

Chamelions



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War drama by Christian Lanciai (2015)

The characters:

Paul
Laila
Manfred
Max
Marcus
Moses Rosenberg
Doctor Goebbels
Lieutenant Gottfried Roth
Admiral Wilhelm Canaris
Three jews
A waiter

The action takes place in 1938-45 in wartorn Europe.
The scenes are mostly in Gothenburg, Berlin, Vienna, Warsaw and Oslo.

Act I Scene 1.

A reception after a concert.

Elegant people come forth to congratulate the soloist with drinks in their hands.

Paul I must congratulate you to your great success.
Laila I must thank you.
Paul No, you must not. We are to thank you.
Laila For what?
Paul For giving us more than just music.
Laila What more did I give?
Paul Something of the true essence of music. It was not just technique, but you gave life to the melodies.
Laila Are you thinking of anything special?
Paul Foremost Chopin.
Laila He is the most sensitive of all.
Paul And you honoured him for that.
Laila Are you a musician yourself or a critic?
Paul I am a great lover of music and amateur but play the violin myself.
Laila You sound more like a music connoisseur belittling yourself. Judging from your accent, you are not Swedish.
Paul I am an Austrian originally from Vienna, but I have been active mostly in Germany and here in Sweden.
Laila If you come from Vienna you know something about music. What do you play?
Paul When I heard your interpretation of Schumann I got the idea that I would gladly play a violin sonata with you.
Laila Which one?
Paul What about César Franck's sonata in A major?
Laila One of the greatest. I love it.
Paul So do I.
Laila When do you have time?
Paul Any time.
Laila What about trying our wings together tomorrow?
Paul I wouldn't mind.
Laila We could meet here at the concert hall. I can reserve a room for three o'clock.
Paul Suits me fine.
Laila I will collect you at the entrance.
Paul Thank you.
Laila What is your name?
Paul Paul Zabłudowicz.
Laila Jewish?
Paul That's why I left Germany.
Laila I see.

Paul My family is actually Polish from Galizia. That's why we became Austrian citizens.

Laila Like Mahler and Arthur Schnabel.

Paul Do you like him?

Laila I prefer Artur Rubinstein and Vladimir Horowitz.

Paul You can hear that you learned much of Rubinstein.

Laila Thank you. Although he is not quite serious I think that he comes closest to the real Chopin. Which is your favourite violinist?

Paul Fritz Kreisler and Jasha Heifetz.

Laila Of course.

Paul I think we understand each other.

Laila See you then tomorrow. Now I must go to my other friends.

Paul Of course. (*retires. Laila goes mingling.*) Is it true? Is she the right one? Can I trust her? She is Norwegian but international. We shall see. If it starts well it could continue even better.

Manfred I must warn you, Paul. She has dangerous contacts.

Paul I don't believe it. She is a musician. For a musician no contacts are dangerous.

Manfred She is protected by the National Community.

Paul I don't care. She is a real musician.

Manfred And you are a Jew. You have no chance.

Paul What do you take me for? Do you think I am already courting her? We only intend to try some sonatas together.

Manfred She is blonde and blue-eyed and has the best contacts in the highest society both here and in Germany.

Paul What do you want to warn me against?

Manfred I don't know yet, but if there is going to be a war she might get to know too much about you if you get too close.

Paul I don't think there will be a war until it breaks out.

Manfred It broke out in 1914. It was never terminated. All Hitler lives for is a new round, and he wants to force Germany into it at any cost.

Paul Why then does he and the Nazis only preach peace?

Manfred To hide their real intentions.

Paul The Nazi fear is as exaggerated as the rumours of their persecution of Jews.

Manfred Why did you leave Germany then?

Paul I can't accept any dictatorship and refuse to live under one.

Manfred Then help us getting rid of it.

Paul I would love to. But how?

Manfred Cultivate your friendship with Laila Winsnes. She has interesting contacts.

Paul You just warned me against them.

Manfred To make you interested in them.

Paul Manfred, I don't want anything to do with your intrigues. You are my friend, and I respect you, but Laila is exclusively a musical contact.

Manfred That's good. Carry on like that. (*leaves satisfied*)

Paul The devil knows where he is manipulating me, but I could never turn him down.

Max I saw that you got on friendly terms with Miss Winsnes.

Paul Not at all. We just agreed to try some sonatas.

Max She has good contacts in Berlin.

Paul What kind of an innuendo is that?

Max My friend, don't play naïve. You are not. There will be war any day, and it can't be avoided, no matter how desperately the poor pathetic Chamberlain tries to look the other way. No one wants war except Hitler, but he will get it.

Paul And why do you wish to include Laila Winsnes in this context?

Max They want her in Berlin. They want her to play for the highest Nazi circles. Furtwängler is interested in her.

Paul Furtwängler is just a musician who never had anything to do with politics. On the contrary he has problems with concealing how much he abhors it.

Max That makes no difference. The party loves her, and that's what counts. Whom the party loves can count on having any wishes fulfilled. The risk is that the party wants to love her.

Paul What is your angle?

Max Join our league. Become one of us. Choose the right side from the beginning. We stand in daily contact with England in exchanging information. They don't want to be taken by surprise. Cultivate your contact with her and use it for phishing information about her contacts.

Paul I don't want anything to do with politics.

Max You can't escape it. No one can escape it.

Paul Music will always escape it.

Max You think so?

Paul I know it.

Max That's what you try to believe. Deep inside you know how hopeless it is. You are one of us already. Since you are one of the chosen persecuted people, you have no choice.

Paul Don't remind me of it.

Max Do you think you could ever avoid being reminded of it?

Paul Not as long as you live.

Max You are a good friend, Paul, and we are in the same boat. I will always do everything to protect you, and I am counting on that it will be mutual. (*gives him a friendly pat on his shoulder and leaves.*)

Paul (*discovers Laila close by and goes up to her*)

Laila Are you still here?

Paul I am afraid I can't come tomorrow.

Laila I don't think so. Are you afraid?

Paul I want to spare you.

Laila From what?

Paul From me.
Laila Don't be silly. I am not afraid of anything and least of all of a Jew, especially not if he is a musician. Music is enough to turn anything sacred.
Paul Even Nazism?
Laila Even Nazism.
Paul We will probably have reasons to discuss that.
Laila (toasts him) See you tomorrow. *(leaves and goes on mingling)*
Paul She has got me stuck. I love her already. But I must never get her into danger.
Manfred (has overheard him) No risk. It will be she getting you into danger.
Paul I would gladly take that risk.
Manfred We thank you for that. I saw that Max spoke with you. Welcome to the brotherhood for freedom. *(toasts him)*
Paul Cheers for Laila.
Manfred Cheers for Laila. *(They toast and go on mingling.)*

Scene 2.

Laila What do you think about music, Paul? Could it redeem the world?
Paul Not just any music.
Laila What music?
Paul The real music.
Laila What is real music, and what music is not?
Paul You are the real music, Laila. You play with feeling and initiation and makes the music live and sing. There are so many false musicians, like the leading modernists, like for instance Stravinsky, Paul Hindemith, Bela Bartok, Arnold Schoenberg, who are all only technicians...
Laila Arnold Sschoenberg is a Jew.
Paul That makes no difference. He started well and wrote wonderful music to begin with. "*Verklärte Nacht*" for example is genuine music all through, while the twelve-tone music can never be anything but false, since nothing can make it sound good.
Laila So real music is music that sounds food?
Paul Yes, that's how simple it is, and if anything it can redeem the world, and only it alone...
Laila So we are the world's redeemers who only devote ourselves to that kind of music...
Paul Yes, you can see it that way.
Laila When shall we dare an attack on the Kreutzer sonata?
Paul I will never venture on it. It's too sacred for me.
Laila Then you flinch from saving the world. You dare not.
Paul To be a world redeemer is too much of a responsibility. You have to set a limit.

Laila Still the world has never needed a redeemer more urgently than now.

Paul Don't you think I know. You might make it but not I.

Laila Why not?

Paul You know. I am a Jew. It will not work today, when the Nazis claim the world.

Laila Hitler is a false redeemer. We must play him out.

Paul You can do it but not I.

Laila How can I do it?

Paul Laila, my love, you have contacts. You know your fascists in Norway, and you have contacts among the highest officials in Berlin. They want you to play for them. Give them their Schumann and Brahms, their Chopin and Schubert, their Beethoven and Bach, and you'll avoid besmirching yourself with Wagner, for he didn't write for the piano.

Laila Mendelssohn called Berlioz dirty, but Wagner is worse.

Paul Mendelssohn is the most sacred of all, who resurrected Bach from the dead. Wagner is falsest of all for making the highest demands and pretensions and the least self-critical of all. He was the least detached of all, but without some detachment to music you can't understand it and must decline to musical abuse.

Laila So you want me to fawn to the highest rulers of Berlin, although we know what monsters they are and in spite of their threat to humanity by their violation of Czechoslovakia?

Paul Hitler is not entirely wrong. Danzig has a German majority and wants to belong to Germany. He saved the German economy from the world monopoly of the bankers. He put an end to the misery and anarchy of Germany.

Laila Is he also right in his racism?

Paul Racism was perfectly natural and taken for granted all the way up to the last world war. It was obvious that Europe should rule the world. It's only Hitler by his aggressive and absurd hatred of the Jews that turned racism into something abominable and ugly.

Laila And all ugliness must be abolished.

Paul Absolutely, and we can do it.

Laila How?

Paul You can help me. You have your contacts, and I have mine. We can both be spies. By your Mata Hari character you can spy out Goebbels and the weird men of Berlin and report to me, who am in direct touch with England.

Laila I will be delighted. It shall be a pleasure.

Paul But you must never take any risks.

Laila I never take any risks. Music protects me.

Paul Music protects both of us.

Laila You must also never take any risks.

Paul I must take risks. I am a man, there is a war on, and I am a Jew.

Laila If only you could forget it and be normal.

Paul I say the same. To be a Jew is no more than to be human but only the more human for being a Jewish human.

Laila We are all Jewish humans or should be.

Paul Tell that to the Nazis or the Arabs.

Laila I will not say it in Berlin.

Paul We might meet in Vienna.

Laila Why do you have to go there?

Paul I must try to get my old teacher out of there. He is also Jewish.

Laila Let's meet then in Vienna. Wait for me there. I will arrange some concerts there after Berlin.

Paul Then I might learn the latest news from Berlin.

Laila You can be sure of that.

Paul Good luck.

Laila Good luck yourself.

Paul I love you.

Laila Paul, I have never loved anyone before you.

Paul That sounds incredible, Laila, but I can only say the same about you.

Laila We will bring the downfall of the ugly world.

Paul By our music.

Laila By the spirit we create by our music. It's the magic of music. It creates a spiritual mood.

Paul And that's why it's important that it is well tuned.

Laila The strange thing is, that even on pianos out of tune, true music can create a perfectly tuned musical mood.

Paul Shall we get married in Vienna?

Laila If you want to.

Paul I want it if you want it.

Laila There is nothing I want more.

Paul Then it will have to be Catholic for security's sake.

Laila Are you a Catholic?

Paul Yes, actually.

Laila Then I must also become one.

Paul There is no hurry.

Laila Kiss me, Paul. I deserve it.

Paul I will love to. *(kisses her warmly and tenderly)*

Laila You are my husband already.

Paul It feels as if I always was.

Laila Perhaps we always were.

Paul *(kisses her again)* Let's always remain that way.

Laila Thanks, Paul, for existing.

Paul Thanks, Laila, for that we both exist.

(They kiss again.)

Act II scene 1.

Manfred We must do something about it.

Marcus What is the problem?

Manfred The problem is that Paul Zabłudowicz has become Laila Winsnes' lover and closest associate, while she associates in the highest circles of Berlin and Vienna while he is a Jew.

Max Does anybody know that he is a Jew except himself?

Manfred Only we.

Max Then there is no problem. We'll have to give him a new identity, and then the thing is clear. He is still born Catholic? We give him a new name, new identity, perhaps a new face, and he can easily remain her lover and continue delivering her secret information from Goebbels and Himmler and the others to us without anyone asking any questions.

Manfred You make it sound so simple.

Max It is simple.

Marcus The case is clear. Here he is himself, by the way.

Manfred Welcome, Paul. How is Laila Winsnes?

Paul Only well. She is preparing for a new concert tour to Vienna.

Max Good. You'll make her company there.

Paul How? As a Jew I am *persona non grata* in Vienna and Germany-Austria.

Max We will have to remake you. Forget your Jewish ancestry. We will give you a new passport. Do you want a new face as well?

Paul Does that have to be necessary?

Max Not if you don't want it. It's enough to make you unrecognizable as Paul Zabłudowicz. What name would you like instead?

Paul It doesn't matter.

Manfred We will have to find something really German, like Himmelstoss or Wunderlich, Windgassen, or why not Wagner?

Paul Just take anything.

Max Wagner should be appropriate for a musician?

Paul You forget that Wagner had an illegitimate Jewish father.

Max Even better!

Paul I could never stand Wagner. I always felt him as astronomical pompous trash. I would do nothing more gladly than use his name for deceitful purposes.

Marcus He loved to do that himself.

Max So it will be Wagner. Congratulations!

Paul It's a pleasure for me to go to Vienna as another than the one I am. Then I can see what I can do for my old teacher Moses Rosenberg.

Max We will give you a double identity so that you can switch on demand. When you deal with him you can still be Paul Zabłudowicz.

Paul Thank you.

Manfred But take no risks. We need you.

Paul No one lives today without daily risking his life. More or less than that I can't do.

Max Excellent, Paul! We'll get started immediately! (*takes heartily care of him, and they get down to work.*)

Scene 2. Moses Rosenberg's flat, a picturesque musician's home with many books.

A knock on the door. Moses interrupts what he is doing and goes to open for Paul.

Moses My son, you shouldn't have come here.

Paul Now I am here.

Moses What do you want? Why have you come?

Paul We must get you out of here.

Moses I don't want to.

Paul Father, they will come to search you if you stay.

Moses This is my home. Vienna is my city. I have nowhere else to go.

Paul You can come with me to Scandinavia.

Moses Scandinavia is as German as Germany.

Paul There are no Nazis in Scandinavia. It has not been affected by the political insanity.

Moses The Nazi political insanity is an illness that will pass.

Paul But while it raves it will bring many innocent victims down with it.

Moses I can't denounce myself. I can't deny my life. I can't be anything else than a Jew. Do it if you like, change identity, love your German pianist who is in good standing with Goebbels, deny yourself and become a normal ordinary human being with nothing special, disappear in the multitude and become common, but let me remain who I am.

Paul That's precisely why you should follow me, to be able to remain who you are.

Moses I can't do that anywhere but here at home in Vienna.

Paul Father, the Nazis are intent on exterminating all Jews from all countries in their control.

Moses I don't believe it. They can't. It's too absurd.

Paul It says so expressly in the Hitlerian bible "*Mein Kampf*" in plain writing, that this is the program of national socialism and definite intention. Hitler lives only for his unreasonable hatred against all innocent Jews.

Moses In that case he is mad.

Paul But he has the power.

Moses He can't keep it on such terms. We'll see who will be the better survivor, he or me.

Paul You refuse to be rescued?

Moses I accept Hitler's challenge. It's him or me, but I am sure it will be me.

Paul That will be even more certain if you follow me.

Moses Your certainty convinces me of my own. Which way shall we take?

Paul That's the spirit!
Moses May I at least bring my violin?
Paul You must not leave Vienna without it. And when this nightmare is over, I will make sure that you may return here with your violin.
Moses A tour without concerts?
Paul To your honour, father. I will fetch you tonight at ten.
Moses (*kisses Paul on both his cheeks*) In these times when the God of the Hebrews no longer seems to be able to exist, we are the more strengthened and united by music instead.
Paul That's better than everything else. (*leaves*)
Moses That boy! He risks his life for my sake, so I will just have to risk mine as well for his sake.

Scene 3.

Paul I can't live without you, Laila.
Laila I can even less live without you.
Paul How can you be dependent on me, when I am the one who is dependent on you?
Laila It must be the power of music. I have you to play for. I only play for you. The audience means nothing. Those Nazi culture usurpers with Goebbels as chief are absolutely worthless to me with all their influence. The only one among them that I like and respect is Furtwängler, who is not a Nazi. Thanks to you I can go on playing at all.
Paul Even for such monsters?
Laila I only do it for your sake. I learn things from them. You can help your people by what I can get out of them.
Paul What are they up to now?
Laila You can't guess. Hitler considers himself forced to start another world war. He intends to enforce a German take-over of Danzig. He thinks he is democratically entitled to it since its population is mostly German. But he can only get Danzig by war.
Paul Then there will be a world war. England and France will never let Poland down.
Laila Hitler thinks they might. He intends to take the chance.
Paul Then he will definitely plunge the world into disaster.
Laila He thinks he has no choice. He blames the threat of communism in Russia forcing him into a defensive war.
Paul If he attacks Poland it will be no defensive war but a war of aggression.
Laila A war of aggression to anticipate an inevitably unavoidable attack from the east. Stalin appears to have planned to take over eastern Europe since several years, and has an already complete strategic plan for it called Groza. If Hitler doesn't

anticipate it, he has no chance, according to Hitler. In secret Hitler and Stalin have already divided Poland between themselves.

Paul This is terrible. It's the doom of Germany.

Laila Hitler intends to go the whole way and never give up his life's ambition to liberate the world from the Jews until he has either succeeded or failed.

Paul Why does no one dispose of that world menace and disaster?

Laila Several have tried but failed.

Paul They will have to try again.

Laila That's what we must hope and live for.

Paul Come, my love. Your Rachmaninov tonight was divine.

Laila It's our love that gives me that divinity.

(They make love.)

Act III scene 1. A reception in Berlin.

Goebbels Do you think we have a possibility of succeeding?

Laila What do you mean, doctor Goebbels?

Goebbels The war is a wage. Our Führer never thought we would be attacked by England and France. Our main adversary is the bolsheviks. Logically and rationally England and France should have joined us against the bolsheviks.

Laila The bolsheviks are not Poland.

Goebbels No, but the way to the bolsheviks goes through Poland.

Laila What do you want to accomplish?

Goebbels A new better world without bolsheviks.

Laila Your Führer equals bolsheviks with Jews. Don't you think that could be a mistake?

Goebbels The fact is that it was the Jews who gave the power to the bolsheviks in Russia. Trotsky, Litvinov and even Lenin had Jewish ancestry, not to mention Karl Marx.

Laila You could without any difficulty have taken up the struggle against the bolsheviks if not England and France had refused to fail Poland, but it will be a lot more difficult for you to cleanse the world of Jews.

Goebbels That comes next. One thing at a time. The question is, do you as a neutral outsider think that we could win the war?

Laila I think the same will apply to this world war which applied to the last one. You can win it if America does not join.

Goebbels America does not want any war and will stay out if they are wise.

Laila They were not so wise in the last war, which was decided by their taking part of it.

Goebbels That's correct. You will remain neutral.

Laila To the highest degree.

Goebbels We could be forced to take control of Denmark and Norway for the sake of the Nordic iron ore.

Laila Norway will never surrender.

Goebbels They say you enjoy protection by *National Communism* and the fascist Vidkun Qisling.

Laila As a pianist I have nothing to do with any politics.

Goebbels Still you are not as allergic that you like Furtwängler find it necessary to wash your hands after having shaken them with me.

Laila Doctor Goebbels, with all your political hubris, you like all Nazis are still only human beings and can never regard yourselves as anything else.

Goebbels Then you are a humanist.

Laila To the highest degree.

Goebbels It's to your credit. The name of your associate appears to be Wagner. It would be interesting to meet him on some occasion. Is he related with the great master?

Laila No, he is an Austrian.

Goebbels Yes, it's a common name.

Laila How do you defend your war?

Goebbels It's a war of defence that we were forced into. Germany was on its way to be taken over by the bolsheviks supported by the Jewish world bank when our Führer intervened. The war was started already as he seized power when the world Jewry declared war on Hitler-Germany of life and death. The Führer's answer was to disconnect the Germany economy from the Jewish world bank. Gradually we were forced to take one step after another of pure defence measures against the covert aggressions of the Jewish world bank. Already in 1936 Stalin had worked out a plan of how to take over eastern Europe. By the conquest of Poland, we now have confines with the Soviet Union and can start dealing with it eventually, but first we have to defeat France and England.

Laila An extensive enterprise.

Goebbels To say the least. He wins who has the right and the truth on his side.

Laila And you seem to be certain it's not the bolsheviks.

Goebbels That if anything is absolutely certain. (*enter an officer.*) Well, here is now lieutenant Roth. Miss Winsnes, you have been allotted an escort of your own and a security officer as long as you remain in the Third Reich.

Roth (bowing politely) At your service, Fräulein.

Laila Pardon me, but do I need it?

Goebbels It's just for your comfort. Take it as a compliment by the Führer. He will just make life easier for you.

Laila Then I am thankful. What is your name except Roth, lieutenant?

Roth Gottfried Roth, at your service.

Goebbels Then I leave you in the care of the lieutenant. (*bows and leaves*)

Laila Why did you get this assignment of confidence?

Roth Miss Winsnes, we happen to know everything about your so called lover.

Laila Paul Wagner?
Roth He has dangerous contacts.
Laila And therefore you are assigned to watch me?
Roth For your own good.
Laila I assure you he is harmless, no matter what contacts he has.
Roth We don't doubt that you believe so, Miss.
Laila But?
Roth It would be better for you to have a cavalier more legated with the Third Reich.
Laila Do you have any suggestion?
Roth I beg to volunteer.
Laila (*extremely surprised, but conceals it well. Takes a sip from her glass while considering the situation.*) I will gladly take you into consideration. I can't do more than that for the moment.
Roth Thanks for not immediately discarding me. (*They mingle.*)

Scene 2.

Max Welcome, Paul. Brace yourself with a whisky.
Paul Why? I don't want to become an alcoholic. Is there anything to celebrate?
Manfred No, but you could do with some preparation for our news.
Paul Do you have bad news?
Manfred On the contrary, but they are precarious.
Mac You have managed perfectly, Paul. Your disguise is perfect. Your new name Wagner is like a magic key to all Nazi circles. Thanks to you and Laila we knew about the invasions of Denmark and Norway long before they happened, why England could take some measures. Now we have an excellent resistance movement organised from there.
Paul Still you are worried. Why?
Manfred Paul, the gains of your and Laila's cooperation have not been free of charge.
Paul What do you mean?
Manfred Shall we tell him?
Max Paul, these are hard times, and war maximizes the hardness to the extreme. Laila's position as favoured by the Nazis and even Goebbels has had its price.
Paul What price?
Manfred She is hard beset by high SS officers.
Paul Do you mean that she has to sell herself to obtain the information she gets?
Max She has no choice. She has no possibility to say no. They must not suspect anything. They have so far no reason to suspect you.
Paul Do you mean that she sells her body for my security?
Manfred Something like that.
Paul And you demand that I accept it?

Manfred We demand nothing. We only inform you.

Marcus You can quit whenever you like.

Paul And leave Laila to the Nazis?

Manfred She can also quit whenever she likes.

Paul But they will get suspicious if she does.

Max That's why we hope you will both carry on. You are our contact with us. She can not be.

Paul No, because the Nazis trust her.

Manfred Their confidence in her is invaluable.

Paul I understand. What do you want me to do?

Max Carry on like so far.

Paul Whatever the cost?

Max Take one day at a time. Get off whenever you like.

Paul I don't want to lose Laila. That's why I will go on.

Manfred Thank you.

Marcus Your sacrifice is invaluable.

Paul Thank you. I am aware that it's a gamble with death. You can't always win such a gamble.

Max The Nazis must not win. That's why we must win.

Paul I accept it. What about that whisky?

Max Pour him a large one. We have nothing to celebrate, why we might as well take out all possible victories in advance.

Marcus The bar is open. Help yourselves.
(*They help themselves and drink deeply while they toast each other and look deep into each others' eyes.*)

Max (with a large drink in his hand) Now tell me. What do you really think about this bloody war?

Marcus A damned overwhelming trouble and nothing else. How could Hitler be so stupid that he started it?

Manfred He thought he could win.

Marcus How could he think that? The man isn't stupid. It's all too obvious that Germany stands no chance. Nothing can break England, and sooner or later America will be dragged into it, and then it will be finished.

Max I view it as a kind of self-destructive mania. Hitler must have known from the beginning deep inside that his cause was hopeless and never could win, but in a kind of political psychosis he still forced it on almost like as if to force as many as possible to go under with him.

Manfred What do you think, Paul, who is the only one among us who is Jewish?

Paul It is a fact that Hitler in many respects is right. Any world banks have no right to rule over Germany. Racism is natural – no one questioned it in the last century, when it was taken for granted almost universally that the white leading Europeans of north-western Europe would dominate and colonise the whole world.

Only by the exaggerations of Hitler the obvious white racism has started to be questioned.

Max So you defend the Nazis?

Paul No, but I understand them. Hitler's only mistake was to from the beginning unreasonably make all Jews his enemies just because they were Jews. That was the point at which racism for the first time turned negative and thereby shot itself down, as we are going to witness the downfall of Germany by its own intentional backfire.

Manfred Einstein, Bruno Walter, Stefan Zweig, Otto Klemperer, Thomas and Heinrich Mann, Erich Maria Remarque, Franz Werfel, Fritz Lang, Otto Preminger, Max Reinhardt, Wilhelm Dieterle, Marlene Dietrich, all leading cultural personalities, Jewish and non-Jewish, who demonstratively abandoned Germany and Austria because of Hitler...

Marcus In brief, it's all horribly awkward and troublesome.

Max Still Paul claims that the Nazis are right.

Paul Only in certain aspects. They have certain interesting occult sides. They dare to question Christianity and to revive old heathen traditions like the Nordic mythology and also to show some interest in Hinduism and Tibetanism...

Manfred They are not alone. Also Romain Rolland turned Hinduist. Hermann Hesse is going in that direction. And all theosophists with their activities in India, like Madame Blavatsky, Alice Bailey, Annie Besant and the Roerich family were westerners. The Nazi occultism is not the only one.

Max So you think Hitler's persecution of the Jews is just a small matter?

Paul I can't take it seriously. It's a strike in the air, a personal folly, an impossible whim and Hitler's personal ideological suicide, into which he desperately wants to drag down all Germany with him.

Manfred Which we are here to resist and put a stop to.

Marcus We are worried about Laila, which you also should be.

Paul She will manage as she knows what she is doing.

Manfred No one will see through her as long as no one sees through you. It's just for you to consistently keep up playing your roles as long as it is necessary.

Paul No problem.

Max Cheers, my friends! To the downfall of all dictatorships!

All To the downfall of all dictatorships! *(They toast with cheers and drink.)*

Scene 3. In bed.

Roth How can you as a Norwegian associate with us Germans after we have taken Norway?

Laila You just have to survive.

Roth Do you?

Laila Some want to.

Roth And you are not afraid to be despized by your own for associating with us?

Laila I am a musician. I only live for art, which sanctifies everything.

Roth Even Nazism?

Laila Have you any objections against Nazism?

Roth It might seem strange to you that I have, as an SS man at that, but I am self-critical by nature. That's why I ended up in the SS.

Laila Wasn't it voluntary?

Roth It was voluntary indeed. SS is the great examiner and critic of the German army. It scrutinizes everything. If Hitler misbehaves or commits some mistake we would have to dispose of him.

Laila Are you critical of Hitler?

Roth I am critical of everything. That's why I am in the SS. I claim my right to be absolutely independent, to be able to disconnect whenever I please and to place myself at the disposal of my enemies and peace if I want to, like Rudolf Hess, and even to spy on their account if I feel like it.

Laila You sound like admiral Canaris.

Roth I admire him like Hitler does. He knows what Germany and the Third Reich is all about better than anyone else, but he and Heydrich are not agreed. They were friends from the beginning, but the war has separated them.

Laila Whom do you agree with more, Heydrich or Canaris?

Roth I obey Heydrich but rely more on Canaris.

Laila Also Canaris is critical against Hitler.

Roth He is critical of the opening of an eastern front.

Laila Eastern front? War against the Soviet Union?

Roth We simply have to. Or else the Soviet Union will attack us. We have to anticipate or find ourselves hopelessly in a disadvantageous position.

Laila When?

Roth As soon as possible.

Laila Isn't it very risky?

Roth It is Russian roulette. It's the greatest risk imaginable. But it is even more risky to wait for Stalin to attack.

Laila And why is that so certain?

Roth Stalin made up a plan to retake Finland, the Baltic states and Poland already in 1936.

Laila So you could say that Stalin caused the Second World War by covert provocation?

Roth Absolutely. Tell that to your Norwegian countrymen. But there are more important things than the war. I really hope your friend doesn't take offence by my loving you as well.

Laila I hope he doesn't, but so far he has always accepted anything.

Roth Where does he stand politically?

Laila Nowhere. He is an artist like me. The violin excludes everything except the music.

Roth Then he is a wise man and much wiser than I.
Laila That's why I'll keep him whatever happens.

Act IV scene 1. Paul appearing with Canaris.

Canaris Brandy?
Paul Why this cordiality? I didn't know that you were drinking.
Canaris In this government everyone is drinking except the leader. I think we both can do with an extra.
Paul Has anything happened?
Canaris Everything has happened. We have lost Stalingrad. I am sorry, my friend, but the game is lost. And it's the more lost for our leader refusing to accept it.
Paul He must accept it sooner or later.
Canaris He will never accept it. He is like that. He refused to accept the end of the last world war. Therefore he started a new one. He will not accept the end of that either. When the Third Reich is finished he intends to start a fourth one. And we must accept it and adapt ourselves to it. All we can do is to try to survive. Drink, my friend, it is not dangerous. Cheers to our perdition. (*raises his glass*)
Paul A strange subject for a toast.
Canaris What else shall we do? We can only make the best of it. He doesn't listen to me any longer. I am losing more and more of my authority. It will probably end by his scrapping all *Abwehr* allowing it to be swallowed up by SS in time for its own self-immolation. I beg your pardon that I can't bring you any good news. That's why I asked you to come here, to inform you of the situation. It's finished. All double crossing is done for. The chameleons don't have to shift colours any more and change their faces. The masks will do no good any more. We are lost anyway.
Paul Have you given up?
Canaris All except survival. Too late it has become obvious that I waged on the wrong horse from the beginning, but I had no choice. He was the only one who was willing to lead a determined resistance against bolshevikism. What is communism? It may have been an idealistic ideology from the beginning, we national socialists are also socialists, but by grabbing power by violence from the beginning in Russia it derailed and turned corrupt, barbaric and insane. They executed the entire intelligentsia, all competence in Russia, all educated academicians, they exterminated knowledge, wisdom, expertise and sagacity, they executed their cultural leaders and representatives, who only could survive by going into exile, like Rachmaninov, Mereshkovsky, Bunin, Diaghilev, Nijinsky, Pavlova, Horowitz and whatever they were called. Only the dregs of the rabble were left.
Paul Didn't we do the same in Germany? Didn't we drive out all competence from Germany?
Canaris It's the socialistic curse. Its law is for everything to be reduced to a level of the lowest possible common denominator. Karl Marx wanted to reduce everyone

to proletarians, and all popular seducers saw their chance and made serious his absurdity. Hitler thinks he can create a world without Jews, but then he has to extirpate all humanity, for there are elements of Jewishness in all humanity. His absurd political experiment means suicide for the national state, for no nationalism can survive this war. After the war we will have to have a world government making war impossible, and it must be democratic and exclude and annihilate all dictatorships, for in our modern times a dictatorship can only mean a total disaster for its own country.

Paul What do you intend to do?

Canaris What can I do? Nothing. What do *you* intend to do?

Paul I have been your agent. I am yours to command.

Canaris Not any longer. I can only offer recommendations. There is something going on in the Warsaw ghetto, where 500,000 people have been walled up. They are organising an uprising there, which will be the first organised rebellion against the Nazis. The best thing you can do in the world today is to take part in that rebellion. I regret that I cannot do it myself.

Paul Then I will have to do it in your stead.

Canaris With all probability it will be a risky suicidal enterprise.

Paul The point is that it is relevant.

Canaris And your woman? The celebrated pianist?

Paul She has only deceived me anyway.

Canaris Are you sure?

Paul She is completely in the hands of the SS, who has seduced her by a certain officer Gottfried Roth.

Canaris I know him. He is of our kind.

Paul But he is SS.

Canaris It's good, Paul Wagner, that you keep yourself informed. Go on like that, but don't let go of your music.

Paul Never.

Canaris Laila Winsnes belongs to music, not to the SS.

Paul I might let her know where I have gone.

Canaris The music unites you, and not even the SS or the war can separate you as long as you have the music.

Paul I wish you were right. We shall see. (*salutes and wants to go*)

Canaris Good luck in Warsaw.

Paul By your recommendation it will be an honour. (*leaves*)

Canaris Will anyone of us survive? I doubt it.

Scene 2. A shabby café in the Warsaw ghetto.

1 How do we know that he is not an agent?

2 Would he come here on his own if he were a Nazi?

1 But he *is* a Nazi!

2 How do you know that he is not a double agent pretending to be a Nazi just to survive and spy them out?

1 That seems far-fetched.

3 In any case he is here, and we should give him a chance.

2 At least we should find out what he wants.

1 Here he is now.

3 Welcome, Paul Wagner. You are very debatable since we don't know if we can trust you.

Paul My real name is Paul Zabłudowicz.

2 Jewish?

Paul Of course.

2 I knew it!

1 And you have not come here just to spy on us?

Paul Why would I? What reasons would the Nazis have to suspect what Jews are up to walled up in a ghetto?

1 But you have been working for Canaris and *Abwehr*.

Paul That's correct, and it's on his recommendation that I am here to in any way support your rebellion and die with you.

3 That sounds convincing.

1 But you have been together with a well known concert pianist who plays for the Nazis and is a friend of them although she is Norwegian.

Paul She has deceived me with them. I have nothing more to do with her.

1 She appears to enjoy the protection of a certain SS officer Gottfried Roth.

Paul I know. You will probably find him here in Warsaw murdering Jews.

2 Is that why you have come here?

Paul Not only. I had nothing else to do.

1 All these wanton ladies in occupied countries who give themselves up to the Germans, like French, Norwegians, Danish, Dutch and whatever they are, will not have an easy life after the war.

Paul If they are lucky they will not see the end of the war.

1 Exactly.

2 What can you help us with?

Paul Up till now I have had intimate contacts with *Abwehr* and the Nazis and know all about them and even a deal about the SS. I can help you with the strategy. It's vital not to strike until you are well covered, secretly well supplied with weapons, have a well working practical communication system with secret bunkers and tunnels and a certainty of being able to take the Germans by complete surprise.

2 Exactly.

3 We have access to and charted all the drain pipes of Warsaw.

Paul That's how you keep all the Warsaw ghetto supplied?

2 Exactly.

Paul You have to collect supplies and weapons as long as possible and not strike until everything is ready for an attack.

2 Exactly.

3 (*catches sight of a stranger*) Pardon me, but does anyone of you know that lady?

1 I have never seen her before.

2 She seems to be looking for someone.

Paul (coldly) I don't know her.

2 Are you sure?

1 It's that pianist we just discussed. What is she doing here?

2 She is looking for you. That is the only possibility.

1 What do you intend to do? You can't just deny her.

Laila (discovers Paul) Paul! (*comes eagerly up to them*)

Paul What are you doing here?

Laila Looking for you.

Paul Why? Who told you I was here?

Laila Your employer. He said that the best way for me to cut all ties with the Nazis was to join you here.

Paul What has your SS.officer to say about that?

Laila He doesn't know about it.

Paul Yet.

Laila Paul, I live only for you. If you have come here to die, I want to die here with you.

Paul You have your music to live for. There is no life for you here.

Laila Yes, here if anywhere, for you are here. Here is the future. Here is the music. Here is everything.

Paul And here is death.

Laila Of a kind that gives life.

Paul You seem to be serious.

2 Miss, you are accepted. Welcome to the foremost suicide legion in the world.

Laila Thank you. I regard it as an honour.

Paul (embraces her) Laila, I thought I had lost you. I had already given you up.

Laila I was afraid of that. That's why I came back.

Paul This is turning into a melodrama. Love in the Warsaw ghetto.

3 Why not?

2 You could always try.

1 We could always do with some more suicidal volunteers.

2 Shouldn't we take the opportunity and make a toast to the reunited couple?

3 Do we have anything to toast with?

1 There must never be any lack of that. (*calls a so called waiter, whispers to him, and he eagerly leaves immediately*)

2 Do you know magic?

1 In war everything is possible.

Laila I am glad that I found you. I was almost ready to give up.

Paul I thought I would never see you again.

2 Here we are! (*The waiter returns with five small glasses.*)

waiter The best *subrowka* I could find.

1 (*takes a glass*) Cheers then, and welcome, love martyrs!
(All take their glasses and toast solemnly.)

Paul Only the music is missing now.

Laila Where is your violin?

Paul At home. I haven't touched it for ages.

Laila Is there a piano here?

2 Wladyslaw Szpilman used to play on one that was never tuned.

1 Still he could play on it to make it sound good.

Laila The Kreutzer sonata would do well now.

Paul After the war, Laila. First we must win it.

Laila Do you think we can defeat the Nazis?

Paul They are already defeated. It's just a question of time until reality catches up with them.

1 It was nice, this *subrowka*. We need some more.

2 We also need a violin and a piano.

1 Everything can be arranged.

Waiter (*appears like by order with new glasses*) I knew you would need some more.

1 Can you take it on credit?

Waiter No, it's on the house. We stopped charging on credit, and this is a special occasion. I know when it's time for that.

1 We are much obliged.

3 Morituri te salutant, amiral Canaris. (*raises his glass*)

2 There can only be one explanation to Hitler's formidable success.

1 Well?

2 He must be Jewish himself.

1 Do you mean that you have to be successful to be a Jew?

2 No, but Jewish impostors are always successful. Just look at Karl Marx, how many followers he got.

3 And look at Moses. Look at Jesus.

1 Do you mean that they were impostors?

3 That possibility can not be excluded.

Paul Come, Laila. Let's find ourselves a piano and a violin, so that we could start practising.

1 That's the spirit!

Paul We will be back. (*goes out with Laila*)

2 I knew that he came here just to find his lost love again. Where else could he have found it?

1 (*considers, then observes surprised*) You are right. It would not have been possible anywhere else.

2 Cheers! (*The three carry on toasting.*)

Act V scene 1. A dark shabby room somewhere in the Warsaw ghetto.

Paul How can we endure this?
Laila We don't have to. But we do anyway.
Paul No one can survive this.
Laila Still there is always someone who does.
Paul Does it have to be us?
Laila I don't want to survive you.
Paul That's mutual.
Laila Let's get lost together.
Paul Like Stefan Zweig with his wife.
Laila They could have survived. But they didn't wish to.
Paul She was ill and depressive, and he was depressed.
Laila Still it was a weakness when they could have survived. It was a betrayal of their responsibility. I don't want to die an unnatural death.
Paul Neither do I. Let them find us in bed. Or bomb the ruins of the house we are in and bury us alive.
Laila Then no one shall know our story.
Paul Only admiral Canaris knows that I vanished in the Warsaw ghetto. Does no one know that you are here?
Laila No.
Paul And the admiral will probably be executed by the Nazis like Rommel and all other decent Germans who unwillingly were dragged into their mass suicide.
Laila Are we part of it?
Paul Only if we die.
Laila I think we stand a better chance of survival than all those outside, just because we made resistance.
Paul Does not even your SS officer know that you are here?
Laila If he suspects it, he will not come after me.
Paul So either we die in complete obscurity, or we commit the impossible act of surviving.
Laila In any case we have nothing to lose.
Paul Except the music.
Laila That we can never lose. Besides it will always survive.
Paul And we probably with it, since it gave us our lives.
Laila Now we are getting all philosophical, while the cruelties of the war out there are constantly raging more terribly inhuman.
Paul It doesn't do any harm being philosophical in the middle of the war. Even philosophy will survive all wars and all mortal lives.
Laila Comfort me, Paul, not because I am scared, but we need something better than the reality of the Warsaw ghetto, especially when it is about to perish.

Paul And it will perish in an outrageously scandalous mass murder and orgy of human cruelty, which will be the first morally crushing defeat of the Germans, and we have the honour of taking part in it.

Laila Go on. Comfort me more.

Paul No one knows that we are here, and yet we are here. No one will bear witness about us, and still our fate will not fade in vain but in some way be carried on and forth. We disappear into the indefinite zone of timelessness in a metaphysical dimension, which transcends all human thinking, but there we will go on loving each other even when the Warsaw ghetto is so annihilated that you can't see any more that it made a part of a city.

Laila And its most important part by its annihilation.

Paul Exactly.

Laila You succeeded in comforting me somewhat. Now I only have one more thing to ask of you.

Paul What ever.

Laila Love me.

Paul For ever.

Laila I believe you really mean it.

(They make love, and the scene fades out into darkness.)

Scene 2. A fashionable home, a flat well furnished, calm and cozy.

Max What the devil am I doing here? The last one left out of how many? No, I can't stand it! *(takes the bottle, pours himself a large whisky, drinks)* All I have left is the bottle. Are they really all gone? Is that all we have accomplished? Murder, death and assassination, universal destruction in all Europe, millions of innocents dead and few guilty ones, all together we got perhaps one percent of the accountable world criminals, while all the best of us have perished... *(drinks)* Tirpitz by all means, what a glory, our greatest triumph was the sinking of a battleship with all its innocent victims on board... Scandal! Disgrace! Insanity! Hell! Everything is gone to hell! Everything is lost! Everything is wrong! The whole world is just one great failure and mistake! No, I don't want to be part of it any longer. As the only one left I don't want to stay on to pay any part of the bill. *(drinks)* Dear bottle, old pal, my only friend, my only comfort, I exchange your contents to what's left of my soul, while I sign myself over to the devil and turn into an alcoholic, my final and only happy career, my only activity in life that will not hurt! I might even get some company. *(enter Marcus)*

Marcus I see that you are drinking again.

Max What else can I do?

Marcus You can live. The war isn't finished yet, and you can survive.

Max While you all are dead? It isn't fair!

Marcus That depends on how you will use your life.

Max Just don't tell me that I should start working for peace. It will not work. I only lived for the war during all these five years. That's all I know. That's all I can. Peace has no place for me.

Marcus If you survive the war you will be a national hero.

Max Don't mock me! All national heroes are dead! Only those who died for the cause and became martyrs have the right to call themselves national heroes! I can only punish myself for unjustly being forced to live on while all the rest of you are dead!

Manfred (enters) Pull yourself together, Max! Don't feel sorry for yourself!

Max What else can I do?

Manfred It's true what Marcus says. You can live. You have the right to live.

Max No, I haven't, not without you, my brothers, my foster brothers in the sacred struggle against oppression, executed, blown up, carried away and lost, bombed and drowned...

Manfred You must live for our sake.

Max What are you trying to make me believe?

Manfred We live on in you. Your life is our lives and the only life we have. As long as you remember us and celebrate us, we live on.

Max I just want to become a phantom like you.

Manfred You already are that although you live – you live in both dimensions. That's an asset.

Max To be living dead, to be both alive and dead, to be dead and still being forced to live, to live as a ghost and as a remnant of what you once were...

Manfred It works. Try it.

Max You will never convince me, no matter how living dead you are.

(enter Laila and Paul)

Are you also coming here to haunt me?

Laila Max, no sacrifice was ever in vain.

Max Says you, who abandoned your career and success and a life of affluence in fame and glory to look up death in the Warsaw ghetto and perish with a Jewish Nazi officer who had scrapped you... You were the craziest of all the patients. And what did you gain by it? You vanished into nothing!

Laila I gained love.

Max What sort of love? Necrophilia? You only found a lot of dead.

Paul No, she found me.

Max A lost shadow of a promising violinist who deserted his music to risk his life as an agent, for what? To help us make a lot of mischief by sabotage and cause the death of thousands of innocents?

Paul Max, everything has a meaning. You are alive. Live for us. Live for our memory. No one else will remember us.

Max What do you want me to do? Write a book?

Paul You can give us back our lives by recalling us in your world.

Max You take out your violin, and I will take out my bottle.

Laila Do that, and we shall play the Kreutzer sonata for you.

Max All right. Play for me until I stifle and pass out, and never stop playing, so maybe even I will be able to die satisfied.

Paul You must live, Max. It's your destiny.

Max The cruellest of all destinies, now when you all are dead.

Paul Perhaps we are not.

Max What do you mean?

Paul We are here. You see us. We are undeniable.

Max That's just the problem. I will never get rid of you.

Manfred (*takes a seat*) All right, Max, pour me a glass as well, and you will have company.

Max Your company is all I have to live for.

Paul We thank you for it.

Max But sit down, all of you! Now when you are here, you might as well relax!

Laila All we lack is a piano.

Max You can never get everything.

Paul Yes, Max, you can still have everything.

Max All I wish is for this party to go on forever.

Paul You are already a part of eternity, with the same right as we.

Max But you are dead.

Paul Don't try it.

Manfred We are here, aren't we?

Max Yes, that's what you try to make me imagine.

Paul No, you imagine it yourself, and therefore it is true.

Max This is getting too metaphysical for me.

Marcus Drink then, and wake up to a new better morning.

Max I am afraid that's all that's left for me. Thanks for your company. You are always welcome back. (*drinks, yawns and falls asleep*)

Marcus He is finished.

Manfred The party is over for this time.

Paul We beg to be able to return.

Manfred Bring your piano and violin next time.

Laila I will make sure to bring a piano from the Warsaw ghetto.

Manfred No piano would be better.

Marcus Good night, comrades.

Paul See you later.

Manfred Indeed. (*They all retire. Manfred closes Max' eyes and covers him with a blanket or shawl so that he will not get cold. He smiles in his sleep. Paul and Laila walk out together with their arms around each other. Finally also Manfred leaves. The scene fades out.*)

(Virhamn 14.6.2015,
translated in November 2020.)

Post script

The drama is inspired by Gry Finsnes' novel "*Vanished in Berlin*", which hasn't even appeared in more than its first part yet, which gave the impulse to some of the characters, while others are real. Max the survivor is mainly inspired by Max Manus though, while his fate became rather common among most of the more heroic survivors of the Second World War.