on the edge of the couch. EMIL takes up a defensive position before the fire-place.*)

ILSE

What shall we say to her?

EMIL

Well, I imagine we should flatter her. That's the right thing to do.

ILSE

I know—but about what?

EMIL

You ought to know. You're a woman.

KRUG (*unexpectedly*)

Tell her you admire this room.

ILSE

Oh!

(*They are both startled, having forgotten KRUG.*)

KRUG

She likes to be praised about all this—decoration. (*With a none too approving sweep of the hand.*)

EMIL

Is it—is the decoration her work?

KRUG

Every bit of it. She stood over the carpenters and painters and told them what to do.

ILSE

It's tremendously effective!

KRUG

Maybe. (*He rises and crosses toward ILSE.*) But as for me—it's—I don't know—I

don't *like* it! It just isn't natural. . . . Do you know what she said when she was having it done? She said: "We won't have one thing in this house to look as if there ever was a past. We must believe we know nothing of what went on in the world before 1920. We are beginning new," she said. Crazy notions! (*He chuckles.*) But all the same, she's smart. She can tell you young people some things that are good for you to know. And what's more, she *will* tell you if you ask her the right . . .

(*ERNEST comes out of ELENA'S room, carrying his empty basket.*)

ERNEST

Well, the laundry added up perfectly.

KRUG

Good! I need a clean shirt.

ILSE (*in an undertone to EMIL*)

} (Together)

I still don't know what to say to her.

EMIL

Sh!

ERNEST

And if I hear any more about that certain affair I'll let you know.

KRUG

Oh, please do, Ernest, because if there is a rumpus, they won't let the papers print anything about it. Do you think there will be a rumpus?

ERNEST (*knowingly*)

Unless I miss my guess, there'll be a good one. . . .

KRUG

Oh, I hope so.

ERNEST

Believe me, they're eager to have Frau Krug there.

(*KATHIE comes out of ELENA'S room.*)

KRUG

Oh, I can believe that.

KATHIE

Come on, now—we're through with you. (*She crosses to the right.*)

ERNEST

Yes, my dear.

ILSE (*to EMIL*)

What was that about Frau Krug?

(*EMIL cautions her to silence.*)

KRUG

Good afternoon, Ernest.

ERNEST

Good afternoon, Herr Krug. (*He goes out at the right, followed by KATHIE.*)

KRUG

Herr Krug! (*He chuckles as he turns back to the students.*) He and I used to go to school together, and now he calls me "Herr" Krug. That's because I'm the father of my son. As if I deserved the credit. (*He comes close to ILSE.*) Do you want to know something?

ILSE

About Frau Krug?

KRUG (*paying no attention to her question*)

I never saw what was in my boy. Neither did his mother. We wanted him to follow my trade, shoe-making. But he had big ideas. He had to be a surgeon *and* a revolutionist. Even when he was wearing short pants he was telling us that science was going to cure every one of everything. He was the wildest talker.

EMIL

Because he knew the truth.

KRUG

Well—he'd have been better off if he'd kept his mouth closed. They didn't like to be talked about the way he talked. They punished him. . . .

ILSE

Who were they?

EMIL

The Habsburgs!

ILSE

Oh!

KRUG

Yes—that's who it was. They were smart, too. Whenever things became too hot for 'em here at home they'd start another war, and send all the worst of the trouble makers into the front line. They did that with him. They put him to work patching up all the soldiers they'd broken there in Gorizia—patching 'em up so that they could send 'em out to be broken again. But do you know what he said about it? He said it was murder they were doing—that the enemy were our comrades. Comrades! The Italians! And on top of all that, every soldier that was sent to him was marked unfit for further military service. He told 'em all to go home. But *they* soon put a stop to that. They took away his commission from him, and made him a laborer in their stone quarries; and that's why he could never be a surgeon again. They crushed his hands with their stones!

ILSE

How *horrible!*

EMIL (*fervently*)

That's one of the crimes that we must never forget!

KRUG

Oh, it didn't upset him. He said, "If I can't use my hands to chop people to pieces, I can still use *this*." (*He taps his head.*) And he did. And now they don't put him in prison for what he says. They *pay* him! Why—they sent for my boy all the way from America, and he went across the ocean to tell those Americans how to live. *They* didn't know. And when he came back he brought me a present—that wireless machine, there. Did you ever see as fine a one as that? (*He gazes lovingly at the radio.*) It's mine—but they won't let me play it.

(ELENA *comes in, now wearing a graceful tea-gown.*)

ILSE

Oh—that's too bad!

(EMIL *signals to ILSE to behold FRAU KRUG.*)

EMIL (*bowing*)

Frau Krug!

ELENA (*shaking hands with ILSE, who rises*)

How do you do?

ILSE (*timorously*)

How do you do, Frau Krug?

ELENA

Father—aren't you going to introduce us?

KRUG

I don't know their names. They're students. (*He goes over to the right and sits down with his pipe and his newspaper.*)

ELENA (*to EMIL*)

I'm afraid I've kept you waiting.

EMIL (*stiffly*)

Oh, no. We are the intruders. The Herr Professor's with a patient.

KRUG

It's a lady who came all the way from Pennsylvania with complaints.

EMIL

If I may say so, Frau Krug . . . I . . . well—I . . . (*There is an awkward pause.*)

ELENA

Why, my dear boy—of course you may say anything.

EMIL

Well, I . . . it was nothing. . . .

ELENA

Oh, come—it must have been something. You're embarrassed.

EMIL (*with a sheepish laugh*)

I'm afraid so.

KRUG

He was going to say that he doesn't believe *you* have any complaints, like that woman out there. . . .

EMIL

I was going to say nothing of the kind! It was something entirely different—a—a compliment—

ELENA

Oh—but that would have been the highest compliment of all!

ILSE (*nervously*)

I think, Frau Krug—I think that Emil meant to say that we both admire the imaginativeness of this room.

ELENA

Oh! I should have liked that too. . . . Now—do sit down and tell me how you are getting on with your studies. (*They all sit.*)

ILSE

I'm afraid I don't know very much yet. You see I'm new. Emil is the Professor's favorite.

ELENA

Really! What does the Professor teach you?

ILSE

Everything!

ELENA

Oh?

ILSE

I mean, everything that's worth knowing.

ELENA

For example?

ILSE (*lamely*)

Well—he makes us understand that if you'll only *think* right, you'll *live* right. I mean—if you can make what's in your subconscious come to the surface—then you'll know what it is—and you'll know what to do about it.

EMIL (*unable longer to curb his eloquence*)

No, no! It's infinitely more than that. He's gone far beyond psychoanalysis. He teaches us the gospel of the better life—the life that is seen through the eyes of the biologist's microscope and in the changing colors of the chemist's test tube. He teaches us that the forward progress of man must be regulated by the statistician's inexorable curve, and not by the encyclicals of priests or the ukases of kings. He teaches us to banish from the world all false fear of God—to know Him, and recognize Him only as a measurable force in cosmic technology. He teaches us to look into ourselves—our bodies, our minds—and not to the vague hills of mysticism, for the knowledge that will set us free.

ELENA

Well—that *does* cover about everything, doesn't it? (*She treats EMIL to a sympathetic smile.*) And when you have absorbed all the knowledge there is, what will you do with it?

EMIL

I shall try to carry it to others—to share it with all mankind.

ELENA

I see. You're to be another Paul.

EMIL

Another Paul?

ELENA

Yes—Paul! The Apostle!

EMIL

Oh—yes.

ELENA (*to ILSE*)

And how about you?

ILSE

I suppose there'll be plenty of work for all of us.

EMIL (*rising*)

You see, Madam—the world is very young.

ELENA

Very *young*?

EMIL

Why—hardly more than ten years ago we were living under conditions of mediævalism.

ELENA

Ten years!

EMIL

When I look at the decaying relics of the old order, the gaunt, empty palace of the Habsburgs, and the silly monuments they erected to their own glory—I bless the war and the revolution that delivered us from the tyranny of ignorance.

ELENA

And what do you say when you look at me?

ILSE

At *you*, Frau Krug? What possible connection has that . . .

ELENA

I'm one of the relics of the middle ages, of ten years ago.

(ANTON *comes in from the left.*)

EMIL

You are the wife of the most enlightened scientist in Austria.

ANTON

Emil! I overheard that last remark.

EMIL

Yes, sir.

ANTON

I'm afraid you must have misunderstood me. I wanted you to flatter her, not me. (*He goes to the bookcase at the back.*)

ELENA

They've been charming, both of them.

ANTON (*casually looking for a book*)

I'm glad to hear it. . . . The one thing these students have difficulty in developing is the correct bedside manner. . . . Is that copy of *Sons and Lovers* here?

ELENA

I think it's there—somewhere.

ANTON

I want to give it to that Pennsylvania woman. It might help her. . . . Ah—here it is.

ELENA

What's the trouble with her?

ANTON

The usual one—another frustration! For twenty years she's been measuring her poor

husband in terms of her first love—the one that got away. . . .

ELENA

And what are you prescribing, beside that book?

ANTON

She must find her first lover, and have a good look at him as he is now. He's a manufacturer of dental supplies. I think she'll be cured. . . . (*He smiles at ELENA and goes out at the left.*)

ELENA

I hope he does help her. It must be awful to be always unsatisfied, and puzzled. . . .

EMIL (*with complete conviction*)

He'll cure her—if she has the capacity to understand.

ELENA

You worship him, don't you?

EMIL

All youth must worship him. He is leading us from the darkness—into the light.

ELENA

Do you hear that, father? Your son is a god.

KRUG

Yes—that's what they say.

ILSE

Frau Krug. . .

ELENA

Yes, dear.

ILSE (*hesitantly*)

There's a question I'd like to ask. You see—the point is that we, Emil and I—we know only the present, the age of reason since the Revolution. You know something of the past.

EMIL (*reproving her quietly*)

Ilse . . .

ELENA

That's quite all right. Why shouldn't I know the past? I'm old enough to be your mother. (*They both protest.*) Well, practically. . . . Now, come—what was the question that you want to ask?

KRUG

She wants you to tell her what you know of the Habsburgs.

EMIL

Frau Krug—I swear that we pay no attention to the scandalous gossip that evil, malicious bourgeois . . .

ELENA (*cutting in*)

Oh, but you should. You want to be psychoanalysts, don't you?

ILSE

Well . . .

EMIL

Of course, we do!

ELENA

Then there's every reason for you to do research work.

EMIL

Research work is to be done in the laboratory—not in the drawing-room.

ELENA

My dear boy—when you have been fully inoculated with the germ of scientific culture you will realize that all the world is your laboratory—and all the men and women in it merely guinea-pigs. I'm one of them—and I'm here to be explored. As a matter of fact, I'm a peculiarly interesting specimen—ask my husband if I'm not. He'll tell you that most of his vast knowledge of human frailty comes from observation of me. (*To ILSE.*) Now, please! Just what did you want to know?

ILSE

It would be helpful to know how you see all the changes—whether you think we are advanced, for all our knowledge, or . . .

ELENA

Aren't you content to take my husband's word for it that the world has improved?

EMIL

I ask for no other assurance. I need none.

ELENA (*to EMIL*)

I know. But—(*to ILSE*)—I gather that you're not so sure.

ILSE (*tremulous*)

The trouble is—I'm not sure of *myself*.

ELENA

Oh?

ILSE

I—I had an experience.

ELENA

Ah! I see! (*She draws her chair closer to ILSE. KRUG, who has been listening, draws his a bit nearer.*) Tell me about it.

ILSE (*hesitantly*)

It was very strange, and terribly disturbing. I've tried to account for my emotional reaction to it, but I can't do it. I was in Nice on my vacation, and I called a taxi. When I was in it, I happened to look in the little mirror, above the driver's seat, and I saw his eyes. He was staring at me, openly, insolently. They were the queerest eyes I've ever seen. I kept looking at them—although I didn't want to. I felt sure I'd seen him before. He was driving frightfully fast—on those narrow roads that run along the brinks of cliffs—crazily. That wasn't where I wanted to go at all, but I'd forgotten about that. I thought the cab would go over the edge any minute. Finally, I screamed out to him to stop—but I was so terrified that I forgot to say it in French. I spoke German. And with that he did stop, and stepped from his seat in the front and climbed into the inside of the taxi and sat down beside me. And he said, "I thought so! There was something about your eyelids that identified you as a Viennese. I am Viennese too. In fact, *I'm one of those who imparted to Vienna its now faded glory.*" Then he put his arms around me and gave me a long kiss.

KRUG (*softly*)

Well—well—

ELENA (*slowly*)

A taxi-driver.

ILSE

He kissed me so that I couldn't seem to utter a word of protest. I tried to tell myself that he was nothing more than an emotional extravert—but that didn't seem to help me. Then he said: "Permit me to introduce myself: I am the Archduke Rudolf Maximillian von Habsburg."

ELENA (*nodding*)

Yes! (KRUG *laughs boisterously*. ELENA *rises*.) Father!

(KRUG *stifles his mirth*.)

EMIL

I don't believe it. It was probably some impostor.

ILSE

No. I asked them at the hotel when I got back. They told me he was well known in Nice.

KRUG

How long was it *before* you got back?

ILSE

Oh, he took me right back. . . . You see, he'd stopped his cab in the middle of the road, blocking traffic, and some policemen came along, so he had to remember he was a taxi-driver. . . . (*A little sadly*.)

KRUG

Oh, dear.

EMIL (*to ILSE, in an undertone*)

You've said about enough!

ELENA

What did he look like?

ILSE

He looked as if he'd stepped right out of one of those portraits in the old palace.

ELENA

Yes! I know. Those full, rich lips.

ILSE (*in ardent agreement*)

Yes! That's why I thought I'd seen him before. . . . And when I wanted to pay him the fare, he waved it away, and said, "Nonsense, my dear—on this ride, you have been my guest!"

KRUG

I should say you had. (*He laughs*.) Just like him! Isn't it, Elena? Just exactly like all of them.

EMIL (*vehemently*)

If I had been there, I should have punched his nose.

ELENA

No—I don't think you would have.

ILSE

Indeed, you wouldn't! It's all very well for you to talk—but if you'd seen him as I did, you wouldn't have been able to say a word except, "Yes, your Imperial Highness!"

ELENA (*to ILSE*)

I gather that you considered the experience not entirely disagreeable.

ILSE

I can't decide what I think about it.

ELENA

Have you consulted Doctor Krug?

ILSE

I haven't had the courage to confess to him how weak I was.

KRUG

You don't have to consult him. . . . Elena—you know more about these things than Anton ever will, with all his experiments. Tell them about that time when the old Emperor caught you and Rudolf Maximilian, posing on the fountain at Schönbrunn, both naked as the day you were born.

ILSE (*gasping*)

Oh—then you *knew* him!

KRUG

Knew him! (*He can't contain his merriment.*)

ILSE

Oh—then I've said something awful.

EMIL

Yes!

ELENA

No, my dear. It wasn't awful at all. I enjoyed every word of it.

(ANTON *has come in.*)

ELENA

Anton, you should have stayed away for another half hour. I was just about to give your students a lecture.

ANTON

On what subject?

ELENA

On the past.

ANTON

Whose?

ELENA

Mine.

ANTON

Then don't let me interrupt. Proceed with it, at once. It's very exciting.

ELENA

No, it isn't. It's very dull. But . . . (to ILSE.) . . . you were right about one thing—it is instructive. And you also (to EMIL) were right, in all those eloquent speeches you made about the better life. Oh, Anton, you'd have been proud of him.

ANTON (*smiling*)

Go on with your own lecture.

ELENA (*to the students*)

It is a better life—and I can say that with authority. I was one of the many evils of the old régime—I and that weird taxi-driver who entertained you in his cab.

ANTON

What *is* all this?

ELENA

She had an encounter with Rudolf.

ANTON (*startled*)

Here in Vienna?

ELENA

No—in Nice.

ANTON (*relieved*)

Oh!

ELENA (*to ILSE*)

You must tell him all about it. He'll analyze your emotional reactions, as he analyzed mine. I needed his treatment—(SHE LOOKS AT ANTON; *there is an exchange of understanding between them*)—a great deal of it. He cured me—and I delivered myself, body and mind, to the new god. (*She puts her hand on ANTON'S shoulder.*) You need have no doubts as to the legitimacy of that god. You can believe in him, you can worship him, you can follow him to the last statistic!

EMIL (*fervently*)

Your words are inspiring, Madam!

ELENA

I intended them to be.

ANTON

Well! All this is elevating our studies to an alarmingly high plane. (KATHIE *enters from the right, carrying a silver plate on which are several cards.*) However, if you neophytes will step into my office, we'll celebrate high mass.

KATHIE

Some callers, ma'am.

KRUG (*rising*)

Who? Who *is* it?

ELENA

} (*Together*)

Just a minute, Kathie. Good-by, Ilse, and don't worry about those emotions. They're not uncommon.

ILSE

I know—that's what worries me.

(KRUG *has gone to KATHIE to have a look at the cards on the plate.*)

ELENA

Good-by, Emil.

EMIL

You remember my name!

ELENA

Yes, that's one good result of my education under the Habsburgs.

KRUG (*excitedly*)

Elena!

ELENA (*not stopping*)

I was trained to remember. (*She beams upon EMIL.*)

KRUG

Elena! It's the Count and Countess Von Stainz.

ELENA (*startled*)

Von Stainz? (*She leaves EMIL abruptly to look at the cards.*)

KRUG

And Frau Lucher, the old lady herself—and that Povoromo, that guide . . .

ELENA (*to KATHIE*)

They're *here*?

KATHIE

Yes, ma'am.

KRUG

Certainly they're here, and I know why.

KATHIE

They're downstairs in the hall—they beg to see you.

ANTON (*to the students*)

Will you wait in the office? I'll be with you in a minute.

(*ILSE and EMIL go out at the left.*)

KRUG

I can tell you *exactly* what they're after!

ANTON

What do they want?

KRUG

They want her to go to that party at Lucher's Hotel!

ANTON

Party! What party?

KRUG

They're having a big celebration! There's going to be a rumpus! (*He is in a high state of glee at this unexpected development, but no one is paying any attention to him.*)

ELENA (*to ANTON*)

It's the hundredth anniversary of the birth of that noble monarch, Franz Josef the First. Frau Lucher thought that it should be fittingly observed.

KRUG

Yes, and she's bribed the police!

ANTON

Well—what about it?

KRUG

They want Elena to go, that's what about it!

ANTON

Do you want to go, Elena?

ELENA

Anton!

ANTON

What?

ELENA

I don't want to see these people.

ANTON

Why not? They're friends of yours, aren't they?

ELENA

They were, a long time ago.

ANTON

Well, then—in that case—I can't see why . . . (*He sees KATHIE.*) Wait in the hall, Kathie.

KATHIE

Yes, Herr Doctor. (*She goes out at the right and shuts the door.*)

KRUG

Why do you want her to wait in the hall?

ANTON

If they're old friends of yours, I can't see any reason why you should refuse them. . . . Unless . . .

ELENA

Unless what?

ANTON

Unless there might be disagreeable associations.

ELENA (*with surprising vehemence*)

Of course there are disagreeable associations! The Count and Countess Von Stainz are dreadful people. They were two of the worst of the court toadies.

ANTON

But what about this Povoromo? He's a harmless and rather pathetic professional guide. There's nothing upsetting about . . .

KRUG

But don't you remember—he was one of the cronies of the Archduke. . . .

ANTON

And Frau Lucher—what's wrong with her?

ELENA

I hate her! I hate the sight of her hotel!

ANTON

Why? . . . Because it was the scene of so many of your youthful indiscretions with him!

KRUG

Are you talking about Rudolf Maximillian?

ANTON

That damned name again! (*He crosses to the door at the left.*) Now please, Elena—if you don't want to see them, then don't see them. But don't ask me what to do. I have those students on my hands. I'm very busy. (*He goes out.*)

KRUG

Did you hear what he said about that damned name? He can't seem to get over it.

(*ELENA crosses to the right.*)

ELENA

Kathie.

KATHIE

Yes, ma'am.

ELENA

Tell them to come up.

KATHIE

Yes, ma'am.

KRUG (*delighted*)

That's the way, Elena! (*He sits down and makes himself entirely comfortable.*) It'll do you good to talk to 'em. I often think you don't see half enough of your old friends.

ELENA

Go to your room, Father.

KRUG

Why?

ELENA

Because I want you to.

KRUG

But I'd like to have a look at them.

ELENA

Go on! Please.

KRUG (*going*)

Oh, dear! They never let me see anything interesting that goes on in this house. . . .
(*He has shuffled out at the upper left.*)

(KATHIE *returns, holding open the door.*)

KATHIE

In here, please.

(FRAU LUCHER *comes in. She is a formidable old party, absurdly dressed in ancient clothes, but imposing. Her voice is gruff, her expression unchangeably hostile, her manner toward all arrogant and despotic. Behind her come the COUNT and COUNTESS VON STAINZ and POFFY. The COUNT is about fifty-five. On his gray countenance are the ravages of time, disappointment, and drink. His courtliness, however, is unimpaired. The COUNTESS, about fifty, is dowdy and excessively emotional. POFFY is a tragic but gallant ex-officer of the Imperial Army, who is now engaged in the great work of guiding American tourists about the Hofburg.*)

ELENA

Tatti! I'm so glad . . .

COUNTESS

Elena! My angel! My beautiful little angel! (*She rushes into an embrace.*)

ELENA (*to the COUNT, over the COUNTESS'S shoulder*)

Hello, Franz, how are you?

COUNT

Not very well, thank you.

(POFFY and LUCHER *have hung back, as though dubious of the quality of their reception.*)

ELENA

I'm so sorry. Hello, Poffy.

POFFY (*bowing*)

Elena!

ELENA

Good afternoon, Frau Lucher.

LUCHER

Good afternoon, Frau Krug.

COUNTESS

But, my *darling*! Ten years have passed and you are not one day older. Look at her, Franz!

COUNT

I have been looking at her.

LUCHER

Would you mind if I sat down? (*She sits, heavily, on a chair at the left.*)

ELENA

No. Everybody sit down.

LUCHER

My feet hurt.

COUNTESS

I can't take my eyes off you, my little angel. You're lovely! I'm about to sob!

ELENA

Now don't be embarrassing, Tatti.

LUCHER

Let her sob if it'll make her any happier.

COUNT

Don't mind our gaping at you, Elena. It makes us think that maybe we haven't grown old, either.

ELENA

Where have you been?

COUNTESS

In a ghastly London suburb . . .

COUNT

Upper Tooting, if you must know.

COUNTESS

Breathing in English fog, eating English food . . .

COUNT

And drinking English beer.

LUCHER

That isn't beer!

COUNT

Which reminds me, Elena—my throat is parched.

COUNTESS

Franz!

COUNT

Would it be causing you too much trouble if I . . .

LUCHER

He's asking for a drink.

(ELENA goes up to a table on which are a decanter and some glasses.)

ELENA

I have some port here—would port do?

COUNT

Admirably!

COUNTESS

I told you you were not to touch a drop!

COUNT

We've had a long train journey and I simply must wash the cinders from my gullet.

COUNTESS

Elena, don't give it to him!

ELENA

Oh, a little port can't hurt him, Tatti. (*She hands him the glass.*)

COUNT

Of course not. Your health, my dear.

LUCHER

Do you mind if I smoke?

ELENA

No, have a cigarette.

(*LUCHER has opened her enormous black hand-bag and extracted therefrom a large silver cigar-case.*)

LUCHER

You needn't bother. (*She takes out a cigar, and bites off the end.*)

ELENA

Still smoking the same brand?

LUCHER

No, those Cubans no longer send the cream of the crop to Vienna.

(*POFFY steps forward to light the cigar.*)

COUNTESS

There is nothing the same here. After ten years of exile—to find this. Oh, Elena—if you only *knew* what we've been through. *I've* been a seamstress, my darling. A *seamstress*! Making sensible underwear for English frumps. We've gone without lunch for three months in order to save enough to be here. And I give you my word, when we arrived here this morning, and drove through the streets, we wept—we literally *wept*—to see that our beloved Vienna is undergoing its last, gruesome agonies.

ELENA

Those aren't death agonies that you see, Tatti. They're the throes of childbirth. A new life is being created.

COUNTESS

You may well say that. (*She looks about the room.*) The new life seems to have done well for you.

ELENA

Yes, it has! (*There is, perhaps, a suggestion of defiance in this.*)

COUNT (*tactfully*)

And by the way—I hope we're to be presented to your husband.

ELENA

I'm afraid he's rather busy just now.

COUNTESS

What's he like, this doctor of yours?

ELENA

Well—he's brilliant, and charming, and kind . . .

POFFY

And famous! When I'm guiding American tourists past here, I point with pride—"Residence of the eminent Dr. Krug"—and they're thrilled.

ELENA (*smiling*)

Especially the women.

POFFY

Ah, yes!

LUCHER

Isn't it about time to come to the main subject? That is—if you all feel that there have been enough polite preliminaries.

ELENA

There's no great hurry.

POFFY

By all means! Proceed, Lucher!

LUCHER

Well—the main subject is this, in so many words: they want you to change your mind about attending the party this evening. They begged me to come with them, and talk with you, on the supposition that I can terrorize any one into doing anything I ask. Strictly between ourselves, I don't think you'll be missing much if you don't come. By the looks of this gathering, it won't be very . . .

COUNTESS

If that's what you think, then why are you giving this party?

COUNT

Why have you invited us?

LUCHER

Even I have my sentimental moments, Countess. When I realized that this was the hundredth anniversary, I thought that we might have a revival of the old insanity, for one evening, at my expense. I thought there might be a bit of amusement. However, I've decided that I was over-optimistic . . . so now you know how I feel about all this, Frau Krug, and perhaps you'll be good enough to tell them how *you* feel, and get it over with.

COUNT

You really can't disappoint us, Elena. We've looked forward so to this, and to having you there, laughing, in the way you always laughed.

ELENA

But that's just it, Franz. I couldn't laugh. I'd probably weep.

COUNTESS

Splendid! We'll all weep together, and have a glorious time!

LUCHER

And when you've become sufficiently gloomy, you'll start throwing bottles through windows. I know!

ELENA

Who's to be here?

COUNT

Well—old General Hoetzler is expected . . .

ELENA

Is he?

COUNT

Do you know what he's doing now? He's a train announcer in the railway station at Erfurt.

ELENA

The poor old dear.

COUNTESS

And Talisz is coming. He's a bookkeeper, somewhere or other. And then the two Koeppkes—I forget what they do.

LUCHER

They run a lodging house in Zermatt—and I've *heard* . . .

ALL

Yes?

LUCHER

Well—never mind.

POFFY

And the beautiful Gisella Von Krett. She's here already.

ELENA

Gisella!

POFFY

She's a governess with a Sicilian family in Palermo.

ELENA

And who else? Is there anyone else?

POFFY

Well—of course there were a good many who wanted to come but they were—lacking in funds.

COUNT

Oh, but more will turn up at the last minute to help us consume Lucher's champagne. It's sure to be the jolliest gathering. . . .

LUCHER

Did I say that champagne would be served?

COUNT

I have never attended a party at the Hotel Lucher without champagne.

POFFY

You're thinking of the days when we paid—and well—for our drinks.

ELENA

Oh, I think Frau Lucher won't be stingy with her champagne. Will you?

COUNT

That's right, Elena. You were the only one who could ever order her about. You and Rudolf. (LUCHER *bursts out laughing.*) What in God's name are you roaring at?

LUCHER

I was just thinking of something. (*She is still emitting gusty, gaseous roars of laughter.*)

POFFY (*to ELENA*)

I gather it was something mildly amusing.

LUCHER

Oh, you remember it, Poffy—the night that Rudolf gave her the diamond necklace. You were there.

POFFY

I was indeed.

LUCHER

He came stalking into my café at two o'clock in the morning—cursing at me—cursing at Strup—presenting medals to the bus-boys. He said he had to have a magnum of 1812, a basket of pomegranates, and a diamond necklace for Fräulein Vervesz—at *once!*—or he'd break every bone in my old body. I had to rout Barnowsky the jeweler out of bed to get the diamonds.

COUNT (*laughing*)

Served him right, the old bandit.

LUCHER (*to ELENA*)

And when I gave His Imperial Highness the necklace, he never said so much as a "Thank you." He merely snatched it, and then threw it into your lap.

ELENA (*to LUCHER*)

No, no! That wasn't what he did. He didn't give me the necklace until later, when we were upstairs. He first took hold of my hand and said, "Isn't it about time for a dance?" Then he waltzed me out of the room, and on the way out we bumped into you.

(ANTON *comes in.*)

LUCHER

But I burned his neck with my cigar. (*They all laugh—but their mirth congeals when they see ANTON. The COUNT and POFKY rise.*)

ELENA

Anton, are you finished with the students already?

ANTON

Yes, I dismissed them. I was anxious to meet your friends.

ELENA (*surprised*)

Oh . . . This is my husband.

ANTON

How do you do, Frau Lucher?

ELENA

The Count and Countess Von Stainz—Herr Povoromo. (*There are murmured salutations.*)

ANTON

Yes. I know Herr Povoromo.

COUNT

Herr Professor Doctor—permit me to felicitate you upon your wife. She is quite the most gracious, the most sympathetic and the loveliest of the ladies.

ANTON (*bowing*)

I am inclined to agree with you.

COUNTESS

Herr Professor—we came to beg Elena, to plead with her, to be with us this evening.

COUNT

It isn't so much a matter of pleading—though we'll do that, too, heaven knows. But we do want to assure her what a delightful occasion . . .

LUCHER (*flatly*)

The fact is that, without Frau Krug, the party will be a disaster.

ANTON (*amiably*)

Well—in that case—I hope she'll go.

COUNTESS

There, Elena, that settles it! Your husband approves.

LUCHER

Perhaps the Herr Professor Doctor will also attend?

ANTON

Oh, that's very kind of you, but I really couldn't. I'm afraid I shouldn't quite belong.

ELENA

I've been afraid I shouldn't belong either. But now I'm beginning to think that it might be great fun.

COUNT

Good for you, Elena!

COUNTESS

And good for you, Herr Doctor! You are worthy of her!

COUNT

You're going to make this occasion a memorable one.

LUCHER (*with an air of finality*)

Well, now that that's settled, we can go.

POFFY (*stepping forward, hesitantly*)

Just one minute, Elena.

ELENA

Yes, Poffy?

POFFY

Elena—I—think I know why you're changing your mind.

ELENA

Why?

POFFY

Because you realize this celebration will be nothing more than a gathering of broken-down old outcasts, like myself—with no one to give us animation, no one to give us the illusion of youth . . . but . . . I'm afraid that it may not be quite what you expect. . .

LUCHER

What are you *talking* about?

POFFY (*deliberately*)

I received a message this afternoon.

ELENA

Yes? (*As though she had expected this.*)

POFFY

I was instructed to say nothing about it to any one. But I think you should know about it before you go to that party; and you too should know, Herr Professor . . . if I might have a word with you in private . . .

COUNTESS

In private? What on earth . . .

POFFY

You'll forgive me . . .

COUNT (*stepping toward Poffy*)

Rudolf?

ELENA

He's to be here?

LUCHER

No!

POFFY

He left Nice yesterday on his way to Vienna.

COUNTESS

Rudolf!

COUNT (*exultantly*)

I can't believe it! It's too good to . . .

ANTON

Will they allow him to cross the border?

LUCHER (*emphatically*)

No! They'll never let him in after all the things he's said and done. The officials are so stupid that the smaller fry can sneak past them, begging your pardon, Count and Countess, but they're not so stupid as to allow the most violent member of the Habsburg faction to get back into Austria.

POFFY

Regardless of all that, Elena—I thought you should know. I ask your pardon, Herr Professor, for having mentioned the subject.

ANTON

Not at all. There's nothing I can say. It's for Elena to decide.

ELENA

I'm not going.

COUNTESS

But, my little angel—what Lucher said is true. He couldn't possibly come into the country . . .

ELENA

I'm not going!

COUNT

You can't change your mind, Elena. We need you. You've always made things go. Have you forgotten all those times when . . .

ELENA

Yes. I have forgotten. And my dear old friends, I advise you to forget, too.

COUNTESS

You're asking a great deal of people who have nothing but memories to live on.

ELENA

That's just it! You're trying to live on something that doesn't exist. That's why you're all so degraded and spent. That's why you have to drug yourselves with such infantile pretense as this reunion. Wallowing in sentiment! Weeping into your beer!

COUNTESS

I never hope to hear a more heartless, brutal statement—and from you, Elena, of all people.

ELENA

I know it's brutal—and I feel miserable for having said it, if that's any consolation to you. But it's all true, every word of it. You know it is.

LUCHER

Of course it's true! I only wish you'd said it all to me before I'd let myself in for this nonsense.

COUNTESS

It would have been kinder to have told your servant to deny us admission. . . .

ELENA

Yes.

COUNTESS

To have slammed the door in our faces.

ELENA

You're right, Tatti.

COUNT (*to POFFY*)

Why didn't you have sense enough to obey orders and keep that information to yourself?

ELENA (*interrupting*)

No, don't blame him. It was very good of you to warn me, Poffy. But the warning didn't make the slightest difference. You can see why—and so can you, Lucher. You've been in Vienna all through this. You know how changed everything is.

POFFY

I know, I know, my dear Elena. We've put you in a horribly unfair position.

COUNTESS

We're not doing that! It's not *our* fault that she's turned against her own kind.

POFFY

It's only proof of her good sense.

COUNT

Yes—and look at the results of her good sense! And then look at us, who wouldn't accept the inevitable.

COUNTESS

It's to our everlasting credit that we didn't. (*She goes over to the COUNT, and takes his arm.*)

LUCHER (*rising laboriously*)

I'm not enjoying this discussion. . . . Come on. . . . I must arrange about the flowers for the party. I'm getting them second-hand from Gruen the undertaker. . . . Good-bye, Frau Krug. Stop in at the hotel some time for a cup of coffee. (*She goes out at the right.*)

COUNTESS

Good-bye, Elena. I doubt very much that we shall see you again. (*She goes out.*)

COUNT (*with attempted courtesy*)

You see—we start the homeward journey to England to-morrow.

ELENA

Good-bye, Franz.

COUNT

Herr Professor Doctor. (*He bows and goes.*)

POFFY

I'm sorry, Elena—very sorry. . . .

ELENA

Good-bye, Poffy. Come to see us again soon. Perhaps my husband can do . . .

POFFY

My duties as professional guide occupy much of my time—but perhaps I'll find a brief opportunity. Good-bye, Herr Doctor. Good-bye, Elena. (*He kisses her hand and goes. For a few moments, ELENA stares angrily at the door through which they have gone.*)

ANTON

You did not appear to best advantage in that encounter.

ELENA (*too heatedly*)

What could I have said or done to make those imbeciles understand? They think I could sit there, and joke with them, and drink with them, as though nothing had happened.

ANTON (*gently*)

You said that it might be great fun.

ELENA

Fun! Carousing with the Countess Von Stainz? And there'll be others at the party even worse than she is.

ANTON

When I came into this room, you were laughing with them. You were just about to accept their invitation.

ELENA

Why did you come in here at all, if you were so colossally busy? Why didn't you let me get rid of them by myself?

ANTON

I came to the conclusion that you should go to that party.

ELENA

What?

ANTON

There seems to me no reason why you shouldn't. . . .

ELENA (*facing him*)

Are you going to carry on the attack?

ANTON

Attack against what?

ELENA

Against my peace of mind!

ANTON

I thought so.

ELENA

Oh! I suppose you consider that it will be good for me to go there and feel wretched and out of place, merely to assure myself that I'm right. Do I have to go there for that?

ANTON

Are you entirely sure that you are right?

ELENA

You can stand there and ask me that?

ANTON

If you take my advice, Elena, you'll go. You know, you may not be quite the calm, superior being that you fancy yourself.

ELENA (*interrupting*)

Are you prescribing for me, as though I were . . .

ANTON

Yes, that's exactly what I'm doing. The tender spot has been uncovered. Now we can take measures to cure it. . . . Elena, as your family physician, as well as your husband, I order you to go to Lucher's to-night, and do the inane things you used to do, and that you still secretly think were gloriously romantic.

ELENA

Anton—I know you've been subjecting me to treatment ever since we were married. But you've at least been subtle about it. Now your methods are a little too obvious to be effective.

ANTON

I've revised my methods because I learned something myself when I saw you with your old friends. You deliver all this fine talk about the old days and the new—the woman who was reborn after the revolution. And now some pitiable spectres appear to you and you can't bear to face them.

ELENA

I can face anything, including your vast overpowering intellect.

ANTON

There are some things you can't face, my darling, because you can't see them. You're still in a state of emotional bondage. You're tied to those people by a cord that's strong even though it's invisible. You must cut that cord—and here's the chance to do it.

ELENA

When I require your professional services I shall make an appointment and come to your office.

ANTON

The appointment is now! (*They face each other through a moment of angry silence. Then ELENA goes to him.*)

ELENA

Oh, Anton—this is so silly.

ANTON

No, it isn't silly. (*They sit down together on the end of the couch.*)

ELENA

Two grown-up people, shouting at each other . . .

ANTON

Sometimes we have to shout. . . . Elena—there's never been a complete understanding between us. There's been a ghost in our house, an arrogant ghost, blocking the fulfillment of our life together. A thousand different times when I thought that at last we'd achieved the thing that we both want, he has stepped into the room, and laughed at me.

(ELENA *glances involuntarily toward the door at the right.*)

ELENA

The bearer of that damned name!

ANTON

Yes. . . . When I heard he might be there to-night it was something of a shock. . . . But then I thought of the advice I had given to other patients of mine. . . . You've seen what ten years have done to the Count and Countess Von Stainz. Well—see what the same years have done to him. . . . Go to that party, have a good look at him, and then come home and admit that I'm right.

ELENA

You're always right, Anton. That's your only fault.

ANTON (*laughing*)

Yes—I've often worried about that. (*He kisses her hair.*) Now come, my dear, dress yourself up, and try to persuade your old friends that you're still one of them. Sing, dance, flirt—relax! Let yourself go completely! And see what happens.

ELENA

Let myself go. . . . Is that the prescription?

ANTON

Why not?

(*Old KRUG bustles in from the upper left.*)

KRUG

Well—I saw them! I had a good look at them from the window—and a more down-at-the-heel lot I never clapped eyes on. Oh, I laughed! I laughed when I thought of the old days when . . .

ANTON

You talk too much. (*He has risen and is going toward the door to his offices.*)

KRUG

Then maybe I can play the wireless?

ANTON

No. (*To ELENA.*) Put on that white dress. You know—the one you got in Paris. You look lovely in that. (*He goes out at the left.*)

KRUG (*mystified*)

He wants you to dress up. What for? Does he want you to go to the party? (*He comes close to her.*)

ELENA

He's a little mixed up. He has me confused with that last patient of his—the one from Pennsylvania.

KRUG

I don't understand what you mean, Elena. Has anything gone wrong?

ELENA

No, father. Not yet. . . . Why don't you play the wireless?

KRUG

Now?

ELENA

Yes, dear—I want to hear it.

KRUG

Ah, Elena—you're my friend! (*He leans over her. She pats his cheek, tenderly. . . . He then turns, happily, goes up to the radio, and switches it on. It is playing "The Dollar Princess Waltz."*)

KRUG

Listen, Elena. It's the band at the Bristol. They always play the old tunes, for a half hour before supper—to give us old-timers an appetite. . . . It's beautiful, isn't it? (*He comes down, toward the right.*)

ELENA

No. (*Nevertheless, she is swaying ever so slightly in time to the music. Old KRUG watches her, fascinated. . . . At length she rises, crosses to the door at the left, and knocks. KRUG sits down at the right to await developments.*)

ELENA (*calling*)

Anton!

KRUG

Oh, what do you want *him* for? He'll only make us turn it off.

(*ANTON appears in the doorway.*)

ANTON

What is it?

ELENA

Will you please look in the safe—in my jewel box? There's a necklace there—a diamond necklace.

ANTON

I'll get it. (*He goes out.*)

(*Swaying more perceptibly, exuberantly, to the rhythm of "The Dollar Princess," she crosses to the chair where old KRUG is sitting.*)

KRUG

You didn't mean what you said, about the music, did you, Elena? It really is beautiful, isn't it?

ELENA

Yes, father. Beautiful. (*She extends her arms. Gleefully, he jumps up. They waltz together.*)

CURTAIN

ACT II

ACT II

The scene is a private room upstairs in the Hotel Lucher, a stuffy edifice built in the gaslit 'Eighties. Although redolent of stale plush, which is suggestive to the Anglo-Saxon mind of Victorianism and therefore of dreary propriety, this venerable tavern retains a winked intimation of Viennese caprice. Its sombre salons can still sparkle with happy imaginings of frivolities which no longer are—and perhaps never were—but which eternally should be.

At right, down-stage, is a leather swinging door, leading to the pantries and kitchens. Up-stage right and left are two more doors. In the centre, at the back, double doors open upon a bedroom in which is an enormous, canopied bed. Downstage left, double doors open upon a larger room in which the banquet is to be held.

Above the door at the back, which is two or three steps up from the level of the stage, is hung an oval portrait of the late Emperor Franz Josef I. A PORTER, on a step-ladder, is arranging laurel festoons about this portrait. Another PORTER is holding the ladder.

At the left is a gilded couch with plum-colored brocade upholstery. By it is a small gilded, marble-topped tabouret. At the right is a round table, also marble-topped, behind which, as though enthroned, sits FRAU LUCHER, administering orders to a respectful, palpitant group which includes STRUP, the aged head-waiter, and BREDZI, the band-leader, who is wearing a frogged green coat and is carrying his violin. He has given LUCHER the programme of selections for the evening and is awaiting her verdict on it. . . . There are also present two lesser WAITERS and two quivering BUS-BOYS. A BELL-BOY is posted in the doorway at the left. . . . There are other chairs against the walls and perhaps a few potted palms. From the left, offstage, the small orchestra is playing a brisk march, as vigorously as its meagre equipment and talents will allow.

LUCHER (to BREDZI)

There is too much of the Mozart. . . .

BREDZI

No doubt, Frau Lucher.

LUCHER

No doubt whatever. They will want waltzes, apassionata, until they get drunk, and then they will want more waltzes. Sentimental ninnies! (*She hands the programme back to BREDZI.*) They will want to weep on each others' shoulders. You understand?

BREDZI

Perfectly, ma'am.

LUCHER

Accompaniment for sobs—that's all that's expected of you. (*Her cigar has gone out. A BUS-BOY hastily strikes a match for her. She exhales a cloud of smoke, then turns to STRUP.*) Now, Strup, I'm ready for the wines.

(*STRUP hands her the wine card.*)

STRUP (*pridefully*)

I have arranged everything.

LUCHER

Oh, have you! (*She scans the wine card with a practised eye.*) Champagne! Cliquot 1911! You are planning to serve that rabble Cliquot 1911?

STRUP

It's the best we have, madam.

LUCHER

And you're granting them the best!

STRUP

It is a matter of tradition.

LUCHER

So? You're putting tradition ahead of common sense, are you?

STRUP (*fearfully*)

It isn't that, Frau Lucher, I only felt that . . .

LUCHER (*slapping the table*)

The employees of this hotel will take their notions of tradition and of everything else from me! (*She includes all of them in the same decisive glare.*) You will serve Tizane with the roast—a half bottle for each of them. When they've guzzled that much, nothing but beer. Vienna beer, not Muenchner.

STRUP

Very good, ma'am.

LUCHER

A sage observation, Herr Strup. . . . Now, all of you, remember this: Courtesy, deference—treat them as if they were still lords of creation and as if you expected heavy tips for your services, which, I promise you, you won't get. All the old formalities, the old nonsense, from all of you—until they start breaking the furniture—then, *a firm hand!* If you can't manage them by yourselves, send for me.

STRUP

Yes, ma'am. We shall, ma'am.

LUCHER

You will serve the aperitifs in here. That is all.

STRUP

Yes, ma'am. To your posts, *march!*

(The WAITERS and BUS-BOYS hurry out. LUCHER turns her attention to the men at the ladder.)

LUCHER

You! You have done enough fussing with the Emperor. Get that ladder out of here.

(Hastily, they fold up the ladder and depart. . . . A BELL-BOY appears in the large door at the right, ushering in POFFY, now wearing a once-resplendent uniform which reeks of moth-balls and naphtha.)

BOY

Herr Povoromo!

STRUP *(bowing low)*

Herr Baron.

POFFY *(mildly astonished)*

What? Oh! I'm greatly obliged for the restoration of the title. *(He bows to STRUP.)*

LUCHER

Are they beginning to arrive?

POFFY

Yes—aperitifs are in order.

STRUP

Yes, Herr Baron.

(BREDZI and STRUP go out at the left. POFFY advances jauntily toward LUCHER.)

POFFY

I came to see you about the final arrangements.

LUCHER

The final arrangements are made.

(The march music offstage stops.)

POFFY

In particular reference to the wine . . .

LUCHER (*consulting her list*)

With the soup, sherry—nine schillings. With the trout, Grinzinger—seven schillings.
With the roast, Tizane—nine schillings.

POFFY (*shocked*)

Tizane! Is that the best that this superior establishment can afford?

LUCHER

On this occasion, yes.

POFFY

There will be complaints.

LUCHER

You people are not paying for this affair. I am.

POFFY

We are aware of that condition. Nevertheless—I must insist—there will be complaints.

LUCHER

Did that message you received say what time he would arrive?

POFFY

I expected him on the afternoon train from Salzburg. But he was not on it.

LUCHER (*with a look at her watch*)

No. It is now half after eight.

POFFY

There will be another train.

LUCHER

Yes—and he won't be on that, either. It's just as I thought. They've stopped him at the border. . . . Are there any unexpected arrivals?

POFFY

No. Here's the complete list. Only eight names instead of the expected thirty.

(POFFY takes the list from his pocket.)

LUCHER

Let me see it.

(He hands it to her. . . . TORLINI, the hotel's courier, enters from the upper left, accompanied by an officer of police.)

TORLINI

Frau Lucher!

LUCHER

Yes?

TORLINI

The police, ma'am.

(LUCHER is not in the least disturbed by this announcement. She is examining critically the list of guests.)

LUCHER *(to the Policeman)*

What do you want?

POLICEMAN

The Herr Inspector thought it might be as well for me to have a look around.

LUCHER

Go ahead and look. You'll observe nothing of the slightest interest.

(The POLICEMAN nods and looks about the room, paying special attention to the portrait of Franz Josef.)

POFFY

Surely, for only eight, you could afford Moët et Chandon, at the least.

LUCHER

No. There's not one on this list with a palate left to his name. The bottles of Tizane will be wrapped in napkins. No one will know the difference.

POFFY (*bowing*)

As you say, my dear hostess.

LUCHER

Exactly as I say! (*She hands him back the list. The Policeman is at the large door at the left.*)

POLICEMAN (*pointing off to the left*)

Will the reception be held in there?

LUCHER

Yes. And it will be kept in there. (*The POLICEMAN steps out at the left. LUCHER speaks in an undertone to POFFY.*) If he had arrived it would have been different. I would have served the best. I'd even have done it if she had consented to come. But for the rest of you, Tizane is good enough.

POFFY

She was right, of course. She'd have had a poor time.

LUCHER

Yes. She was right. . . . But I'd like to have heard what the great psychologist said to her after we left.

(*The POLICEMAN has returned.*)

POLICEMAN

Who is to be present at this function?

POFFY

Here is the list. (*He hands the list to the POLICEMAN, then turns to LUCHER.*) And if he can find any cause for excitement in that group, then perhaps it may be a good party, after all.

POLICEMAN

Is this all?

LUCHER

That is all, and as I informed the inspector—there'll be no one of the slightest importance here to-night.

(Having looked over the list, the POLICEMAN sticks it in the large note-book which he carries in a breast pocket.)

POLICEMAN

If you don't mind, I think I'll have a look at these guests of yours and make certain that this list is correct.

LUCHER

You're calling me a liar?

POLICEMAN

No. I'm only being careful. *(He turns to the left and starts to go out.)*

POFFY

Perhaps you'd like me to present them to you formally. *(He and the POLICEMAN go out at the left.)*

LUCHER

Torlini, give that policeman a drink.

TORLINI

Yes, ma'am. *(He goes off at the left. FRAU LUCHER opens her hand-bag and takes therefrom a note-book and gold pencil. She is leaning over the little marble-topped table at the left, figuring out the cost of this affair. The aged CHEF rushes in from the right. He is in a state of terrific perturbation, as is a WAITER, who follows him.)*

CHEF

Frau Lucher!

LUCHER *(calmly)*

Well—what is it?

(Her back is toward the CHEF so that she does not see him bow low as the ARCHDUKE RUDOLF MAXIMILLIAN comes in from the right. . . . RUDOLF is tall, lean, deliberately ominous, consciously mad—an ageless prince who, despite the absurd inappropriateness of the Tyrolean costume that he now wears, brings back with him into the Hotel Lucher the semblance of imperial splendor which it had known when such outrageous beings as he were lords of Vienna. . . . He is followed by a WAITER and two BUS-BOYS, who carry his cape, haversack, blanket roll and sword holster. Even these BUS-BOYS, who were infants when the House of Habsburg fell—even they are awe-struck, trepidant in the presence of a magnificence which they have been rigorously taught to scorn. . . . RUDOLF crosses to LUCHER and administers a loving whack to her ample bottom.)

RUDOLF

Good evening, venerable strumpet.

(LUCHER *turns, stares at him, mutters some blasphemous exclamation of dismay, curtseys involuntarily, then rushes to the doors at the left and shuts them.* RUDOLF *follows her.*)

RUDOLF

Still wearing the red flannel drawers? (*He lifts her skirts from behind.*) Thank God, there's something in Vienna that hasn't been changed.

LUCHER (*ferociously*)

How did you come here?

RUDOLF

I came by various means of conveyance which I shall not describe in detail. My entrance to the hotel was made through the kitchens—and whatever appetite I may have had is now gone. You received no letter from me?

LUCHER

No.

RUDOLF

Good! I wrote none. (*He strolls toward the right, pauses, and sniffs.*) There's the same nauseating stench of fish in this hotel. By God—I believe it's the same *fish!*

LUCHER

Do *they* know?

RUDOLF

Who are they?

LUCHER

Poffy—Count von Stainz—Hoetzler . . .

RUDOLF

Is it necessary for me to advise *them* of my intentions? Is it?

LUCHER

They will be startled.

RUDOLF

As they should be! I will occupy the Imperial Suite . . .

LUCHER

The Imperial Suite no longer exists.

RUDOLF

Restore it!

LUCHER (*to the BUS-BOYS*)

Is that his luggage?

BUS-BOYS (*eagerly*)

Yes, Frau Lucher. We were commanded to . . .

CHEF

Yes, Frau Lucher. His Imperial Highness ordered that we take it to. . . .

LUCHER

Put it in there. (*She indicates the door at the back. The CHEF motions to the two BOYS who hustle out as directed. The WAITER goes with them.*) Do you happen to know that the police are in the building?

RUDOLF

You! Were you addressing the chef?

LUCHER (*grudgingly*)

Your Imperial Highness. . . . (*To the CHEF.*) You may go.

(*The CHEF starts to go out at the right.*)

RUDOLF

Wait! (*The CHEF stops, and bows.*) You recognized me, didn't you?

CHEF (*pleased*)

Yes, Your Serene Highness. (*He bows again.*)

RUDOLF

You did *not* recognize me. I am travelling incognito.

CHEF (*bowing*)

Yes, Your Serene Highness. (*He goes out at the right.*)

LUCHER

If your memory were better, you would remember that *this* was the Imperial Suite.

RUDOLF (*looking about the room*)

By God, it is! (*He sees the portrait of Franz Josef, salutes it, then sits in the chair back of the table at the right and starts to take off his shoes. The WAITER comes out of the room at the back, followed by the BUS-BOYS.*) I want some brandy.

LUCHER

Brandy.

WAITER (*bowing*)

At once, Your Serene Highness. (*He goes. RUDOLF is shaking some pebbles from one of his shoes into an ash-tray on the table.*)

RUDOLF

A cigarette.

LUCHER

Cigarette!

(*One of the BUS-BOYS places a cigarette between RUDOLF'S "full, rich lips." The other boy lights it.*)

BUS-BOYS (*bowing together*)

Your Serene Highness. (*They scurry out at the right. RUDOLF exhales a huge cloud of smoke. Then he laughs.*)

RUDOLF

It's incredible! I believe that even the aged worms in your woodwork recognize me, and are thrilled by my return. I don't blame them—after all these years with nothing to do but sit back and watch themselves decay. How have you managed to keep this decrepit establishment going?

LUCHER

We have plenty of trade.

(*The WAITER comes in with a tray on which is a bottle of brandy and one enormous glass, which he puts on the table.*)

RUDOLF

Loud-mouthed American tourists, I suppose.

LUCHER

Yes! They flock here to ogle the scenes of your triumphs. (*She is pouring a drink of brandy.*)

RUDOLF

Disgusting!

LUCHER (*to the WAITER*)

Tell Torlini I want to see him.

WAITER

Yes, Frau Lucher. (*The WAITER goes out at the left.*)

RUDOLF

I find the whole aspect of this place depressing, and at the same time, rather gratifying. . . .

LUCHER (*interrupting him*)

Now, I wasn't joking when I warned you about the police. . . .

RUDOLF (*through her speech*)

Will you please not talk when I'm speaking? Sit down! (*Under protest, LUCHER has stopped talking and sits down across the table from him.*) Does this city realize that it's hopelessly defunct? It is like a corpse that twitches with the reflexes of life—a gruesome spectacle. I don't envy you, Lucher, having to abide here among the remains. . . . I didn't really mean that. I do envy you. (*He gulps some brandy.*) They drained the blood from Vienna when they removed us—and now observe the results! Serves the swine right. (*Another gulp.*)

LUCHER

Do you wish to change your clothes?

RUDOLF

Naturally, I don't intend to exhibit myself in this outlandish costume.

LUCHER (*rising*)

Then you had better go in there, and *stay* in there, till I can get rid of the police.

RUDOLF

Sit down! (*Subduing several choice oaths, she again sits.*) Who is here, besides Poffy and that senile incompetent, General Hoetzler?

LUCHER

The Baroness von Krett, and Koeppke and his wife, and Talisz. . . .

RUDOLF

And Elena Vervesz. She is here, too.

LUCHER

No.

RUDOLF

She is late.

LUCHER

She is not coming!

RUDOLF

What? She is not in Vienna?

LUCHER

Yes—but she has flatly refused to come!

RUDOLF

Oh! She didn't know I would be here. . . . Married, isn't she?

LUCHER

Yes. To a doctor—a very important doctor.

RUDOLF

I have a distinct feeling that he will be called out to-night, to some distant place—an emergency case. . . . Have you seen her lately?

LUCHER

I went to her house to-day.

(The orchestra starts offstage, playing the opening bars of "The Blue Danube.")

RUDOLF

How is she? Old?

LUCHER

No. *(Reminded by the music that the door is open, she rises and starts over toward the left.)*

RUDOLF

Does she bulge? (LUCHER *does not answer. He roars.*) Does she bulge? (LUCHER *turns*

to him.) Here? (*He indicates breasts.*)

LUCHER

No! (*She shuts the doors at the left, so that the music can now be heard only faintly.*)

RUDOLF

Send for her.

LUCHER

She will not come.

RUDOLF

Tell her that her one true lover has condescended to be present.

LUCHER

I tell you, *she will not come!*

RUDOLF (*rising suddenly*)

And I am telling you that she *will* come!

LUCHER

She has a different life now . . .

RUDOLF (*advancing*)

If by any chance she should not be here when I am ready . . . (*He takes hold of her throat.*) But you know the consequences—don't you, old filthy? *You* know! (*He laughs, gives her a playful shake, and kisses her.*)

LUCHER (*through his kisses*)

There is something else in Vienna that is not changed. You! You are the same maniac—like all your wretched family.

(*RUDOLF laughs, releases her, and walks over to the table at the right.*)

RUDOLF

No—not a maniac. It is only that I am constantly intoxicated with my own charm. (*He starts to yodel. He picks up the bottle and glass, also his green Tyrolean hat.*) I want a valet. (*He puts on his hat and crosses to LUCHER.*) Tell Elena to take all the time she wants. I don't approve of women who jump into their clothes like fire-horses. She must make every possible effort to look alluring. (*He pinches her and strolls off yodelling into the bedroom at the back. He starts to remove his clothes. LUCHER nervously rushes up with unusual alacrity and closes the doors after him. Then she crosses to the doors at the left, opens them, and calls:*)

LUCHER

Strup! (*The music is playing loudly.*) Strup!

STRUP (*from offstage*)

Yes, Frau Lucher. (*He hurries in.*)

LUCHER (*in measured tones*)

You will take the Tizane off the ice. We will serve champagne—Cliquot 1911.

STRUP

What?

LUCHER

Did you hear!

STRUP (*astounded*)

The Cliquot 1911.

(*LUCHER crosses slowly to the table at the right.*)

LUCHER

Yes, and there will be nine covers, instead of eight. Have them get that big chair that's in the office—that gold chair.

(*TORLINI has appeared in the doorway, followed by the POLICEMAN, whom LUCHER does not at first see.*)

STRUP

Yes, ma'am. Nine covers.

(*Hearing this, the POLICEMAN takes out his note-book and the list of guests which POFFY had given him.*)

LUCHER

Put the gold chair at the head of the table. And I want caviar served. . . .

TORLINI

You sent for me, Frau Lucher?

LUCHER

Yes, I did. (*She sees the POLICEMAN.*) But it's . . .

POLICEMAN

Nine covers? There are only eight here.

LUCHER

I neglected to count myself. I am to attend the party.

POLICEMAN

The gold chair will be for you?

LUCHER

Why not? It's my hotel, isn't it? Go on, Strup, do as you're told.

(STRUP *goes out at the left*. LUCHER *goes close to TORLINI*.)

LUCHER

I want to send a message—(*The POLICEMAN is evincing interest. LUCHER is frantically attempting to signal to TORLINI to get rid of the POLICEMAN*)—to the florist's. The flowers they sent are all wilted. (*The POLICEMAN is watching too closely—LUCHER goes over to him, fire in her eye.*) And as for you—I'd be grateful if you'd go straight to the Herr Inspector and tell him that I consider this intrusion by the police an unpardonable outrage! Do you hear that?

POLICEMAN

Yes—Frau Lucher. I hear. But surely you'll agree that the police must be . . .

LUCHER (*shouting*)

I'll agree to nothing! I've taken great pains to explain this whole affair to the authorities and they assured me that there would be no interference.

POLICEMAN

I only know that I have been ordered to look in here, and . . .

LUCHER

And you've obeyed your orders. (*She opens her hand-bag.*) You've seen everything and satisfied yourself that nothing harmful can come of this. It's all ridiculous stupidity, typical of the brainless asses who govern this city. (*She has fished some bills from her hand-bag.*) Here, my good man. (*She hands the money to him.*) Now run along to the inspector, and present to him my sincerest compliments. (*She pushes him toward the door.*)

POLICEMAN

I will, Frau Lucher! (*He pockets the money.*) And if he sends me back, it won't be my fault.

LUCHER

I know that. Go on. (*She pushes him out, then addresses TORLINI, rapidly, in a furious undertone.*) See that that policeman gets out of the hotel. Then telephone to Dr. Anton Krug's house, and tell Frau Krug that the worst has happened!

TORLINI

The worst?

LUCHER

She'll understand. Tell her to get into a car and drive out of Vienna just as fast as she can.

TORLINI

Yes, Frau Lucher. . . . But what about the florist?

LUCHER (*at the top of her lungs*)

Great God! Never mind the florist!

(*The door at the back opens, and RUDOLF appears wearing his shirt and nothing else.*)

RUDOLF

Where in hell is that valet?

LUCHER

Get back in that room!

TORLINI (*staring at RUDOLF*)

It is impossible!

LUCHER

I told you to stay in . . .

RUDOLF

Is there such a thing as a valet in this brothel?

LUCHER

Yes, he's coming right up.

RUDOLF

Thank you, my sweet. (*He pinches her cheek.*)

TORLINI (*bowing low*)

Your Imperial Highness.

(RUDOLF *reaches out and lifts* TORLINI'S *bowed head.*)

RUDOLF

I do not remember who you are—nevertheless, good evening. (*He bows to TORLINI, then turns and walks back with great dignity, albeit without trousers, into his room. LUCHER slams the door behind him.*)

LUCHER

Now do you know what I meant by the worst?

TORLINI (*trembling*)

I do.

LUCHER

Tell her he's here. . . . When he finds out she isn't in this hotel, there'll be an uproar. He'll go after her. He'll break into her house, and have a fight with her husband. If she wants to avoid a nasty scene, she'll have to get herself out of the city, at once.

(*The COUNT has come in from the left. He is carrying a cocktail glass. TORLINI goes.*)

COUNT

Now let me tell you something, Frau Lucher: I just happened to take a look under the napkin in one of the ice buckets, and what did I see there? Tizane—that's what I saw! Tizane—sparkling dishwater!

(*LUCHER has been gathering up the papers from the table and stuffing them back into her hand-bag. She darts one look at the COUNT.*)

LUCHER

You're drunk already.

COUNT

Oh, now, that isn't worthy of you, Lucher. It hasn't been easy for us to come here, you know. If you had the heart to invite us here, I should think you'd have the decency to furnish us with wine that is at least potable.

(*LUCHER, however, has gone out at the right. GISELLA VON KRETT has come in from the left.*) *She was once one of the haughtier beauties of the court. She is now a wasted, embittered governess, clinging grimly to the sense of snobbery which is all that she managed to salvage from the wreckage of the past. She is wearing an evening gown which was fashionable in 1917.*

GISELLA

Well? Did you tell her we insisted on champagne?

COUNT

Yes, but she didn't seem to hear me.

(GISELLA *sits down at the left.*)

GISELLA

We should have known that this would happen. She dragged us here solely to humiliate us for the satisfaction of her own vulgarian sense of inferiority.

COUNT

Ah, well, my dear Gisella—Tizane isn't really so unbearable. I mean to say, after the first three glasses you hardly know what you're drinking. I shall consume the first three glasses rapidly.

HOETZLER (*from offstage*)

I hurled in the 19th army corps—or was it the 17th? (*He enters from the left with SOPHIA KOEPPKE on his arm.*) . . . And in another twelve hours we'd have smashed the Russian line. (*He sees the COUNT.*) Franz!

COUNT

General Hoetzler!

(*They bow formally and shake hands. . . . The old GENERAL is still fat but obviously shrunk; he hasn't flesh enough left to fill his skin. He wears a uniform coat, which is too large for him by many years, but moths have deprived him of the trousers that go with it and he is forced to wear a pair from his gray civilian suit. . . . In spite of which, he is wilfully hearty, and determined to make this a gay and care-free celebration. . . . SOPHIA is a faded blonde, buxom and—unlike the others—too well fed, but still flagrantly girlish.*)

HOETZLER

This is splendid, old boy.

SOPHIA (*who has gone over to GISELLA*)

My darling Gisella! How stunning you look!

GISELLA (*without emotion*)

Good evening, Sophia.

HOETZLER

Gisella! Smart, distinguished, entrancing as ever!

SOPHIA

Now you must all be quiet, because dear General Hoetzler is telling me the most thrilling story about the campaign in 1915.

COUNT

Oh, yes, indeed—I remember it well. You had the Russians in a tight corner—eh, General? Now do sit down, Sophia.

(She sits down at the right. . . . Offended at this abrupt dismissal of his favorite reminiscence, the GENERAL makes an attempt to continue.)

HOETZLER

I was trying to explain to Sophia how curious it was that, at the very moment of complete triumph . . .

(But the COUNT has his back turned.)

COUNT *(to SOPHIA)*

I can't tell you what a delightful privilege it is to see a really stylish woman again.

SOPHIA *(giggling shrilly)*

Oh, Franz—you're much too gallant.

COUNT

With provocation, my dear.

SOPHIA

But Koeppke and I do try to keep up appearances, even in the hopelessly middle-class atmosphere of Switzerland.

COUNT

As Tatti and I do, in Upper Tooting. But it's an endless struggle.

SOPHIA

Dreadful! People don't seem to understand the importance of those things any more. There are so many false standards.

COUNT

That's it! That's precisely it!

(During all this, HOETZLER has sat down on the couch beside GISELLA, and is carrying on manfully with his narrative.)

HOETZLER

I was just telling Sophia of the time early in 1915 when we had the Russians on the run. We were within *that* of breaking through the enemy's line; and they had no more than a corporal's guard in reserve. You can readily imagine the consequences. We'd have marched on to Petersburg, crushed the Russian Empire! But at the very moment when my plan of campaign had reached a climax . . . *(By this time the COUNT has*

said "That's precisely it!" and has been compelled, by the loudness of HOETZLER'S voice, to turn to listen.) I received a telegram from Prince Max in Berlin telling me to withdraw! Now I ask you, I ask all of you, what was I to do?

COUNT

Withdraw.

HOETZLER

Exactly. And the baffling part of it all is that that telegram from Berlin has never been adequately explained. And I can tell you, my dear Gisella . . .

COUNTESS (*from offstage*)

They're all in here.

(The COUNTESS and TALISZ come in, arm in arm. She is now wearing an evening dress, of her own manufacture, and there is an ostrich plume or so in her hair. . . . TALISZ is very old, somewhat bemused and slightly deaf. He is wearing a frayed swallow-tail coat, lustreless, black satin knee breeches, and black cotton stockings borrowed from his landlady. . . . There are general greetings, all very formal, very courtly.)

COUNTESS

Gisella! Sophia! Well!

SOPHIA

Well!

GISELLA (*acidly*)

The General is telling us about a telegram from Berlin.

HOETZLER

I was merely explaining that there was a certain faction in Prussia headed by Hindenburg that did not wish Austria to achieve . . .

TALISZ (*to SOPHIA*)

And where is Koeppke? I don't see him. Isn't he to be with us?

(The COUNTESS takes his arm and indicates that he has interrupted the GENERAL.)

HOETZLER (*giving TALISZ an angry look*)

There can be no question of doubt that Hindenburg was jealous of the inevitable result of my coup. He knew my victory would destroy the Russian power and Austria would gain the credit for having won the war.

TALISZ (*who doesn't quite know what's happening*)

Is His Imperial Highness here yet?

SOPHIA

No. Poffy's out now trying to find out if there's any word of him.

TALISZ

I beg your pardon?

COUNTESS (*distinctly, in his ear*)

She said: "Poffy's out now trying to find out if there's any word of him."

TALISZ

Oh, yes, I knew that. I felt sure he'd come.

HOETZLER

Hindenburg, of course, was a Prussian of the Prussians—contemptuous of Austria, determined to . . .

TALISZ

What's the General saying?

COUNTESS

Something about the war.

TALISZ

Oh! Too bad. (*He moves away. . . . Nettled by the frequent interruptions, HOETZLER makes a supreme attempt to complete his story.*)

HOETZLER

I knew it at the time, but my obligations as a soldier to our allies compelled me to silence. Hindenburg blocked my plans and then deliberately stole them! Stole them—and used them himself in the Masurian Lakes region! That, my friends, is the true explanation of . . .

(POFFY *enters*. The COUNT, COUNTESS and SOPHIA *rush over to question him*.)

SOPHIA

Poffy, is there any news?

COUNT

What about Rudolf? Is he coming?

POFFY

No. The last train from Salzburg is in, but he wasn't on it.

COUNTESS

Oh! I can't bear to think they've caught him. (*She is apparently on the verge of tears, her favorite perch.*)

SOPHIA

He must come. He *must!*

POFFY

Of course with Rudolf there is always hope.

HOETZLER

Of course there is hope. Rudolf was always late. Do you remember the time, my dear Gisella, when the Emperor was holding a reception for King Edward VII?

GISELLA

No.

(*STRUP has come in, followed by two WAITERS with trays loaded with glasses of tepid vermouth.*)

STRUP (*speaking through HOETZLER'S lines*)

Herr Baron, the aperitifs!

POFFY

By all means proceed with them.

STRUP

Thank you, Herr Baron.

(*The service of the aperitifs proceeds, under Strup's benign supervision, while HOETZLER continues with his reminiscence about the reception for King Edward VII.*)

HOETZLER (*taking GISELLA'S "No" as cue*)

Matters of the utmost importance were at stake, and the Emperor had commanded all the members of the royal family to be most punctual. And of course they all were—with one exception. . . . (*The WAITER offers HOETZLER a drink, which he takes, and then continues:*) With one exception—Rudolf. He was a mere stripling then, but even so, he kept the King of England waiting for two hours while he . . .

(*The VALET has come in from the right and gone up to the bedroom door. He knocks.*)

RUDOLF (*from within*)

Come in.

HOETZLER

Who's in that room?

SOPHIA (*archly*)

Now—now, General!

HOETZLER

But if there's anybody spying on us . . .

POFFY

He'll be bitterly disappointed. Now if you will all be good enough to rise. (*They all rise. POFFY turns and lifts his glass to the portrait of Franz Josef.*) To His Imperial Majesty!

(*They all drink and then give silent, facial testimony to the low quality of the vermouth. . . . The oppressive silence is broken by the entrance from the left of KOEPPKE, a brisk, obtrusive little man who, like his wife, SOPHIA, is too well nourished.*)

KOEPPKE (*breezily*)

Well, here I am!

SOPHIA

You're late.

KOEPPKE

Yes, my love. (*He looks about.*) Is the party in full swing?

GISELLA

It is.

POFFY

Oh, come—let's go in to dinner.

GISELLA

I've lost my appetite. That loathsome vermouth . . .

POFFY

I know, my dear Gisella, you're accustomed to the best in Palermo. As for the rest of

us, we have come here to conduct a celebration. It is going to be a difficult task, but I strongly urge that we all smother our justifiable grievances and pretend to be having a very devil of an uproarious carousal. Let us close our eyes to the fact that we all look a bit moth-eaten and concentrate on getting through this with a show of good grace.

(The COUNT starts to sing: "Vilya, oh, Vilya, the witch of the wood.")

GISELLA

We're not going to be very uproarious on Tizane.

HOETZLER

I beg of you, Gisella, be quiet.

SOPHIA *(referring to the COUNT'S song)*

That's a cheerful selection!

GISELLA *(to POFFY)*

If you'd only taken the trouble to let us know what it would be like . . .

COUNTESS

It wasn't Poffy's fault.

KOEPPKE

Personally I'm in favor of abandoning the whole thing.

(The COUNTESS has started to weep. SOPHIA is trying to calm her. The COUNT is slumped in a chair at the left, still singing "Vilya." GISELLA is seated at the right, regarding the COUNTESS with disgust. HOETZLER and TALISZ are behind her. POFFY has gone out at the left to beg the musicians for God's sake to play something lively. KOEPPKE is hovering over the couch, patronizing the COUNTESS. The following speeches are delivered in a jumble:)

SOPHIA

ve can pretend to be
on't help matters at all

HOETZLER

beer it might take

TALISZ *(to HOETZLER)*

KOEPPKE (*to the* COUNTESS *and* SOPHIA)

I'll tell you what. How about the three of us slipping down to the bar and having a few brandies? Just the three of us. Oh, don't worry—I can pay for them. I've over a hundred and fifty real marks in my pocket at this moment!

(ELENA has entered on the cue from TALISZ: "What's everybody saying now?" She comes down from the upper right, so that TALISZ and HOETZLER see her first.)

ELENA

Talisz! I did so hope you'd be here. And the dear General. How sweet it is to see you.

TALISZ

Elena! Elena! (*He kisses her hand.*)

HOETZLER

Elena, is it *you*?

(POFFY has come back; he sees ELENA, and fairly whoops for joy.)

POFFY

Elena!

(*The others are now aware of her presence. They cease their chattering, weeping and singing, and form a hilarious, welcoming group about her.*)

ELENA

Tatti! You should have *known*. I couldn't keep away. And Sophia! How charming you look! And Koeppke! I can't *believe* it! Hello, Franz—you knew I'd be here, didn't you!

COUNT

A good joke on us! A capital joke! Just like you, Elena. Bring some more drinks. Herr Ober! Herr Ober! (*The COUNT rushes out at the left.*)

HOETZLER

Where's that blackguard gone with the aperitifs?

ELENA

And here's Gisella. How are you, my darling? You're looking so chic, so exactly like

yourself.

GISELLA

They told me you weren't coming.

COUNTESS

She wanted to surprise us—to make it all the better.

KOEPPKE

And that's what she's done.

ELENA

I changed my mind for no reason except a selfish one. I wanted to see all of you—and hear you laugh and joke.

(A veritable orgy of ad-libbing is interrupted when the COUNT appears in the doorway at the left.)

COUNT *(shouting)*

Come in to dinner! They're serving *champagne!*

SOPHIA

What?

COUNT

Cliquot 1911! And caviar!

(The COUNT'S announcement is greeted with cheers. POFFY'S request for lively music has been fulfilled by the orchestra offstage. There is a general movement toward the left.)

HOETZLER *(offering ELENA his arm)*

With your permission, I think I take the precedence.

(ELENA takes the GENERAL'S arm and goes out at the left, followed by KOEPPKE and the COUNTESS, POFFY and GISELLA, TALISZ and SOPHIA. Just as ELENA reaches the door, LUCHER enters from the right and rushes across after them shouting:)

LUCHER

Frau Krug! Frau Krug! Did you get my message?

(Her voice is lost in the din of laughter, talk and music. . . . ELENA goes out. LUCHER is going after her, but she stops when cries for "Help!" are heard from the bedroom at the back. The bedroom door flies open and the VALET hurtles out, propelled by RUDOLF, who is now magnificent in his uniform. . . . LUCHER hastily shuts the doors at the left.)

V_{ALET}

Frau Lucher! He threatened to strangle me!

RUDOLF

Do you mean to tell me that that stable-boy is dignified with the title of valet?

V_{ALET} (*terrified*)

I was only trying to brush Your Highness's hair.

RUDOLF

He scratched my ear. (RUDOLF *slaps the* V_{ALET}, *who rushes out at the right.* RUDOLF *starts to fasten on his golden sash.*)

LUCHER

You're to stay in that room until I tell you it's safe to . . .

RUDOLF

Is she here?

(TORLINI *comes in from the upper left.*)

LUCHER (*to* RUDOLF)

I told you she wouldn't come!

TORLINI

They informed me that she had already left her house, on the way here. . . .

RUDOLF (*turning, to* LUCHER)

Ah! Then she has arrived?

LUCHER

I've warned you that the police are on the watch . . .

RUDOLF

She's here, isn't she?

LUCHER

No! (*He tweaks her nose.*) Yes!

RUDOLF

Good! You have acted with unexpected competence. Bring her to me.

LUCHER

But they have just sat down to supper. You should join them.

RUDOLF

Bring her here! And champagne with her. I shall not be hungry for another forty-three minutes. (*He crosses to the right to examine himself in the mirror.*)

LUCHER (*to TORLINI*)

Request Frau Krug to come here for a moment.

(*TORLINI goes out at the left.*)

RUDOLF

Frau Krug?

LUCHER

That is her name! (*RUDOLF turns again to the mirror, with an expression of disgust.*)
You'd better be careful how you talk to her.

RUDOLF

You may now depart, Lucher.

LUCHER

She isn't the same one you used to make free with. Her husband is a very fine man—a big man, too, and . . .

(*RUDOLF steps up on a chair, the better to see the reflection of his sash in the mirror.*)

RUDOLF

I shall want some champagne—and also more cognac . . .

LUCHER

I tell you—you'd better not try any of your old tricks on her. She's different.

(*The doors at the left are opened. ELENA appears, looking backward.*)

COUNTESS (*from offstage*)

But, my little angel, you're not going?

ELENA

No, no, Tatti, don't you worry, I'll be right back.

COUNT

Immediately——

ELENA

Yes, immediately. (*She turns and sees RUDOLF on the chair, his back to her.*)

RUDOLF

And one other thing: the towels in my bathroom are soggy. Have them changed. . . .
Get out, Lucher!

(LUCHER *darts one glance of commiseration at ELENA, folds her hands over her protuberant stomach, and goes out at the right. ELENA stares at RUDOLF'S back. He gazes at her image in the mirror. . . . After a few moments, he steps down from the chair, turns and confronts her. . . . The doors at the left have been closed, but the strains of a waltz are faintly audible. . . . RUDOLF starts toward her, pauses, then walks around her. ELENA does not move, but her eyes follow him. . . . He is behind her. He reaches out to touch her, but doesn't touch her. He walks around, in front of her, stares at her, then slaps her face. He seizes her in his arms and kisses her, fiercely. . . . A WAITER has come from the right with a bottle of cognac and glasses, followed by a BUS-BOY with an ice bucket containing a bottle of champagne. They deposit these at the right, gaping at RUDOLF and ELENA as they do so.*)

RUDOLF

How long has it been since you were kissed like that? Ten years? More than ten years! Think of it! (*The WAITER makes a slight clatter as he arranges the glasses on the table. . . . RUDOLF, still holding ELENA tightly, motions behind his back to the WAITER to get out. He does so, followed by the BUS-BOY. RUDOLF kisses ELENA more gently.*) Come—we'll have a drink! (*He steps aside, motions her to the table. She crosses slowly and sits down. He goes behind the table and fills each of the glasses with equal quantities of brandy and champagne.*)

ELENA

You know—I realize now how completely I had forgotten you.

RUDOLF

Yes—it's too bad. We're not equipped with the power to recall sensations. One of our Creator's more serious mistakes. . . . However—to-night we will both refresh our memories. (*He raises his glass, toasting her, then drains it. She raises her glass, slightly, then places it on the table, untouched.*) That's a very graceful tribute, Elena. I'm referring to the necklace. But—good God! That wedding ring! (*He laughs boisterously and seizes her hand for closer inspection of the ring.*)

ELENA

That's nothing to laugh at. (*She is trying to pull her hand away, but he has a tight grip on her wrist.*)

RUDOLF

Of all the bourgeois adornments! On you, it is a gross anachronism. Like a brassiere on the Venus de Milo. It offends me. We must remove it. (*He snatches the ring from her finger.*)

ELENA

Give it *back* to me!

RUDOLF

I told you it offends me.

ELENA (*struggling*)

Are you going to give me back my ring?

RUDOLF

Yes, my darling—I'll give it back, cheerfully, in the morning. But in the meantime—well—surely, you can understand my point. That heavy gold band on your finger would strike a discordant note.

ELENA

I'm not planning to be in communication with you to-morrow morning. I want it now! (*She snatches for it.*)

RUDOLF (*pocketing the ring*)

I must ask you to be careful, Elena. Refrain from irritating me. You will recall that the members of my family are subject to epileptic rages—sheer exuberance, you know—which invariably result in one form or another of physical violence. . . . I should not care to send you back to your husband with your lovely nose broken, and minus one or two conspicuous teeth. . . .

ELENA (*staring at him*)

It can't be true!

RUDOLF

On the contrary, I can assure you that one more allusion to that detestable ring will prove that it *is* true. . . .

ELENA

I wasn't thinking about that. I was thinking of what ten years have failed to do to you.

RUDOLF

I chose to remain as I was.

ELENA

Ten years of exile, and humiliation, and poverty, haven't shaken in you the conviction that Franz Josef is still reigning in Schönbrunn.

RUDOLF

No—I admit that I have occasional qualms. There are moments when I suspect that the Habsburgs are not what they once were. But when I see you, my eternally beloved, and realize that you have had the pride to preserve your figure against the day of my return—then I know that there has been no revolution. *(He has sat down on the table, and is leaning over her, his face increasingly close to hers.)*

ELENA

Don't come near me.

RUDOLF

You don't wish to be kissed?

ELENA

I do not!

RUDOLF

Very well—if you feel that you need the inspiration of a little more champagne, you shall have it. . . . *(He goes to pour out another glass for her, but finds that she has had none. He empties her glass into the ice bucket, and refills it. He then hands it to her. She places it on the table. He pours out more for himself.)*

ELENA *(rising)*

We must go in there and join the others.

RUDOLF *(pouring)*

We must do nothing of the kind.

ELENA

I came here to-night to be with them. . . .

RUDOLF

Whereas I came here to be with you. Those pitiful relics are of no interest whatever to me. . . . Come now—drink!

ELENA

I'm going in there.

(He steps in front of her.)

RUDOLF

No, you're not.

ELENA

Get out of my way. (*He laughs and gulps some more champagne, but does not budge. She softens her tone to one of persuasion.*) Oh, Rudolf—I'll tell them you're here. It's all that's needed to send the poor things into a complete state of delirium. Think of the excitement when they see you looking as young as ever, and as handsome, in your lovely uniform, with all the medals. Think how pleased *he'd* be (*pointing to the portrait*) if he knew that a Habsburg was again holding court in Vienna.

RUDOLF (*with a glance at the portrait*)

Very well—I'll show myself to them—for his sake. (*He kisses her lightly on the forehead, then crosses to the left and tries the door. It is locked. He turns to ELENA, delighted.*) Lucher's had us locked in—the tactful old bawd. (*He pounds on the door. It is opened. The guests at the banquet offstage are making a great deal of noise, indicative of well-bred hilarity. The voice of STRUP is heard to call out: "His Imperial Highness!"*) RUDOLF stands in the doorway. The shouts and murmurs stop as each of the guests sees him. BREDZI'S little orchestra strikes up the old national anthem. RUDOLF turns and glances at ELENA. She points to the portrait of the late Emperor, and he goes up and takes a position beneath it. POFFY comes in and bows low. The others follow him, the ladies going up to him to kiss his hand. RUDOLF greets each of them by name. He is impassive, regal, mildly disdainful—just as they want him to be. The COUNTESS begins to sob.)

RUDOLF

That is enough—enough! (*He waves them out.*) I may join you later in the evening. (*They all back out. From offstage, the COUNT is heard to shout: "To His Imperial Highness."*) ELENA lifts her untouched glass of champagne and sips. There are sounds of shattered glasses from the left. The doors are closed, subduing the uproar of cheers.)

RUDOLF

Why are they all so old? (*He gazes toward the left, despondently, then suddenly decides to give this depressing matter not another thought. He turns to ELENA.*) Well? Have I or have I not done my duty? (*He comes down to the table.*) Sit down, if you please. (*She sits down at the right of the table. He leans over and kisses her hair.*) Now! I suggest that we discuss briefly your husband, before we pass on to more mutually agreeable subjects. . . . Do you love him?

ELENA

Very much.

RUDOLF

I have no objection to that. . . . He's a doctor, isn't he?

ELENA

A psychoanalyst.

RUDOLF

Ah! A practitioner of Vienna's sole remaining industry. . . . I've been told he's quite brilliant. Written a book, hasn't he?

ELENA

Yes—eight volumes.

RUDOLF

I must meet him and let him study me. He could derive enough material for eight volumes more.

ELENA

He knows all about you already.

RUDOLF

Ah—you've told him!

ELENA

Yes. You'll find your type analyzed in one of his books under the heading, "Elephantiasis of the Ego."

RUDOLF

I doubt that I'd be interested. (*He sits down at the left of the table.*) Have you any children?

ELENA

No.

RUDOLF

I extend my condolences. (*He lifts his glass as in a toast. She bows slightly in acknowledgment.*) These purely intellectual husbands are not very productive, are they?

ELENA

It isn't his fault that there are no children. It's my fault. . . . Are there any more questions?

RUDOLF

Let me see . . . No—I think there aren't. We can dismiss the dreary topic of your

domestic life—and press on to consideration of my own. But I suppose you know all about it.

ELENA

No, Rudolf. I have not followed your later career very closely.

RUDOLF

No?

ELENA

No. How have you supported yourself?

RUDOLF

In various ways. Now and then a good run at baccarat. One or two engagements in the cinema studios—did you see me in "The Shattered Idol"?

ELENA

No, I missed that, deliberately.

RUDOLF

You did well. As it turned out, I was virtually invisible. Then I conceived a great scheme for mulcting American tourists, but the authorities got wind of it, and took over the idea themselves. There have been other occupations.

ELENA

Some one told me you've been running a taxi.

RUDOLF

Merely an amusing whim. I've only driven people I know.

ELENA

And if you don't know them when you start the drive, you do before it's finished.

RUDOLF (*laughing*)

You've evidently been listening to gossip.

ELENA

Yes. I've heard how charming you are to your fares. You must have collected many delightful friends that way.

RUDOLF (*wistfully*)

Friends? You can hardly call them that.

ELENA

No—I suppose not.

RUDOLF

As a matter of fact, Elena, Nice is a bore. I have been very lonely.

ELENA

I've been waiting for you to say that.

RUDOLF

You have no sympathy for me?

ELENA

No.

RUDOLF

Your heart wasn't always cold.

ELENA

You have never been lonely—never deserved one atom of sympathy, from any one.

RUDOLF

You don't understand me. No one has ever understood me. It's because I'm inscrutable.

ELENA

Perhaps. But I remain unimpressed by your appeal for pity.

RUDOLF

Pity! Have you the effrontery to suggest that I want you to pity me?

ELENA

Yes!

RUDOLF

I see. . . . Then I shall abandon that tack. (*He laughs.*) Elena—it has always seemed miraculous to me that any one could be as intelligent as you are and still alluring. And you *are* alluring!

ELENA (*bowing*)

You're overwhelmingly kind.

RUDOLF

Oh—that wasn't intended as a tribute to you. It's a tribute to my own flawless taste.

ELENA

Ah! I see.

RUDOLF

I'm proud to think that it was I who first realized you, for the sight of you now assures me that, by God, I was right. . . . You're so beautiful, Elena. You delight me! You refresh me—and I am speaking nothing less than the truth when I tell you that refreshment is what I most urgently need.

ELENA

What tack are you off on now?

RUDOLF

None. I am driving straight to the point. . . . My room is in there.

ELENA

How convenient!

RUDOLF

Yes. It's a room that we have occupied before.

ELENA

I suppose we've occupied all of them.

RUDOLF

We have, indeed, my darling. We have made history in this hotel. Come—let us make some more.

ELENA (*pause*)

Rudolf . . .

RUDOLF

Yes?

ELENA

I think it's time for me to announce that I'm not going to bed with you.

RUDOLF (*after a while*)

Very well. (*He stands up, as though accepting her rejection, and walks away. Drink in hand, he turns and looks at her.*) I can wait (*he sips the drink*) . . . a few minutes. (*He looks toward the left.*) Who's playing in there?

ELENA

Bredzi.

RUDOLF (*pleased*)

Bredzi! (*He goes to the left and calls "Bredzi! Bredzi!" The doors are opened and BREDZI comes in, with his violin. He is in a fever of excitement, and knows precisely what is expected of him. Following him is JANSEI, an accordion player, similarly thrilled by this summons.*) A waltz! (*With appropriate flourishes, they start to play "Viennese Beauties." RUDOLF turns and crosses to the table where ELENA is sitting. The musicians follow him, playing as they go. RUDOLF bows before ELENA. Laughing, she rises and curtsseys, and then they start to waltz around the room. The tempo is sprightly, exuberant. . . . RUDOLF manages to manœuvre ELENA to the bedroom door. He kicks it open and they waltz into the room and disappear. The musicians whisper to each other happily—for this is just as it should be. . . . However, after a moment, ELENA comes out alone, laughing. RUDOLF follows. She sits on the couch.*) You know—I'm being admirably patient with you.

ELENA (*still laughing*)

Yes, Rudolf—I know.

RUDOLF

Because I understand you, too well. I can read your thoughts.

ELENA

No!

RUDOLF

I can see that as a result of your purely spiritual marriage you have developed a certain reluctance, which it is for me to overcome. Very well! I accept the challenge confidently! (*He has a drink of champagne, then turns to BREDZI.*) Play something more—more. . . . (*BREDZI understands, and obliges with a palpitably passionate selection. For a moment RUDOLF stands, silently regarding ELENA.*) Does that remind you of anything?

ELENA

Yes.

RUDOLF

What?

ELENA

Ischl!

(RUDOLF *crosses to the couch and lies down beside her. Knowing all the moves in this game, BREDZI goes close to ELENA and plays softly, persuasively.*)

RUDOLF

Ischl! Do you remember one night when it was too warm to stay indoors?

ELENA

Yes, we went out into the forest, and you took along an entire symphony orchestra to accompany us.

RUDOLF

I always adored music.

ELENA

And you had all the musicians blindfolded. The poor things. They couldn't play in harmony because they couldn't see.

RUDOLF

It was dreadful!

ELENA

And you cursed the leader horribly—and beat him with your cane.

RUDOLF

And when you tried to stop me, I knocked you down.

ELENA

Then you dismissed the orchestra—and we went on with our romance.

RUDOLF

Oh God, what beautiful times! (ELENA *is now lying back on the couch, languorously. RUDOLF kisses the hollow of her throat. Then it occurs to him to kiss her ankle. BREDZI feels that it is time to shift the tune. . . . Raising up on his elbow, RUDOLF suddenly signals the musicians to be quiet.*) Do you imagine that I need any artificial stimulation from you. Get out! (*They hurry out at the left, closing the door after them. RUDOLF stands up.*) It's no use bantering this way and that about it, Elena. I know now if I didn't know before that I have never loved any woman as I love you. When I see you I know that I've never loved any one else at all. You were, you are and ever will be the one passion of my life. . . . Now! Glow with justifiable pride.

ELENA

I am glowing. . . . What other women have you known since then?

RUDOLF

Plenty. All kinds.

ELENA

All colors?

RUDOLF

All shades. There have been French women, English women, Americans. I've had a few tempting offers of marriage, but . . . Then there have been Russians, Moroccans, Siamese . . .

ELENA

Twins?

RUDOLF

No, unfortunately. But I can swear to you, Elena, that all of them were no more than incidents. Whatever enjoyment I've had from them—and I'll be generous and admit that there has been some enjoyment—has been vicarious. Every quivering one of them has been no more than a proxy for you. Ah, Elena—if you could know how I've clung to you, how I've cherished you. Memory has been kind to me, my darling. It has kept you with me, through all the nights and days. (*He is again on the couch, at her side. She jumps to her feet, walks quickly away. There is a nervous irritability in her voice.*)

ELENA

It has been otherwise with me!

RUDOLF

What do you mean?

ELENA

Memory has been kinder to me. It has discreetly withdrawn . . .

RUDOLF

Behind the curtains of your imagination—but it is still there, alive and warm, aching to emerge.

ELENA

No, it is dead!

RUDOLF

I refuse to accept that, sight unseen.

ELENA

I have looked behind the curtains and seen it. It is decayed and loathsome.

RUDOLF

You're talking nonsense from your husband's books.

ELENA

I'm talking truth—bitter truth, for you, perhaps.

RUDOLF

I don't believe it.

ELENA

Because you will not face the one important fact.

RUDOLF

Which is what?

ELENA

I am happy with my husband. (*He laughs.*) I love him!

RUDOLF

You will notice that I am laughing.

ELENA

And you may notice that I am not going to bed with you.

Rudolf

Elena! Will you tell me that never once while you've been enduring the physical intimacies of this great thinker, never once have you shut your eyes and assured yourself, "It's Rudolf Maximillian."

ELENA

Not in years have I thought of that.

RUDOLF

But there were times at first, weren't there? Many times?

ELENA

There may have been.

RUDOLF

I thought so—and they became less frequent as the years went by—not because you were learning to be happy with him, but because you were learning to be resigned. You see—I know something about your psychology, too. Now, come—we've had enough of debate. It's time for a little emotion. We'll see if we've forgotten what life tastes like.

ELENA (*indicating the door at the left*)

I'm going back in there.

RUDOLF

You are not! (*He seizes her wrist and pulls her against him, then holds her tightly in his arms.*) You are now expected to shriek.

ELENA

I shall not shriek.

RUDOLF

Forgive me. I had forgotten that you are not the shrieking kind. That was always one of your most engaging qualities, Elena. You invariably knew when you were beaten. (*He kisses her several times, on her eyes, ears, nose and throat. She offers no apparent resistance and no response.*) Ah, Elena, my only darling—it isn't easy for you to yield, is it? You keep on thinking of that wedding ring in my pocket. You're loyal to him, because you have the courage to be decent. You were always loyal, always brave. But with me, it isn't as it would be with any one else. Can't you see that? I loved you first. And you loved me. You weren't lying when you said you loved me. You never knew how to lie. And I'm only asking you to love me again, for a little while, reminiscently, not as a rival of your husband, but as the echo of a voice that enchanted you when you were innocent and impressionable and young. You can't tell me that those things have changed. I can see that they haven't. You have not grown old. The warmth is still in you. You can still make me adore you, and I can still make you love me! (*He sits down on the couch, still holding her tightly as she stands before him.*) Why not admit it, Elena? Why maintain that formidable rigidity, as though you were a pure-minded school girl in the clutches of an avid gorilla? Relax, my darling. Let yourself go. (*She has begun to laugh.*) Have I happened to say something witty? (*ELENA continues to laugh.*) There is something in the quality of that laughter which suggests that I'm wasting my time wooing you.

ELENA

You told me to let myself go!

RUDOLF

I did, but it was not intended as a pleasantry. (*He is seated on the couch. She is standing over him. Suddenly, she seizes his face and kisses him as ferociously as he had kissed her.*) Great God, Elena, I didn't expect . . .

ELENA (*passionately*)

No, you didn't expect me to take your advice so quickly. (*She slaps his face.*) Did

you? You thought I'd keep up the pretense of frigidity forever, didn't you? (*She kisses him again. As she does so, he pulls her down on to the couch. She rolls over him.*)
Am I frozen now?

RUDOLF

No, there's been an unaccountable thaw.

(*She kisses him again.*)

ELENA

Am I restraining myself now? Am I being subdued, repressed, coldly unresponsive?
Am I? (*She slaps him again.*)

RUDOLF

No! But for God's sake, Elena—there is such a thing as going too far.

ELENA

No, there isn't. Let's open the doors.

RUDOLF

No.

ELENA

Yes! I want them to see that I haven't changed, that there are some things that can never change. (*She goes to the doors, flings them open, and shouts "Come on—come on!"* POFFY, GISELLA and the rest come in, laughing, shouting. BREDZI and JANSEI are with them, playing "The Merry Widow" waltz.)

RUDOLF (*through the happy din*)

Look at her! Look at her! She has been hitting me—hitting me with all the old strength! Show them how you did it, my darling! (*She slaps him again. He kisses her gratefully. Then he picks her up in his arms and waltzes her into the bedroom. . . . KOEPPKE rushes after them and smirkingly closes the door. The others cheer lustily and wave their champagne glasses.*)

TALISZ

I give them both happiness!

SOPHIA

Happiness—and love!

POFFY

May the night last forever! (*He is standing on the sofa, singing, while BREDZI plays softly. The COUNTESS crosses to the COUNT, who kisses her.*)

COUNTESS

This is the most enchanting moment of my life.

(HOETZLER *bows to GISELLA, who curtsies, and they begin to waltz. SOPHIA goes to the couch.*)

SOPHIA (*transported*)

It is the same Vienna—the same exquisite Vienna. . . .

COUNT

Just as it always was! Nothing has changed.

COUNTESS

I don't care if I die to-morrow. I really don't care at all.

(LUCHER *bustles in, terribly perturbed.*)

LUCHER (*to HOETZLER*)

Hush! Where has he gone? (*Waltzing with GISELLA, the GENERAL ignores LUCHER, who dashes to the left and shouts at KOEPPKE.*) Where is he?

KOEPPKE

We don't wish to be disturbed now.

TALISZ

What is she saying?

LUCHER (*thundering*)

Bredzi! Stop!

(*The music stops. POFFY, still standing on the couch and singing, turns to LUCHER.*)

POFFY (*sublimely unworried*)

Is there anything the matter?

LUCHER

Herr Povoromo! Get down off that brocade! (*POFFY descends. They all laugh.*) The police are here! They've heard this racket and one of the bottles you threw hit somebody in the street.

(*Gleeful cheers hail this gratifying news.*)

KOEPPKE (*archly*)

They'll hear no uproar from the arch-ducal chamber.

LUCHER

Where has he gone? And Frau Krug? What's he done with her?

SOPHIA

We haven't the faintest idea.

(They all laugh.)

COUNT

Resume the music, Bredzi.

(The general, mildly intoxicated laughter is interrupted by the sound of sharp knocking from within the bedroom.)

HOETZLER

What is that?

RUDOLF *(offstage)*

Elena! Elena!

(More pounding is heard. LUCHER starts up to the door. HOETZLER, SOPHIA, KOEPPKE and GISELLA stop her.)

LUCHER

Have you all gone crazy? The police will get him!

SOPHIA

Ssh!

(RUDOLF bursts out of the room, rushes to the right. Through the opened door, on the bed, is ELENA'S white dress.)

RUDOLF

Elena! Elena! *(He goes out at the right, then returns.)* Where is she? Why do you all stand there, frozen? Go after her. Find her. *(HOETZLER, SOPHIA, the COUNT, TALISZ and KOEPPKE go off babbling "We'll find her. We'll bring her back," etc.)* I never should have trusted her to go into that bathroom alone.

COUNTESS *(frightened)*

How did she get out? Did she jump out of the window?

RUDOLF

No. She went through another door. I wouldn't have trusted her if it hadn't been for the affectionate way she hit me. Elena! *(He is still pacing about frantically, from door to door. SOPHIA comes in again.)*

SOPHIA

She's left the hotel!

COUNTESS

She ought to be ashamed of herself.

LUCHER

She's gone home!

RUDOLF

Home? And where is that? Where does she live?

LUCHER

You've got to stay here.

RUDOLF

Why?

LUCHER

The police.

POFFY

They're in the hotel now.

RUDOLF

Get my cap.

LUCHER

I tell you she's gone back to her husband.

RUDOLF

That psychoanalyst? So much the better. Get my cap! (*He propels LUCHER toward the bedroom.*) Now which one of you verminous objects is going to tell me where she lives?

GISELLA

I don't know where she lives.

RUDOLF (*to the* COUNTESS)

Do you know?

COUNTESS (*timorously*)

Poffy can tell you. Poffy knows.

RUDOLF (*to POFFY*)

You will escort me there.

POFFY

If you set foot out of this hotel you're insane.

RUDOLF

You're still threatening me with the police?

POFFY

They'll recognize you, Your Highness. . . .

SOPHIA

Oh, we *beg* of Your Highness . . .

RUDOLF

Any member of the Vienna police force who lays a hand on me will find himself at the bottom of the canal.

(LUCHEr *has returned with the Tyrolean hat.*)

LUCHEr

Here!

RUDOLF

No! My military cap!

LUCHEr

That uniform is no longer worn in Vienna.

RUDOLF

I don't give ten thousand damns what's worn . . .

LUCHEr (*screaming at him*)

They'll shoot you. They'll jump at the chance to finish you.

RUDOLF (*calmly*)

Very well. . . . Very well. (*He has put on the hat, and a cape which POFFY has brought for him.*)

LUCHER

She doesn't want you any more.

RUDOLF

Oh, yes, she does. She's leading me on. She wants the thrill of the chase. Well—she shall have it! *(He crosses to the right and picks up the brandy bottle from the table.)* And if the accommodations at her house are inadequate I'll bring her back here. So see to it that this party is still going on when I return, whether it's tomorrow—or the next day—or whenever. Come on, Poffy. *(He has gone out, followed by Poffy.)*

COUNTESS *(thrilled)*

He'll do it! He'll do it!

GISELLA

Nothing will stop him!

SOPHIA

He'll bring her back, and the party will go on forever!

LUCHER

You fools! You fools! Don't you see what will happen? They'll catch him. They'll kill him. To-morrow there'll be another Habsburg burning in hell.

(Poffy comes in quickly.)

POFFY

Frau Lucher!

LUCHER *(gasping)*

Have they got him?

POFFY

No. . . . His Imperial Highness presents his compliments and wishes you to advance him a few schillings for his taxi-fare.

(Lucher is muttering a series of unprintable imprecations as she digs into her capacious hand-bag.)

CURTAIN

ACT III

ACT III

Again the living room in the KRUG home.

The time is directly after the end of Act II.

There are spots of light about the room, but the surrounding shadows are deep. In one of the areas of shadow ANTON is seated, listening to the radio, though not relaxed. He continually looks toward the window—toward the door. After a moment, he rises and crosses to the window, parts the curtains, and peers out.

ELENA comes in, breathless and agitated. RUDOLF'S cape is about her, clutched tightly, masking the absence of her white dress. . . . She hurries past ANTON and turns off the radio.

ANTON (*turning from the window*)

Well, how was it?

ELENA

Just about as I expected.

ANTON

Amusing?

ELENA

No.

ANTON

No excitement?

ELENA

None.

ANTON

You didn't stay there very long.

ELENA

Didn't I? (*She is going toward her room.*)

ANTON (*gently*)

It was evidently a bit upsetting.

ELENA

It was nothing of the kind.

ANTON

I don't like to question you, Elena, but I'm rather afraid that . . .

ELENA (*with uncharacteristic petulance*)

You like nothing better than to question me. (*She is at the back. He is still by the window at the right.*)

ANTON

You know that's not so.

ELENA

Oh—not usually. But to-night . . . why did you ask me to go? Why?

ANTON

I thought you might have a good time.

ELENA

You were wrong. You know, Anton, your prescriptions are not infallible. . . . But—let's not talk about it now. I'm tired.

(*Old KRUG has come in from the upper left. He is in his bath-robe, night-shirt and slippers.*)

KRUG

Ah! So you're back. I *thought* I heard you come in. Well, how was the party? Did anything interesting happen? Tell us all about it.

ANTON

She's going to bed.

KRUG

Who all was there? Any famous people? (ELENA *has gone up to the door of her room.*) And what—where's your *dress*?

ELENA

Good night, father. Good night, Anton. (*She goes into her room.*)

KRUG

Hmm! Well, what do you make of it? (ANTON *crosses to the left, lights a cigarette, nervously*. KRUG *comes down slowly*.) Didn't you notice anything about the way she said good night? No kisses, nor sweet dreams, nor any affection. And that costume! She was wearing a dress when she left here, wasn't she? There's something the matter. Didn't you notice it?

ANTON (*sharply*)

No!

KRUG

Well, if you didn't I *did!* And I don't set myself up as a great mind-reader, like you. . . . I could see that something happened there at Lucher's . . .

ANTON

She's tired, that's all.

KRUG

Yes—but *why* is she tired? That's what we ought to know. And what happened to her dress? That's what we ought to find out. You ought to ask a few questions about this . . .

(*The insistent ringing of the night bell is heard.*)

ANTON

There's nothing to find out.

KRUG

There's the night bell.

ANTON

I can hear it.

KRUG

What do you suppose it is?

ANTON

I haven't the faintest idea. (*From the right can be heard peremptory pounding on the front door and loud shouts*. ANTON *crosses to the right and goes out.*)

KRUG

But listen. . . . That sounds like trouble . . .

RUDOLF (*offstage*)

You needn't announce me . . .

KATHIE (*shrieking, offstage*)

Oh! Herr Professor! It's a madman.

KRUG (*excited*)

You'd better get out your pistol, Anton. It's another one of your patients gone insane.

KATHIE (*offstage*)

A maniac! His keeper is with him but he won't listen. . . . He forced his way in. I couldn't stop him.

POFFY (*offstage*)

I'm sorry, Herr Professor. If there had been any conceivable way of avoiding this . . .

RUDOLF

A thousand pardons for the disturbance, but this dutiful handmaiden seemed to feel that I should be denied admittance. (*By now, RUDOLF has entered, followed by POFY, ANTON and KATHIE. RUDOLF is still carrying the bottle of brandy, as a weapon. He addresses KRUG.*) Are you the doctor?

KRUG

Yes! No!

RUDOLF

No?

KRUG

No! He is. (*He points to ANTON. RUDOLF turns and confronts the husband of ELENA.*) And I am his father . . .

RUDOLF

Ah! So you are the Herr Professor Doctor! I am frankly surprised. My imagination had adorned you with a gray beard, a long one. (*He bows.*) How do you do?

ANTON

Who are you?

RUDOLF

Eh? You are asking me who . . . ?

KRUG

I can tell you who he is . . .

RUDOLF

He doesn't know who I am, Poffy. Come—step up! Present me.

POFFY

Professor Krug—this is the former Archduke Rudolf Maximillian.

RUDOLF

The former! One would think I had already joined my ancestors in their eternal empire.

KRUG

Oh! No!

RUDOLF

However, my dear doctor, you will readily observe that such is not the case. I am here, in your charming home, and I wish to see your wife.

ANTON

My wife has gone to bed.

RUDOLF

She will wish to be aroused.

(ANTON *regards* RUDOLF *for a moment, then crosses in front of him and addresses* KRUG.)

ANTON

Go to bed, father.

KRUG

Me?

ANTON (*motioning him off*)

Yes! Do as you're told.

(*In a state of extreme disgruntlement, old KRUG turns and ambles slowly up toward the steps. RUDOLF removes his hat.*)

RUDOLF (*to POFFY*)

And you're no longer needed, Poffy. Go back to Lucher's and see that they carry on.

POFFY

You had better come with me.

RUDOLF

I may be detained a little longer than I had expected.

POFFY

I'll be at the hotel on call. (*POFFY goes out at the right. KRUG is now at the door of ELENA'S room.*)

KRUG (*calling through the door*)

Elena, the Archduke Rudolf Maximillian von Habsburg is calling on us and they're sending me to bed. (*KRUG goes on out at the upper left. . . . ANTON confronts RUDOLF, who holds the brandy bottle at the alert. . . . After a moment, ANTON smiles and advances toward RUDOLF.*)

ANTON

I—I wish I could tell you how glad I am to see you.

RUDOLF (*startled*)

You're *glad*—to see *me*?

ANTON

I should think you could imagine why. You've been something of a presence in my home, for a long time, ever since Elena and I were married. Not an entirely agreeable presence, I might add. (*He laughs.*) But one that we could never quite get rid of. At times, you've stalked about this house as if you owned it.

RUDOLF (*pleased*)

I *have*?

ANTON

I naturally resented it, a little. But now that I have the chance to see you, and talk to you, I can feel much more friendly toward that presence.

RUDOLF (*bewildered*)

Well! I've known husbands in my time—but you're the first one who ever granted me a kind word. . . . (*He steps forward. They bow and shake hands.*) I'm glad to see you, too, Herr Professor. Your vast reputation has not done you justice.

ANTON

A remarkably graceful compliment!

RUDOLF

Of course, I've known you through your books. Oh, yes! I've studied them, carefully.

ANTON

All eight volumes?

RUDOLF

You don't believe me, do you? Very well—cross-examine me!

ANTON

No, no. I don't like cross-examinations. I'm only too eager to take your word for it.

RUDOLF

It's very fortunate that you are. Otherwise I should have been proved a liar. (*He puts his hand affectionately on ANTON'S shoulder. They both laugh. . . . ELENA comes in, now wearing a negligee.*) But I'm going to read them. I know now that they're good. (*He sees ELENA.*) Elena, we're friends!

(ELENA, *on the landing, looks from RUDOLF to ANTON.*)

ELENA

Are you?

ANTON

Of course we are. We see eye to eye on the most important subject.

RUDOLF

As a matter of fact, we're an incredibly happy combination. Your husband represents the sublimity of the intellectual, and I the quintessence of the emotional. You know—between us, just about there—(*he points to a spot on the carpet*)—there ought to be found the perfect man!

(ANTON *laughs*. ELENA *comes down, goes over to the left, beside ANTON.*)

ANTON

Please go on talking.

RUDOLF

Gladly! I have a great deal of interest to say. (*He sits down in a chair in the centre.*)

ELENA

I hope you'll cut it short, Rudolf. Not that I'm unmindful of the great distinction conferred on our house by your presence here—but I'm sleepy. We're sleepy.

RUDOLF

I am still confident of my ability to keep you awake. But my words are not for you, my darling. They are for our mutual friend, your husband.

ANTON

I am anxious to hear them.

RUDOLF

I'm sure you are. And I'm equally sure that you'll be sympathetic. You're a brilliant psychologist—but more than that, you're a Viennese. You will know what I mean. . . . (ANTON *bows.*) But here—I seem to be the only one who's seated. Won't you please sit down?

ANTON

No—if you don't mind . . .

(ELENA *sits down on the edge of the couch.*)

RUDOLF (*settling back in the chair*)

No, I don't mind. . . . Well—to begin at the beginning—always a suitable starting point: Herr Professor—I have been making advances to your wife. I am here now to continue them until the desired objective has been reached. Am I making myself clear?

ANTON

Perfectly clear.

ELENA

So far.

RUDOLF

Good! You are obviously a man of superior perception. You will not fail to see the validity of my claim. Fifteen years ago I became intimate with Elena. And when I say that I became intimate with her, I hope you will understand that I . . .

ANTON

I am familiar with the preface. You may skip it.

RUDOLF

No, no. I decline to do so. Indeed, I wish to dwell on it. She was then a maiden,

exquisitely frail, standing hesitantly upon the threshold of infinite potentiality, if you will forgive my eloquence. Ah—she was lovely, Herr Professor. You would have adored her.

ANTON

I'm sure of it.

RUDOLF

As for myself, I was then, as now, a rank idealist—and when I first looked upon her, and felt the touch of her hand and saw the virginal invitation that was in her eyes, I vowed to myself, "This is the ultimate!" So I made her my mistress. For four beautiful years, I was devotedly . . .

ELENA

It was hardly more than two.

RUDOLF

Don't interrupt!

ELENA

Don't exaggerate!

RUDOLF (*rising, enraged*)

If I'm to be interrupted . . .!

ELENA

Don't *exaggerate!*

RUDOLF

I do so only because of a desire to flatter you. (*He turns apologetically to ANTON.*) Permit me to continue: our idyllic romance was terminated by the revolution. Austria was compelled to give up most of her treasured provinces and possessions, including my family. (*He sits down again.*) We were at Lucher's together when the summons came. I promised her I'd return immediately—but I didn't return. I never even had a chance to say good-bye to her. (*He has said this almost to himself. He turns now to ANTON.*) We were denied the privilege of parting as most lovers do, with the customary romantic heroism—hypocritical self-sacrifice. We were wrenched apart. (*He indicates the arbitrary separation with a gesture of his clenched fists.*) Surely, Herr Doctor, you can see the significance of that wrench.

ANTON

I've seen a great deal of it.

RUDOLF (*resuming*)

The pretense of adjustment had to be made. In my exile I concluded that I should never see my darling again and I made every effort to reconcile myself to that dismal realization. The effort was not completely successful. For ten years I have felt the lack of her. So I decided to return to Vienna, and have one more look at her, and let my youthful illusions be shattered once and for all.

ANTON

That was a highly intelligent decision—wasn't it, Elena?

ELENA

I'm not quite certain.

RUDOLF

Oh, it was, in theory. For I assumed that she would have become a commonplace, obese, bourgeois housewife.

ANTON

She has resisted the influences surrounding her.

RUDOLF

She has, indeed, and I've been grievously disappointed. I find that my acute want of her was no illusion. It remains a fact. (*He rises.*) A fact! (*He crosses and stands behind the couch.*) Which we all must face.

ELENA

Yes, Anton.

RUDOLF

Perhaps you don't believe that it is a fact. Elena didn't at first. I told her something this evening—something that I'd have confessed to no other woman. I told her that all the enjoyment I've had has been vicarious. I, too, have been conscious of a presence. Elena has been in attendance at all the sordid little romances I have ever known. (*Turning to ELENA.*) Oh, my dear, you'd be horrified if you knew how many fantastic shapes you have assumed. (*To ANTON.*) That sounds a bit disgusting, doesn't it?

ANTON

Nothing is disgusting that is said with such artless sincerity.

RUDOLF (*to ELENA*)

He's charming—charming! (*To ANTON.*) I knew you were qualified to deal with this situation, Herr Doctor. You see, Elena told me: you've written a whole book about me.

ANTON

What?

ELENA

I told him nothing of the kind.

RUDOLF

You did. You distinctly said he'd analyzed me . . .

ELENA (*cutting in*)

I did not. I said he'd written about that much, explaining your type. (*She indicates about two inches between her thumb and forefinger.*)

RUDOLF (*to ANTON*)

Evidently you can say volumes in a few words. Ah, Herr Doctor—it's enlightening to confront any one like you, who can view things impersonally, and with none of the usual moralistic indignation. You're a scientist—thank God—and I beg of you to consider me as your patient. Analyze me. Subject me to the treatment that you know I need.

ANTON

I'm afraid that's impossible, my friend.

ELENA (*to RUDOLF*)

That's absurd. It takes a long time to complete a treatment.

RUDOLF

So much the better. I don't mind remaining in Vienna indefinitely. But now is the time to begin, Herr Doctor. I want some professional advice.

ANTON

I can't give it.

RUDOLF

But I insist that you can.

ELENA

It's not his custom to give advice.

RUDOLF

Nonsense—he's a doctor—a distinguished one.

ELENA

By a process of suggestion, he compels the patient to advise himself.

RUDOLF (*to ANTON*)

Very well, then—suggest something.

ANTON

No. You have ideas of your own.

RUDOLF

A bewilderingly wide variety.

ANTON

I don't doubt it. But it is useless for me to try to consider this in the light of my own experience; because I have never confronted this problem in just this way before.

RUDOLF

Why, with Elena for a wife I should think that this sort of thing would be coming up all the time.

ANTON

I agree one would naturally think so. (*ANTON is beginning to betray evidences of impatience which might easily develop into violent wrath.*)

ELENA

But one would be wrong.

RUDOLF

Well, I'm glad.

ANTON

I'm only a psychiatrist. Your case requires the specialized services of a neuropathologist. There is a very good one in Munich.

RUDOLF

Munich? But that's a long way off—and the night is slipping through our fingers.

ANTON

That's the only advice I can give you, Herr von Habsburg. There's nothing I can do to help you.

RUDOLF (*appalled*)

Herr von Habsburg! So that's my name? Herr von Habsburg! Oh—I'm not protesting.

It is my name! It would have been patronizing to call me anything else. Forgive me for interrupting. . . . *(During the foregoing speech he has crossed to the left, close to ANTON, as though, for a moment, he had considered a demonstration of his resentment of the humiliating "Herr." . . . He now sits down, slumping, on a chair that is between ANTON, who is standing before the fire-place, and ELENA, on the couch. . . . It should be noted that through this dialogue ELENA is watching both of them with enthralled interest, alarmed expectancy and mounting excitement. . . . With apparent weariness, RUDOLF continues:)* You were saying something about a doctor in Munich.

ANTON

Yes. I'll give you a letter to him, and I urge that you go and consult him at once.

RUDOLF *(with a flash of anger)*

But I don't want to go to Munich! I want this problem to be settled now!

ANTON

I'm not a witch doctor. I can't straighten out a mass of glandular complications with a wave of the hand.

RUDOLF *(surprised but amused)*

Oh, but I'm not complicated—even though I do like to represent myself as an enigma. *(To ELENA.)* You don't mind my talking about myself?

ELENA

Not at all. We're used to it.

RUDOLF

It's a fascinating subject. . . . You must realize, Herr Doctor, that for all my talk, I'm simply a man who lives on sensations. They're meat and drink and breath of life to me. At the moment, I'm desperately in need of nourishment—nourishment for my self-esteem. My ego is like the belly of a starving man—it's bloated but empty.

ANTON

And you imagine that I can furnish the necessary nourishment?

RUDOLF

If you can't—no one else can.

ANTON

If this could be dealt with in a rational manner, it would be simple. I'd tell you to look at her to your heart's content—fill your imagination with her. *(RUDOLF turns and stares at ELENA and continues to do so while ANTON snaps out the following:)* And then see for yourself that for you she has no substance; she's a dream that you've explained, and disposed of, and that you can never recapture. . . . But it isn't so

simple as all that.

(Slowly RUDOLF turns away from ELENA, rises, confronts ANTON.)

RUDOLF

You're right, my friend. It isn't so simple. . . . I must do more than just look.

(ANTON walks away, toward the right.)

ELENA

Well, Anton—what have you to say to that?

ANTON *(irritably)*

There's nothing for me to say. I don't want to have anything to say. *(There is a pregnant pause.)*

RUDOLF

I know—it's a damned awkward situation. And it wouldn't have arisen if it hadn't been for your decency. When I came in here I was ready to fight, and either be dragged out myself, or take Elena with me. But—you were so kind. You were so friendly. You showed me that this dispute should be settled by reason as opposed to force.

ANTON

I find that this dispute has become essentially unreasonable.

RUDOLF

It has not! My impulses are entirely natural.

ANTON

And so are my objections to your impulses.

RUDOLF

Oh! So you do object?

ANTON

Yes! I do! *(His attitude is now one of undisguised belligerence.)*

RUDOLF

You're not friendly with me any more. Why? Do you imagine that I want to take her away from you for good and all? I can reassure you on that point. I want her for one night only. That will give me enough to live on for another ten years—by which time I'll hardly be a serious menace to you or to any one. Now—surely—you can have no objection to that?

ANTON

You're forcing me into the hellishly uncomfortable position of a jealous husband.

RUDOLF

If you will permit me to say so, you assumed that position voluntarily when you married her.

ANTON

Yes, yes! I know that!

RUDOLF

You admitted the presence that is in your house, and now that the presence has materialized, are you afraid to face it?

ELENA

No! Anton! You won't let him say that.

RUDOLF

No! No! I don't believe it! You're a man of exalted intellect. You know that jealousy is merely a manifestation of fear, and you have banished fear as completely as you have banished the odious Habsburgs. Isn't that so?

ANTON

We've expelled the Habsburgs from Austria, but not all of us have expelled the Habsburgs from ourselves. . . . Now, I want you to leave.

RUDOLF

What?

ANTON

I'm asking you to go.

RUDOLF

Taking Elena with me?

ANTON

No.

RUDOLF

Even though she might want to go?

ANTON

Have you bothered to consult her as to that?

(ELENA rises and crosses to the fire-place.)

ELENA

Oh, leave me out of this. I'm only the guerdon in this conflict. You will have to dispose of me between yourselves.

ANTON

Get out!

RUDOLF

Oh—I'm disappointed in you, Herr Doctor. I thought you were one who had conquered all the baser emotions. But now I see that you *are* just a husband—no better than the rest of them.

ANTON

Unless you go of your own accord, I shall attempt to put you out—and I believe I shall succeed.

RUDOLF

I'm sure you can. But not without making a ridiculous spectacle of yourself.

ANTON (*taking off his glasses*)

Then I shall not delay the process. (*He now starts to take off his coat. Observing this, RUDOLF starts to take off his coat, turning to ELENA, as he does so.*)

RUDOLF

There, Elena! I have exposed him before your eyes. This colossus of the intellect, this triumph of civilization, is behaving like a vindictive ape.

ANTON

Get out!

RUDOLF (*going up and putting his coat on the balcony rail*)

I have to warn you that I'm not going to fight fair.

ANTON

You'd better not watch this, Elena.

ELENA

Nothing could induce me to leave now! (*She sits down on the bench before the fire-place.*) I've just realized that I've been waiting for this moment for years.

RUDOLF

That's right. Stay where you are. When I've had enough I'll call to you and you can drag him off me. (*He picks up a small, modernistic metal statue from the bookcase and brandishes it.*) Come on, Herr Professor. It's for you to begin the brawl. . . .

ELENA

Put that down!

(RUDOLF *examines the statue.*)

RUDOLF

Do you *like* that?

ELENA

Put it down!

(*Reluctantly he obeys.*)

RUDOLF (*to ANTON*)

I'm now unarmed. I'm a competent swordsman but I'm hopelessly inept with my fists. I'm forced to the indignity of treating with you. I'll make you an offer.

ANTON

Make it quickly.

RUDOLF

A very handsome one . . .

ANTON

Make it quickly!

RUDOLF (*with convincing fervor*)

Give her to me for this one night, and I shall give to you in return my one possession—namely, this carcass that I wear about my immortal soul, these priceless pounds of flesh. To-morrow I shall go forth upon the Ringstrasse. I shall kick and insult policemen. My identity will become known. I shall be beaten to earth and shot, and I shall die gloriously in the gutter, my head pillowed on a pile of excrement. But before I take this suicidal action, I shall sign documents bequeathing my remains, unconditionally, to the eminent Professor Doctor . . . what's the name?

ELENA

Krug.

RUDOLF

Krug! All that is left of me will be yours. You will appreciate my value to science. You may lay me out on your operating table, you may probe, dissect me, discover just what it is about me that has made me what I am, the quality that dominated most of Europe for six hundred years. You will be able to say to your students: "Here, gentlemen—this revolting object that I hold before you is the heart of a Habsburg!" (*There is a prolonged pause.*) No? You reject my offer? You insist on being primitive? Very well, then! Come on, Herr Doctor—(*He steps back and achieves a pose.*) I'm waiting for that bull-like rush.

ANTON

You are succeeding in your object.

RUDOLF

I—succeeding?

ANTON

You are making a fool of me. I should have heeded your warning that you wouldn't fight fair. There are a thousand excellent reasons why I should hit you and I know all those reasons. But confronting you this way, in the presence of my wife, whom I wish above all others to impress, I can't do it. I could finish the fight, but I can't start it.

ELENA

No, Anton, you're wrong. You couldn't finish it. I am the only one who could do that. I should have known it there at Lucher's. (*The night bell rings.*) I shouldn't have tried to escape. That's the mistake I've always . . . (*The bell rings again.*) Who is that?

RUDOLF

Don't tell me that the doctor is being summoned to a patient! (*The bell rings again.*)

ELENA

Shall I go? (*She crosses to the right.*)

ANTON

No—Kathie is awake.

(*Old KRUG comes in.*)

KRUG

I heard the bell! I thought it might be something important.

RUDOLF

Let us hope it is not a matter of life and death.

(KATHIE *comes in at the right.*)

KATHIE

Herr Professor Doctor!

(POFFY *rushes in.*)

POFFY

Herr Professor Doctor, my deepest apologies for bursting in in this manner but . . .

ANTON

What is it?

POFFY

It's the police.

KRUG

The police!

ANTON

What do they want?

POFFY

His Imperial Highness was seen tearing down the Kartnerstrasse in a taxi . . .

(*Old KRUG whistles.*)

ELENA

They want him! They've found out about him!

RUDOLF

By all means let them have me. It's an easy disposition of your problem, Herr Professor.

ELENA

No. You will have to hide. Go in there.

ANTON

What good will that do? The police will keep on till they find him.

RUDOLF

I shall not hide! I prefer to stand and face them.

ELENA

No, you won't. Go in there. . . . Kathie—tell the police that Dr. Krug will see them in a moment.

KATHIE

Yes, ma'am. (*She goes.*)

POFFY (*to RUDOLF*)

You must hide! The whole force is out searching for you.

RUDOLF (*going up*)

This is the very depth of ignominy.

KRUG

In here, Your Imperial Highness.

ELENA

Here! (*She hands him his Tyrolean hat.*)

RUDOLF

I will not be arrested in this God-damned hat! (*He goes into the room at the back.*)

ELENA

Shut the door, father.

(*KRUG does so—ELENA motions him to his bedroom. He pouts but goes out, upper left.*)

ANTON

We'll have to see them.

POFFY

I beg of you, Herr Professor, go down and send them away.

ANTON

Do you think that will stop them from going on with their search?

POFFY

But, surely, they will listen to you. Your position . . .

ANTON

They know perfectly well that there was every likelihood of his coming here. I might

get them out of this house, but I can't prevent them from keeping a close watch on it.

POFFY

But you have the greatest influence with the authorities. You can speak to them, persuade them . . .

ANTON

To do what? To allow him to remain here as my guest?

POFFY

No—to permit him to leave Austria, quietly. If you will only say a word to Herr Wreede, the prefect. He's out at Schönbrunn. . . . And I can swear to you that the Archduke will abide by any arrangement you choose to make.

ANTON (*to ELENA*)

So I'm to go to Schönbrunn and make all the arrangements.

ELENA

Oh, yes, Anton. You must do everything you can to help him. . . .

POFFY

You will be performing an act of the greatest generosity!

ELENA

Yes, Anton.

(*ANTON stares at ELENA for a moment, then turns to POFFY.*)

ANTON

Will you please wait for me downstairs?

POFFY

Yes, Herr Professor Doctor. (*He bows and goes. There is another pause.*)

ANTON

An act of great generosity! And let us hope of great wisdom.

ELENA

Have you any doubt of the wisdom, Anton?

ANTON

Yes, I have, but I must not admit it. (*He is making a gallant attempt to be ironic.*)

You see, Elena—I am facing the test of my own relentless principles. You've heard what my students call me: "the messiah of a new faith." . . . Well—to-night I've heard the bitter injunction that is given to all messiahs: "Physician, heal thyself." It's not a comforting thought. . . . However—I must go out to Schönbrunn and see Wreede. I must make the necessary arrangements. I shan't be back before morning.

ELENA

Oh!

ANTON

Yes! (*He comes close to her.*) You saw the truth, Elena. You saw it, at last, when he goaded me into behaving like—like a vindictive ape. You are the only one who can settle it. If you can look at him, and laugh at him, and pity him, as you'd pity a deluded child; if you can see him for what he is, and not for what your memory tells you that he was—then you're free. He can never hurt you, whatever he does, or whatever you do.

ELENA

Very well, Anton.

ANTON (*he stares at her for a moment*)

Good-bye, Elena. . . . And tell him not to worry. . . . (*He turns and starts to go.*) Herr Wreede will be glad to do me a favor. His wife is one of my patients. (*He has gone out at the right.* . . . ELENA *stands still for a moment, then turns and calls, "Rudolf! Rudolf!"* RUDOLF *opens the door and peers out.* ELENA *crosses to the left.*)

ELENA

They've gone. You can come out.

(RUDOLF *emerges, still in his shirt sleeves, carrying his uniform coat. His tone during the subsequent scene is elaborately sardonic.*)

RUDOLF

Are you sure it's safe?

ELENA

Perfectly.

RUDOLF

Where is your husband?

ELENA

He has gone out.

RUDOLF

Where?

ELENA

To see the prefect of police.

RUDOLF

And what am I to do in the meanwhile—put on my coat and go?

ELENA

No. You can't. The police are down there.

RUDOLF

They were reluctant to take your husband's word?

ELENA

Yes—but you can rely on Anton. He has great influence with the officials. He'll see to it that you are allowed to leave Austria safely.

RUDOLF (*coming down*)

So I'm to rely on him, am I?

ELENA

There's no one else who could do as much for you.

RUDOLF

The soul of magnanimity, isn't he!

ELENA

Yes.

RUDOLF

And trustful, too!

ELENA

Yes.

RUDOLF

And sublimely confident of your strength.

ELENA

Yes!

RUDOLF

And contemptuous of me. (*She says nothing. He throws his coat down on the couch, and glowers at the door through which ANTON departed.*) As effective a bit of foul play as I have ever witnessed! He's tricked me into his debt—put me on my honor. He knows that I have that. It runs in the Habsburg blood—honor and epilepsy. We deserved to be thrown out—not because we were tyrants, but because we were all at heart rotten sentimentalists. The doctor has discovered the essential weakness.

ELENA

I told you his method of cure. He influences the patient to advise himself.

RUDOLF

Yes—and what he has made me advise myself is not very gratifying to my vanity or stimulating to my lecherous impulses. God damn him! He's devitalized me, emasculated me. (*He sits down on the end of the couch; his fury and much of his bumptiousness have gone out of him.*) While I was in there, hiding, waiting for him to protect me from the law, I looked at my coat, and the obsolete medals, and the worn-out lining, and a great truth dawned on me. It came to me in a revelation that I am no longer an Archduke, nephew of an Emperor; I am a taxi-driver, dressed up!

ELENA

And did your revelation also disclose to you what I am now?

RUDOLF

Yes! You're no longer a mistress—you're a wife—and consequently unprepossessing.

ELENA

Ah! You have realized that at last!

RUDOLF

I have.

ELENA

And you know that I can face you, and laugh at you, and pity you, as I'd pity a deluded child!

RUDOLF

Do we need to enlarge on it? If you mean to get satisfaction for all the indignities that I've lavished on you, you'll be up all night. . . . Go to bed and leave me alone. I'll promise to sit here and keep the faith.

ELENA (*with sudden tenderness*)

You'd better have some rest. You'll be travelling in the morning.

RUDOLF

Your solicitude is touching. But please don't have me on your mind.

ELENA

The police may come back.

RUDOLF

And you want me to know that it would grieve you sorely to have me receive my just deserts. I knew it!

ELENA

You'd better go in there and lie down and try to get some sleep.

RUDOLF

As you wish. (*He rises, crosses to the window, starts to look out upon the Viennese scene, but turns away.*) I shall rest peacefully, soothed by the knowledge that even I have influential friends in Austria. . . . Good night. . . . And when the benevolent doctor returns, please try to express to him some measure of my gratitude. Assure him that, thanks to his generosity, I shall leave Vienna, forever, and return to my taxi. (*He has gone up to the landing at the back. Elena picks up his coat from the couch.*)

ELENA

You've forgotten your coat, Rudolf.

RUDOLF

Oh, thank you.

ELENA (*looking at the coat*)

It needs mending. (*She goes up to the steps.*)

RUDOLF

Please don't bother. I'll never wear it again.

ELENA

You will, Rudolf. You'll always wear it, gallantly—even if the lining is a little torn. It's your coat. (*She hands him the coat.*)

RUDOLF

Yes! One of the meagre possessions of Herr von Habsburg! (*He puts the coat on the balustrade.*) You're very sweet, Elena. I don't quite know why you should be, in view of the ridiculous trouble I've caused. But please remember that I'm grateful—and also sorry.

(She takes his hand.)

ELENA

No, Rudolf—you must never be sorry.

RUDOLF

Good night, my dear. *(He kisses her hand.)* Good-bye. *(He goes into the bedroom. . . . For some moments, she stands still. At length, she picks up his coat, looks at the worn lining and the tarnished medals, hanging limply. Then she turns, switches out the lights so that the stage is in darkness except for a faint glow from the hallway. She opens the door of her room. The light from within shines on her.)*

ELENA

Rudolf . . .

RUDOLF *(from offstage)*

Yes?

(She goes into the room and closes the door behind her.)

CURTAIN

The curtain is down a few seconds to indicate the passage of several hours. Its rise reveals morning, brilliantly sunny, warm and cheerful. KATHIE is completing the arranging of the breakfast table which is at the left of the couch. It is set for three.

Old KRUG shuffles in from the left, carrying the morning paper.

KRUG *(disgusted)*

Just as I thought! Not a word in here about what happened last night. One of the most exciting things that's happened in this city in years, and then they hush it up. *(He sniffs and his expression changes.)* Mm! Kidneys!

KATHIE

You're not to touch them! They are for the Herr Professor Doctor.

KRUG

I thought as much. . . . Oh—well . . .

(KATHIE starts to go, KRUG follows her, talking.)

KRUG

Oh, Kathie! *(She pauses.)* What did you think of our guest, eh? Did you ever see any one like that before?

KATHIE (*scornfully*)

No! (*She resumes her exit.*)

KRUG

I never did, either—I mean, close to. How did they get rid of him? What happened after I went to bed? (*He is following her out.*)

KATHIE (*from offstage*)

I haven't the faintest idea what happened!

KRUG (*from offstage*)

Well—I'd surely like to know. But it's a sure thing no one's going to tell me. Didn't you hear anything? (*RUDOLF comes out of the room at the back, and deposits his cape and his hat on the balustrade. . . . KRUG, still mumbling, returns.*) I've got to find out all these things for myself.

RUDOLF

Good morning. Good morning. Good morning! Whoever you are, I bid you good morning, and I can assure you I do so with the most profound sincerity. (*KRUG sees who it is, and is so startled he can only gape. RUDOLF goes to the window and looks out.*) It has been years since I have seen one like it. You know, it's an extraordinary thing about Vienna; in no other place on earth will you find a finer quality of mornings. They're ample, they're complete! They have character. Look at this one! It's a new day—and, don't forget, that's very different from saying "another day." You never hear people in Vienna say "another day has dawned," do you? For that's precisely like saying "another Chinaman has been born," an exact reproduction of all the countless millions and millions of Chinamen that have been born and lived and died. . . . It's an appalling thought, isn't it? (*He crosses toward the breakfast table, by which old KRUG, utterly bewildered, is now standing.*) No, my dear friend—we Viennese are privileged beings. For us, each morning is an adventure, unprecedented and unforgettable. A new day! (*He inspects the array of breakfast.*) What have we here?

KRUG (*weakly*)

I thought Your Imperial Highness had gone.

RUDOLF

What led you to that misconception? (*He is looking at the various dishes.*)

KRUG

After the police had left, I heard the front door close again.

RUDOLF

That was the excellent Herr Professor, going forth to clear the atmosphere. Ah! Kidneys. (*He takes the dish and sits down.*)

KRUG

Those are for my son!

RUDOLF

He likes kidneys, does he? (*He has begun to eat them.*)

KRUG

He does—and no one is allowed to touch . . .

RUDOLF

Please sit down. (*KRUG sits across the table.*) You know, the more I hear about that gifted scientist, the more I know him to be a gentleman of discernment and taste. He and I obviously appreciate the same delicacies.

KRUG

Where did you sleep last night?

RUDOLF

Now really, my friend—you're a man of the world, aren't you?

KRUG (*indignantly*)

I am nothing of the kind.

RUDOLF

I envy you. It's a poor world. You do well to keep out of it. If you take my advice, you'll stay here, where you are, in this charming house, in this incomparable city, with a view of the horse-chestnuts; and leave investigation of the world to those who have no place else to go. (*ELENA comes in. She is radiant.*) Ah! Our lovely hostess!

KRUG

Look, Elena! Look at who is having breakfast with me!

ELENA

Good morning, father. Good morning, Rudolf. (*She waves toward the window.*)
Gorgeous, isn't it?

RUDOLF

We've been discussing it, at some length.

KRUG

You should have heard him, Elena. I couldn't make out what he was talking about.

(*ELENA has come down to the table and taken possession of the coffee pot.*)

ELENA

Will you have coffee, Rudolf?

RUDOLF

Oh—I'll have everything: coffee, with whipped cream, rolls, honey, jam, jelly. . . .
(*To KRUG.*) By the way, did you ever know why it was that our bakers started making rolls in the shape of crescents? (*KRUG shakes his head.*) It was intended as an expression of our contempt for the Turks. (*He is holding up a crescent roll while he talks.*)

KRUG

Was it really! (*He takes a bite of a roll, and munches it reflectively, as though appreciating for the first time its full flavor.*)

RUDOLF

Oh, I could tell you many similar facts of historical importance. For instance—about the Serbian pigs . . .

ELENA (*interrupting*)

I've forgotten whether you take sugar.

RUDOLF (*gazing at her*)

So have I.

(*Old KRUG laughs heartily.*)

ELENA

Father! What are you laughing at?

KRUG

He said he'd forgotten if he takes sugar.

RUDOLF

I don't blame you for laughing! I don't blame you a bit. It was a fatuous remark.

KRUG

What?

RUDOLF

A very silly remark. As a matter of fact, I take three lumps. (*They all laugh at that.*)

ELENA (*to KRUG*)

He's a fool, isn't he?

KRUG

I should say that he is! Why, do you know what he said about the morning? He said it was like a lot of Chinamen! (*He laughs uproariously. So do ELENA and RUDOLF. . . . The merriment is interrupted when ANTON comes in, accompanied by POFFY.*)

ANTON

Good morning.

ELENA

Anton! (*She rises and crosses to ANTON.*)

KRUG (*pointing to RUDOLF*)

Look at *this*, Anton . . .

RUDOLF

Before any one else breaks the news, permit me to announce that I have devoured the kidneys.

ELENA

Kathie will cook some more. Sit down, Anton—and you too, Poffy.

ANTON

No, I've already had a huge breakfast at the Hotel Lucher. But I'm afraid this gentleman hasn't. He has been standing out in the street all night.

RUDOLF

Why in heaven's name have you been doing *that*?

POFFY

The police were still there, and I thought I might be needed.

RUDOLF

And you were ready to die for your Prince. Such gallantry must not pass unnoticed. (*He unpins a medal from his coat and tosses it to POFFY, who catches it.*)

KRUG (*wide-eyed*)

Did you *see* that!

RUDOLF

You say you've been at Lucher's?

ANTON

Yes.

RUDOLF

Is the party still going on?

ANTON

Oh Lord, yes. They all entertained me at breakfast.

ELENA

How are they now?

ANTON

They're getting a little sleepy.

RUDOLF (*to old KRUG*)

Then let's rush over and wake them up!

(*KRUG starts up, hopefully.*)

ANTON

I'm afraid we can't. I mean, you and I.

RUDOLF

Oh!

ANTON

We have to start immediately for Passau, where you will be allowed to cross the frontier. There's a government car downstairs.

RUDOLF

I see.

ANTON

I hate to drag you away.

RUDOLF (*rising*)

But it's necessary. Of course it is. Do I have to wear that cape and that hat?

ELENA

Yes—help him, father.

(Rising, KRUG throws his napkin down.)

KRUG

Oh, dear! Now he has to go!

ELENA

But why do you have to go with him, Anton?

RUDOLF

I flatly refuse to hear of such a thing! I will not take you away from your duties, your home. Poffy will escort me.

POFFY

I should be delighted to.

ANTON

No. I have given my word that I myself will see you depart from Austria. The authorities wished me to explain that they will take extraordinary precautions to see that you do not return.

RUDOLF

I don't blame them. I don't blame them a bit. . . . Thank you. (*This to old KRUG, who has brought him his hat and cape.*)

ANTON (*to ELENA*)

I shan't be back much before evening. Will you tell Zenzi to cancel all my engagements for to-day?

ELENA

Yes, Anton. I'll tell her. And I'll send word to the university.

RUDOLF

A dutiful wife, Herr Professor. I commend her to you—and you to her. It is a remarkable union, and it will give me satisfaction to the end of my days to think that perhaps I, in my small way, have contributed something to it.

ELENA

It's time to go, Rudolf.

RUDOLF

I know it is. But before I depart, Herr Professor, let me say that I call your roof tree blessed! For beneath it, a Habsburg has been entertained—royally entertained—and has been granted, into the bargain, a superb demonstration of applied psychology. . .

. Good-bye, Elena. (*He kisses her hand.*) No wistful tears, please. (*He crosses to POFFY, who bows and kisses RUDOLF'S hand.*) Good-bye, Poffy. If you sell that medal for a sou less than a thousand francs, I shall be insulted. (*RUDOLF slaps POFFY on the back and crosses to old KRUG, who is by the door at the right.*) Good-bye, my dear friend. Think of me in the mornings. (*He kisses old KRUG on both cheeks and goes out at the right. POFFY and KRUG go up to the window.*)

ANTON (*to ELENA*)

There'll be no trouble. . . .

ELENA

Anton—there's something I want to say . . .

ANTON (*hastily*)

No, there isn't, Elena. You have nothing to say to me. I have only to look at you. (*He takes her hand.*) I must hurry. . . .

ELENA

Yes, Anton—but I wanted to say—when you get to the frontier, ask him to give you back my wedding ring.

ANTON

I shall. And I left a package for you in the hall. Frau Lucher gave it to me. It's your white dress. (*He kisses ELENA'S hand and goes out.*)

KRUG (*at the window*)

A government car—with the shades drawn!

(*ELENA goes over to the table and sits down, wilfully indifferent to old KRUG'S excited reports of what is happening in the street below.*)

ELENA

Sit down, Poffy, and have some breakfast. You must be famished.

POFFY (*crossing to the table*)

I rather imagine that I am. (*POFFY sits down. ELENA looks at the empty dish.*)

KRUG

They're just starting—and the policeman is saluting them!

ELENA

All the kidneys are gone. . . . Father! Ring the bell. I'll tell Kathie to cook some more.

KRUG

Enough for me, too? (*Pressing the bell button.*)

ELENA

Of course.

KRUG

Good! (*He is ambling over to the table.*)

ELENA (*pouring coffee*)

Cream?

POFFY

No, thanks, Elena. I've got out of the habit of cream. (*She hands him the cup.*)

KRUG

You know, Elena—I've never, in all my life, had so much fun!

ELENA

Neither have I. (*She smiles at old KRUG, then sips her coffee.*)

CURTAIN

TRANSCRIBER'S NOTE

The following changes were made to the original text:

Page 8: changed off-stage to offstage

Page 17: changed fireplace to fire-place

Page 39: changed Good-by to Good-bye

Page 75: changed downstage to down-stage and changed Upstage to Up-stage

Other than changing the capitalization of some of the character names, minor variations in spelling and punctuation have been preserved.

[End of *Reunion in Vienna* by Robert Emmet Sherwood]