

The Family Doctor

A full-length play

By Steven Lehrer

Contact:
Steven Lehrer
30 West 60th Street 5M
New York, New York 10023
Phone 212 765 7132
stevenlehrer@hotmail.com
<http://stevenlehrer.com>

CAST

DR. EDUARD BLOCH is a short heavy set older man, stocky, with a walrus moustache twisted at both ends and wavy grey hair. He wears a stiff white collar, a vest, a perky silk bow tie, and double cuffs. His appearance is old world Habsburg.

KLARA HITLER is 47 years old, an intelligent, modest, kindly woman, sad and careworn in Act I but quite sexy in Dr. Bloch's Act II dream. She is tall, with brownish hair, which she keeps neatly plaited, and an oval face with large expressive eyes.

ADOLF HITLER, her only son, is eighteen years old in Act I, with a long pale face and a wispy moustache which covers most of his upper lip. In Act II he is the German Reich Chancellor Hitler familiar to us in photographs.

ALOIS HITLER, Adolf's father, is a huge, ugly, bewhiskered, hulking, powerful man, dressed in a customs officer's uniform. The same actor plays PRIEST, DRILL SERGEANT, and PROFESSOR DR. DR. RASCH.

LEO RAUBAL, Adolf's brother in law, is a small, officious man in a well tailored suit. The same actor plays SHELTER OFFICIAL and Journalist RENATO ATTILLIO BLEIBTREU.

SYNOPSIS

Dr. Eduard Bloch, a Jewish poor people's doctor in Linz, Austria, cares for Adolf Hitler's mother, Klara Hitler, as she dies a painful death from breast cancer in 1907. Three decades later, after he has annexed Austria to the German Reich, Hitler protects Bloch, and allows him to emigrate in 1940. But first, Bloch must turn over Klara Hitler's medical record and two post cards Hitler sent him in 1907 and 1908. Bloch's reluctance to comply almost costs him his life. In his white coat during Act I, Bloch is, under his sympathetic caring demeanor, every inch the successful, self-confident professional man who has accomplished something in life, in contrast to Adolf, who has failed. In Act II, without his white coat and his profession, Bloch is diminished. When he confronts the all powerful Hitler in the last scene, he is submissive, befuddled, confused. The two men have, in effect, exchanged roles.

TAGLINE: The story of the only Jew that Hitler protected from Hitler.

The entire action of the play takes place in Dr. Bloch's Linz consulting room, Act I 1907, Act II 1938-1940.

ACT I

1 SCENE

1

AT RISE:

The stage is in darkness, except for a spotlight on Dr. Eduard Bloch, a short heavy set man in his late sixties, stocky, with a walrus moustache twisted at both ends and wavy grey hair. He wears a stiff white collar, a vest, a perky silk bow tie, and double cuffs. His appearance is old world Habsburg. He is seated in an easy chair in his Bronx apartment. He speaks to the audience as though he is talking to interviewers.

DR. BLOCH

(shaking his finger at audience)

Don't call me Herr Professor Doktor. I am not professor. I am an old Jewish doctor from Austria; a poor people's doctor; a Linz medicaid provider retired to an obscure corner of the Bronx. I know you want to hear about Hitler. Why else would you come here: to climb up five flights of stairs? Believe me, you aren't the first. Excuse me.

(From a pitcher on a table next to his chair, he pours himself a glass of milk, which he sips as he speaks)

Ulcers. They've been with me since my thirties. Like the Hitler family. Probably stomach cancer by now.

In my Linz office I always kept a pitcher of milk on my desk.

(He sips more milk, then
places the glass on table
next to his chair.)

In 1940, I was three days out of Lisbon, bound west for New York in a storm. The British found me. A little before eleven o'clock that night our ship, a small Spanish liner, Marques de Comillas, got orders to stop. British control officers aboard a trawler wanted to examine the passengers. Everyone lined up in the main lounge. Four British officers, wearing life jackets, entered. Grimly they worked their way down the line, examining passports. Everyone was frightened. Many people aboard the ship were fleeing for their lives. They thought they had escaped Europe. Now? No one knew. Perhaps some of us would be taken off the ship. Finally it was my turn. The officer in charge took my passport, glanced at it and looked up, smiling. "You were Hitler's doctor, weren't you?" he asked. He was correct. I knew Adolf Hitler as a boy and a young man. I treated him for minor complaints. I was intimately familiar with the modest surroundings in which he grew up. In 1907, I attended his mother in her final illness.

BLACKOUT.

2

SCENE

2

The lights come up on Dr. Bloch's consulting room, which contains a regular examining table and a white metal gynecologic examining table with chrome stirrups. A medical bookshelf is in one corner. A white supply cabinet with glass doors is next to it. In the center of the room is a roll top desk, at which Dr. Bloch is seated. He wears a white coat and an air of self-confident professional authority. A full pitcher of milk and a glass sit in a corner of the desk.

A comfortably padded chair is at right of the desk. In the chair KLARA HITLER is seated. Klara is 47 years old, a simple, modest, kindly woman, sad and careworn. She is tall, with brownish hair, which she keeps neatly plaited, and a long, oval face with large expressive eyes. As Klara gives Dr. Bloch her medical history, he makes brief notes on a piece of foolscap paper in a folder.

DR. BLOCH

Frau Hitler, please tell me what troubles you.

KLARA

I'm having terrible pain in my breast, Herr Doktor Bloch.

DR. BLOCH

Which breast, please.

KLARA

The right.

DR. BLOCH

Is the pain awakening you at night?

KLARA

In the past few days the pain has been so awful I've hardly slept at all.

DR. BLOCH

Have you been ill before?

KLARA

No, I've been quite healthy, thank the dear Lord.

DR. BLOCH

How old are you?

KLARA

Forty-seven.

DR. BLOCH

Tell me about your family. Do you come from Linz?

KLARA

I come from Spital.

DR. BLOCH

Spittal? The town near the Danube?

KLARA

That's Spittal with two "t"s. Spittal an der Drau, Lower Austria. My Spital has one "t". It's a little village in the south of Upper Austria, about 200 kilometers from here.

DR. BLOCH

I must be more frugal with my "t"s.

KLARA

Not at all, Herr Doktor.

DR. BLOCH

Are you married?

KLARA

I am a widow.

DR. BLOCH

Please tell me about your husband.

KLARA

Alois was a customs official. I was his housekeeper. He married me after the death of his second wife. He died four years ago.

DR. BLOCH

How old was he?

KLARA

(thinks)

Sixty-five.

DR. BLOCH

Much older than you.

KLARA

Twenty-three years.

DR. BLOCH

What happened to his first two wives?

KLARA

They died.

DR. BLOCH

(writing)

Cause of his death?

KLARA

(indifferent, matter of fact)

One morning he went to an inn, had a glass of wine, and dropped dead. They said he had a lung hemorrhage.

DR. BLOCH

Did he have tuberculosis?

KLARA

He might have. There was tuberculosis in his family.

DR. BLOCH

Have you been pregnant?

KLARA

Six times.

DR. BLOCH

(writing)

Living children?

KLARA

Two. My son Adolf is eighteen, my daughter Paula eleven.

DR. BLOCH

What happened to the others?

KLARA

Two sons and a daughter died of diphtheria not long after they were born. Adolf's younger brother, Edmund, died of measles when he was five years old.

DR. BLOCH

Frau Hitler, please pull the screen in front of you, remove your dress, sit on the examining table, and call me when you are ready.

Klara stands, pulls a white rolling screen in a metal frame in front of the examining table, removes her dress and sits on the table.

KLARA

Bitte, Herr Doktor, I am ready.

Dr. Bloch, stethoscope in hand, pulls away the screen. Klara, her bare back to the audience, is undressed to the waist. Bloch begins by tapping her chest, then listening with his stethoscope over both sides of her chest, front and back.

DR. BLOCH

Breathe in deeply...Breathe out...Say "E"...Say "E".

Bloch examines her breasts. The left is normal. When he palpates the right breast, a look of mild surprise passes over his face.

DR. BLOCH

Raise your hands above your head...Hold them in front of you. Hold them behind your head.

Dr. Bloch feels the left armpit with the fingers of his right hand. Nothing.

Then he palpates the right armpit, where he spends a few moments. He looks grave.

DR. BLOCH

You may get dressed again, Frau Hitler.

Dr. Bloch pulls the screen in front of Klara, goes to sink, washes hands, sits at his desk and continues writing. Klara, fully dressed, sits down in the padded chair next to the desk.

KLARA

Is it serious, Herr Doktor?

DR. BLOCH

(hesitates)

We can treat you. You must have an operation.

KLARA

You will remove my breast?

DR. BLOCH

Yes, it must be removed.

(pulls out a prescription pad, writes two prescriptions)

Here is some medicine that will make you feel better. Take one of these pills at bedtime. It will help you sleep.

(hands first prescription to Klara)

Take one of these pills also. It's a pain killer, morphine.

(hands Klara the second prescription)

I will schedule your surgery.

KLARA

Will you please talk to my son, Herr Doktor? I would like him to know.

DR. BLOCH

Of course. Have him come to see me.

3

SCENE

3

ADOLF HITLER sits in the chair next to Dr. Bloch's desk facing Bloch. Hitler is eighteen years old, with a long pale face and a wispy moustache which covers most of his upper lip. He is obviously distraught.

ADOLF

Why does my mother have such pain, Herr Doktor?

DR. BLOCH

Are the pills giving her some relief, Adolf?

ADOLF

A little.

DR. BLOCH

Is she able to sleep?

ADOLF

For the past few nights. What is wrong with her, Herr Doktor? What did you find?

DR. BLOCH

She has a tumor in her breast.

ADOLF

(he hesitates)

Is it a large tumor?

DR. BLOCH

The size of a hen's egg.

ADOLF

(hopefully)

Then you can remove it?

DR. BLOCH

We can, but the surgery will not be simple.

ADOLF

(worried again)

My mother is not old. She can endure it.

DR. BLOCH

The tumor sits against the chest wall. It is fixed to the underlying structures. It does not move. It is invading the chest wall and the rib beneath. Your mother's pain comes from tumor that is penetrating the periosteum, the fibrous covering of the bone, which is filled with nerves.

ADOLF

If you can remove the entire tumor, will she recover?

DR. BLOCH

It has spread. Under her right arm I felt a large hard node, also fixed to the surrounding structures. Her only hope is an operation called a radical mastectomy. An American surgeon in Baltimore named Halsted devised it a few years ago.

ADOLF

Will we need to take Mother to Vienna for the operation, Herr Doktor?

DR. BLOCH

That won't be necessary. A surgeon here in Linz, Dr. Karl Urban, has done many radical mastectomies.

ADOLF

Which hospital?

DR. BLOCH

The Hospital of the Sisters of Mercy. Do you want me to schedule the operation?

ADOLF

(hesitating a moment)

Of course, Herr Doktor. The sooner, the better. Will you attend the surgery?

DR. BLOCH

If you wish, I will be there. I will reserve a bed for your mother on one of the open wards.

ADOLF

(Raises his arm in gesture
that resembles Nazi salute)

Absolutely not! My mother must have a private room.

DR. BLOCH

I will order one. But I must tell you that the operation is risky. It has complications. Your mother may not pull through it.

ADOLF

(He appears to have been
struck by lightning. His
entire face crumples. Tears
flow freely from his eyes.
He fixes Dr. Bloch with a
penetrating, horrified
stare.)

Does my mother have no chance at all?

DR. BLOCH

(obviously uncomfortable to
impart such bad news)

Even with the surgery, there is only a tiny chance she will survive.

4

SCENE

4

*Klara is seated in the padded
chair next to the desk. Dr. Bloch
is listening to her.*

He is making notes in her medical record folder, which has grown thicker.

KLARA

Your pills have helped me, Herr Doktor. I am so grateful.

(short pause)

But if, if something, if something should happen to me during the surgery, I am terribly concerned about Adolf.

DR. BLOCH

Why? I examined him last year when he had influenza. He is a healthy, normal young man.

KLARA

Physically, yes.

DR. BLOCH

Is he in school?

KLARA

(she shakes her head)

Not for the last two years.

DR. BLOCH

What is he doing?

KLARA

He is writing an opera.

DR. BLOCH

An opera?

KLARA

A wonderful opera. He has described it to me.

DR. BLOCH

What is it about?

KLARA

It is set in the Bavarian mountains at the time of the arrival of Christianity. The men who lived on the mountain did not want to accept the new faith. On the contrary!

They had bound themselves by oath to kill the Christian missionaries.

DR. BLOCH
(Klara's dramatic flair has surprised him.)

I see.

KLARA
(rapturous)

There is a Holy Mountain in the background, Herr Doktor. Before it a mighty sacrificial block surrounded by huge oaks; two muscular warriors hold a black bull, which is to be sacrificed, firmly by the horns, and press the beast's powerful head against the hollow in the sacrificial block. Behind them, erect in light-colored robes, stands the priest. He grasps the sword with which he will slaughter the bull. All around, solemn, bearded men, leaning on their shields, their lances ready, are watching the ceremony intently. Suddenly...

DR. BLOCH
What does Adolf live on?

KLARA
He receives an orphan's pension. I give him a little money.

DR. BLOCH
Does he not wish to acquire a profession?

KLARA
Oh, he does. He is trying to become an artist.

DR. BLOCH
(doubtfully)
A painter?

KLARA
Adolf's father tried repeatedly to direct the boy into the civil service.

DR. BLOCH
What happened?

KLARA

They quarreled every night.

BLACKOUT.

*Spotlight on downstage corner.
Alois Hitler, a huge, ugly,
bewhiskered, hulking, powerful
man, dressed in a customs
officer's uniform, pounds and
hammers the cowering Adolf
mercilessly with his fists.*

ALOIS

(screams maniacally in a
drunken rage, waving report
card)

You lazy, worthless creature. You refuse to study. You won't
shame me again. I'll teach you what Professor Huemer can't.

(Alois grabs Adolf by the
neck, shakes and throttles
him, then throws him to the
floor. Adolf lies
motionless.)

Bah!

(Pulls silver flask from hip
pocket. Takes a swig. Storms
off.)

BLACKOUT.

*Dr. Bloch and Klara again at
Bloch's desk.*

KLARA

We thought Alois had killed Adolf.

DR. BLOCH

Such violence is better reserved for the canvas, not the
artist himself.

KLARA

Even with Alois dead and buried, the rest of my family has not let up on my son. Leo Raubal, Adolf's brother in law, is at me constantly.

BLACKOUT.

*Spotlight on downstage corner.
LEO RAUBAL, a small, officious
man in a tailored suit, is
haranguing Klara.*

LEO

An artist's career is rubbish. Adolf should learn something respectable.

KLARA

Leo, please, you must drop this.

LEO

I won't drop it. I won't see a family member slide into the gutter.

KLARA

If Adolf finds you here badgering me...
(Adolf enters. He has
overheard.)

Uh oh.

ADOLF

Raubal, what are you doing here?

LEO

I'm trying to arrange a better life for you.

ADOLF

Don't try to smear me with your Sacher Torte. You're nothing but a petty moron government clerk nailed hand and foot to a customs desk. I'm not a fool like you.

LEO

You must be if you think you'll succeed as an artist.

ADOLF

(furious)

You Pharisee. You're ruining my home for me.

(Adolf punches Leo violently
in the stomach. Leo sinks to
the ground unable to catch
his breath.)

BLACKOUT.

*Lights come up on Clara and Dr.
Bloch at desk as before.*

DR. BLOCH

I hope Leo isn't vengeful.

KLARA

Leo went to Adolf's guardian, Mayrhofer.

DR. BLOCH

Josef Mayrhofer? He's my patient.

KLARA

Adolf planned to support himself in Vienna for a year on the little legacy Alois had left in trust. Leo tried to convince Mayrhofer to intervene. Mayrhofer went to work on me. I tried to convince Adolf.

BLACKOUT.

5 SCENE

5

*A spotlight comes up on a
downstage corner of set. Adolf
and Klara face one another.*

ADOLF

I am going to Vienna.

KLARA

What will you do?

ADOLF

What did Papa do?

KLARA

You know what he did. He was very young. He learned a trade in Vienna. He learned to be a cobbler.

ADOLF

If he hadn't gone to Vienna, what would have become of him?

KLARA

How will you live? You are already down ten crowns and you're still in Linz.

ADOLF

(holds up lottery ticket)

I have carefully allocated where each crown of my winnings will go.

(pulls from pocket and
carefully unfolds an inky
spreadsheet)

KLARA

My dear son, you are unique. Most people who buy a lottery ticket derive pleasure dreaming of their tiny chance of winning. I have never seen such a complex allocation of pure hope and nothing else.

ADOLF

The first prize represents a lot of money. I will not spend it thoughtlessly.

KLARA

(skeptically)

Of course not.

ADOLF

I will rent a flat on the Ringstrasse near the Opera. Nothing too opulent. Comfortable.

KLARA

Very sensible.

ADOLF

(Reaches into pocket, pulls
out and unfolds floor plan)

Here is my ideal floor plan. The furniture will be elegant,
of superior quality, made by the town's leading craftsmen. No
cheap, mass-produced kitsch in my home.

KLARA

(Putting on her reading
glasses, staring hard at
floor plan)

Charming. You've drawn each piece of furniture to scale.

ADOLF

Do you see the wall decorations?

KLARA

Tasteful. What is this fabric tacked to the corner?

ADOLF

The draperies.

KLARA

You've thought of everything.

ADOLF

Simplicity will be the keynote of my home. Winning the
lottery will not change the way I live. I will wear good
clothes. Nothing ostentatious. A lady housekeeper will
receive all guests with studied non-chalance. She will be a
refined, elderly lady, to rule out any expectations or
intentions which might interfere with my artistic goals.

KLARA

Expectations or intentions? Do you mean love?

BLACKOUT.

A spotlight comes up on Dr. Bloch
in his Bronx apartment easy chair.

DR. BLOCH

Adolf didn't win the lottery. On the day of the draw his anger was volcanic.

BLACKOUT.

Spotlight comes up on Adolf and Klara; they are as before.

ADOLF

(in a rage, spitting and wildly gesticulating, waving the list of winners, reminiscent of his rages at the Jews in filmed speeches as Führer)

Thieves! Robbers!

KLARA

You didn't win.

ADOLF

The state lottery. It should be called the state swindle.

KLARA

My dear son, you knew how small your chance of winning was when you bought the ticket.

ADOLF

The state lottery is nothing but organized exploitation of human credulity.

KLARA

Do you think your income as an artist in Vienna will be more certain?

ADOLF

The state lottery is a fraud. The entire Empire is a fraud.
(dripping sarcasm)
What others achieve by war, you, happy Austria, achieve by marriage, you whore.

KLARA

I am concerned with your future. Austria can look after itself.

ADOLF

The Habsburg Empire, this patchwork of ten or twelve, or God knows how many nations, Poles, Czechs, Magyars, Ruthenes, Croats, Slavs...

KLARA

Don't forget the Jews.

ADOLF

This monster built up by Habsburg marriages. It cheats poor devils out of their last few crowns.

KLARA

The Kaiser did not hold a gun to your head and force you to buy the ticket. Yet it does not occur to you to reproach yourself. You took it for granted that the first prize belonged to you by right.

ADOLF

Not to me alone. I would have used some of the money to rebuild Linz. I would have constructed a magnificent new bridge over the Danube. I would have tripled the finances of the Linz Opera. They could have performed Wagner non-stop.

KLARA

(becoming exasperated--
arguing with Adolf is
useless)

You brooded for hours over the conditions of the Lottery. You calculated exactly how small your chances were. I watched you. I can find no explanation for this contradiction in your character. You are as stubborn as your father was.

ADOLF

I'm eighteen. How much longer can I live at home? My own mother is keeping me. The shame is killing me.

KLARA

Herr Mayrhofer, the worthy peasant, has found an apprenticeship for you.

ADOLF

May I ask what kind?

KLARA

A baker.

ADOLF

(incredulous)

I don't believe it.

KLARA

Soon you will be a pastry chef.

(She produces a chef's cap and places it lovingly on Adolf's head.)

ADOLF

I'm ill. I think I'm going to vomit.

KLARA

You will have a trade, a safe haven. As an artist you would starve to death on the streets of Vienna. You must enroll in a school to learn a vocation.

ADOLF

I will enroll in a school.

KLARA

What school?

ADOLF

The Academy of Fine Arts.

KLARA

(receptive)

In Vienna?

ADOLF

It's on the Schillerplatz.

KLARA

What will you study?

ADOLF

Painting.

(He angrily pulls off chef's
cap, throws it to floor,
stomps it.)

BLACKOUT.

*Dr. Bloch and Klara at desk as
before.*

KLARA

I cannot stop worrying about Adolf. What will become of him
when I am gone?

DR. BLOCH

The operation is risky, of course. I would be lying if I told
you otherwise. But to do nothing would be worse. Dr. Urban is
a magnificent surgeon. I have seen cases more serious than
yours that he operated. Today they are fine. Your procedure
will be minor surgery compared to theirs.

KLARA

With all due respect, Herr Doktor, minor surgery is surgery
done on somebody else.

7 SCENE

7

*Dr. Bloch's consulting room.
Bloch sits at desk facing Adolf,
whose face is tired, eyes red,
tears flowing freely.*

DR. BLOCH

The operation went well.

ADOLF

How long did it take?

DR. BLOCH
An hour.

ADOLF
When was it over?

DR. BLOCH
(pulls pocket watch from vest pocket)
Two hours ago.

ADOLF
How long must my mother remain in hospital?

DR. BLOCH
Probably twenty days.

ADOLF
How much will that cost?

DR. BLOCH
A hundred kronen.

ADOLF
I must give up my piano lessons.

DR. BLOCH
Have you been studying long?

ADOLF
Three months.

DR. BLOCH
What are you playing?

ADOLF
I've finally mastered *Chopsticks*.

DR. BLOCH
You should throw yourself into finger exercises. My wife is an excellent pianist. She plays through *Hanon* and *Czerny* every day.

ADOLF

A hundred kronen is one month's widow's pension. An hour a week with Herr Prewatsky is out of the question. With or without *Hanon* and *Czerny*.

DR. BLOCH

For the next month, I will come to your apartment daily to change the dressing on the wound.

ADOLF

Herr Doktor, you are very kind.

DR. BLOCH

We must do everything we can.

ADOLF

(struggling to control
himself, stifling a sob)

Tell me truly: Must my mother suffer?

BLACKOUT.

8

SCENE

8

*Lights come up on Dr. Bloch in
his Bronx easy chair.*

DR. BLOCH

My house calls provided me with an indelible impression of Klara Hitler: *Hausfrau* par excellence. Her modestly furnished apartment was excruciatingly clean. It gleamed. Not a fleck of dust on a table or chair. Not a crumb of dirt on the polished floors. The window panes glistened, without a trace of grime. Frau Hitler herself, as immaculate as her home, was totally resigned to the dark fate she sensed: agonizing death. She worried only about her son.

BLACKOUT.

*Lights come up on Dr. Bloch's
consultation room.*

Klara is dressing behind screen, then sits in chair. Dr. Bloch has examined her and is washing his hands. He sits down at his desk and faces her, making notes in her medical chart, which is even thicker than before.

DR. BLOCH

You're doing well. All the surgical incisions are completely healed. Do you have any pain, any discomfort?

KLARA

(listless, resigned, staring off into space rather than at Dr. Bloch)

No, Herr Doktor.

DR. BLOCH

You have lost a little weight. Is your appetite good?

KLARA

(mechanically)

Yes, Herr Doktor.

DR. BLOCH

Are you sleeping well?

KLARA

Yes, Herr Doktor.

DR. BLOCH

Would you like more veronal?

KLARA

No, thank you.

DR. BLOCH

Do you still have pain? Would you like more morphine?

KLARA

No, thank you.

DR. BLOCH

(after an awkward pause)

Is something bothering you?

KLARA

Not a word from Adolf since he left for Vienna. Not a letter. Not a card. I am beside myself with worry.

DR. BLOCH

(opens desk drawer, takes out
post card)

Adolf sent me this card with a picture of the *Burgtheater*.

(puts on reading glasses and
reads from card)

"Heartfelt greetings from my trip to Vienna. Your eternally grateful patient, Adolf Hitler."

(He hands the card to Klara,
who reads it eagerly)

KLARA

If only he had studied at the technical school in Linz. He would have graduated by now.

DR. BLOCH

He is a fine young man. He will make his way in the world, I can assure you.

KLARA

Why his crazy journey to Vienna? Instead of holding on to his little legacy, he's frittering it away. And after that? Nothing will come of his painting. His opera-writing doesn't earn anything either. I can't help him. I've barely enough to live on.

DR. BLOCH

You need to think of your own recovery. In Vienna, Adolf must fend for himself.

KLARA

I shall not live to see him succeed.

BLACKOUT.

*Spotlight on Dr. Bloch in his
Bronx easy chair.*

DR. BLOCH

Frau Hitler was right. With Adolf gone, she let herself go. She had nothing to live for. When I saw her she appeared old and more frail. Her face was heavily lined, her eyes sunken. A few months after surgery, her tumor recurred in the surgical scar. Even today with orthovoltage radiation treatment, a scar recurrence is very difficult to manage. In those days it was a disaster, a stinking, bleeding tumor on the chest wall, oozing pus.

(he grimaces, as though he
can still smell the pus)

An evil-smelling mess.

*Spotlight down, lights come up on
Dr. Bloch at desk and Adolf in
chair.*

ADOLF

Incurable? What do you mean by that? Not that the cancer is incurable; doctors aren't capable of curing it. My mother isn't old. Forty-seven isn't an age when you give up hope. As soon as you doctors can't do anything, you call it incurable.

DR. BLOCH

(kindly, patiently, wearily;
as a doctor he has
encountered similar scenes
countless times)

I will do everything for your mother that I can.

ADOLF

In life I have failed completely. Now this.

DR. BLOCH

I'm sorry.

ADOLF

Not as sorry as I am. The general painting school of the Academy rejected me. I went to see the rector and demanded to know why.

DR. BLOCH

What did he say?

ADOLF

(mimicking the arrogant
rector)

Young man, the drawings you have submitted show clearly that you have no aptitude for painting. Ahem! Your ability seems to lie in the field of architecture. You should not go to the painting school, but rather to the school of architecture of the Academy.

DR. BLOCH

Architecture? Interesting.

ADOLF

I told the wretch I had never been to a school for building, or received any training in architecture.

DR. BLOCH

What was his response?

ADOLF

He looked at the architectural drawings I submitted and didn't believe me.

DR. BLOCH

Nevertheless, the situation sounds promising.

ADOLF

Promising? Impossible. My stupidity, avoiding technical school, took its bitter revenge. Attendance at the school of architecture of the Academy is dependent on attendance at a technical school for building. Entrance to the technical school hinges on passing the matriculation examination at a secondary school. I didn't fulfil any of these conditions.

DR. BLOCH

(sympathetic)

You are too hard on yourself. It's a fine thing you are doing, coming home to care for your mother.

ADOLF

(screaming)

They rejected me, they threw me out, they turned me down.

DR. BLOCH

Have you told your mother?

ADOLF

What are you thinking of? How could I burden my dying mother with this *schweinerei*?

DR. BLOCH

(softly)

I was going to suggest that you didn't tell her.

ADOLF

(screaming and gesticulating)

The Academy. A pack of old-fashioned fossilized civil servants, bureaucrats, devoid of understanding, fetid lumps of flesh. The whole Academy ought to be blown up.

(Dr. Bloch sits quietly, does not respond. Adolf pauses, then begins respectfully:)

My mother's pain is getting worse, Herr Doktor. Morphine isn't helping as much. Even with veronal she can hardly sleep at night. Do you have anything else for her?

DR. BLOCH

(hesitantly)

We can try one other treatment.

ADOLF

What treatment?

DR. BLOCH

Iodoform.

ADOLF

Iodoform? What is it?

DR. BLOCH

Iodoform is an iodine compound, chemically similar to chloroform, but with iodine replacing chlorine.

ADOLF

I've never heard of it.

DR. BLOCH

It was originally used as a disinfectant. Recently, we've begun using it as a dressing for wounds, sores, and tumors, like the one on your mother's chest.

ADOLF

Of course we should try it. Do you have any books about it I could read? I would like to learn more.

DR. BLOCH

(surprised, hesitates, then goes to bookshelf, pulls down thick heavily bound book, thumbs through to page on iodoform)

Here is the *Textbook of Practical Therapeutics*.

(Hands open book to Adolf, pointing to entry)

ADOLF

(locates entry, reads from book)

"Iodoform occurs in small yellow colored crystals which possess a powerful characteristic, penetrating odor and sweet taste. It is soluble in alcohol, ether, chloroform, benzol, and in fixed and volatile oils, but is insoluble in water."

DR. BLOCH

(reading over Adolf's shoulder, points with forefinger at a paragraph)

Here is the part you are interested in: "Iodoform is used chiefly as a surgical dressing. It is antiseptic.

When used locally, iodoform does good by absorbing the liquids of the wound, and thereby removing the nidus for germ-growth. When applied to large moist surfaces iodoform gives off free iodine and acts as a protective. Iodoform when applied to a wound acts by inducing chemical changes in bacterial toxins."

ADOLF

How do you apply the iodoform?

DR. BLOCH

(goes to medicine cabinet,
pulls out large labeled jar
filled with gauze pads and a
second opaque closed jar)

It comes already prepared as gauze pads.

(holds up opaque jar)

I also have it as ointment, but I prefer the gauze pads.

ADOLF

(eagerly reading from book)

What about this: "Studies by von Witzleben et al have shown that in high doses iodoform is tumoricidal. Von Witzleben has reported two cases of chest wall breast cancer recurrence in which daily application of topical iodoform ointment for two weeks caused tumor shrinkage and disappearance."

DR. BLOCH

(rolls his eyes and scoffs)

I saw von Witzleben's iodoform ointment article in the *Deutsche Medizinische Wochenschrift* when it appeared. Von Witzleben is at the Charité Hospital in Berlin. Every week he thinks he has found the cure for cancer and he's mad for ink. I heard him speak at a meeting of the Vienna Medical Society. You could be killed if you accidentally got between him and a newspaper reporter. You'd have a better chance between a mother bear and her cub.

ADOLF

Why not try the ointment? What do we have to lose?

DR. BLOCH

More than you might think. Believe me, the gauze is best. Please bring your mother in tomorrow morning. I will start the iodoform then.

10

SCENE

10

Dr. Bloch's consulting room the next morning. Klara, looking weak, pale and ill, is sitting on the examining table in a bathrobe. Her eyes are glassy. She seems to notice very little. Adolf and Dr. Bloch are nearby.

DR. BLOCH

She's very pale. Is the tumor bleeding?

ADOLF

The dressing is soaked with blood.

DR. BLOCH

(He goes to the corner of the room and wheels to center an electrical device, with a red button and a cautery connected to it by a wire.)

If I can see a bleeding point I will cauterize it.

(He holds up the cautery and pushes the button. The box hums. In a moment the cautery turns red hot and emits some smoke. He pulls the screen in front of Klara.)

Frau Hitler, could you please open up your bathrobe.

(He goes behind screen and in a moment emerges with a large padded dressing, totally soaked with blood and pus.)

Holding the dressing
gingerly by the edge he
drops it into a trash can
and quickly replaces the
lid. He addresses Adolf.)

I will cauterize two bleeding points at the edge of the
tumor.

ADOLF

Do what you must.

DR. BLOCH

If I can stop the blood loss your mother may regain some
strength.

(He rolls the cautery behind
the screen)

Frau Hitler, this may hurt a little.

The cautery hums. There is a
hissing burning sound. Smoke and
the smell of burning flesh emerge
from behind the curtain. Klara
emits a long wail of pain.

DR. BLOCH

One bleeding point closed.

The cautery hums. Again the hissing
burning sound. Smoke and the smell
of burning flesh. Klara emits a
series of blood-curdling shrieks of
unendurable pain.

DR. BLOCH

(to Adolf)

Success. I have closed the second bleeding point.

ADOLF

Yesterday evening the priest gave her last rites.

DR. BLOCH

Now for the iodoform.

(Bloch goes to cabinet and
brings back large labeled
gauze filled bottle)

ADOLF

Aren't you going to use the ointment, too?

DR. BLOCH

(hesitates)

The ointment is toxic. In her condition it might kill her
straight away.

ADOLF

Or it might cure her. Wouldn't the priest be surprised.

DR. BLOCH

We cannot take the chance.

ADOLF

Surely you exaggerate, Herr Doktor.

Dr. Bloch brings down *Textbook of
Practical Therapeutics* from
bookshelf, opens to iodoform
article; pointing to paragraph
hands book to Adolf

ADOLF

(reading)

"Iodoform Poisoning: If applied to an absorbing surface in
susceptible individuals, iodoform may cause general systemic
poisoning. The first symptom is wild, uncontrollable thirst.
Headache and vomiting are followed by trembling, insomnia,
loss of memory, loss of appetite, and rapid pulse. Finally,
convulsive movements and maniacal delirium alternate with
coma."

DR. BLOCH

Are you convinced? I have seen iodoform poisoning, the wild
thirst, the delirium. I do not wish to see it again.

ADOLF

The book refers to susceptible individuals. My mother has never been a susceptible individual. I want her to have the ointment and the gauze. I want you to cure her.

DR. BLOCH

(softly)

I should never let a patient's family tell me how to practice medicine.

ADOLF

I am not telling you. I am only suggesting.

After a moment's hesitation, Bloch goes to the cabinet, brings back the jar of iodoform ointment.

ADOLF

You will cure her, Herr Doktor. Mark my words.

Bloch reluctantly opens the jar, at the same time giving Adolf a very rueful look.

11 SCENE

11

*Dr. Bloch's consulting room.
Klara sits on the examining table much sicker than the day before. She sweats with fever, trembles, and is barely conscious of her surroundings. A worried Adolf stands nearby as Bloch examines her.*

DR. BLOCH

How do you feel, Frau Hitler? Better than yesterday?

KLARA

(barely audible murmur)

I am very thirsty, Herr Doktor.

ADOLF

I think she may be improving.

KLARA

May I have a bit of your milk?

(points to milk pitcher on
desk)

Dr. Bloch picks up the pitcher and
is about to fill the glass next to
it.

KLARA

Please bring me the pitcher.

Dr. Bloch hands Klara the pitcher.
It is a magician's magic milk
pitcher, containing a transparent
liner, giving the illusion that an
entire pitcher of milk has been
poured when in fact nothing has
been poured. Klara takes the full
pitcher and appears to gulp down
its entire contents. Dr. Bloch,
quite worried, takes the empty
pitcher, holds it up for Adolf to
see. Suddenly Klara starts to gag
as though she is going to vomit.
Dr. Bloch puts the pitcher in front
of her. She retches convulsively
into it.

DR. BLOCH

(puts hand on Klara's
forehead)

I must take her temperature. She seems to have fever.

(Dr. Bloch fetches a
thermometer, places it in
Klara's mouth. She has a
sudden spasm of pain and
bites the thermometer. The
outer half falls to the
floor.)

Dr. Bloch pulls a white handkerchief out of his pocket.)

Please try to spit out the glass.

Klara spits. Blood gushes from her mouth along with the broken end of the thermometer.

DR. BLOCH

She is toxic from the iodoform.

ADOLF

Are you certain?

Dr. Bloch stares speechless at Adolf.

ADOLF

Has it helped her tumor?

DR. BLOCH

We must look.

Dr. Bloch pulls the screen in front of her. He emerges from behind it with the large wound dressing, again drenched with blood and pus, which he drops in the waste can.

ADOLF

(going behind the screen to look)

The tumor is cleaner and smaller, not nearly as much infection.

DR. BLOCH

What would you expect? With that much iodoform I could have disinfected the entire Linz sewer system.

ADOLF

Today you must apply even more.

DR. BLOCH

What? Are you crazy? Another dose of iodoform will kill your mother.

ADOLF

You're curing her, Herr Doktor.

DR. BLOCH

My dear boy, there is no curing a tumor like this. I try to keep your mother comfortable. That is all I can do.

ADOLF

More iodoform. You must apply more. My mother can withstand it. A few more applications and the tumor will be gone.

DR. BLOCH

No!

ADOLF

Yes!

DR. BLOCH

You're demanding I commit murder. I refuse.

Adolf walks to medicine cabinet, brings back iodoform jars, and sets them down in front of Bloch. For a moment Bloch and Adolf stare each other down, in a battle of wills. After a moment, Adolf cows the hapless Bloch.

DR. BLOCH

I am letting a patient's son tell me how to practice medicine. What is wrong with me?

ADOLF

You will cure her.

Shaking his head sadly, Bloch opens the jars, takes them behind the curtain. After a moment, Klara screams in pain.

*Spotlight on Dr. Bloch in his
Bronx easy chair.*

DR. BLOCH

Klara Hitler clung tenuously to life for a few more days, completely bedridden. I was amazed she survived as long as she did. Adolf was by her side continually.

*Spotlight down on Dr. Bloch,
spotlight up on downstage corner.
Klara, groaning with pain and
very ill, almost unable to speak,
lies on her back in a simple iron-
frame bed, her head on a pillow.
Adolf is on his knees next to her
in a sky blue kitchen apron,
scrubbing the floor.*

ADOLF

It's freezing outside. This kitchen is the only warm spot in our entire apartment.

KLARA

(barely a whisper)

I complained last year. The landlord told me that too much heat in the wintertime is a danger to health.

ADOLF

Whose health? No matter. Now that I have pushed the kitchen cupboard into the living room, there is plenty of space for your bed.

KLARA

Why have you dragged the living room couch into the kitchen?

ADOLF

I will sleep on it. I will be near you, should you need anything during the night.

KLARA

You are a darling son.

ADOLF

Did you like the Tafelspitz I cooked for you last night?

KLARA

Delicious. You can do anything. I couldn't have prepared it better.

ADOLF

I will cook all your favorite dishes.

KLARA

Since you came home, I have never had such a good appetite.

Klara begins to heave and vomit.
Adolf rushes for a basin to put in
front of her.

BLACKOUT.

*Lights up on Dr. Bloch in Bronx
easy chair.*

DR. BLOCH

Klara Hitler died the next day. For the last time, I drove my carriage to her apartment in Urfahr, to sign the death certificate. Adolf had obviously passed a sleepless night. As I entered the kitchen, he was in the process of completing a sketch of his mother on her death bed. I sat for a while with the family and tried to give them some comfort.

(pause; Bloch looks very sad,
as though his memories still
disturb him)

I didn't go to the funeral. Klara Hitler suffered one of the most painful, agonizing deaths I have ever attended as a doctor. A day after the burial, Christmas Eve, Adolf came to my office.

*Lights down on Dr. Bloch in easy
chair.*

Lights up on consulting room. Dr. Bloch sits at his desk, Adolf, dressed in mourning, in the adjacent chair. Both men are understandably subdued.

DR. BLOCH

You have my deepest sympathy.

ADOLF

We buried mother yesterday.

DR. BLOCH

Her death was a blessing. If she had lived longer, her pain would have been unbearable. Even morphine wouldn't have helped.

ADOLF

She is in the cemetery in Leonding, next to my father and my little brother Edmund.

DR. BLOCH

I know that cemetery, by the church, the *Alte Pfarrkirche*. A peaceful spot.

ADOLF

I selected the coffin myself. Polished hardwood with metal fittings. I spared no expense.

DR. BLOCH

(opens desk drawer, pulls out Klara's thick medical file, hands Adolf a page of the record)

I came to your apartment 42 times, sometimes twice daily. You see I'm charging the same for a house call as for an office visit. The total is at the bottom.

ADOLF

You are very kind. The coffin cost more.

DR. BLOCH

Here are the receipts for the iodoform. It is quite expensive.

ADOLF

No matter. It was our last hope.

DR. BLOCH

If you are not able to pay, I would be willing...

ADOLF

(interrupting)

You shall receive every penny.

(pulling out wallet, from
which he carefully counts
out bills)

DR. BLOCH

Won't you need it for other expenses? You do not...

ADOLF

(finishes counting out money,
hands it to a reluctant Dr.
Bloch)

There. You are paid in full.

DR. BLOCH

Thank you.

ADOLF

You did your best.

DR. BLOCH

What are your plans?

ADOLF

I have an appointment with my guardian, Herr Meyrhofer. A wasted hour, I'm sure. He will also ask me about my plans.

(mimicking the elderly
Meyrhofer)

You won't be going to school or studying? No orphan's pension for you, my lad. You must earn your bread by the sweat of your brow.

Dr. Bloch and Adolf sit quietly for a moment. Adolf stands, bows, and extends his hand to Dr. Bloch, who stands and offers his hand.

ADOLF

(very emotional, still
bowing, pressing Dr. Bloch's
hand in both of his)

Herr Doktor, I am eternally grateful to you.

BLACKOUT.

13

SCENE

13

*Spotlight on Dr. Bloch in Bronx
easy chair.*

DR. BLOCH

A month later, Adolf left for Vienna. I received one more card from him, a new year's greeting: "Prosit Neujahr," toast the new year. On the front, Adolf had drawn a tipsy Capucin monk, wine glass in hand. On the back he wrote, "Hearty new year's wishes from your eternally grateful Adolf Hitler." Adolf may have been grateful, but he wasn't hearty at all. He had hit rock bottom in Vienna. Winter came early. He was living in the street, sleeping on park benches. He earned a few crowns shoveling snow, but was too undernourished and weak to shovel for long. He did no better as a porter in the train station.

Adolf enters in tattered winter coat and hat, huffing and puffing, laboriously dragging an enormous heavy steamer trunk across the stage. In the middle of the stage he stops to rest, panting. He stares malignantly at audience.

ADOLF

I think I see some Jews.

(Drags trunk offstage and
disappears)

DR. BLOCH

Adolf's appearance was so bad that he frightened off most of his potential customers. Even at begging he was a flop.

Lights down on Dr. Bloch. Lights up on Hitler and well-nourished priest (same actor who plays ALOIS HITLER in scene 4)

ADOLF

(Hand out, palm up)

Praise be to Jesus, father.

PRIEST

Praise be to Jesus, my son.

(hands Adolf a copper penny
and starts off)

ADOLF

A penny!

PRIEST

Blessed are the poor, for they shall inherit the earth.

ADOLF

I won't wait much longer.

Lights down on Adolf, lights up on Dr. Bloch in Bronx easy chair)

DR. BLOCH

On a bitterly cold night in December Adolf tried to get admitted to the homeless shelter in Meidling.

*Lights down on Dr. Bloch.
Spotlight on Adolf and SHELTER
OFFICIAL (the same actor who
plays LEO in scene 4).*

SHELTER OFFICIAL
(consulting his clipboard)
You're in luck. We have one more bed.

ADOLF
(in tattered winter coat and
hat covered with snow,
coughing, shivering
uncontrollably)

Thank God.

SHELTER OFFICIAL
(holding up his hand)
One moment. Open your coat and unbutton your shirt.
(Draws on rubber gloves.
Pulls open Adolf's coat and
shirt to look at his skin)
I thought so. You're infested with lice. I can't admit you.

ADOLF
Please. I'll freeze to death.

SHELTER OFFICIAL
We ran out of de-lousing powder an hour ago.

Exhausted, Adolf sinks to his
knees.

SHELTER OFFICIAL
Wait a minute. I might have one can left.
(Disappears for a moment,
returns triumphantly holding
can of de-lousing powder)

*Lights down on Adolf and Shelter
Official, lights up on Dr. Bloch
in Bronx easy chair.*

DR. BLOCH

Adolf was lucky. People froze to death on the sidewalk outside the door of the Meidling shelter. The newspapers were outraged when it happened, but nobody did anything. After a few weeks, Adolf moved from Meidling to the men's shelter on Meldemannstrasse. He made a decent living copying architectural scenes in watercolor from postcards and selling his copies to Jewish picture frame dealers. He left Vienna for Munich in 1913 and enlisted in the German army when war broke out in August 1914.

Lights down on Dr. Bloch. Lights up on Adolf, in private's uniform, holding rifle, with drill sergeant (the same actor who plays ALOIS and PRIEST).

DRILL SERGEANT

Ten hut!

Adolf snaps to attention.

DRILL SERGEANT

About face.

Adolf turns to face Drill Sergeant.

DRILL SERGEANT

Present arms.

Adolf fumbles with rifle. He seems confused about what to do with it.

DRILL SERGEANT

Private, that's not a paintbrush. Have you ever fired a gun?

ADOLF

Not recently.

DRILL SERGEANT

Not recently, sir!

ADOLF

Whatever.

DRILL SERGEANT

(disgusted)

We'll make a messenger out of you. With a rifle in your hands, you'd be more dangerous to us than the enemy.

Lights down on Adolf and Drill Sergeant, spotlight on Dr. Bloch in Bronx easy chair.

DR. BLOCH

Adolf was a brave soldier. His commander, Lieutenant Hugo Gutmann, a Jew, recommended Adolf for a first class Iron Cross. He duly received his Iron Cross and proudly wore it. In 1918, Adolf was gassed and temporarily blinded. As he lay in hospital at Pasewalk, he heard that Germany had asked for an armistice. Sightless, in his hospital bed, he decided to become a politician. The world soon came to know him. A few years later, he re-entered my life as well.

BLACKOUT.

ACT TWO

14 SCENE

14

AT RISE:

A movie screen is downstage, in front of Dr. Bloch's office set. On the screen is German newsreel clip of the Nazis rolling into Austria, March 1938, cheering crowds, Hitler standing in his six wheel Mercedes. Film stops. Screen rises. Spotlight on Dr. Bloch in his Bronx easy chair.

DR. BLOCH

The German Reich annexed Austria, March 12, 1938. A few days later Adolf visited Linz on the way to his triumphal entry into Vienna. The public square in Linz, a block from my home on Landstrasse, was in turmoil. I stood at my window as Adolf's procession arrived, a massive, open, black Mercedes, a six-wheeled monster, flanked by motorcycles. Even after thirty years, Adolf didn't look much different, except that his mustache was smaller. He smiled, waved, gave the Nazi salute to the people who crowded the street. Then, for a moment he glanced up at my window. I doubt that he saw me. My problems quickly began.

Dr. Bloch is seated at his desk. He no longer wears his white coat and looks diminished. RENATO ATTILLIO BLEIBTREU sits in the padded chair (the same actor who played LEO RAUBAL and SHELTER OFFICIAL). Bleibtreu is smooth and charming.

DR. BLOCH

(He takes calling card from Bleibtreu and reads it out loud)

Renato Attilio Bleibtreu. My son-in-law, Dr. Kren, told me you had visited him.

BLEIBTREU

Yes, it was a pleasure. As I mentioned to Dr. Kren, I am on the staff of Rudolf Hess, the Führer's Deputy. I am engaged in a special task for the Herr Direktor of the Munich Main Archive of the National Socialist German Workers' Party.

DR. BLOCH

I was puzzled that you went to Dr. Kren, rather than coming to me directly.

BLEIBTREU

No puzzle, Herr Doktor. I didn't want to suddenly rain down upon you unannounced, like snow from the blue sky.

DR. BLOCH

You are very considerate.

BLEIBTREU

I had no idea where you lived. I went to the Linz newspapers to see if someone could give me an introduction, but they refused.

DR. BLOCH

Since I closed my medical practice in October, perhaps I am no longer as easy to find.

BLEIBTREU

You are not seeing patients?

DR. BLOCH

There are no patients for me to see. After 38 years of practice in Linz, the source of my patients has dried up. The new laws allow Jewish doctors to see only Jewish patients. There are precious few Jews left in Linz.

BLEIBTREU

The Jewish journalists are gone, certainly.

DR. BLOCH

Journalists? Your name is familiar to me. I seem to recall an article you wrote for the Free Press in Vienna.

BLEIBTREU

You have an excellent memory.

DR. BLOCH

Was it about Chancellor Dollfuss?

BLEIBTREU

Exactly.

DR. BLOCH

Wasn't he a tiny man? Were you the one who named him *the jockey*?

BLEIBTREU

Oh, no. Until he was assassinated, I wrote articles extolling him. They were what the Free Press wanted.

DR. BLOCH

Now his murderers employ you.

BLEIBTREU

(cheerfully)

I am apolitical. Neutral. I blow with the prevailing wind.

DR. BLOCH

One must, in order to survive these days.

BLEIBTREU

For the party archive in Munich, I am collecting reminiscences of people who played a role in the Führer's early life.

DR. BLOCH

You've definitely come to the right place.

BLEIBTREU

I have already interviewed Herr Prewatsky, the Führer's piano teacher.

DR. BLOCH

After three months of lessons, Adolf mastered *Chopsticks*.

BLEIBTREU

The Führer presented a magnificent Bösendorfer grand piano to Herr Prawatsky.

DR. BLOCH

Have you interviewed Professor Huemer, the French teacher?

BLEIBTREU

He is next on my list.

DR. BLOCH

Don't expect too much. Adolf once told me that his French classes were a total waste of time.

BLEIBTREU

You certainly appear to be my most valuable source. The citizens of Linz, for the most part, are close-mouthed and venal. One old lady wanted a hundred marks for a yellowing newspaper death notice of the Führer's mother.

DR. BLOCH

Are you planning to archive all the information you collect?

BLEIBTREU

Oh, no. I am working on a book about the Führer's youth.

DR. BLOCH

I should have known.

BLEIBTREU

I will include a large section describing your role as the Führer's family doctor, how you treated the Führer as a youth.

DR. BLOCH

You're going to tell people that the Hitler family doctor was a Jew?

BLEIBTREU

My dear Herr Doktor, the Führer doesn't feel that way at all. I was at his house in Berchtesgaden two weeks ago. Do you know what the Führer asked me?

DR. BLOCH

(imitating Hitler)

Bleibtreu, what are you doing here? Why aren't you at home writing?

BLEIBTREU

The Führer asked about Linz and about you. How is my old family doctor, Dr. Bloch? Is he still alive? Is he treating patients? Ja, he is an exception, a noble Jew. If all Jews were like him there would be no anti-Semitism.

DR. BLOCH

I'm surprised.

BLEIBTREU

Not as surprised as some of the Führer's guests that day. They were not pleased, to put it mildly, hearing the Führer praise a Jew.

DR. BLOCH

Nobody in Linz is praising Jews. I can attest to that fact personally.

BLEIBTREU

Would you like to write down your memories of the Führer and his family for the party archive? They would be a welcome addition. We would value them highly. I would certainly cite them in my book.

DR. BLOCH

I will try. Even without my medical practice, I've been a little busy of late.

BLEIBTREU

What occupies you?

DR. BLOCH

Perhaps you know Max Hirschfeld, the merchant. He was head of the Jewish Burial Society. When the Gestapo arrived, they made him Commissioner of Jewish Affairs. He asked me to help at the burial society. We've had a rash of Jewish suicides since the annexation. The Society is overwhelmed. A few weeks ago even Dr. Kohn, the Jewish coroner, killed himself after the Nazis cashiered him.

BLEIBTREU

What method did he use? Pardon me. I have trouble suppressing my inner journalist.

DR. BLOCH

Veronal overdose. Swallowed a whole bottle of sleeping pills. Gas is popular too. Hanging. Gunshot wounds of the head. They put the pistol in their mouths and blow their brains out. Not much left for the undertaker to work with.

BLEIBTREU

I have one other question.

DR. BLOCH

Yes?

BLEIBTREU

You have two postcards the Führer sent you thirty years ago.

DR. BLOCH

You know about my two postcards? My goodness.

BLEIBTREU

We would like them for the party archive. I of course will write you out a receipt for them.

DR. BLOCH

Why would I still have them? Over the years I received hundreds of cards and letters from patients and former patients. I never saved any of them. When Adolf sent me the postcards, he was one of many people I had treated. He did not seem to me exceptional.

BLEIBTREU

You have Frau Klara Hitler's medical record. We would like it for the archive, too.

DR. BLOCH

A thirty year old medical record? Who keeps medical records of a deceased patient for thirty years?

BLEIBTREU

So you are telling me you have neither the two postcards nor the medical chart?

DR. BLOCH

When I closed my practice, I had no further need for any medical records. My Jewish patients are no longer in Linz. The non-Jewish ones went looking for another doctor well before the annexation. As for the postcards, I might have put them in the medical chart. Maybe not. I really don't remember.

BLEIBTREU

(skeptical)

So that is your final answer? You have nothing of the Führer's for the party archive?

In answer, Bloch says nothing,
holds out hands palms up.

BLEIBTREU

You would do well to cooperate, Herr Doktor. I am only a journalist collecting material. Other people may become involved. Rest assured, they can be very persuasive.

15

SCENE

15

The movie screen appears. Nazi propaganda film of Kristallnacht. Screaming. Synagogues burning, Jews being beaten, dragged through the streets. Screen rises. Lights up on Dr. Bloch in Bronx easy chair.

DR. BLOCH

Kristallnacht. The night of broken glass, November 9th and 10th, 1938. The pogrom against the Jews. Murders. Synagogues burned, Jewish businesses torched. President Roosevelt withdrew the US Ambassador in protest. The Nazis didn't care. As for me, I didn't want to give up my postcards and medical chart. I thought they were my best protection. The Gestapo arrested my son in law, Dr. Kren. I brought one of the postcards to Gestapo headquarters in Gesellenhausstrasse, showed the officer my relationship with Adolf, and he immediately released my son in law. A few days later, Professor Doktor Doktor Otto Rasch, head of the Linz gestapo, paid me an unannounced visit.

Lights down on Dr. Bloch in Bronx easy chair. Lights up on Dr. Bloch, without white coat, standing in his consulting room.

Loud banging on front door combined with impatient ringing of doorbell. Bloch exits to open door. OTTO RASCH enters imperiously, followed by Bloch. Rasch is dressed in black gestapo uniform with markings of SS Brigadeführer (brigadier general). Rasch is played by the same actor who played ALOIS HITLER, DRILL SERGEANT, and PRIEST.

RASCH

(throwing ripped yellow sign
to floor)

I have removed the yellow star from your door.

DR. BLOCH

Thank you.

RASCH

The order came from Berlin.

DR. BLOCH

I'm still grateful.

RASCH

(hands calling card to Dr.
Bloch)

My card.

DR. BLOCH

(reading from card)

Professor Doktor Doktor Otto Rasch. Director, Reich Security
Main Office, Linz.

Dr. Bloch sits in the padded chair
next to desk, Rasch leans against
examining table, does not sit.

DR. BLOCH

What are your two doctorates?

RASCH

Law and criminology.

DR. BLOCH

And your professorship?

RASCH

Criminology, University of Vienna.

DR. BLOCH

You teach there?

RASCH

Techniques of Interrogation, 101.

DR. BLOCH

(looks at his hands)

I'm glad I still have my fingernails.

RASCH

The fingernails are part of Advanced Techniques of Interrogation, 102.

DR. BLOCH

Thank goodness.

RASCH

Bleibtreu told me he had visited you.

DR. BLOCH

I was surprised he did not wear his uniform.

RASCH

Do you mean like mine? SS? Gestapo?

DR. BLOCH

That general category.

RASCH

He has no uniform. He can't document his ancestry. He can't prove he's 100% pure aryan.

DR. BLOCH

Why not?

RASCH

His mother was Maximiliane Bleibtreu.

DR. BLOCH

The stage actress?

RASCH

Exactly. Bleibtreu was born out of wedlock. Maximiliane would never reveal the father's name. She probably didn't know it herself.

DR. BLOCH

No one knows who the Führer's paternal grandfather was, either.

RASCH

No matter, he's been grandfathered in.

DR. BLOCH

Being a grandfather has its advantages. Look at me.

RASCH

(he looks at Dr. Bloch
menacingly for a moment)

Bleibtreu requested certain materials. Come, come. Don't deny you have them. You showed one of the cards during the detention of Dr. Kren.

Dr. Bloch is silent.

RASCH

I like this building. It is centrally located.

DR. BLOCH

I've been here many years.

RASCH

Do you know if there's any vacant space? Our offices on Gesellenhausstrasse are becoming a bit cozy.

DR. BLOCH

Just because I'm not practicing medicine doesn't mean I've gone into real estate.

RASCH

My brother sells real estate in Chicago. He studied medicine in Prague.

DR. BLOCH

Please tell me, Herr Professor Doktor Doktor, do you really need to carry a pistol in a quiet town like Linz? It's not Chicago, after all.

RASCH

(pulls out heavy, lethal
looking Luger from holster)

What, this?

DR. BLOCH

(He suddenly sinks weakly
into his chair, grasping his
chest with his hand,
grimacing with chest pain)

My heart. I have angina. Would you be so kind as to hand me that bottle of nitroglycerine tablets?

(points to bottle on small
table across room)

RASCH

(Pistol in one hand, he
saunters across room,
leisurely picks up bottle of
tablets)

These tablets?

DR. BLOCH

Yes.

Rasch opens bottle and pours
contents into trash can.

DR. BLOCH

(still gripping chest)

I think I'm going to faint.

RASCH

(examines his pistol)

This is the safety catch.

(Rasch points to the safety
catch, snicks it. He aims
the pistol at various points
around the room, then at Dr.
Bloch, who is in pain, weak,
barely conscious. Rasch
holsters the pistol. Walking
to desk, he opens drawers,
one after another, examines
contents, throws them to
floor)

You are wasting my time, you know. I'm supposed to be at a
meeting in Berlin. I am not fond of people who waste my time.
Especially Jews.

16

SCENE

16

*Spotlight on Dr. Bloch in Bronx
easy chair.*

DR. BLOCH

For Jews in Linz, conditions went from lethal to murderous.
In 1939, we managed to get my two grandchildren on the last
Kindertransport to England. Not long afterward, my daughter,
Trude, and my son-in-law, Dr. Kren, got US visas. They then
presented themselves at the Central Office for Jewish
Emigration in Vienna. The Vienna office processed Jews with
marvelous German efficiency, like a mill coupled to a bakery
that turned wheat into flour into bread. A Jew entered with
property and possessions, a store, a factory, a bank account.

He went through the Central Office for Jewish Emigration from window to window, desk to desk. When he exited, the German Reich had robbed him of all rights, all money, all property, but had given him an exit visa. He had fourteen days to get out of the country or be thrown into a concentration camp. I had not yet had the pleasure of visiting the Central Office for Jewish Emigration. My wife and I were still sitting in Linz, uncertain what to do next, when Renato Attilio Bleibtreu reappeared.

*Lights down on Dr. Bloch in Bronx
easy chair, lights up on Dr.
Bloch seated at his desk, looking
tired and sleepless, Bleibtreu
seated adjacent. There is a
bucket near a corner of the
rolltop desk.*

BLEIBTREU

(reading from three
handwritten pages he holds
in his hand)

What you've written here, Herr Doktor, is splendid: "Frau Hitler was a person with a good heart. Her kindly eyes mirrored this trait, which illness had not diminished." Excellent.

DR. BLOCH

In 38 years as a doctor, I never saw such a close relationship between a son and his mother. Adolf suffered as intensely as Frau Hitler. Every day he was more pale and drawn. When Frau Hitler died, it was as though a piece of Adolf's heart had been ripped out.

BLEIBTREU

(pulls a small notebook from
breast pocket and scribbles
down notes)

I must include your observation in my book. Very poignant.

DR. BLOCH

As a doctor I'm not permitted to reveal confidences I've received from a patient. I reveal what I revealed only because I intended it for the Führer's eyes alone.

BLEIBTREU

Of course. I will obtain the Führer's permission before I cite anything you have given me.

DR. BLOCH

Thank you.

Horrific screams and yells from a room on the floor above. Dr. Bloch winces. Bleibtreu is all ears.

BLEIBTREU

Don't tell me. The Linz Opera is rehearsing upstairs.

More awful screaming

DR. BLOCH

Opera?

BLEIBTREU

I know that aria. It's from, it's from
(snaps fingers)
The second act of *Wozzeck*. Alban Berg is one of my favorites.

Dr. Bloch sadly shakes his head
"no".

BLEIBTREU

(snaps his fingers again)

Quite right. How stupid of me. Don't tell me. Don't tell me. It's the famous third act duet from *Lulu*.

DR. BLOCH

You are not listening to an opera by Alban Berg. Herr Professor Doktor Doktor Rasch has turned the apartment upstairs into a Gestapo interrogation chamber.

More blood curdling screams.

BLEIBTREU

You're joking. That's not *Lulu*?

DR. BLOCH

The screams keep the whole building awake at night. The rest of the neighborhood isn't getting much sleep, either.

(points to ceiling, then to
bucket near desk)

Do you see where water has leaked through and ruined the ceiling? They've been using the bathtub for their interrogations. I leave a bucket here so the floor isn't wrecked.

Screams, gurgling from above,
splashing of water, water pours
down from ceiling into bucket.

BLEIBTREU

No one's bothering you.

DR. BLOCH

(stares at Bleibtreu amazed)

For the most part.

BLEIBTREU

(Picking up telephone
receiver from desk and
listening)

Your phone still works. They've disconnected the phone of every Jew in Linz, except yours.

DR. BLOCH

It's nice to have a phone, but even better to have someone to call.

BLEIBTREU

They've allowed you to stay in your apartment.

DR. BLOCH

Swimming lessons not included.

BLEIBTREU

You don't look like you're starving.

DR. BLOCH

It's true. I have everything I need. The Gestapo, most of them, are quite friendly and solicitous. Some are my former patients. When they meet me on the street, they raise their arm in the Hitler salute and say "Heil Dr. Bloch." They're deadly serious. I need to bite my tongue to keep from laughing.

BLEIBTREU

They're treating you like an Aryan.

DR. BLOCH

They're continually asking me, don't I have any Aryans in my family? Maybe I'm not really a Jew?

BLEIBTREU

I researched your background. The Gestapo commissioned the search. I went to the Jewish cemetery in Frauenberg. I prepared a complete family tree.

DR. BLOCH

What did you find?

BLEIBTREU

You're one hundred percent Jewish.

DR. BLOCH

You could have simply asked me to pull down my pants.

BLEIBTREU

When I gave the Gestapo my report, they were annoyed. They were keen to classify you as an Aryan. Now they want to make you an honorary Aryan.

DR. BLOCH

I'm sixty-eight years old. At my age a man needs new testicles more than the New Testament.

BLEIBTREU

Frau Hitler's medical record, Herr Doktor.

DR. BLOCH

What about it?

BLEIBTREU

Would you like to give it to me? I will write you out a receipt.

Bloch is silent.

BLEIBTREU

The two postcards. Would you like to give them to me?

Dr. Bloch picks up two postcards
from desk, hands them to Bleibtreu

BLEIBTREU

(looking at cards)

Reuben's Delicatessen? Minsky's Burlesque Theater?

DR. BLOCH

Dr. Kren and my daughter sent them from New York.

BLEIBTREU

(reading from card)

"Father, darling, we miss you and mother terribly. We adore Reuben's cherry cheesecake. Love, Trude and Franz"

DR. BLOCH

(sadly)

My wife and I are here alone. Our entire family is gone. Children. Grandchildren.

BLEIBTREU

You are free to go. You can do whatever you like.

DR. BLOCH

I've lived in Linz forty years. I don't speak English. Even if I did, I couldn't practice medicine in America. They don't recognize foreign medical training. I would need to repeat everything. Pass licensing examinations. Serve an internship in an American hospital, if I could get one. On call twenty-four hours. Up all night every night. My son-in-law is applying for an internship in New Jersey, but he's forty years younger than I am. Believe me, I never expected my medical career to end so abruptly.

BLEIBTREU

I understand there's a good opportunity in Vienna for you.

DR. BLOCH

I heard.

BLEIBTREU

The Rothschild Hospital. The position pays well.

DR. BLOCH

I'm flattered that the famous Rothschild Hospital values my medical talents so highly.

BLEIBTREU

They're the last hospital in Austria that can admit Jews. The last Jewish hospital.

DR. BLOCH

I gave first aid to an elderly lady. Some thugs across the street beat her with clubs. They knocked out three teeth and broke her jaw. I sent her to the Rothschild Hospital to have her jaw set and wired. No hospital in Linz would take her.

BLEIBTREU

Sturmbannführer Eichmann, the Commissioner for Jewish Affairs, affirms that he will be responsible for your safety and will greet you personally when you arrive in Vienna.

DR. BLOCH

Thanks. I prefer unemployment.

17

SCENE

17

Rasch is leaning against the examining table, now in his Gestapo dress uniform and polished riding boots. Dr. Bloch is sitting near his desk looking tired.

RASCH

You have the wrong idea about this entire matter. Completely wrong. We didn't want to steal the postcards and Frau Hitler's medical record from you.

DR. BLOCH

Of course not.

RASCH

We want to pay for them.

DR. BLOCH

What will I do with money? Other than food, rent, and the phone bill

(picks up the phone receiver,
listens)

Still a dial tone.

RASCH

What about the restitution money?

DR. BLOCH

Restitution money?

RASCH

Where have you been? Haven't you heard? When the synagogues burned in November, nearby buildings were damaged or destroyed. You Jews must pay restitution to cover the cost of restoring every damaged building.

DR. BLOCH

I have no income. My savings are almost gone.

RASCH

Every Jew must turn over a quarter of his net worth as restitution.

DR. BLOCH

For me that's virtually nothing.

RASCH

We'll see. If you withhold payment or try to hide assets, you're committing a serious crime.

DR. BLOCH

If you find any liquid assets belonging to me, bring them here and I will gargle them.

RASCH

No need. Your reimbursement for the postcards and Frau Hitler's record would cover the restitution payment.

DR. BLOCH

You want to pay me, then immediately reclaim the money.

RASCH

Oh, not immediately.

DR. BLOCH

How long would I have the money?

RASCH

Maybe quite a while.

DR. BLOCH

Which is how long?

RASCH

At least five minutes.

DR. BLOCH

What would I do with a sum of money that I could only hold for five minutes?

RASCH

I don't believe it. A Jew wants me to tell him what to do with money.

DR. BLOCH

The Rothschilds have fled. You are all I have.

RASCH

You could invest it in an ultra short term certificate of deposit.

DR. BLOCH

How do they issue a certificate like that? Printed on a banana?

Awful screaming from above.
Gurgling, splashing, water pours
from ceiling into bucket near desk.

RASCH

I might be persuaded to move our manicure salon.

DR. BLOCH

Is that what you call it?

RASCH

We do pedicures, too.

DR. BLOCH

Excuse me a moment. My ulcers are speaking to me.
(Dr. Bloch, clearly in
discomfort, stands, pours
himself a glass of milk from
pitcher on his desk.)

RASCH

Are they telling you to give me the documents? No? Do they need a little more convincing?

Rasch draws his pistol. Aims.
Fires. The bullet whizzes past Dr.
Bloch, barely missing him, and
crashes into the milk pitcher on
desk. The pitcher explodes in a
shower of milk and shards of glass.

RASCH

(looking at his watch, then
politely)

Will you kindly excuse me. I am scheduled to give a lecture to my class, Fundamentals of Interrogation, 101.

Rasch exits. Clearly shaken, Dr.
Bloch sinks into nearby chair.

A splinter of glass has hit his forehead. Blood runs down his face onto his starched white collar and silk bow tie. He raises his hand to his bleeding forehead, then looks at his blood smeared hand. He grasps his chest, groans with pain, faints dead away in his chair, gasping for air.

18

SCENE

18

Dr. Bloch's dream. Klara Hitler enters. Klara looks ethereal and sexy, wears very little clothing, entirely different from the prim Victorian appearance she had in Act I. Dr. Bloch is still covered with blood.

KLARA

My dear Herr Doktor, how I have longed to see you again.

DR. BLOCH

Frau Hitler. Do you have pain?

KLARA

(seductively)

Oh no, Herr Doktor. Please call me Klara.

DR. BLOCH

Are you having trouble sleeping?

KLARA

Not at all, Herr Doktor. I'm sleeping very well.

DR. BLOCH

Is there any way I may help you?

KLARA

On the contrary. I have come to help you.

DR. BLOCH

You have?

KLARA

I was too dead to thank you on your final house call. I apologize.

DR. BLOCH

No apology necessary. I understand completely.

KLARA

I am so grateful. You cured me with your iodoform.
(Klara raises her thin blouse
to show her very nice
looking breasts)

DR. BLOCH

I used too much. I poisoned you.

KLARA

My life was hard. The cancer was more than I could bear. You mercifully ended my struggles.

DR. BLOCH

I killed a patient who had put her trust in me. I disobeyed the doctor's first commandment: above all, do no harm. Thirty years later, my conscience gives me no peace.

KLARA

(She sits in Dr. Bloch's lap,
embraces him and kisses him)

You are a sweet man.

DR. BLOCH

First Adolf forced me to murder his mother, now he has deprived me of my profession. My children and grandchildren are gone. My wife is crying one minute, terrified the next. Adolf has certainly changed my life, and not for the better.

KLARA

Oh Adolf. He is too much like his father. I spin inside my coffin when I see what he has done. They should have buried me with ball bearings.

DR. BLOCH

I worry more about what he will do. Your medical chart and his two post cards are all that protect me from who knows what.

KLARA

You're cute.

(she kisses Dr. Bloch again)

I've always been partial to Jewish men.

(she caresses Dr. Bloch)

DR. BLOCH

I didn't know there were Jewish men in Spital.

KLARA

Before I came to work for Adolf's father, I worked in the home of a rich Jew named Frankenthaler. A cloth merchant. He looked like you. He was very good to me. I was good to him, too.

(Klara gives Dr. Bloch a kiss
on the lips)

DR. BLOCH

Forgive me for asking this intimate question, but I always wondered about the closeness of your relationship with Adolf.

KLARA

(giggles)

You are very naughty, Herr Doktor.

(becomes passionate)

Would you like to examine my breasts?

DR. BLOCH

I shouldn't.

KLARA

Why not? You could enter the information in my chart. I don't mind.

DR. BLOCH

I would be violating my Hippocratic oath.

KLARA

(puts index finger to her
lips)

If I run into Hippocrates, I won't say a word.

DR. BLOCH

Do you speak ancient Greek?

KLARA

He's very deaf. He'd probably tell me to take two aspirin and
call him in the morning.

(becomes more passionate)

DR. BLOCH

I have a bad heart, Frau Hitler. I am no longer a young man.

Klara begins to undress.

DR. BLOCH

I will end up coming and going at the same time.

Rasch suddenly enters. He looks
like an angry husband who has
caught his wife *in flagrante
delicto*. Klara stands and hurriedly
covers herself.

RASCH

(to Klara)

I'll deal with you later.

Klara exits.

DR. BLOCH

Herr Professor Doktor Doktor.

RASCH

You criminal. You have broken the Nuremberg laws.

DR. BLOCH

All of them, or one in particular?

RASCH

You have defiled an aryan woman.

DR. BLOCH

She didn't seem to mind.

RASCH

The mother of our revered Führer.

DR. BLOCH

Maybe she was more than that.

RASCH

You filthy Jew miscreant. A trial and sentencing would be too good for you.

(Rasch pulls out his pistol,
walks up to Dr. Bloch, aims
the pistol at Bloch's head
and fires)

BLACKOUT.

19

SCENE

19

Spotlight on Bleibtreu and Rasch.

RASCH

The Führer is becoming annoyed.

BLEIBTREU

I've done my best.

RASCH

You've done nothing.

BLEIBTREU

What have you accomplished?

RASCH

How can I give a manicure when my brush and scissors are tied behind my back? If I could take that decrepit Hebrew upstairs for ten minutes.

BLEIBTREU

The Führer will not permit it.

RASCH

He wants his postcards and his mother's records. Why won't he allow me to request them in a proper manner?

BLEIBTREU

They're not the plans for a secret weapon.

RASCH

I'll arrest the son-in-law again. The daughter too. I should have arrested her before.

BLEIBTREU

Too late. They're in New York. Eating cherry cheesecake. The grandchildren are in England.

RASCH

What? You're joking. Who let them out? I'll manicure him myself.

BLEIBTREU

Sturmbannführer Eichmann had orders from Berlin to allow them to leave whenever they wanted.

RASCH

I must speak with the Führer personally. He'll be in Linz today.

BLEIBTREU

You'd have a better chance to see him in Berchtesgaden. I understand he'll be here only to visit his boyhood friend Kubizek; then he leaves immediately for Vienna to attend the opera.

RASCH

One way or another, I'll have his items for him before he returns to Berlin. You'll see.

BLEIBTREU

No manicures.

RASCH

What about pedicures?

BLEIBTREU

Nope.

RASCH

Baptism?

BLEIBTREU

Are you serious? You'll kill that old man.

RASCH

At least he'll die an Aryan.

BLEIBTREU

And we'll die in Dachau.

RASCH

Are you telling me how to do my job?

BLEIBTREU

In this case, you don't seem to know.

RASCH

You impudent mongrel. I know who your father was.

BLEIBTREU

Not you, I hope.

RASCH

I have never consorted with whores.

BLEIBTREU

When you were assigned to Vienna, you were famous around the Gürtel. The way you threw coins on the bordello floor for the girls to dive on.

RASCH

You're no journalist. You are nothing but a second rate gossip monger.

BLEIBTREU

This bickering is getting us nowhere.

RASCH

What do you propose?

BLEIBTREU

The Führer wants a photograph of Herr Doktor Bloch in his consulting room as a memento. I am visiting the good doctor to make the photo. I will ask for the cards and the record again.

RASCH

(incredulous)

Ask for them? Even if we knew who your father was, you would be worthless to the SS.

20

SCENE

20

Bleibtreu at desk with Dr. Bloch.

BLEIBTREU

(looking at Dr. Bloch's
bandaged forehead)

I see you have had a mishap. Nothing serious, I hope.

DR. BLOCH

(eyes filled with tears, a
broken man)

I cared for Adolf. I cared for his mother. Look where it has brought me.

BLEIBTREU

You are free to leave, Herr Doktor.

DR. BLOCH

Everything is over for me.

BLEIBTREU

Your situation is not so grave.

DR. BLOCH

What difference does it make whether I stay or go? I am no longer a Herr Doktor.

BLEIBTREU

Whatever you do, you will always be a Herr Doktor.

DR. BLOCH

As a Herr Doktor, I spent four decades caring for my fellow man. Now I am nothing at all. A sick man. A broken, forgotten hulk.

BLEIBTREU

(reaches into coat pocket,
withdraws letter)

I bring you this letter from the Linz Medical Board. If you leave, you may take it with you and use it as you like.

DR. BLOCH

(opens envelope which is
unsealed and reads the
letter aloud, struggling to
retain control of his
emotions)

This letter will certify that Dr. Eduard Bloch was a practicing physician in Linz for 38 years. He earned the respect and admiration of everyone on account of his character, his medical knowledge, his willingness to help, and his kindness. Therefore, the Medical Board of Linz gives an unqualified recommendation to this worthy man and wishes him well in his future endeavors. Signed, Dr. Wimmer, District Director of Public Health, National Socialist German Workers' Party, Upper Danube.

(Dr. Bloch pauses a moment)

What future endeavors?

BLEIBTREU

Aren't you a religious leader as well as a doctor?

DR. BLOCH

I was never a religious leader. The more years I spent practicing medicine, the more suffering and death I saw in blameless, innocent human beings. Now I see even more suffering and death. Either God is kind but weak, or evil and all powerful. Torah and Talmud no longer help me to understand these things.

BLEIBTREU

Even so, your own kindness to your fellow man is well known. Didn't you adopt three orphans, raise them with your family, and educate them?

DR. BLOCH

It was the right thing to do.

BLEIBTREU

There is a right thing to do at this moment.

DR. BLOCH

A peaceful death. Surrounded by my family in New York eating Reuben's cherry cheesecake.

BLEIBTREU

Please give me the Führer's items. If you do, at least I can guarantee you some peace.

DR. BLOCH

(Dr. Bloch hesitates, then goes to a cabinet, opens drawer, pulls out Klara Hitler's medical record. He begins paging through it, shaking his head sadly.)

What an unbearably long illness.

(turns pages, holds up invoice)

The bill from Schering for iodoform.

(whistles)

My goodness, drug makers have no scruples about what they charge.

BLEIBTREU

Iodoform? I never heard of it. What is it?

DR. BLOCH

(uncomfortable, offhandedly)

Oh, nothing. A medicine.

BLEIBTREU

Medicine? What kind of medicine?

DR. BLOCH

No one uses it today. It's too toxic.

BLEIBTREU

What does it do?

DR. BLOCH

Sometimes it was helpful in patients with tumors, like the one Frau Hitler had.

Dr. Bloch is still reluctant to hand over the chart. Bleibtreu stands and takes it from him, sits down, begins thumbing through it.

BLEIBTREU

Where are the two postcards?

DR. BLOCH

Aren't they in the chart?

BLEIBTREU

(continues to riffle through the pages)

I don't see them.

DR. BLOCH

Keep looking. I'm sure they're in there somewhere.

BLEIBTREU

(after more searching)

Nothing.

DR. BLOCH

You must go through page by page.

BLEIBTREU

(looks at Dr. Bloch
skeptically)

This matter will not end well, Herr Doktor. I dearly hope you will give due consideration to what you are doing.

DR. BLOCH

Believe me, I have done nothing else for the past two years.

BLEIBTREU

The Führer is so favorably disposed toward you.

DR. BLOCH

He was favorably disposed to Morgenstern, too, wasn't he?

BLEIBTREU

Who?

DR. BLOCH

Samuel Morgenstern.

BLEIBTREU

I never heard the name.

DR. BLOCH

Really? You are about to acquire more material for your book on the Führer's youth.

BLEIBTREU

I'm listening.

DR. BLOCH

Samuel Morgenstern was a Jewish picture frame dealer and glazier in Vienna. Adolf was living in a men's shelter painting watercolors to eke out a living before the world war. Morgenstern bought most of them. Many more than he could ever sell with his picture frames.

BLEIBTREU

How did you come to know this Morgenstern?

DR. BLOCH

He came to Linz occasionally to buy antique frames. In 1909, I believe, he cut his hand on a sharp glass frame. I sewed up the wound. Afterward, we talked for a while. He noticed one of Adolf's postcards on my desk and recognized the artist. We became friends and stayed in touch over the years.

BLEIBTREU

Thanks for the tip. I must go to Vienna to interview Herr Morgenstern. Where does he live?

DR. BLOCH

Not where, but does he live? The Reich quickly aryanized his business after the annexation. His children immigrated to the United States. I spoke to him around that time. He told me he had written to Adolf. He mentioned their pleasant association and the watercolors he had bought. He asked permission to sell a lot he owned in Vienna so that he and his wife would have the money to emigrate.

BLEIBTREU

Did he receive a response?

DR. BLOCH

Not that I am aware. When I last tried to get in touch with him, he and his wife had disappeared. I heard that the Gestapo arrested them. They haven't been seen since.

Rasch enters, carrying a briefcase.

RASCH

So you're interested in what happened to your friend Morgenstern?

DR. BLOCH

I would like to know how he is doing. Did he emigrate?

RASCH

He wanted to.

(pulls a letter out of his
briefcase, hands it to Dr.
Bloch)

DR. BLOCH

(anxiety in his voice)

This is the letter he wrote to Adolf.

RASCH

Quite so.

DR. BLOCH

Was there a response?

RASCH

Look at the letter.

DR. BLOCH

Someone has scrawled a "J" across the text.

RASCH

For J-U-D-E. Jew. Like you, the Jew Morgenstern had items belonging to the Führer that the Reich wanted back.

DR. BLOCH

You're talking about the watercolors he bought thirty years ago to put in his picture frames for sale?

RASCH

Precisely.

DR. BLOCH

You got them back?

RASCH

(breezily)

Each and every one. Jawohl.

DR. BLOCH

Did you buy them back?

RASCH

He wouldn't sell.

DR. BLOCH

Then how did you get them?

RASCH

A manicure helped.

(Rasch removes a small paper bag from briefcase and pours out on the floor a shower of whole fingernails)

DR. BLOCH

(grimacing)

Some of those fingernails are covered with red lacquer.

RASCH

You recognize Frau Emma Morgenstern? A delightful lady.

DR. BLOCH

Are a few old unsold watercolors worth so much to you?

RASCH

So much? Even more.

(Rasch pulls from briefcase a bottle of clear liquid containing a human ear. He hands the bottle to Dr. Bloch, who carefully places it on his desk and sinks into chair)

You look like you have something to say.

DR. BLOCH

My mouth is so dry I can hardly...

(hesitates)

RASCH

Please look closely at that bottle. It contains an ear. The ear of a man who would not listen to reason. Do you know what happens to people who won't listen to reason?

DR. BLOCH

(Grimacing, he holds his fist over his burning stomach)

If you tell me, I think my ulcer is going to perforate.

RASCH

(pulls a bottle of white powder from briefcase, opens bottle, pours powder onto Dr. Bloch's desktop)

You asked about your friend Morgenstern. There he is. Would you like to know about Frau Morgenstern?

(pours another bottle of powder on Dr. Bloch's desk)

Dr. Bloch is trembling. Rasch is becoming angrier.

BLEIBTREU

(holding Frau Hitler's medical record)

We have the medical record. We can give Herr Doktor Bloch time to find the two cards for us. Perhaps he has misplaced them.

RASCH

No, no, no. No more time. He has had time enough.

(Walks over to Dr. Bloch, picks up Dr. Bloch's hand, inspects Dr. Bloch's nails)

Dear me, my friend, your nails are in terrible shape. Cracked. Broken. Split. You are in urgent need of a manicure.

BLEIBTREU

You are mad.

RASCH

(to Dr. Bloch)

Come with me, my friend.

Dr. Bloch does not move.

RASCH

(furiously draws his pistol, points it at Dr. Bloch's head)

You're right, Herr Bleibtreu. In this situation, a manicure would never do.

BLEIBTREU

What do you gain by shooting him?

RASCH

I'll decide that after I pull the trigger.

BLEIBTREU

Think of the outcome.

RASCH

This corner of the room will be a terrible mess.

BLEIBTREU

The Führer will be furious. He won't have his post cards. He won't have his noble Jew.

RASCH

Noble Jew! Rubbish. To the Führer, there is no such thing as a noble Jew.

Sirens in the street outside.
 Sounds of a motorcade halting,
 marching boots, clicking of heels,
 and many cries of "Jawohl Mein
 Führer". Adolf enters in uniform
 with Iron Cross on breast pocket.
 Rasch quickly re-holsters his
 pistol. Bleibtreu and Rasch stand
 straight, give Hitler salute, shout
Sieg Heil. Adolf hardly seems to
 notice them as he approaches Dr.
 Bloch.

ADOLF

(happily)

Herr Doktor Bloch.

DR. BLOCH

Adolf.

ADOLF

(takes Bloch's hand, gazes at
 him for a moment)

You are just the same as you always were, dear Herr Doktor. I should have recognized you immediately anywhere. You have not changed at all, just got older.

DR. BLOCH

I have aged a good deal of late.

ADOLF

I am so pleased to see you. It has been such a long time.

DR. BLOCH

The pleasure is mutual.

ADOLF

(looking around briefly)

This is not the moment for a heart-to-heart talk. Certainly I hope we can have one soon.

DR. BLOCH

I hope so too.

ADOLF

I no longer have a private life. I can't do just what I want, like other people.

DR. BLOCH

I understand.

ADOLF

I have magnificent plans for Linz. The old Sisters of Mercy Hospital, where you took such loving care of my sainted mother. I will build a new hospital, the Klara Hitler Krankenhaus.

DR. BLOCH

Excellent.

ADOLF

I will name a wing after you, my dear Herr Doktor. It will be the Eduard Bloch Women's Clinic.

DR. BLOCH

I'm deeply honored.

ADOLF

My two post cards. Herr Doktor.

DR. BLOCH

They are the last remnants of my life as a doctor. I never earned much. Many of my patients were too poor to pay anything. Your post cards are precious to me.

Adolf, deadly intense and serious,
and Dr. Bloch stare into each
other's eyes for a moment.

ADOLF

I want them.

Dr. Bloch opens a small compartment
in his desk, takes out the two
cards, hands them to Adolf. Barely
glancing at them, Adolf hands the
cards to Bleibtreu, who slips them
into his coat pocket.

ADOLF

(very friendly again)

Now tell me truly, Herr Doktor. What has become of you?

DR. BLOCH

These days I'm not doing too much. I've decided to leave.

ADOLF

To leave Linz?

DR. BLOCH

To emigrate.

ADOLF

Why? Everyone in Linz reveres you. No one here would ever think of doing you the slightest harm. You should not concern yourself with material worries. We will take care of your future, all your needs, and then some, rest assured.

DR. BLOCH

Forgive me for being so frank. I cannot continue to live in a town where other Jews have fared so terribly. I intend to immigrate to New York, a city with many street corners. I would prefer to stand on every one, hat in hand begging, than live in Linz, richly provided for.

ADOLF

(an ominous pause, then
sadly)

I know you well, Herr Doktor. I expected no other answer.

(Adolf turns to leave, then
stops thoughtfully)

Bleibtreu, have you made your photograph?

BLEIBTREU

(stares meaningfully at
Rasch)

Not yet, mein Führer.

ADOLF

Do you have your camera?

BLEIBTREU

Jawohl, Mein Führer.

(Bleibtreu goes to his camera
bag in corner, withdraws a
Leica, and snaps a photo of
Bloch sitting at his rolltop
desk)

ADOLF

Another, please, with Herr Doktor Bloch in his white coat.

BLEIBTREU

Jawohl, Mein Führer.

Bleibtreu hurries across the room,
picks up white coat, which has been
hanging on a rack in the corner,
and helps a reluctant Dr. Bloch,
who is almost at the point of
collapse, into the coat.

Even with the white coat on, Bloch looks very sad, very small, not at all the man we saw in Act I.

BLEIBTREU

Now smile. Say cherry cheesecake.

(He snaps a second photo)

ADOLF

Herr Professor Doktor Doktor Rasch, please render Herr Doktor Bloch all assistance with the formalities of emigration.

RASCH

Jawohl, Mein Führer.

ADOLF

(very emotional, he bows, grasps Dr. Bloch's hand. Dr. Bloch stands. Adolf presses Bloch's hand in both of his for a moment)

Herr Doktor, I am eternally grateful to you.

Adolf turns to leave. Bleibtreu and Rasch snap stiffly to attention, frozen in the Nazi salute. Suddenly, awful screams from upstairs, splashing, gurgling, water pours down from the ceiling directly on Rasch, drenching him. Rasch and Bleibtreu continue to stand immobile like statues. Adolf looks around for a moment.

ADOLF

Very shoddy construction. Perhaps the world would be a better place if I had become an architect.

(He exits)

BLACKOUT.

*Lights up on Dr. Bloch in Bronx
easy chair.*

DR. BLOCH

My wife and I left Austria in 1940 with the equivalent of sixteen Reich marks. A Jew was usually allowed to take thirteen. As we left, I posted a letter to Adolf.

(Bloch picks up a letter from
table and reads)

Your Excellency: Before passing the border I want to express my thanks for the protection which I have received. In material poverty I am now leaving the town where I have lived for forty-one years; but I leave conscious of having lived in the most exact fulfilment of my duty. At sixty-nine I will start my life anew in a strange country where my daughter is working hard to support her family. Yours faithfully, Eduard Bloch.

(shakes his head)

Adolf probably never even saw the letter. Now people ask me, how does it feel to owe my life to the friendship, or gratitude, or mercy, of Adolf Hitler. I tell them that Adolf never broke his vow to me. He was eternally grateful. It's unsettling, isn't it? Did the bloodiest mass murderer of all time have some good in him? I am a tiny historical footnote, and I will die with this central enigma of my life unresolved.

Klara enters, dressed as in scene 18. She kisses Dr. Bloch, caresses him seductively, takes his hand, begins to lead him across the stage. As he is about to exit, Dr. Bloch turns to the audience and gives them a smile and a broad wink, then he is gone.

BLACKOUT.