

# **The Germans in Paris**

A Play in Four Acts

By Jonathan Leaf

# THE GERMANS IN PARIS

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## THE GERMANS IN PARIS

*The Germans In Paris* was first performed on March 10, 2005 at 59E59 Theaters in New York City with the following cast and production crew:

Heinrich Heine: Kevin Kelly

Karl Marx: Corey Moosa

Madame Morisot: Ali Marsh

Madame Fenel: Christi Craig

Richard Wagner: Brian Louis Hoffman

Inspector Burkhardt/Conrad Schramm: Bruce Barton

Mathilde: Monica West

Monsieur Morisot/Solomon Strauss: Henry Caplan

Footman/Catholic Priest/Willich: Paul Siemens

Written by Jonathan Leaf

Directed by José Zayas

Set Design: Meghan Healey

Costume Design: Maline Casta

Sound Design: Jane Shaw

Lighting Design: María Cristina Fusté

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ACT 1  
SCENE 1

*The curtain rises with the stage lit low. There are just two seats located around a plain wooden table, some candles and two men, one of these clean-shaven, the other with a long dark beard: HEINRICH HEINE and KARL MARX. A baby in a crib is crying in much distress. The audience can vaguely sense that the clean-shaven man – Heine – is beautifully dressed.*

**MARX.** She won't eat. She's bleeding from the gums. Her temperature – it's a real fever. It's dark –beyond our actual darkness.

**HEINE.** How do you mean?

**MARX.** *(whispering)* The way things work out. He who scorns God most scorned by Him. The depths of suffering and all that. I guess I shouldn't be finding – or looking for – irony in this...*(Explaining)* Jenny's gone to fetch a doctor.

**HEINE.** She's been crying like this for how long?

**MARX.** All night. She dies, Jenny will never forgive me. The child continues crying. There is a pause.

**MARX.** Have you an idea?

**HEINE...**Give her a bath of cold water.

**MARX.** Why?

**HEINE.** Try it.

*Marx looks at him and then goes off with the crib. Heine goes and picks up a magazine on a table, waiting for Marx's*

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*return. He studies it. As he does so, the crying continues and then abruptly – and without explanation – it stops. Marx then returns with the crib and a quiet child in it as Heine puts the magazine down.*

**MARX.** *(softly)* She's sleeping. She's almost fine. Even – she's even stopped sweating...How did you know?

*Heine shakes his head, indicating he can't say why he suggested this. Marx nods and then feels the baby's forehead. After this, Marx looks to Heine, smiles and takes a deep breath. Then he draws Heine to another part of the room where they are apart from the sleeping child. For the remainder of the scene, he walks back and forth, checking on her.*

**MARX.** I think you saved my daughter's life.

**HEINE.** Don't know what to say.

**MARX.** *(ironically)* "Thank god" – if we didn't share our view of Him – that.

**HEINE.** Well...

**MARX.** Well...Yes. You saved her life.

**HEINE.** But her illness wasn't the reason you asked me to come?

**MARX.** No. Thank you. How did you know?

**HEINE.** I don't know.

**MARX.** Thank you.

**HEINE.** Enough. Why did you ask me to come?

**MARX.** Speak low – so she sleeps. *(For the remainder of the scene they speak sotto voce.)* My wife liked you even before this, you know.

**HEINE.** She has taste. The reason?

**MARX.** I'm still thinking about what you've done.

**HEINE.** You were saying about Jenny, your wife?

**MARX.** Of course, she'll also bring a doctor: another bill.

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**HEINE.** You need money again?

**MARX.** (*fondly*) Wouldn't ask you for it.

**HEINE.** Yes...The note – ?

**MARX.** Two issues, actually.

**HEINE.** The first then.

**MARX.** (*indicating the child*) I am still thinking about this Jenny.

**HEINE.** Then let's talk of it another time.

**MARX.** But it is urgent.

**HEINE.** All right then. Yes? Go ahead.

**MARX.** I think we have an informer, Harry.

**HEINE.** You're being self-dramatizing. Again.

**MARX.** No. I wish.

**HEINE.** What was the second issue?

**MARX.** I have reason to think I might be arrested tonight...But I wanted to talk of you.

**HEINE.** That's quite a way of going about it...Go ahead. Now.

**MARX.** Yes....Harry, I know it's not my business to give advice –

**HEINE.** Let's return to the subject of the informer you think you have –

**MARX.** We have.

**HEINE.** Admittedly serious. If so.

**MARX.** Yes.

**HEINE.** Though we must also credit the purported informer for bringing me here, thereby saving your little one. So: who do you think it is?

**MARX.** Can't say.

**HEINE.** Should we examine the group –

**MARX.** I'm not sure of anyone, Harry.

**HEINE.** Why did you say that that way? You think I'm the Judas?

**MARX.** No. Please.

**HEINE.** But we should compare you to Christ? In terms of

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your importance?

**MARX.** (*nodding his head – taking the jibe without offense*) I'm the soul of modesty by comparison with some. My friend Proudhon, you know, wears a medal around his neck. He says it commemorates himself.

**HEINE.** I've heard...

**MARX.** (*now serious again*) Papers have disappeared from here.

**HEINE.** All right, let's suppose that's so. What then? Your first concern shouldn't be the magazine, but your wife.

**MARX.** Yes.

**HEINE.** What will Jenny say if you're arrested?

**MARX.** She's been remarkably understanding.

**HEINE.** But then what? What happens to her? How will she support little Jenny? You're not a boy. You've got to think of these things.

*Marx does not answer.*

**HEINE.** I'd do what I could.

**MARX.** Yes.

**HEINE.** You're family, however distant... They place you in jail, we'll visit.

**MARX.** (*bitterly*) A chance to read.

**HEINE.** (*tenderly*) I can loan books.

**MARX.** (*a beat*) Thank you for what you did with my daughter.

**HEINE.** I'm sure she would have been fine.

**MARX.** Maybe.

**HEINE.** Sure you didn't just misplace the papers?

**MARX.** Certain.

**HEINE.** You think there's an informer as we have thirteen in the group? We've been too hard on that bourgeois fable?

**MARX.** There's more: Schramm was arrested.

**HEINE.** Could be that they simply read your magazine.

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**MARX.** Our magazine.

**HEINE.** Please don't doubt me. When the Prussians made up their list of radicals to arrest who was first? Me, yes?

**MARX.** Though now...? Are you going to run away?

**HEINE.** God, no, but...you attribute everything to conspiracies, plots. But look.

*Heine walks to the table the magazine is on and picks it up again. He looks to Marx.*

**HEINE.** *(reading)* "Karl Marx, Editor-in-Chief." Likely they simply know that Schramm's your secretary, and they want to interrogate him.

**MARX.** Schramm's name isn't on the masthead. How do the police know him?...Listen: I saw him in jail today. And he told me they asked about me. He thinks they might pick me up tonight.

**HEINE.** I see. You wanted to know if I could hide you somewhere?

Heine looks to Marx and then back at the magazine, still in his hand.

**MARX.** Though we'd have to keep it between us – as the informer could then just tell them – where I am.

**HEINE.** I believe you now that they may be coming. But that Schramm isn't identified here *(indicating the masthead)* as the Secretary to the Editor of Paris's most seditious émigré publication hardly demonstrates we've been infiltrated.

**MARX.** I'm being followed.

**HEINE.** Must admit it doesn't look good.

**MARX.** Yes...

**HEINE.** But you were going to give me what I most seek, unwanted advice.

**MARX.** Harry, I'm not the only one worried about you.

**HEINE.** *(arch and self-aware)* "When troubles come, they come not single spies but in battalions..." Don't try to talk me



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out of it. As a friend you should know that I'm immune to advice.

**MARX.** You've had one lesson in swordsmanship?

**HEINE.** I won't agree to swords, and for the moment there is no duel...He insists as the aggrieved party that he picks weapons – sabers since he's such a swordsman. I demand pistols. So, we're not fighting yet anyway.

**MARX.** Pistols...I thought you proved his "witnesses" weren't there?

**HEINE.** Monarchists say: "Heine won't duel when challenged by a man – proven to be lying – who says he slapped him in the face right on the Champs-Élysée." In saying this they question all of us, Karl. I tried to get him to say it wasn't true. He won't. What would you have me do?

**MARX.** At least use swords.

**HEINE.** I'm one of the few Jews who likes his nose. I can't have it lopped off by a saber. A gunshot in the groin doesn't spoil my profile.

**MARX.** Am I the first person you made that witticism with or the twentieth?

*There is a knock at the door. Marx does not reply to ask who it is, but he does go to the door and opens it. RENÉ BURCKHARDT enters the room. His motions are economical and brusque. His face and gestures convey an amused warmth and humor – a certain gallows sharpness.*

**MARX.** Who are you?

**BURCKHARDT.** Inspector René Burckhardt. Of the Constabulary. You are Karl Marx?

**MARX.** Yes.

**BURCKHARDT.** You're under arrest.

**HEINE.** I'm Heinrich Heine. Am I as well?

**BURCKHARDT.** I'm afraid we're only intent on this fellow now. Great honor to meet you though. Monsieur Marx,

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would you like to pack a bag – is there anything you want to take to jail?

**MARX.** A few things.

**HEINE.** I'll do what I can: You have my word

### SCENE 2

*Daylight. Paris, 1843. Inspector Burckhardt's office. The usual accoutrements are about: leather chairs, gold-painted settees with papers on them, a large central desk, doors left and right, gray dusky walls with dirty blue wainscoting.*

*A knock sounds.*

**BURCKHARDT.** *(placing himself in the desk-chair)* Come in.

*A young man with the manner of a fanatic enters.*

**BURCKHARDT.** Yes. *(A pause.)* Sit down...*(The man sits down – then ponderously)* You know who I am?

*The MAN, afraid to say the wrong thing, does not answer.*

**BURCKHARDT.** We have reports a friend of yours is about to duel: Heinrich Heine.

**MAN.** I've nothing to do with the duel. And Strauss hasn't agreed to fight him.

**BURCKHARDT.** That you know of it is a serious admission. You know that duelling is illegal in France?

**MAN.** They haven't fought.

**BURCKHARDT.** Not yet. But you've written a defense of Heine that's to appear in the newspaper, no? Should I read. *(He picks up a paper and reads.)* "...Any German youngster

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who picks up his pen today, for good or ill, consciously or unconsciously, imitates Heine, for never before has a writer who appeared so suddenly, so quickly come to dominate his field as Heine has. And yet we look on without comment as our police hound this splendid talent out of the land that bore him; our quickly tiring attention overlooks the fact that he has been brutally uprooted from the soil that nourishes his utterly supreme genius” – I’ll skip ahead – “And now he faces a challenge to his life and reputation...”

**MAN.** I admire him.

**BURCKHARDT.** You sound ready to propose.

**MAN.** I owed Heine several favors. I haven’t been asked to be a second. You can’t really intend to arrest me. Half of Paris knows about the duel. And who doesn’t know Heine? He’s friends with Victor Hugo, Balzac – the Rothschilds.

**BURCKHARDT.** And quite a few calling for violent revolution. People you know.

**MAN.** There was nothing about France in their magazine! I love France. I merely listened to them.

**BURCKHARDT.** (*good cop, pausing*) You understand though the situation. I must tell you that I consider you potentially the equal of the giants of living composers, like Spontini –

**MAN.** Spontini, you think is – ?

**BURCKHARDT.** – Monsieur Wagner, then Auber even.

**MAN/WAGNER.** (*anxious, vexed*) Yes...You would like me to repeat what I heard them say?

**BURCKHARDT.** You're getting ahead of me. Have a cigar. (*He opens a box, comes around, lighting a cigar for Wagner.*) That better? Now –

**WAGNER.** Yes?

**BURCKHARDT.** Well, Monsieur, there is one person who particularly concerns me with respect to whom I should like you to assist me.

**WAGNER.** I simply want to write my music. I'm no

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revolutionary.

**BURCKHARDT.** If so: a shame.

**WAGNER.** I just listened to them.

**BURCKHARDT.** You would still be an accomplice.

**WAGNER.** Understand – music – this is my life. Whatever serves its interest. I'd been trying to arrange for my work to be done at the Paris Opera, and I would really have done anything. I did no more than meet these revolutionists. I wouldn't even have agreed to do that you understand, but Meyerbeer - the composer – was among them and I need his help. They were mostly Jews, and –

**BURCKHARDT.** Yes?

**WAGNER.** You know, no matter how weak a country is Jews prosper.

**BURCKHARDT.** What did they say?

**WAGNER.** Well, as you know, there is this publication calling for the Prussian King's murder financed by the Jew Meyerbeer and with the writing mostly by others of these Jews –

**BURCKHARDT.** Isn't Heine a Jew?

**WAGNER.** Converted, yes. Some of them have talent.

**BURCKHARDT.** Well, what did they say: these revolutionists – whatever their origins...?

**WAGNER.** Mostly Jews –

**BURCKHARDT.** Under every half-way decent-looking woman's bed. What did they say?

**WAGNER.** You think I'm being ridiculous. But it's true. They're crafty. They run the music business in Paris. The banks...Which one do you wish to know –

**BURCKHARDT.** We are interested in one man – if one no one in a hundred years will remember: a certain Karl Marx.

**WAGNER.** He really never talked to me.

**BURCKHARDT.** You're in quite a bit of trouble.

**WAGNER.** I'm to report on him?

**BURCKHARDT.** I'll explain what I want you to do when I

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think you're ready. Only then... It's of great importance and value to me. I can only tell you that it may not be what you expect.

*Burckhardt rings the bell for his assistant. Wagner is to be taken away.*

### SCENE 3

*A Parisian bedroom. It is night. As the stage-lights come on, there is a rap at the door. MADAME MORISOT is wearing a huge, full-length dress.*

**MADAME MORISOT.** I said in a moment, Monsieur.  
*(There is another rap.)* All right, then come in.

*The door opens to reveal a tall, angry stout man in opera dress: MONSIEUR MORISOT.*

**MORISOT.** *(cold)* I wondered, Madame, whether you wished to attend me.

**MADAME MORISOT.** Your "noises" again?

*He looks at her.*

**MADAME MORISOT.** For your benefit I try to make myself look presentable. You take this to mean I have a lover, making a fool of yourself over the existence of a lover whom you imagine. But then you always were better at inventing deeds in my bed than in performing them.

**MORISOT.** *(vitriolic)* Stop talking once and for all!

**MADAME MORISOT.** You've changed your mind and we are not only not going out, but you're going to your mistress's?

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*He steps forward ominously and then stops.*

**MORISOT.** I'm sorry. Knowing you got the better of me.

*The door closes, and from under her bed there appears an expensively got up man in striped trousers, the well-dressed man of before: Heine. He is elegant and highly coiffed, erect in his bearing, and he walks with his usual air of cultivation and assurance.*

**HEINE.** Are you all right? I'm so sorry.

**MADAME MORISOT.** I'm fine.

**HEINE.** He knows?

**MADAME MORISOT.** (*enjoying herself*) He suspects. (I said I'm fine.) By the way, where were you last night?

**HEINE.** At a salon.

**MADAME MORISOT.** (*unimpressed*) Yes?

**HEINE.** (*arch*) Chopin, Georges Sand, Lizst: no one of note.

**MADAME MORISOT.** (*explaining*) I should say that the spouse you saw is not my usual one. No, he's never hit me.

**HEINE.** No?

**MADAME MORISOT.** He's courtly: as you know, he's a gentleman when he explains that women are the root of all evil; and still the gentlemen when he spends my inheritance on these courtesans.

**HEINE.** I understand.

**MADAME MORISOT.** No. I don't think you do. I don't resent them. Really.

**HEINE.** How can you not?

**MADAME MORISOT.** It's been years since I cared about him.

**HEINE.** So you say. Well...But through this you can see the reason for my attachment to the idea of overthrowing the existing order?

**MADAME MORISOT.** If you wish.

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**HEINE.** To ending your slavery.

**MADAME MORISOT.** Slaves at least can be freed.

**HEINE.** Yes. Not very fair.

**MADAME MORISOT.** Especially as it was my money. But he is my lord and master.

**HEINE.** And gives up the role only with your death. Which I would find inconvenient.

*He kisses her.*

**HEINE.** A few more years, my love. There is plenty of time for servants and balls and unfaithfulness before the revolution.

**MADAME MORISOT.** I take it you need money.

**HEINE.** You are special, my love, no. I would never come to ask you for money. You know that. I would only do so in a letter.

**MADAME MORISOT.** Harry.

**HEINE.** You know I love you.

**MADAME MORISOT.** You better go.

**HEINE.** Yes –

**MADAME MORISOT.** Sh –

**HEINE.** Important –

**MADAME MORISOT.** What?

**HEINE.** Sad though it is –

**MADAME MORISOT.** What –

**HEINE.** That our friend, my cousin Karl – you know him. I introduced you. With the wife Jenny.

**MADAME MORISOT.** (*conspiratorial, referring to her husband*) He's gone. (*referring back to Marx, teasingly*) Your cousin: he shares your origins?

*Heine looks at her, unsure whether to take offense at what appears to be a reference to his religious background.*

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**MADAME MORISOT.** I wasn't thinking that. I meant German, Harry. Not Jewish. Yes?...What sort of cousin is he?

**HEINE.** Third. Fourth? A distant relation. But here's the thing: Karl has been arrested...I wasn't offended. (*She nods.*) To free him we need to influence someone.

**MADAME MORISOT.** A bribe?

**HEINE.** Not necessarily.

**MADAME MORISOT.** Justice wearing thinner blindfolds?

**HEINE.** You know I favor thinner garments for women in general. Your sister's husband is the relevant magistrate.

**MADAME MORISOT.** Harry, as it happens my sister is coming this evening. Tell me, was your friend Karl's crime serious?

**HEINE.** He's being held on orders of one of the Police Inspectors. They haven't told him what the charges will be. Speaking of overthrowing the social order: remember, he's one of my friends busy with promoting that. A good man.

**MADAME MORISOT.** He hasn't killed anyone?

**HEINE.** No.

**MADAME MORISOT.** His offense was political?

**HEINE.** Yes, he wrote a piece in our magazine.

**MADAME MORISOT.** The article?

**HEINE.** Displeased the King of Prussia. Suggested he forgo his position.

**MADAME MORISOT.** I see. And...?

**HEINE.** Seems Prussia wants him exiled from France.

**MADAME MORISOT.** (*sighs*) Would you like to meet my sister?

**HEINE.** (*affably*) She's notorious, yes. (*Pause.*) She is notorious?

**MADAME MORISOT.** It's only recently we've come to be close once more. Don't offend her.

**HEINE.** (*in a different tone, again dear*) What shall I do?

**MADAME MORISOT.** Descend from the porch window. Wait on the street. Once her carriage passes on the drive, then



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advance and present your card to the footman.

**HEINE.** No one else is coming?

**MADAME MORISOT.** You love me?

**HEINE.** Not frequently enough. I do resent your husband's constant presence in this house. You will speak to him about that?

**MADAME MORISOT.** Out.

**HEINE.** (*while exiting*) A great genius comes along once or twice a century. Don't worry, Madame, I'm sure you won't have any trouble finding another.

**MADAME MORISOT.** Harry, we haven't time. Please, now.

**HEINE.** I like when a woman says "please" and "now" as I'm retreating from her boudoir. Must one go through a course of instruction to be notorious here in Paris?

*A pause as she sits down. Then the bell rings, and a footman enters.*

**MADAME MORISOT.** Did the gentlemen of the house break something? A vase?

*The footman nods.*

**MADAME MORISOT.** My sister? Show her in.

*Her sister enters and they kiss each other on the cheeks. After a moment then her sister turns towards the audience and looks about. MADAME FENEL is somewhat younger and slimmer than her elder sibling; convinced in her own mind of a superior beauty and status she is condescending to most. She is not though notably false or bitchy towards her sister whom she obviously loves – in spite of their past differences.*

**MADAME FENEL.** My sweet, you look beautiful.

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**MADAME MORISOT.** Reflection of your presence.

**MADAME FENEL.** Why, you glow!...What is his name? You did take my advice? Goodness knows you waited enough years to do this. I hope Guy doesn't know.

**MADAME MORISOT.** He suspects.

**MADAME FENEL.** Yes? And...?

**MADAME MORISOT.** What happened when you saw mother?

**MADAME FENEL.** What's the lover's name?

**MADAME MORISOT.** Mother?

**MADAME FENEL.** She can't remember things. You needn't worry. You can sell the property she wanted us to hold on to. At this point mother is nostalgic for the days she had memories.

*Madame Morisot sits her sister down.*

**MADAME MORISOT.** Please.

**MADAME FENEL.** Would I know him from the Opera? Your lover...?

**MADAME MORISOT.** He loves the Opera, in fact.

**MADAME FENEL.** Marguerite, if you don't wish to say, just tell me the box he sits in.

**MADAME MORISOT.** I don't know...I was asked to beg something of you.

**MADAME FENEL.** What is it you want? Some money I can provide. (*Stops*) You remember when I met Guy what I said.

**MADAME MORISOT.** Don't remind me.

**MADAME FENEL.** I don't mean to be unkind.

**MADAME MORISOT.** Would you make an arrangement?

**MADAME FENEL.** Yes?

**MADAME MORISOT.** See to it that a man in your husband's packet – an acquaintance of my lover – is released rather than exiled.

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*Madame Fenel thinks.*

**MADAME FENEL.** I want to know who your lover is first.

**MADAME MORISOT.** He doesn't have a title. In fact, he's a writer. But respected.

**MADAME FENEL.** In confiding, dear, one would think that we're confiding. You know that I'm not wholly the frivolous person they suggest (and desire).

**MADAME MORISOT.** He's coming tonight – soon.

**MADAME FENEL.** For what was the other man arrested?

**MADAME MORISOT.** Slander. He's one of these émigrés who talks about overthrowing foreign governments. The name is Karl Marx.

**MADAME FENEL.** Your lover's cologne gets stronger as we move towards the bed. I take it he has some talents in this direction.

**MADAME MORISOT.** He tries at least, dear. I was unaware that there were men who did. (*about Marx*) This Marx, the one imprisoned – no charges were filed yet.

**MADAME FENEL.** Foreigner, you said?

*Madame Morisot nods.*

**MADAME FENEL.** He only writes pamphlets?

**MADAME MORISOT.** Yes...

**MADAME FENEL.** Well, introduce me to your lover, and, after we've conversed...Perhaps I'll speak to my husband...

**MADAME MORISOT.** You'll like my Harry. Charming. A German, but he really speaks our language. A poet. Always well-dressed. Handsome face. The soul of urbanity. You'll permit me to check on your niece. (*thinks*) Give me a moment.

*With her sister's blessing, Madame Morisot exits and then*

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*there is a knock, and the footman enters. With him is Wagner. Madame Fenel gestures for the footman to leave. Wagner looks somewhat bedraggled.*

**MADAME FENEL.** I am Madame Fenel, Marguerite's sister. She's told me a good deal about you. I confess that you are not how I expected you. She must love you very much given how...differently she describes you.

**WAGNER.** I have never met your sister. This is the first time I have ever been in this house, the first time I have ever been in her bedroom.

**MADAME FENEL.** Of course.

**WAGNER.** Truthfully.

**MADAME FENEL.** You're a poet?

**WAGNER.** Glad someone recognizes that.

**MADAME FENEL.** Your modesty is becoming...Is there some way I can help you?

**WAGNER.** I apologize. Perhaps there was a mistake. I was looking for someone I was told was here -

**MADAME FENEL.** But you'd be more comfortable if I left you upon my sister's return?

*He does not understand that she thinks he is planning an extramarital assignation with her sister.*

**WAGNER.** No. We can transact our affair with you present. I hardly think it makes a difference.

**MADAME FENEL.** Perhaps I'm narrow, but I think it makes a difference.

**WAGNER.** You said you're Madame Fenel?

**MADAME FENEL.** Yes.

**WAGNER.** I've heard your name. *(Pause.)* My pleasure. I'm looking for a man I'd heard would be here. Perhaps we'll all enjoy an intimate evening.

**MADAME FENEL.** I must not be understanding you

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correctly.

**WAGNER.** I think I've been perfectly clear. I don't know much about you, but unless you're something very different than what I think –

**MADAME FENEL.** How dare you –

*They are interrupted by Heine's return with Madame Morisot.*

**WAGNER.** Ah, the man I've been awaiting!

**MADAME FENEL.** My dear, do you know what your friend has been –

**MADAME MORISOT.** Who is he? Did you let him in?

**MADAME FENEL.** Did I let him in? Of course – but – you're saying you don't know him?

**MADAME MORISOT.** Why would you think I did?

**MADAME FENEL.** Well, he...insisted he didn't know you and had never been in your bedroom before. So I thought –

**MADAME MORISOT.** Because he said he didn't know me, you thought he knew me?

**MADAME FENEL.** Of course –

**MADAME MORISOT.** Harry, can you explain this?

**HEINE.** No, but I do know Herr Wagner. He's a composer.

**MADAME FENEL.** I thought you said you were a poet?

**WAGNER.** I am.

**HEINE.** I thought you were a composer.

**WAGNER.** Yes, yes. I tell you I am. Don't you remember that I write my libretti? I showed you some of my rhymes.

**HEINE.** Oh, yes, you did. That was what persuaded me I should solely introduce you as a composer.

**MADAME FENEL.** So you're the German poet?

**MADAME MORISOT.** What are you doing here?

**WAGNER.** I was told I might find Monsieur Heine. I need to talk to him.

**MADAME MORISOT.** In a woman's boudoir? In the

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middle of the evening?

**WAGNER.** Someone suggested.

**HEINE.** But I've never been in this house or Madame Morisot's bedroom before.

**MADAME FENEL.** You're the second man to tell me that tonight.

**MADAME MORISOT.** You haven't explained.

**WAGNER.** It is a matter of some urgency.

**HEINE.** Yes?

**WAGNER.** It's about a relative of yours: (*to the others*) a man named Karl Marx.

**HEINE.** Well, I have myself been concerned about him. (*Incidentally, to the women*) He also has shown me his poetry.

**MADAME FENEL.** Anyone who writes German poetry feels obligated to show you his?

**HEINE.** Just about, but I should explain: I was just teasing Herr Wagner. His opera "Rienzi" has been a great triumph from Prussia to the Rhineland. He is a man of great promise, even genius.

**WAGNER.** Thank you for the proper acknowledgment. I do not always think I am received as I am due here in Paris.

**MADAME MORISOT.** Then I am honored.

**WAGNER.** Please. I have far greater compositions which have not yet been performed. I simply have not been able to get my work in the right hands. My music is the music of the future.

**MADAME MORISOT.** Of course.

**WAGNER.** No, really –

**HEINE.** You were saying about my friend, Marx. You know he was arrested?

**WAGNER.** Oh, yes.

**HEINE.** And you wish to see him released?

**WAGNER.** Not precisely.

**HEINE.** Then...

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**WAGNER.** You don't know? He's been challenged to a duel.

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### ACT 2 SCENE 1

*A 19th Century prison straight out of The Count Of Monte Cristo. There is a clanging sound. Wagner enters from a passage-way above, center-stage, with Heinrich Heine. Wagner carries a lantern.*

**WAGNER.** You know, Harry, it occurs to me – you dress awfully well for a revolutionary.

**HEINE.** Thank you – if that’s meant as a compliment. I’m not rich.

**WAGNER.** You know, Harry, it occurs to me – you dress awfully well for a revolutionary.

**HEINE.** Thank you – if that’s meant as a compliment. I’m not rich.

**WAGNER.** You don't dress poor though.

**HEINE.** Well, you wear out suits by squiring women into dining rooms and when beside females I’ve at least tried to be in their beds. I’d have spent more time with them in less intimate settings, I assure you, but I didn't have the wardrobe.

*Wagner lights a torch on a wall, and, after a second then, the torch flashes and we see a cell. Marx is within. Marx's face appears, turned sideways, pressed onto a prison-cot. He is sleeping.*

**HEINE.** Karl, wake up. *(As Marx wakes up)* It's your cousin Harry.

*With this, Marx gets to his feet in the darkness, reflexively folding his arms behind him, as if speaking from a reviewing stand.*

**MARX.** *(noticing Wagner)*...Your name is Rolf, isn't it?



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**HEINE.** Richard. He's a friend of Meyerbeer's. He's the one who told me about your duel. How did this come about?

**MARX.** I'm afraid I made some intemperate remarks.

**HEINE.** What did you say?

**MARX.** A member of one of our committees said we should follow Bakunin and –

**WAGNER.** I know Bakunin.

**MARX.** You're a disciple?

**WAGNER.** Certainly. Yes. Yes, I am.

**MARX.** Well. I see. I suppose I can trust you then. (*Beat.*) I guess I should be more of a gentleman when introductions are made. As a rule, I prefer not to receive people outside my home.

**WAGNER.** I met Bakunin in Dresden.

**MARX....**We are comrades?

**WAGNER.** Very much.

**HEINE.** But what will you do about the duel? And what did –

**MARX.** The duel is the least of my worries –

**HEINE.** Perhaps, but –

**MARX.** What did you learn?

**HEINE.** Well – don't ask me how I found this out – the King of Prussia would like to have you thrown out of Paris. But he does not want a trial because then you would get publicity. They want to deposit you at the border as an unwanted alien. Apparently, they've decided not to pursue me. They know it will just make them look ridiculous.

**MARX.** (*To Heine, sincerely*) I'm glad. (*explaining to Wagner*) But what of me? Jenny was afraid before. She must be terrified now – and should we be deported...

**WAGNER.** Where could you even be deported to?

**MARX.** Just Belgium. It's the only country in Europe now which accepts political refugees.

**WAGNER.** You can't go there?

**MARX.** You're sure he's not a police agent? That he is a

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friend of Bakunin's?

**HEINE.** Yes.

**MARX.** Michael has mentioned this man to you?

**HEINE.** I think.

**MARX.** I did meet you with Meyerbeer, didn't I?

**WAGNER.** Yes, I'm a composer.

**MARX.** I think we have an informer among us.

**HEINE.** I wouldn't worry that it's Richard.

**MARX.** What makes you so sure?

**HEINE.** Richard barely knows French. I would think that's a requirement for informing in a country where taste is everything and speaking German is gauche.

**MARX.** Harry, no time for jokes.

**HEINE.** Always time for jokes.

**WAGNER.** I can leave if you want.

**MARX.** I suppose I do have to be more trusting. But if I'm deported. I'm thinking just of getting my inheritance – what I'm due...

**WAGNER.** I'm sorry. I sympathize.

**MARX.** I shouldn't speak of it. Forget what I said.

**WAGNER.** But what happened – this duel?

**MARX.** Again: how do I know you were with Bakunin – or, even were you, aren't with the police? (*Parenthetically*) Please don't take offense, Harry.

**HEINE.** I'm not at all –

**WAGNER.** Would you like me to describe him?...He's very tall and has pale blue eyes. He has a cleft chin –

**MARX.** That could come from a police report.

**WAGNER.** We met in a beer hall on the outskirts of town. Gray chairs and buff walls. Outside, in the garden, a brass band played a Mozart serenade too quickly and out of key. So annoying I could hardly hear what was being said. Like keys scraped against tile. Only when the band stopped, could I listen. No guns were present, and there were just eight of us meeting. As Bakunin spoke, he stared at us with those eyes.

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He said all of the future was upon us. Then he told us that he had men who could have us killed if we reported what we knew. You're the first person I've told that to.

**MARX.** All right. Yes. I believe you. The challenge is from an ally of Bakunin's. You know Willich?

**WAGNER.** Sounds familiar.

**HEINE.** Anyway...?

**MARX.** Well, this Willich doesn't say the Prussian king should die, he wishes to actually kill him. He had the whole plot laid out.

**WAGNER.** And? What did you say?

**MARX.** I asked him how we would advance our cause by having the King's son replace his father on the throne and then arrest and execute us. So this Willich passed around a note calling me a coward. I lost my temper and pointed out that he was a cuckold. He challenged me. Bakunin can't control him.

**HEINE.** Does he actually wish to duel in Paris?

**MARX.** No, while he's not afraid to plot a political assassination, he is afraid of being charged for duelling.

Truly. So he suggests we go to the low countries, where it's legal. The police, of course, wish to deport me there.

Wonderful, yes? To prevent my writing that the King should die, the French will send me where a man who wants to blow the king up is waiting to blow my brains out. And he's a crack shot...

**HEINE.** Well...

**WAGNER.** Yes...

**MARX....**I'm getting an even more profound knowledge of the travails of workingmen here. I think of this place as a study. For the enlightened prison is a library without books.

**HEINE.** Are you talking with the other prisoners or to them?

**MARX.** Good you're family. You know how to cheer me up.

**HEINE.** I'm sorry.

**WAGNER.** Have any of them heard of you?

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**MARX.** Oh, yes, many of the debtors already recognize me as their champion.

**HEINE.** Of course.

**MARX.** You had the meeting with your mistress's sister, the one to secure my release?

**HEINE.** I never said that it would.

**MARX.** Well...?

**HEINE.** Nothing is accomplished yet...

**MARX.** *(to Wagner)* This woman is a notorious example of bourgeois filth and animal decadence...

**WAGNER.** I met her. With Harry.

**MARX.** Yes?

**WAGNER.** She didn't seem as you describe her.

**MARX.** You may not know women.

**WAGNER.** While you do?

**HEINE.** Gentlemen...

**MARX.** They want to know if I'll act as an informant?

**HEINE.** You're far ahead of us. The woman had never even heard your name before...How is your wife doing for money?

**MARX.** Engels gave her some. I asked him to split his inheritance with me, but he refused saying my anger from my poverty fortifies the revolution's spirit and so he can't be so selfish as to give me any large share of his money...Should I read you both my latest poem?

**HEINE.** You wrote it here?

**MARX.** Ah...*(finding the back of an envelope, he reads)*

When workers starve and spies eat well

And morning comes with night its guest

Dark clouds rise past my prison cell.

I hope still that the desp'rate West

Will be in time a paradise

With rule by parliaments long past

And power placed in seeing eyes;

This kingdom come to be the last.

**HEINE.** "Paradise" and "seeing eyes" don't really rhyme.

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**MARX.** (*accusing*) But you do such rhymes in your poems  
(*stops*)...

**WAGNER.** I liked it.

**MARX.** For sound or sense?

**WAGNER.** The ideas are interesting.

**MARX.** You didn't like it?

**HEINE.** He liked it.

**MARX.** I want to hear him answer.

**WAGNER.** I liked the imagery.

**MARX.** But there was hardly any imagery. That was the  
point: to strip it down to meaning.

**HEINE.** He meant that was what he liked about it.

**WAGNER.** Precisely.

**HEINE.** We're trying to save you.

**MARX.** Yes...

**HEINE.** We like your poetry. We're your friends. Don't  
sulk.

**MARX.** Yes.

**HEINE.** So...Who do you think the informer is?

**MARX.** (*still a little peeved*) Well, we can be sure of  
Bernays, Meyerbeer. Bakunin is a revolutionist – though  
admittedly, you might be right – it could be someone in  
Bakunin's cell...

**HEINE.** I see.

**MARX.** I'm sorry: I know you're worried about your own  
duel. (*Trying to cheer him up*) In the future utopia there will  
be none of this.

**HEINE.** Yes.

**MARX.** But, in the meantime, my wife –

**HEINE.** We know: her family are aristocrats –

**MARX.** I am sorry. I appreciate your kindness...You know to  
free one man on the basis of personal ties is sentimental in a  
way.

**HEINE.** So, were you a reactionary, I shouldn't help?

**MARX.** No. I'm feeling contrary. I don't know.

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*They are interrupted by the appearance of another man:  
CONRAD SCHRAMM, Marx's secretary.*

**MARX.** This is my secretary, Monsieur Schramm. Conrad had been imprisoned himself.

**WAGNER.** Yes...I'm surprised you can afford a secretary.

**SCHRAMM.** I'm not paid. I contribute my services because I believe in our cause.

**WAGNER.** Oh, forgive me.

**MARX.** Yes, in any event. What is your plan with respect to Madame Fenel? *(adding for Schramm)* Her husband is the minister responsible for my arrest, and she's the sister of Harry's mistress.

**HEINE.** Tomorrow Richard and I are going to visit her on our way to a salon.

**MARX.** Yes...*(being polite, making conversation)* Will anyone else of interest be at the salon?

**HEINE.** Prosper Merimee, Hector Berlioz. I wish that I might have invited you. I regret present circumstances tend to conspire against.

**SCHRAMM.** Could you threaten your lover Madame Morisot with exposure to get her to –

**HEINE.** Good god! Are you serious?

**SCHRAMM.** Karl's life is at stake. When one goes to bed with a married lady of station, in a manner, there is an opening, no, even if it is not explicit, by which one could press her?

**HEINE.** But I am no such man.

**SCHRAMM.** Then forgive me.

**HEINE.** You would exploit a woman's affections to advance the cause?

**SCHRAMM.** It's selfishness to do anything else. One must be rational above all else. This woman, Madame Morisot, whom you are seeing: will anyone remember her or her

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travails – save as she was your mistress?

**HEINE.** I will.

**SCHRAMM.** Well, that’s wonderful – especially if you write some verse, but...

**HEINE.** What?

**SCHRAMM.** Just that: history is impersonal, that’s all. So one must be indifferent to bourgeois sentiment and bourgeois courtesy in making it. What is one person when ranged against large and impersonal forces?

**HEINE.** You think?

**SCHRAMM.** You took an oath to help him. Yes?

**HEINE.** To try. But, if I am to believe you, what is an oath?

**MARX.** Conrad, please. It’s all right.

**SCHRAMM.** *(to Heine still)* But I know you’re a man of honor.

**HEINE.** You regard such words – honor, valor – as contemptible concepts of the old order?

**SCHRAMM.** I was just released from prison. Of course, I think the old order must be crushed. Completely – of course.

**HEINE.** I’ll do what I can.

*Heine nods. Then he and Wagner exit. Marx is left with Schramm.*

## SCENE 2

*Heine, Madame Fenel and Wagner are in her drawing room. Wagner is playing the piano from before the moment the curtain rises. He is playing a piano transcription of the “Tannhauser” overture. The music gathers into larger and larger chords and beats up to its crescendo. When it finishes, Wagner turns and bows not altogether humbly.*

**MADAME FENEL.** And you got the idea for this – and your “Frying Dutchman” – from your friend?

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**WAGNER.** It's actually called "The Flying Dutchman" –

**MADAME FENEL.** Really, but how does he "fly"? You said he was a sailor. I could see how as a Dutchman he might catch some haddock or herring –

**WAGNER.** It's a metaphor. Just a metaphor. A ship "flying" across the ocean.

**MADAME FENEL.** I see.

**WAGNER.** It's a ghost ship you see. He's the Captain, and he must sail across vast, lonely seas until a woman should come who will give her life in love to release him from a curse.

**MADAME FENEL.** I see. Very interesting. I take it this opera isn't meant for Paris – the one about the lair of the goddess Venus sounds a bit more for us, more cosmopolitan.

**WAGNER.** No, I want them both done here in Paris. In fact, Harry and Monsieur Meyerbeer have arranged meetings for me with the head of the Opera.

**MADAME FENEL.** Your operas sound wonderfully decadent, so appealingly sinful.

**WAGNER.** Well, that's interesting – though I don't see them that way.

**MADAME FENEL.** Have you other subjects?

**WAGNER.** Yes, but they really aren't "decadent."

**MADAME FENEL.** For instance?

**WAGNER.** I'm also thinking about an opera based on the story of a one-eyed philandering God and the incestuous loves of his children.

**MADAME FENEL.** (*looking to Heine*) And these first two: you get the ideas from our newest favorite among the lately Christian?

**WAGNER.** Yes. Yes, I did. I am glad to see you can make jokes about this subject. Everyone is very uncomfortable talking about it in Germany.

**MADAME FENEL.** Well, in France we try to have humor.

**HEINE.** It's good that you should take from Jews, granted



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how many people wind up paying everything to our moneylenders.

**WAGNER.** Indeed.

**HEINE.** But take what you wish from us, Richard, so long as in making a new German culture, you recognize your debts.

**WAGNER.** Of course.

**HEINE.** But you know this is not why we've come?

**MADAME FENEL.** I do.

**HEINE.** Well...did you speak with your husband about releasing our friend Marx?

**MADAME FENEL.** No...He's been rather hectoring the last two days. I thought I'd wait – and I wanted to meet you again, Monsieur Heine, given your friendship with my sister, and get a better appraisal of you.

**HEINE.** I see.

**MADAME FENEL.** I thought as well that I would like to hear a bit more about your friend.

**HEINE.** Of course.

**WAGNER.** Yes.

**MADAME FENEL.** You know, people suppose – I indeed have a reputation and I know it – as a beautiful woman with a superficial mind. But...

**WAGNER.** You would like to know what this is all about before you intercede.

**MADAME FENEL.** Perhaps more than that. Since our little bit of unrest in '30 – it seems to me, you will admit – the country has prospered.

**HEINE.** To some degree, yes.

**MADAME FENEL.** Well, what I'm saying is – here's what I see: we have now a kindly king and parliament and a press that even sometimes questions them. So, to really sound terribly naive, I must ask: why is it that intellectuals spend their days and nights decrying all this?

**HEINE.** Well, that there is a parliament hardly means injustice has ended.

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**MADAME FENEL.** Yes.

**WAGNER.** And you know Marx's writings attack Prussia, not the regime here?

**MADAME FENEL.** So my sister said. But he does want revolution here, too?

**HEINE.** He believes we can create a better man.

**MADAME FENEL.** As a woman, I would certainly look forward to this, but, if you mean that a new form of government or society can alter human nature, I'm inclined to wonder.

**HEINE.** Socialists believe that a new society absent of class relations will alter human nature.

**MADAME FENEL.** I see. And you both believe this?

**WAGNER.** Really, could things be worse than they are?

**MADAME FENEL.** Doesn't the past indicate?

**HEINE.** You think creating a new man impossible?

**MADAME FENEL.** I am not an intellectual like both of you. But it does seem a leap. I mean: I not only can't resuppose my soul, I can never seem to lose five pounds.

**WAGNER.** We believe you to be wonderfully slim –

**HEINE.** A woman of the utmost fashion –

**WAGNER.** We can't imagine what weight you're talking about.

**MADAME FENEL.** My ankles.

**HEINE.** You have some of the best ankles in France.

**WAGNER.** Gorgeous ankles. My wife was a very successful actress and hers don't begin to compare.

**MADAME FENEL.** I know you value Monsieur Heine's friend.

**WAGNER....**I have to go. I must arrange some things for Monsieur Heine. But...

*He gets up and makes his exit.*

**MADAME FENEL.** What does he have to arrange?

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**HEINE.** Just some affairs of mine.

**MADAME FENEL.** Yes?

**HEINE.** On, no. Not that sort of affair.

**MADAME FENEL.** Tell me.

**HEINE.** As you're the wife of a magistrate, I'm afraid I can't.

**MADAME FENEL.** As your lover is my sister, and you come asking my aid, I insist.

**HEINE.** Will you keep what I tell you secret? Not only from your husband, but, for now, from your sister?

**MADAME FENEL.** Tell me what it is.

**HEINE.** I have a duel to fight tomorrow. With pistols.

**MADAME FENEL.** Well...My sister respects a man's commitment to the idea of honor. I'm surprised you haven't told her.

**HEINE.** She would try to persuade me not to, I think. And then she would say she wouldn't forgive me if I went ahead. But there's more: I'm to be married.

**MADAME FENEL.** I thought you were married.

**HEINE.** The woman with whom I live: we've never exchanged vows.

**MADAME FENEL....**I know my sister will resent this.

**HEINE.** If I die, my wife – or fiancéé – must have the copyrights to my writing. Otherwise, she would be destitute. And people do respect a widow.

**MADAME FENEL.** Won't marrying her put your creditors' claims upon her?

**HEINE.** Immediately, yes. Over time though the copyrights to my writing will support her so she need not go back to work as a shopgirl.

**MADAME FENEL.** It's a slap at my sister to marry your wife.

**HEINE.** I'd marry your sister, but bigamy is mistakenly considered a crime that doesn't serve as its own punishment.

**MADAME FENEL.** But you told people that you and...

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**HEINE.** Mathilde –

**MADAME FENEL.** – were husband and wife?

**HEINE.** Married women are often so vain that they only trust married men as lovers; they think the unmarried kind will insist on running off together. Would you take offense if I also suggested that infidelity among the wedded is a form of commiseration?

**MADAME FENEL....**You want me now to see if I can have this man Marx released?

**HEINE.** Yes...

**MADAME FENEL.** Does the request end...

**HEINE.** If I do tomorrow? Dead, I wouldn't be bothered so much by Marx's reproach – but, I'd hope you'd do it anyway. So assured I have one less thing to think about as I hold a gun...Of course, Marx himself faces a duel, and, if he dies in it after he's released from jail, then we need not worry about him being deported.

**MADAME FENEL.** Well, if the state regards him as an annoyance they're better off without and he faces a challenge, shouldn't they release him?

**HEINE.** They don't know if he's a man who'd fight to defend his name.

**MADAME FENEL.** Do you?

**HEINE.** I hope him to be a man of honor. He is not only my companion but a relation.

**MADAME FENEL.** What will happen to him if I don't do this – but he survives the challenge?

**HEINE.** You really want to know?

**MADAME FENEL.** Yes.

**HEINE.** Accompanied by his wife Jenny and their possessions – half-ruined – Karl will be brought by the police in handcuffs to a border post where he will be let free with his documents. Obloquy will fall upon him. An ordinary job will be denied to him – should he have sought one. He will become more settled in his hatreds. Bitter. He'll continue

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writing. In their munificence they will not kill him or keep him in a dungeon like past tyrants – but will make him implacable.

**MADAME FENEL.** You love my sister? Truly love?

**HEINE...**She's inspired my poetry.

**MADAME FENEL.** Your marriage plans make things even harder...when is the wedding?

**HEINE.** I wed in the morning, duel at dusk.

**MADAME FENEL.** You're not inviting my sister?

**HEINE.** The ceremony is to be Catholic, but not that Catholic.

**MADAME FENEL.** You won't see your bride until the wedding?

**HEINE.** I am seeing her when I leave you...Will you do it?

### SCENE 3

*Heine's study. His common-law wife MATHILDE enters. There is a palpable warmth about her. She is attractive and dressed in a fashionable and very feminine way. There is something charmingly girlish about her.*

**MATHILDE.** Harry?

**HEINE.** Yes?

**MATHILDE.** You're angry with me?

**HEINE.** *(slightly exasperated – focused on his writing)* What is it, my love?

**MATHILDE.** I thought we might talk about some things. Now – before...

**HEINE.** What?

*Mathilde is put off and decides to talk about something else.*

**MATHILDE.** Would you kiss me?

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*She comes to sit in his lap. Smiling warmly – amused – he prevents her from doing so.*

**HEINE.** After...

**MATHILDE.** Yes.

**HEINE.** I'm sorry. And I would like to make love. I have to work to make us money, that's all. You know that.

**MATHILDE.** Why did you get home so late last night? Do you have a mistress – you were ending things with? And now you're feeling guilty for her?

**HEINE.** No.

**MATHILDE.** No?

**HEINE.** No.

**MATHILDE.** We haven't made love in a week.

**HEINE.** I'm exhausted. Tense. You've said you were tired by the planning. (*tenderly, archly*) Besides, love, I wouldn't ever refuse you because of a mistress. It would have to be something out of the ordinary. (*Beat.*) Now, what is it?

**MATHILDE...**I can't sit in your lap?

**HEINE.** After the wedding.

**MATHILDE.** I want a child.

**HEINE.** They take nine months. (*Pause.*) We will.

*He gets up, goes over and kisses her.*

**HEINE.** You are too beautiful a child not to have a child, beautiful or otherwise. I wish you knew German, and I could read you my poems.

**MATHILDE.** What does that have to do with it?

**HEINE.** You know what I'm saying: that I wish I could show you through them how much I love you.

**MATHILDE.** All right...You're sure we can't make love again until the wedding?

**HEINE.** Patience. It's custom...What?

**MATHILDE...**I wish I could read. Would you be more

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proud of me then? Would you have proposed before?

**HEINE.** The day I saw you – saw your bright, warm, loving eyes – feeling lonely – I knew I would die happily. Reading is only for stupid people like me. Song is for the wise. And you know how I like to hear you sing.

**MATHILDE.** I want a green dress as a wedding present. Will you give me money for that?

**HEINE.** Then you better let me work, hm?

**MATHILDE.** (*frustrated, subdued annoyance*) Yes...(*in another voice*) May I show you my wedding dress? Or is that not allowed?

**HEINE.** No, don't spoil it. Don't even tell me if it's white.

**MATHILDE.** It's not a color which flatters me, you know.

**HEINE.** You're beautiful in everything.

**MATHILDE.** Thank you again for all the money to pay for everything.

**HEINE.** Please. I think you'll like the ring. It has –

**MATHILDE.** No, no – you must not tell me.

**HEINE.** I signed the papers – saying all children from a prospective union will be Catholic. They're on the dresser.

**MATHILDE.** We will have children?

**HEINE.** Yes.

**MATHILDE.** What is it?

**HEINE.** Mathilde, after we marry, I'm finally to duel that Strauss fellow.

**MATHILDE...**Is this why you proposed?

**HEINE.** I love you.

**MATHILDE.** But...?

**HEINE.** It made me more aware of the wrong of not having proposed. And I don't think anything tragic will happen, but, if it does...

**MATHILDE.** Harry, I forbid you...

**HEINE.** You know what he's said about me.

**MATHILDE.** I just said. I won't marry you.

**HEINE.** Be better than the man you marry. Try to be

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sensible. Please, Mathilde. You'll need the money if I die. You can't go back to working in the bootmaker's shop.

**MATHILDE.** I'll do something. I don't want to talk about this.

**HEINE.** Mathilde, what other jobs are there for an unmarried woman in Paris?

*She moves away.*

**MATHILDE.** I'm not talking about this, and I'm not marrying you...How could you not tell me this?

*She begins to cry.*

**HEINE.** Mathilde, please. Please, listen to me...have I often lied to you?

**MATHILDE.** (*interrupting*) Yes.

**HEINE.** This is the truth. I never asked you to marry me before because I didn't wish in a church to take an oath swearing myself to anyone, even you. But this duel has made me think – something which for all my powers of mind, I freely admit to not having done – and it's made me make that choice. Do you understand? From the moment of my oath you will be the only woman until I die.

**MATHILDE.** He could kill you.

**HEINE....**I can't promise you he won't. But I wouldn't want you to marry a man who wasn't honorable, and I wouldn't want you to take my name were it sullied.

**MATHILDE.** You're to fight with pistols?

**HEINE.** He's a master swordsman. I'm putting myself in Christ's hands twice tomorrow.

**MATHILDE.** Tomorrow? Oh, god!

**HEINE.** I presumed that we'd done enough in the realm of consummation.

**MATHILDE.** You're not even being serious.



## THE GERMANS IN PARIS

**HEINE.** From tomorrow, I take you, “forsaking all others.”

**MATHILDE.** Oh, Harry. You’re such a fool.

**HEINE.** Come now. You can’t disappoint your aunt. She wants to see you in that dress.

**MATHILDE.** I’m just a child. I don’t need to be told anything. Why did you have to tell me now?

**HEINE.** I’m sorry.

**MATHILDE.** You should never have even gotten yourself into this duel.

**HEINE.** You’re sounding too much like a wife not to have been one.

*She smiles, amused.*

**HEINE.** They’re all expecting it. I readily accept that you won’t ever forgive me if I die.

**MATHILDE.** Oh, Harry.

*Crying again, she comes into his arms.*

***THE PLAY IS NOT OVER!! TO FIND OUT HOW IT ENDS –***

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