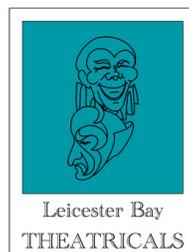


PERUSAL SCRIPT



a play by

Thomas F. Rogers



Newport, Maine

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THE SECOND PRIEST

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This play poses the pacifist dilemma. It shows how one man's futile attempt to disavow violence, and combat the bloodshed of war, causes him to sacrifice first the lives of his wife and son, then his own.

CHARACTERS *(in order of their appearance) 16M 4W*

Delo

Agen

Bok

Cantri

Igrid

1st Soldier

2nd Soldier

3rd Soldier

Doctor (played by 1st Soldier)

Nurse (played by Delo)

1st Orderly (played by 2nd Soldier)

2nd Orderly (played by 3rd Soldier)

Young Girl

Foreign Diplomat (played by 1st Soldier/Doctor)

1st Guard (played by 2nd Soldier/1st Orderly)

2nd Guard (played by 3rd Soldier/2nd Orderly)

1st Interpreter (for Agen)

2nd Interpreter (for Foreign Diplomat)

Announcer (played by 1st Soldier/Doctor/Foreign Diplomat)

1st Businessman (played by 1st Interpreter)

2nd Businessman (played by 2nd Interpreter)

SUGGESTED DOUBLE CASTING -- 8M 3W

ACTRESS ONE -- plays Delo and Nurse

ACTRESS TWO -- plays Igrid

ACTRESS THREE -- plays Young Girl, and boy Child

ACTOR ONE -- plays Agen

ACTOR TWO -- plays Bok

ACTOR THREE -- plays Cantri

ACTOR FOUR -- plays 1st Soldier, Doctor, Announcer, Foreign Diplomat

ACTOR FIVE -- plays 2nd Soldier, 1st Orderly, 1st Guard

ACTOR SIX -- plays 3rd Soldier, 2nd Orderly, 2nd Guard

ACTOR SEVEN -- plays Interpreter for Agen, 1st Businessman

ACTOR EIGHT -- plays Interpreter for Foreign Diplomat, 2nd Businessman

THE SECOND PRIEST by Thomas F. Rogers. 8M 3W (doubled) play all the roles. About 2 hours. This play poses the pacifist dilemma. Set in an unspecified locale, now, or sometime in the future, it's idealistic hero, Agen, refuses to take the lives of his political enemies. In consequence, his wife dies and he loses his memory. As, years later, he recovers from his amnesia, he proves the perfect candidate for his nation's highest office. Manipulated by his minister and boyhood friend, Cantri, while negotiating a binding peace with a foreign power, Agen unintentionally abets the death of his only child. In an effort to enforce the treaty he's already paid such a high price for, he finally attempts, in a public address, to dissuade his nation from developing any more deadly weapons. In order to stop him, Cantri orders Agen's assassination. Ironically, a man's attempt to combat war and bloodshed by disavowing violence has led to, first, the deaths of his wife and son, and then his own.

ORDER #3068

Thomas F. Rogers -- A former director of the BYU Honors Program, Thomas F. Rogers is professor emeritus of Russian language and literature at Brigham Young University and the author of more than a score of plays, many on Mormon subjects. Four of these have been published in *God's Fools* (Signature Books, 1983), which also received the Association of Mormon Letters Drama Prize that same year: **HUEBENER** (the first literary treatment of its subject), **FIRE IN THE BONES** (again, the first literary treatment of its subject, the 1857 Mountain Meadows Massacre), **GOD'S FOOLS** (or **JOURNEY TO GOLGOTHA**) and **REUNION**. Other titles include: **The SECOND PRIEST**, **The ANOINTED** (an Old Testament narrative with music by C. Michael Perry) and **The SEAGULL** (translated and adapted from the Chekov play). In 1992, **GENTLE BARBARIAN**, **FRERE LAWRENCE** and **CHARADES** were published in a second anthology entitled *'Huebener' and Other Plays by Thomas F. Rogers*. Rogers has also penned stage adaptations of Dostoevsky's novels **CRIME AND PUNISHMENT** and **THE IDIOT**, an opera libretto based on Hawthorne's **THE SCARLET LETTER**, a translation of Georg Buechner's **WOYCZEK** (produced at BYU), and scripts based on novels by local authors, Phillip Flammer and Ben Parkinson. The first of these received a BYU production, directed by Tad Danielewski, in which Rogers played the role of Marmeladov.

In 1995–1996 **GOD'S FOOLS** was produced (in translation) by a professional repertory theatre in St. Petersburg, Russia, where Rogers was then serving as an LDS mission president. He also played the role of the American double spy Cooper in that production. During that mission he directed LDS Church members in a stage adaptation of Dostoevsky's *The Brothers Karamazov* and a Russian language version of **HUEBENER**. The play has also since been produced in Finland in the Finnish language, while a German translation still awaits forthcoming performances in that language.

At BYU and in Provo, Utah, Rogers directed the premiere productions of Robert Vincek's *For the Lions to Win*, Thom Duncan's *Matters of the Heart* and Eric Samuselsen's *Accommodations* and in Bountiful, Utah, a production of **HUEBENER**. Besides numerous productions in both Russian and German for the BYU Department of Germanic and Slavic Languages, he has directed Chekhov's *The Three Sisters* (in German) for Deutsches Teater Salt Lake City, where he also performed as an actor, and Synge's *Playboy of the Western World*, Pirandello's *It Is So If You Think So* and Pinter's *The Caretaker* for the BYU Department of Theatre.

Cited by Eugene England as "undoubtedly the father of modern Mormon drama," Rogers received the Mormon Arts Festival's Distinguished Achievement Award in 1998 and in 2002 a Lifetime Service Award from the Association of Mormon Letters. His published stories have appeared in volume 2, no. 2 of *Sunstone*, the Summer 1991 and Winter 2001 issues of *Dialogue* (receiving an annual *Dialogue* fiction award) and in the collections *Christmas for the World* (SLC: Aspen Books, 1991) and *The Gifts of Christmas* (SLC: Deseret Book Co., 1999). Rogers has served as editor of *Encyclia*, journal of the Utah Academy, and authored two critical monographs: *'Superfluous Men' and the Post-Stalin'thaw'* (The Hague: Mouton, 1972) and *Myth and Symbol in Soviet Fiction* (San Francisco & New York: The Edwin Mellen Research University Press, 1992).

Rogers studied at the Yale School of Drama and holds degrees from the University of Utah, Yale, and Georgetown. He has also studied theatre in Poland and Russian at Moscow State University and taught at Howard University in Washington, D.C., and the University of Utah. He has intensively studied some ten languages and had extensive residences in Russia, Eastern Europe, Germany, Austria, Sweden, the Baltic states, Armenia, Ukraine, Bulgaria, India, China and the Middle East. He and his wife Merriam are the parents of seven children, thirty-eight grandchildren and, so far, three great grandchildren. They reside in Bountiful, Utah.

From the INTRODUCTION of “The Collected Plays of Thomas F. Rogers, Volume 1: Perestroika and Glasnost. (Available from Leicester Bay Theatricals)

"The selections in this first volume of Tom Rogers's collected plays appear under the collective sub-title "Perestroika and Glasnost." The Russian word perestroika means "restructuring," and glasnost means "openness." Those terms refer to Communist Party General Secretary Mikhail Gorbachev's 1985-91 radical changes to Soviet economic structure, internal policy, and foreign relations. He led a major change in the leadership of the Communist Party, and decentralized economic planning in favor of market forces. He also reduced central Party control of the mass media, religious groups, and Soviet citizens whose views may have differed from those of their leaders. The results of this massive new "restructuring" and "openness" were felt across the Soviet Bloc. Communist governments collapsed, and the USSR dissolved into multiple independent republics.

The five plays in this volume suggest that on the personal level, too, "restructuring" and "openness" can cause similarly significant change. And a natural hoped-for result of pursuing such personal perestroika and glasnost is the communion which Tom Rogers wants for everyone, in all our relationships—the communion to which he has devoted his entire professional life, accompanied by all the interpersonal and even religious connotations "communion" implies.

Tom Rogers is unabashedly idealistic and ambitious. He wants to change us, and thereby to change the world. These five Perestroika and Glasnost plays by Tom Rogers cry to us in our wilderness, urging us to help prepare the world for better things, whatever the cost. These plays are bold and uncompromising theatrical explorations of the most profound and vexing social dilemmas." —**Bob Nelson, Professor of Theatre at the University of Utah**

(in this book you can peruse CHARADES, CRIME AND PUNISHMENT, GOD'S FOOLS, THE IDIOT, and THE SECOND PRIEST)

ACT ONE

SCENE ONE: *Somewhere in the urban West. Somewhere in the present century, either earlier or in the near future. It doesn't matter. The issues have been and will be the same. A poor student garret, with a bed placed prominently stage center. As the lights rise, AGEN lies on the bed, in this scene more like a cot, half delirious. His wrists are wrapped in bandages drenched in blood. DELO, AGEN's approximate age, holds his hand and periodically moistens and applies a cloth to his forehead.*

DELO: How could you? Your poor dear wrists. As red and chafed as that funny birthmark.

(She kisses his upper arm. A loud knock at the door.)

AGEN: *(sitting up)* Don't leave me.

DELO: Don't worry, dearest. I'm still here. It's probably Bok, or my brother.

AGEN: Bok, does he know too?

DELO: Cantri sent for him.

(The knock again.)

AGEN: I'm so ashamed.

DELO: Hush now. The main thing is we reached you in time.

(She opens the door admitting BOK.)

BOK: How is he?

DELO: I think the bleeding's stopped. He'll be fine.

BOK: Thank god!

(Going to the bed)

Why, Agen? Why would you do this?

AGEN: Don't you know?

BOK: I can't imagine. With such a brilliant career before you—our school's top scholar—loyal friends, and

Delo here, your fiancé. Don't you still love each other as much as ever?

AGEN: Of course.

DELO: Certainly.

BOK: Then why?

AGEN: Why? I can't tell you—not in front of Delo.

DELO: I'll leave then...

(She does so.)

BOK: Well?

AGEN: Last night I did some figuring.

BOK: And?

AGEN: I realized I'll never have the money for medical school ... to become a physician.

BOK: What?

AGEN: That's right. And if I must forgo my profession—of what worth will I be to Delo?

BOK: She would still marry you.

AGEN: Maybe. But she wouldn't be happy. Not the daughter of our leading city father, not coming from the

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home she does—with all its comforts and connections.

BOK: You underestimate her.

AGEN: Her family wouldn't allow it—especially Cantri.

BOK: Cantri loves and respects you.

AGEN: He loves and respects my potential for becoming important and influential.

DELO: (*re-entering*) My brother's coming up the stairs. Do you want more time together?

BOK: It's alright. He's already explained to me what we need to know.

AGEN: We?

BOK: That's right.

(*To DELO*)

You stay here. Make sure he doesn't harm himself.

(*To AGEN*)

I'll respect your confidence. She needn't ever know—unless you tell her. But I must tell Cantri.

AGEN: Please, no.

BOK: I must. He'll know what to do. He'll find a solution.

CANTRI: (*at the doorway*) How is he now?

DELO: He's conscious.

BOK: And getting feisty.

CANTRI: Then he's out of danger.

BOK: Let me have a word with you.

(*He exits with CANTRI.*)

DELO: I still don't understand. And you won't tell me any more?

AGEN: I can't. Not now.

DELO: (*sitting by him on the bed and drawing him to her*) Then at least promise me it's all over—that you'll never try this sort of thing again.

AGEN: All right. I guess it wouldn't have accomplished anything.

DELO: Only your death—and the end of my happiness.

AGEN: I'm sorry. That's the last thing I want to do—make you unhappy.

(*They kiss*)

But I don't want to lose you either.

DELO: Why should you?

AGEN: Because ... just because...

DELO: Look at you—all three of you. About to graduate. Each of you heading for a brilliant career.

AGEN: No.

DELO: No? What do you mean? I don't know of three finer young men. You're a model to everyone your age.

You each intend to serve mankind—each in his special way. You want to become a physician—not for wealth or influence. But to save men's lives. It's been your natural inclination, your sole aspiration ever since you were a child, tending any of us who were ill and nursing our injured pets, restoring them to health when we'd given up on them ... Bok will become a minister and save men's souls. My brother intends to study law and be a politician like our father. He wants to govern and be a diplomat—to solve our social problems and bring peace and prosperity to all the nations, to save us from another war. If only everyone

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were as high minded as you three. Then the world would be transformed in our very own generation.

AGEN: Yes. That's what we've always told one another.

DELO: But you will never achieve that glorious goal if you destroy yourself.

AGEN: I can't anyway.

DELO: Why not?

(The door opens. BOK and CANTRI re-enter.)

CANTRI: *(walking confidently to the bed. To AGEN.)* My dear, dear friend. Are you still despairing?
(to DELO)

Well, is he?

DELO: I'm afraid so.

CANTRI: You won't much longer. Not after the marriage.

AGEN: Marriage?

CANTRI: You must marry her right away. It's that simple.

AGEN: But your father would never —

CANTRI: Not if he knew beforehand, maybe. But we won't give him time to find out. We'll go to the next village—this afternoon. Bok and I will be your witnesses, then will come back and tell father.

DELO: What will he do then, Cantri?

CANTRI: He'll fume. He'll rant and rave. But he'll soon see the wisdom in keeping things respectable, and he'll want nothing but the finest position for his new son-in-law, so he'll pay for your medical training, you can be sure, wherever you want to study. He'll pay for your expenses while Delo keeps a cozy apartment to come home to and cheers you up each night.

DELO: You think so?

CANTRI: I know father. He'll recognize that that's the best course. Besides, Agen, he's always liked you. I know he'll come around. I'm even a little envious. Maybe I should try the same thing—bring Igrid along and make it a double wedding.

AGEN: Cantri, you make it all seem so easy. But I'm not sure. Is it right?

CANTRI: Is it right? Look, friend, do you still love my sister?

AGEN: You know I do.

CANTRI: And do you still want to heal the afflicted?

AGEN: With all my heart.

CANTRI: Then you will marry Delo and you will become a doctor. Be assured of that.

(AGEN and DELO embrace.)

AGEN: You are truly remarkable, Cantri. You bring off anything you put your mind to. You always have. You have a very special gift.

CANTRI: I had my own challenges. You all know about them. I've renounced my debauchery, my loose living. I've overcome myself in order to serve a cause greater than myself. I've vowed to sacrifice anything I must—for others. Each of us has his own special gift and calling. Each of us is destined to serve—and save—others in his own particular way. Isn't that right, Bok?

BOK: That's right.

CANTRI: *(to AGEN)* You agree, don't you?

AGEN: I agree.

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(Reassuringly, CANTRI grasps AGEN's and DELO's hands. The lights dim.)

SCENE TWO: *Another bedroom. The same bed, but now with elegant trappings. AGEN is seated on the bed, wearing an expensive but conservative suit. IGRID sits across from him, in a chair.*

IGRID: Cantri is really enjoying the army, and as long as the war goes so well, he's getting so much good experience. He's had a lot of responsibility since he became a major. I don't imagine it will stop there either.

AGEN: I suppose not.

(DELO enters from an inner room, presumably the kitchen, with a tea service.)

IGRID: I miss his company, of course.

AGEN: Of course.

IGRID: But it's still worth it. And I think you should consider it, too.

AGEN: You do?

IGRID: So does Delo. We talked about it last night.

AGEN: You did?

DELO: Since father's death, we haven't been able to depend on the kind of support we had when you first started your training.

AGEN: I know.

DELO: The inheritance was disappointing. We've used up most of it already. And it's so important that you finish your degree.

AGEN: Why is it?

DELO: Must I always rehearse the reasons? First for the security of your family.

AGEN: What family?

DELO: The family we'll have someday.

AGEN: When?

DELO: When the time is right.

AGEN: Who will determine that?

DELO: We will, of course—together.

AGEN: That never used to be a reason.

DELO: Well it must be now. Now that you're still not in school and we're not as financially well off as we once were.

AGEN: And as you thought you'd always be.

DELO: That's right.

AGEN: Then why did you marry me?

DELO: Because despite all that, I love you. Haven't I proved that by now? And because I want to help you realize your full potential. That's the other reason you must complete your training.

IGRID: You see, Agen, they'll train you in the Army. At government expense. And you'll serve as an officer, like Cantri.

AGEN: But I refuse to kill.

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IGRID: You won't kill—not as a doctor. Instead, you'll save the life of many a soldier.

DELO: Just think of it. You will already be serving your fellow men like you've always dreamed to.

AGEN: So they can kill somebody else.

IGRID: That's not your problem.

AGEN: Why isn't it?

IGRID: Because in a war no one's in control. It's simply a matter of 'kill or be killed'.

AGEN: That's why it's so horrible. No, I can't...

IGRID: I've got to go. But you really ought to consider it. You have to adjust to the times. That's what Cantri always says. And nothing ever gets in his way.

AGEN: Or makes him feel guilty.

IGRID: Why should it?

AGEN: If you don't know, I can't tell you.

IGRID: I'm leaving tomorrow. Cantri gets a leave this weekend. We're going to the mountains. Let me know if you change your mind. He can get you a good safe spot, with his connections. I could let him know when I see him, and he'd start making the necessary contacts.

DELO: We'll let you know. And thanks.

IGRID: Goodbye.

DELO: Goodbye...

(Going to AGEN and sitting beside him on the bed.)

Agen?

AGEN: Yes, love?

DELO: Do you really want a child?

AGEN: You needn't ask.

DELO: Then join the Army, and I'll give you one.

AGEN: That's blackmail.

DELO: We can't afford a child any other way.

AGEN: For others' death, a life.

DELO: You mustn't think that way. If it isn't you, it will be someone else. You and I need that child—to cement our marriage and give it purpose.

AGEN: Haven't I always said so?

DELO: Well then?

AGEN: I guess... I will.

DELO: *(embraces AGEN, undoes his sleeve and caresses his arm)* That funny birthmark. Like a strawberry. Here. Let me kiss it.

(DELO kisses his arm. He pulls her to him. The lights dim.)

SCENE THREE: *The same bed, with the same trappings, now badly worn. DELO sits on the bed, holding a slumbering little CHILD, a boy, three-years old. IGRID sits in the chair across from the bed, as before. The chair is now much shabbier, and the women's attire plain and threadbare. Distant artillery can be heard until the men's entrance.*

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DELO: I'm sorry I haven't anything to serve you.

IGRID: That's not important. What's important is that you come away with me—this instant. Enemy troops are just kilometers away. But I have an escort. Now that he's a general, Cantri has access to a secret refuge farther inland. He's requisitioned it for both of us and for your and Agen's child. If we travel all night we'll be there by morning.

DELO: Would Agen know where to find me?

IGRID: When the war is over—if he survives ...

DELO: Could I leave him a note?

IGRID: It's too dangerous—it might lead them to us.

DELO: Then we might never see each other again.

IGRID: We all take such chances. At least it's more likely you and the child will survive if you come with me. But you must do so immediately.

DELO: I never thought it would come to this, did you? Four years ago it seemed certain we would win the war. Now we're being invaded. Back then I thought it would all be over in just a few months. I didn't dream our child would be born and reach the age of three with his father still in uniform.

(Holding up the CHILD's arm)

Look. He has his father's same birthmark ... No. I can't bear to think that Agen would never see his son. He still hasn't, you know. Even if one of us perishes, it's more likely we'll see each other at least one more time if I stay right here.

IGRID: It's very dangerous here—for you especially.

DELO: I know.

IGRID: I can't dissuade you?

DELO: I must take the chance ...

IGRID: *(kissing DELO, then going to the door)* Goodbye. Don't forget I tried to help you.

DELO: I know. Goodbye ...

(IGRID exits.)

DELO: *(coming to, addressing the sleeping CHILD)* Goodness. I should have put you in your bed hours ago. Well, you'll sleep more soundly this way...

(She moves to the inner exit.)

I think I'll put you on that cot up in the attic. If they break in and I'm not hiding there with you, they may not think to look for a child.

(She turns the light down, then exits. A pause, then scurrying noises and whispers. AGEN and BOK enter from outdoors. Both are in ragged officers uniforms, AGEN's that of a colonel with medical insignia, BOK's that of a chaplain. BOK also carries an automatic weapon.)

AGEN: I can't believe it. That we're still alive.

BOK: It's truly miraculous.

AGEN: Out of an entire division—just the two of us. How do you explain it?

BOK: God's intervention—that's all it can be.

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AGEN: But why us? There were all those other fine men—many younger than ourselves.

BOK: It must be our callings.

AGEN: Callings?

BOK: The missions we each vowed to fulfill. God obviously has that in mind too, and this is his confirmation.

AGEN: Maybe so. All I know is that I stood with you an hour ago on that exposed bluff, men dying all around us in the crossfire, fully expecting that we too would be cut down in the very next moment I thought for some reason of that day I despaired go.

BOK: The day you tried to take your life.

AGEN: An hour ago I asked myself why I hadn't then—or in the meanwhile—since I'm having to die anyway, still relatively so young and in these awful circumstances. Isn't it all the same?

BOK: But you didn't die out there just now. You've been spared. So it does make a difference that earlier you stayed alive. It isn't all the same.

AGEN: I know one thing. I know now that bloodshed is evil and that no one ever gains by opposing anyone else with physical force.

BOK: Amen.

AGEN: And I know I will never again lift my hand against another human being.

BOK: Nor I.

AGEN: (*raising his hand*) I make this vow in your presence, a man of God.

BOK: I am your witness.

DELO: (*returning to the room, then noticing the others in the shadows*) Who's there?

AGEN: Delo!

DELO: (*rushing to embrace him*) Oh, my darling. I was right. It was worth staying to see you again.
(*They kiss.*)

AGEN: (*finally pulling away, still staring at her with great tenderness*) I've come to take you with me.

DELO: Where?

AGEN: To safety.

DELO: But doesn't the army still need you?

AGEN: I am no more needed than the army—*any* army—is needed.

DELO: That's easy to say now that we're losing.

AGEN: Which is exactly why we should never have gone to war. Such a sacrifice of young lives. It's all so futile.

DELO: But you still might save one or two.

AGEN: We already checked on them. Those still alive are just hours from dying.

BOK: I think the shelling has stopped. I'd best go back and bless them.

AGEN: Be careful.

BOK: (*handing AGEN the automatic*) Here. It's probably safer without a weapon. I'll come back later...

(*He exits. AGEN looks at the automatic, repulsed, then props it behind a chair near the inner door.*)

DELO: So now you're a deserter.

AGEN: I'm deserting Hell, that's all.

DELO: And where will you take us? To Cantri's hide-a-way?

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AGEN: Yes.

DELO: If you're caught, you'll be executed. Cantri will have no choice.

AGEN: Have I ever cared that much for my own life?

DELO: No. You have a decided tendency to throw it away. But you must also think of me... and the child.

AGEN: That's why I'll escort you to safety. Besides, it's not my time to die—not yet.

DELO: How can you be so sure?

(A knock.)

BOK: It's me. Bok.

(AGEN opens the door, admitting BOK.)

I just sighted an enemy patrol. They're coming in this direction. I can avoid them, but you had better hide—and remove your uniform. With a Colonel's insignia, they'd shoot you on the spot.

AGEN: Thank you.

(BOK leaves.)

DELO: Quick. Go change.

AGEN: Where?

DELO: In the attic. Through the trap door in the ceiling. Your old clothes are laid out there

AGEN: Where's the child?

DELO: He's there, too. Take a good look at him. Look at his arm. He's all yours. Hurry back. Or stay with him if you like while I detain them. They won't expect a man to be here.

AGEN: No. I'll come back. I'll... try to help.

(Voices in a foreign tongue. A loud knock. AGEN exits.)

DELO: Coming!!

(She walks slowly to the door, then admits three soldiers with drawn weapons. Two immediately reconnoiter the adjacent rooms while one trains his weapon at DELO. When the others return, they exchange several phrases in their native tongue, then smile, look at DELO, smile more broadly, and stow their weapons near the outside entrance.)

1st SOLDIER: I happen to speak your language.

DELO: Oh?

1st SOLDIER: Does that please you?

DELO: I think so.

1st SOLDIER: We don't want to harm you.

DELO: Thank you.

1st SOLDIER: But I give you this warning. You must cooperate.

DELO: Cooperate?

1st SOLDIER: You mustn't resist. Or my men may become angry. They have seen many of their comrades die at the hands of your soldiers.

DELO: I'm sorry.

1st SOLDIER: They won't notice whether you're sorry or not if you resist. They'll probably break your neck before you can give them any pleasure.

DELO: You mean...

1ST SOLDIER: It's the least I can do for them. They're good fighters. They've been through a lot. They've

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earned it...

(He addresses the soldiers in their language. Then, to DELO.)

Do you like our language?

DELO: It's... the first time I've heard it.

1st SOLDIER: Do you know what they were saying just now?

DELO: No.

1st SOLDIER: They said they are ready.

(Caressing her hair)

And so am I. They insist on deferring to their officer. So I will be first. Kindly disrobe.

(The three SOLDIERS now face DELO, their backs to the inner exit in which AGEN suddenly appears, dressed in grubby civilian attire. Noticing him, DELO gestures with a glance at BOK's automatic weapon, which still stands propped against the chair and within arm's reach. He looks at it, extends his arm halfway, then lets it drop. The SOLDIERS remain entranced by their quarry.)

DELO: *(backing toward the outer door)* No.

1st SOLDIER: please don't move any closer to our weapons.

(He issues a command, to which the others respond by rushing to her and pinning her arms. With his next command, one of the men tears DELO's blouse off one shoulder.)

AGEN: No!!

(All three SOLDIERS, two of them is still holding DELO, whirl in place, facing AGEN.)

AGEN: Please... no....Please don't.

1st SOLDIER: Who are you?

AGEN: Her husband.

1st SOLDIER: Why aren't you fighting? You look able-bodied.

AGEN: I can't. I won't kill. I'm a doctor. I only heal.

1st SOLDIER: Do you heal your nation's soldiers so they can do the dirty work for you?

AGEN: No. Not any more.

(Circling AGEN)

1st SOLDIER: Recently reformed, eh? Now that you're losing? But a genuine pacifist nonetheless?

AGEN: Yes. Nonetheless.

1st SOLDIER: *(noticing BOK's automatic)* What's this?

AGEN: Another man's weapon.

1st SOLDIER: You knew it was here?

AGEN: Yes.

1st SOLDIER: But you didn't use it on us?

AGEN: No.

1st SOLDIER: Why?

AGEN: I already told you.

1st SOLDIER: Well, well. Now I believe you. You might be a soldier, a deserter, but I doubt it. Or you would have tried to kill us, with our weapons out of reach and our backs turned. And it can't be that you're a coward, or you wouldn't have come into the room just now. Either way, you have saved your life by not

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trying to stop us with that gun. And now I invite you to enjoy the pleasure we take with your wife — vicariously that is but with a front row view. It may remind you of what we had to endure when your troops first invaded our land three years ago.

(He issues another command. The other TWO hand DELO to him, whereupon he pins her arm behind her back. They then move to AGEN and forcibly hold him against the bed's headboard.)

I think we're ready now. And you, Madame?

(DELO does not answer.)

Remember not to struggle. Your life depends on it.

(He tears her blouse off the opposite shoulder.)

AGEN: *(writhing)* No!

DELO: You wanted to die once because you thought you couldn't please me. Now that you're my husband you won't even lift a finger to defend me. I could have escaped my fate in time, but I thought that we—that I — meant that much to you. How wrong I was You don't deny it. You say nothing. But your silence says everything.

(DELO spits at AGEN, then stares at him hatefully. The MEN smile.)

AGEN: *(as the lights quickly dim)* No!! No!!!

Scene Four—*As the lights rise, the same actors occupy the exact same positions. But all are now dressed in white, except for AGEN, who wears a drab, terry cloth robe, brown or gray. The bed is now draped with a plain white sheet. The 2nd & 3rd SOLDIERS, now in the uniform of orderlies, hold AGEN against the bed as before, while he screams. The 1st SOLDIER is now a DOCTOR, and DELO a NURSE. [He does not hold her, but they both stand in the same proximity as before.] All look at AGEN. The white in his and the doctor's hair and added strokes of makeup suggest the passage of a number of years. However, the NURSE, should not look any older than DELO did in the previous scenes.*

AGEN: No! No!

(The ORDERLIES remove electrodes from AGEN's head, then gather up their equipment and leave. AGEN slowly sits upright on the bed, his head in his hands.)

How many more treatments, doctor? Before you're satisfied I won't get any better?

DOCTOR: On the contrary, your recovery has been phenomenal. After sixteen years of relative stasis, you're almost back to your original self. If you continue to show such progress, we may not have to apply any more unpleasant therapy.

AGEN: I'm glad to hear that. I know I've suffered amnesia and can't remember anything about my past—except that I had a wife.

DOCTOR: That may change as you recover. Your amnesia may recede. But as soon as you remember anything at all, you must tell me at once. Confidentially, and no one else. Please remember. That's very important.

AGEN: Even so, doctor, I somehow have the feeling that she really didn't die and may still be alive.

DOCTOR: Do you still insist on that?

AGEN: Please understand me, doctor. I'm only reviewing for you what I said I felt in the past.

DOCTOR: And what do you feel now?

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AGEN: I see no point in insisting on such feelings any more...

DOCTOR: Then you are improving. And I'm delighted. My congratulations.

AGEN: Thank you.

DOCTOR: I have other patients to attend to now. While you're recovering from the treatment I'll leave the nurse with you—in case there are any reactions.

AGEN: Thank you.

DOCTOR: Don't mention it.

(He exits, then returns and stands just outside the door, Invisible to AGEN and the NURSE but not to the audience.)

NURSE: Won't it be wonderful when you finally recall who you really are?

AGEN: Do you think that will ever happen?

NURSE: Oh, yes. Any time now. It often happens when patients reach the stage you have. As soon as they're willing to accept the truth about their past—like your wife's death in an air raid—then they have nothing more to repress, and it all comes back to them.

AGEN: You're most encouraging. So is the doctor.

NURSE: That's because your case has suddenly become so hopeful.

AGEN: But why after so many years?

NURSE: Who can say? I know that your treatments are different than they used to be.

AGEN: How different?

NURSE: They're not so strong, like medications.

AGEN: You mean to say I've been kept in a tranquilized state till now?

NURSE: I can't tell you that. Only the doctor can interpret what he prescribes.

AGEN: No wonder I can't remember anything.

NURSE: I couldn't say ... Maybe we should talk about something else. It's a beautiful day, isn't it? I'm glad they built this place on the top of a mountain and that I got to come here.

AGEN: Mountain? Igrid went to the mountains with Cantri when he had a furlough. Before I enlisted.

NURSE: What are you saying?

AGEN: I don't know. What did I say just now? Something about my therapy...and my medicine.

NURSE: I like to hike those peaks over there on my day off and look back at the sanitarium. How high we are here—perched on the edge of the precipice out there. When I step out on the porch I always hold tight to the railing, don't you?

AGEN: No. It doesn't seem to matter.

NURSE: As I said, I like to hike. There are excellent trails all over. And in the spring there are patches of wild strawberries.

AGEN: Strawberry? It is not. Not really. It's really just a birthmark.

NURSE: What is?

AGEN: This inflamed spot here on my arm. It must be hereditary. My son has one too.

NURSE: Your son?

AGEN: Yes, you see—Oh... I can't believe it. It's happening.

NURSE: What's happening?

AGEN: I...I'm beginning to remember.

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NURSE: What?

AGEN: Everything! I know who I am!

NURSE: Then you'd better tell the doctor.

AGEN: I'm Agen. *I'm* a doctor. And I was a colonel in the army during the war.

NURSE: You're sure?

AGEN: Yes.

NURSE: Why, that's wonderful....

(The DOCTOR enters the room.)

AGEN: Doctor. A wonderful thing just happened.

DOCTOR: One moment please. Nurse, would you mind joining me on the sun porch?

(to AGEN.)

We'll be right back.

AGEN: Please hurry. I can hardly wait to tell you.

(The DOCTOR and NURSE exit onto the porch. AGEN jubilantly walks about the room. Suddenly a woman's blood curdling scream comes from the direction of the porch, becoming ever more faint as though rushing away at a great speed and distance. AGEN faces the porch, then freezes. After several more beats the DOCTOR enters.)

What happened?

DOCTOR: You mustn't ask. If you do I will have to pronounce you ill all over again.

AGEN: Doctor. I am also a doctor. I remember that now. That's what I wanted to tell you. I became a doctor not to kill but to save men's lives. That is the only justification for wielding so much power over other people or prescribing for them. And as a fellow professional I want to tell you that you have criminally violated your oath and are unworthy of your high calling. This you have demonstrated in your treatment of me these many years and, now, your very own nurse.

DOCTOR: Is that so, doctor? Well, we shall see.

(As the DOCTOR turns to the door, BOK and CANTRI enter, both correspondingly aged and very distinguished in their dress and manner. The DOCTOR acknowledges their presence and their position with a low, obsequious bow.)

CANTRI: Good day, doctor.

DOCTOR: Good day, Chairman.

CANTRI: You've done a fine job, doctor.

DOCTOR: Thank you, Chairman.

CANTRI: We observed the patient's 'breakthrough' on closed circuit video.

DOCTOR: Very good, sir.

CANTRI: You handled it just right—every step of the way.

DOCTOR: Thank you, sir.

CANTRI: You may go now.

DOCTOR: Are you sure, sir?

CANTRI: I'm quite sure. It is time for you to go.

DOCTOR: Thank you, sir...

(He exits.)

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CANTRI: Well, you must recognize us.

AGEN: Yes, of course. But not as some ‘Chairman’ who gives orders to doctors.

CANTRI: He’s not the first doctor whose ‘progress’ I have masterminded. If you happen to remember.

AGEN: I remember. And I’m not surprised to see you running the show as usual.

CANTRI: It’s astute of you to notice.

AGEN: What ‘show’ is this, by the way?

CANTRI: What year, you mean?

AGEN: I know what year it is—and that the most productive time of my entire life—maybe a fourth of my entire life span—has come and gone while I’ve been half asleep, anesthetized. No, by ‘show’ I mean, what is our present relationship and what have you to do with all this? A great deal, I’m sure.

CANTRI: That’s exactly why I came today—to fill you in.

AGEN: It was the right time to raise these questions, then?

CANTRI: Exactly the right time.

AGEN: According to your timetable.

CANTRI: According to our nation’s need... and its manifest destiny.

AGEN: Please explain.

CANTRI: First, let me remind you of the vision that so inspired us in our younger days—to serve mankind, to save others—Bok their souls, you their lives, and I to work for an improved social order and, most important, a lasting peace and the eradication of war. You were especially insistent on that point—at least earlier. It was that vision, really, and our efforts to help you achieve it—including my sister’s—that kept you then from taking your own life.

AGEN: For which, I suppose, I am eternally indebted.

BOK: You were also miraculously preserved in battle—as I was—for some very special, doubtless providential reason.

AGEN: Yes, I remember.

CANTRI: My question to you then: Is that still your vision—to work for peace and serve humankind?

AGEN: Of course. If only one man somewhere could bring us permanent peace.

CANTRI: It will take more than just one man, however exceptional. He was already here once—in human form. What good would it do if he came again? What good is all Bok’s preaching? We also need power and organization...I can tell you the rest, and you will see how it all fits in. You will understand that, while waiting here these many years, you have also been serving that vision.

AGEN: Please explain.

CANTRI: You heard the doctor call me “Chairman.” That doesn’t mean I actually wield any real political power. Not yet. I only head a new minority party, but we have strong backing from the disgruntled leaders of the nation’s largest corporations. Bok is my deputy and, if we gain control of the government, a future minister. Ours is a peace platform. Everyone gives it lip service, of course. But the party now in power has involved itself in enough far-flung skirmishes—in little, insignificant foreign lands—to belie its commitment to peace. And the public has at last become wary. Besides, the whole thing has drained the economy—and that’s one inconvenience the people will only stand for for a certain length of time. After that, ideology goes out the window.

AGEN: Including “peace”?

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CANTRI: Not, fortunately, under the present circumstances. What our people want most of all right now is the *assurance* of peace—peace and isolation—in which to become more productive and grow more prosperous.

AGEN: I see. The way we became shortly before the war.

CANTRI: In due time we will doubtless have to deal with the people's over-confidence. Meanwhile, we need a figurehead, an idol—someone whose record will convince the people he is serious about peace, at all costs. With that person as our candidate for the nation's highest office, for head of state, our party—the *peace* party—will, I'm confident, surely win. However, there is hardly anyone with such a clean record.

BOK: Once it was popular to support those global skirmishes—particularly these last ten years—practically everyone voiced his approval. It was the patriotic thing to do.

AGEN: I see.

CANTRI: Fortunately, your record is spotless.

AGEN: It's actually void.

CANTRI: That's not nearly so harmful as a careless statement or a misplaced gesture. They can never be recalled. But a void now—a void we can fill in—and very impressively, with the right coloration.

AGEN: Even if it's fiction?

CANTRI: The public will believe a certain amount of fiction. Facts are too banal. If people recognize themselves too much in a public figure, they won't believe him. And they certainly won't like him. A certain distortion makes a man heroic. And people must have a hero. But there's one thing that, in *your* case, we don't have to distort at all—something that is already a matter of public record. That's why you're such an ideal candidate

AGEN: What's that?

BOK: The fact that you quit the war.

AGEN: My desertion?

CANTRI: Exactly. And on principle. Because you had such a personal repulsion to war itself. This came out after the armistice and after our foes retreated from the scene.

BOK: They could no longer afford to occupy us with their own standing army. And they didn't dare exploit us economically because they needed us as an ally. So they let us have our own government again.

CANTRI: Good of them, wasn't it?

AGEN: So we really won the war after all.

CANTRI: In a certain sense... so, you see—although your whereabouts, your very existence, are presently unknown to the public—your refusal to fight, even to defend your wife and child, were written up some years ago from interviews with the soldiers who came to your home.

BOK: It appeared in all the tabloids and can be revived at any moment.

AGEN: So that's why I've been in moth balls all this time. It was another of your calculations.

CANTRI: Believe me, it was the only way you could effectively fulfill your purpose—your vision. I could see that from the very beginning.

AGEN: Always watching out for me. What would I do without you, Cantri?

CANTRI: You are the people's rightful leader, their next perfect hero—he who before anyone else recognized the ultimate doom of our wartime and post-war government. Now is your chance to prove how serious you really are about saving men's lives—both individually and in the aggregate. Will you run?

AGEN: How can I be sure this isn't all just so much white wash—a way to jar you and others to pursue your

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own private ends?

CANTRI: I knew you'd question our motives, and I'm glad you're not more gullible.

AGEN: Well?...?

BOK: Let me talk to him. After all Agen and I have been through together—I think I can make him understand.

CANTRI: All right. I'll leave. But when I return, I must have your answer.

(CANTRI exits.)

BOK: Agen, do you still recognize our special friendship—all that brought us together, especially that night we survived the battle?

AGEN: I do—unless you, too, have been bought over.

BOK: I left my weapon in your home. I've never held a gun since then. That same night the enemy captured me, too—as I was administering last rites to our wounded. But they spared my life because I had no weapon—just as they did yours. It taught me a great lesson. I'm still a minister of God, but more his representative than ever.

AGEN: I believe you. I can tell that you're sincere.

BOK: Then I urge you to accept Cantri's offer and run for office.

AGEN: But can we trust him? And those corporate heads who back him?

BOK: Once in office, you can ignore Cantri. You can do what you think best. You and others will wield the power, not he. Then whatever Cantri may ask of you, you can work for the common good and secure peace for the nation. I know you would never do anything less. That's why I would like to see you run...

AGEN: A few details still need clearing up.

BOK: For instance?

AGEN: I'm really not insane then? The nation's leader should have his normal faculties.

BOK: Physician, heal thyself... you've never been insane. You did suffer from partial amnesia, however—brought on by the shock of what happened to your wife—so that when Cantri found you you didn't just then know who you were, he arranged to bring you here to the country's most exclusive sanitarium where you've received the best possible care.

AGEN: And sedation?

BOK: Yes... that, too.

AGEN: All right, what about that nurse?

BOK: That was to maintain the tightest secrecy regarding your identity. When the nurse found out, she had to be disposed of. Only Cantri and I can ever afford to know that our candidate, Agen, the great pacifist hero, was treated here as a patient. The association would not help your Hero Image and you would never be elected.

AGEN: I see. Another death for another life.

BOK: It's Cantri's strategy, not mine. I can't say I agree with it, and it was already in motion before I or anyone else could interfere. Besides, I was never consulted.

AGEN: That's what worries me. And the doctor—what of him?

BOK: He was liquidated, too—as soon as he left the room. I'm not sure of the details. I didn't dare inquire.

AGEN: Cantri is a monster! He'll achieve nothing this way—nothing we haven't already seen in the past from one government to the next.

BOK: That's why it's so important that *you* come to power and not anyone else.

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AGEN: Not just any other *pawn*, you mean?

BOK: Because you know better. You have integrity. Once in office, you won't remain a 'pawn.' I know that.
That's why I still believe in you...

AGEN: Have you considered that Cantri has been listening to every word of our conversation?

BOK: Of course.

AGEN: Well?...

BOK: He'll forgive anything we say as long as I persuade you to accept his offer.

AGEN: He won't think you've been disloyal?

BOK: He'll consider it another clever stratagem—that's all.

AGEN: But you really mean it, or don't you?

BOK: Haven't I been entirely open with you?

AGEN: But you are also being as open with him.

BOK: That's right.

AGEN: Then where does it end? Whose side are you really on? Whom do you really trust? I can't tell.

BOK: Look. We are offering you ultimate power. Wherever I seem to stand can't alter that.

AGEN: I guess not... but I have one more question. The most important one yet.

BOK: Well...?

AGEN: Where are my wife and son?

BOK: We really don't know.

AGEN: Then why did the doctor insist on my accepting his version—about the bombing?

BOK: Because Cantri thought it would prove how amenable you were to accepting his advice and following his instructions.

AGEN: As head of state?

BOK: Yes.

AGEN: So no one really knows the fate of my wife and son?

BOK: I don't. But that will be made up to you. To be respectable, you must have a normal, happy, family.

Cantri will lend you *his* in their place. They've been in seclusion too. But you mustn't allude any more to your son. Cantri's child came later, and he—you—now have a daughter. A most charming little girl. She's been kept away from her father enough that she'll readily believe you're he—once you pay her a little personal attention

AGEN: I see... I wonder if at this point I'm sufficiently brainwashed. What do you think?

BOK: I don't know.

AGEN: Do you wish I were?

BOK: For your own sake, perhaps...

CANTRI: (*re-entering*) Well, Agen, have you made up your mind?

AGEN: I have.

CANTRI: And your decision? Will you be our next head of state...

AGEN: I will govern.

CANTRI: Then, you will be our next head of state.

AGEN: I will govern.

(*The LIGHTS dim.*)

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14 more pages contained in Act Two