

Antigone in Munich

“I must please the gods, not a mortal man or his laws.” - Antigone

“Somebody, after all, had to make a start. What we wrote and said is also believed by many others. They just don't dare express themselves as we did.” “Stand up for what you believe even if you are standing alone.” – Sophie Scholl

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Antigone in Munich

RUNNING TIME: 75-80 minutes (approximate)

NOTES ON CASTING: The play is based on real people and real events but this is not a documentary. It is an imagining of how Sophie Scholl became an activist in treacherous times. The people this story is based on were certainly Caucasian; the casting doesn't need to be. It's a story for everyone to be told by everyone.

CAST: 8-11

Cast of 11: 6f, 5m

Cast of 8: 4f, 4m

(The age range is for the characters that grow from early teens to twenties during the course of the play. Their ages are also noted in their scenes.)

Extras possible in Scenes 1, 3, 9 and Epilogue

Sophie (f) ages from 13-21

Hans (m) (25)

Robert Mohr (m) 35

Luisa (f) age 13-14

Elisabeth (f) ages 18 to 22

Fritz (m) ages from 19-25

Elsa (f) 18

Alex (m) 25

Traute (f) 24

Willi (m) 25

Annaliese (21)

Doubling: Cast of 8

Sophie (f)

Hans (m)

Mohr (m)

Elisabeth (f)

Elsa/Annaliese (f)

Luisa Traute (f)

Fritz/Willi (m)

Alex (m)

NOTES ON DIALOGUE: “/” – slashes indicate overlapping dialogue.

Antigone in Munich

TIME: 1933-1943

PLACE: Germany

SET: The set should consist of playing areas or levels. The scenes are episodic and move quickly in time and space. Set pieces should be kept to a minimum. The play would do well with projections. Multimedia slides for each scene are suggestions.

SYNOPSIS: Sophie Scholl was a member of the White Rose Society in Nazi Germany which encouraged passive resistance against the totalitarian government. The play chronicles her coming of age and development from bystander to witness to activist.

PROLOGUE: February 18, 1943. An atrium in the University of Munich.

SCENE 1: Interrogation chamber, February 21, 1943
On the Danube River in Ulm, September, 1933

SCENE 2: Interrogation chamber, February 21, 1943
Living Room in Scholl Home, Spring 1937

SCENE 3: Interrogation chamber, February 21, 1943
Streets of Ulm after Kristallnacht, November 10, 1938

SCENE 4: Interrogation chamber, February 21, 1943
A park in Worpswede, Spring, 1939

SCENE 5: Interrogation chamber, February 21, 1943
Alex's home, May, 1942

SCENE 6: In Sophie's and Hans's apartment, June, 1942
English Gardens (Park), Munich, same afternoon in June, 1942

SCENE 7: Hans's and Sophie's apartment later that same evening. Jun, 1942

SCENE 8: Interrogation chamber, February 21, 1943
Hans's and Sophie's apartment, January 1943

SCENE 9: Interrogation chamber, February 21, 1943
Hans's and Sophie's apartment, February 16, 1943
Interrogation chamber, February 21, 1943
English Garden in Munich, February 17, 1943

EPILOGUE: University of Munich, June 1943

Antigone in Munich

PROLOGUE

MULTIMEDIA: Atrium, University of Munich

LIGHTS UP on SOPHIE and HANS in the atrium of the University of Munich, Germany. It is February 18, 1943. SOPHIE has a suitcase and a fistful of leaflets. SOPHIE is running up the staircase while HANS is below. We hear a male voice shout “Halt!” SOPHIE has her hand up with the leaflets and freezes. HANS freezes. (Beat.) Gestapo sirens.

Blackout.

SCENE 1

MULTIMEDIA: Photo, Sophie Scholl

LIGHTS UP on SOPHIE being interrogated by ROBERT MOHR, a Gestapo interrogator. A bright light hangs over SOPHIE. SOPHIE is 21 years old. It is February 21, 1943 – the last day of her interrogation.

MOHR

You have been accused that in times of war, through propaganda leaflets, you have called for the overthrow of the National Socialist way of life, By doing so, you aided the enemy and weakened the armed security of the nation. This is treason. Do you understand the seriousness of the charges?

SOPHIE

I told you – I had nothing to do with the leaflets/

MOHR

/You were seen with them.

SOPHIE

I know it looks bad – but I was at the building to let my friend know I wouldn’t be meeting her for lunch/

MOHR

/Because you were taking a train home to Ulm. You said that. It is not true.

SOPHIE

But it is! Hans and I decided at the spur of the moment to go home so I wanted to tell Gisella so she wouldn’t wait for me. I knew she would be getting out of class shortly/

MOHR

/You were carrying the leaflets. You threw them when the janitor saw you.

SOPHIE

I picked them up from the ground. They were everywhere. I was curious.

MOHR

You had an empty suitcase. Because that's how you carried the leaflets to the University.

SOPHIE

No! It was empty because I was going home to pick up some more winter clothes. I didn't pack enough.

MOHR

Treason is punishable by death. Do you understand?

SOPHIE

Yes.

MOHR

Do you want to die?

SOPHIE

No.

MOHR

Then tell the truth.

SOPHIE

I went to the bank to get some money for the train ticket, stopped off at the Main Hall to see Gisella –

MOHR

We went through your home. We found the typewriter/

SOPHIE

/used for our class papers/

MOHR

/with the same type as the leaflets/

SOPHIE

/not typed by us!

MOHR

/Extra postage stamps were found ...

SOPHIE

I write home a lot. I'm very close to my family.

MOHR

There was a mimeograph machine, extra leaflets and an example of the seventh leaflet was found on Hans. I ask you again, do you want to die?

SOPHIE

There was no seventh leaflet.

MOHR

There was in Hans's pocket. I ask you again, do you want to die?

SOPHIE

No.

MOHR

We start again. This time you will tell the truth.

SOPHIE

Will it matter?

MOHR

It could save your life.

SOPHIE

Why do you care?

MOHR

I don't want the blood of a young, German girl on my hands. I believe, with rehabilitation, you could be an asset to Germany. Again, what is your name?

SOPHIE

You know all that.

MOHR

Name, please.

SOPHIE

Sophia Magdalena Scholl.

MOHR

Date and place of birth.

SOPHIE
May 9, 1921, Forchtenburg, Germany.

MOHR
Are your parents German?

SOPHIE
Yes.

MOHR
Are your grandparents German?

SOPHIE
Yes.

MOHR
What religion are you?

SOPHIE
Lutheran.

MOHR
Are your parents and grandparents Lutheran?

SOPHIE
Yes.

MOHR
When did you move to Ulm?

SOPHIE
In 1932. I don't see what any of this has to do with this situation.

MOHR
We want a factual history of your life and want understanding of what happened to turn you against Germany.

SOPHIE
I could never turn against Germany. Its beauty, its literature – all is in my blood.

MOHR
Something changed.

SOPHIE

I love Germany. I admit, I have wrestled with National Socialism. It has not been a just government. It has turned German people against each other.

MOHR

It is this government that rescued the German people from the Treaty of Versailles. It is this government that has reduced unemployment and curbed inflation. It is this government that has brought Germany back from the ruins.

SOPHIE

This government sold the soul of the German nation to reduce the price of bread.

MOHR

You are too young to know how things were. For that, I forgive you. But you are not too young to understand that your actions were treasonous.

SOPHIE

I committed no treason. I do question what happens when the laws of man contradict the laws of God. What should a woman who follows God's laws do?

MOHR

One learns to obey both.

SOPHIE

Is that what you do?

MOHR

I am not on trial. There are sympathetic points here. You were part of the Hitler youth. When did you join the German League of Girls?

SOPHIE

In 1933. I loved it. I thought it was all fun and games. Things that thirteen-year-olds love.

LIGHTS CHANGE and LUISA runs on. She is 13 years old. We are by the Danube in Ulm. It is September, 1933. SOPHIE (also 13 years old) joins her. They both have book satchels.

LUISA

Beat you! Shall we jump in the river? Clothes and all.

SOPHIE

It's the perfect day for it! But I have a meeting tonight and it wouldn't do to go home all wet and muddy.

LUISA

So law-abiding! I'd risk punishment. Come on!

SOPHIE

If only my mother would punish me. But there'd be days of her sighing and looking at me as if I was a great, big disappointment. I don't want to put myself through that.

LUISA

Punishment is easier.

SOPHIE

Much. I've been sitting all day – I need to move. Shall we dance?

LUISA

My pleasure!

(And humming or singing nonsense they do a silly *Blue Danube* waltz – maybe ending with a twirl.)

SOPHIE

I wish I could dance all day!

LUISA

Dance and sing and ski and swim and read –

SOPHIE

- and eat! I almost forgot. From lunch.

(SOPHIE pulls out a roll.)

LUISA

Brochten! My favorite.

(SOPHIE tears it in half and they settle down to eat.)

SOPHIE

Imagine if the river could talk – the stories it could tell us. It's seen everything, don't you think? Love and hate, battles and sweethearts –

LUISA

Sweethearts!

SOPHIE

Don't you think about things like that? I saw George eyeing you during recess.

LUISA

George is too young. And he doesn't have the dreamy eyes that someone ... like Hans ...

SOPHIE

Hans? My brother Hans? Dreamy eyes!

LUISA

Sort of.

SOPHIE

He's too old for you. Plus he's very busy. I don't think he has time for girls.

LUISA

Ha! According to my sister, he has a lot of time for girls!

SOPHIE

Hans?

LUISA

Yeah. Movie-star-eyes Hans.

SOPHIE

Hans!!!!

LUISA

Yes. Your brother/

SOPHIE

/is – waiting for me! Luisa, I'm sorry – I promised I would dig out some music for him to play at the meeting tonight and bring it to him. I forgot I had it – I have to go.

LUISA

Of course.

SOPHIE

Come to the meeting –

LUISA

I'm Jewish, Sophie.

SOPHIE

The meetings are about being German. You're German!

LUISA

The wrong kind of German.

SOPHIE

I'm sure they'd welcome you. We don't pray really – it's all singing and dancing and telling stories.

LUISA

They don't allow Jews.

SOPHIE

That's just silly.

LUISA

Haven't you noticed/

SOPHIE

/I have to –

LUISA

Go. It's fine. I'll see you at school tomorrow.

(They hug and SOPHIE runs off. LUISA watches and then exits. The females in the cast join in a circle on one side of the stage for a dance. The males in the cast will be on the other side. They could be in a march or also in a dance. Flags of schools or cities could be held. WILLI GRAFF (age 15) stands to the side holding his school flag. He does not join in. KLEZMER music is heard – or a RUSSIAN folk song. HANS (age 15), ELISABETH (age 14) and finally SOPHIE will join them – all smiles and innocence.

The dance/celebration is a sweet entertainment for the GERMAN youth. At the height of the dance, the music comes to an abrupt halt. ALL freeze.

Beat.

New music is heard – a song from a German, Aryan composer. The dancers female dancers begin a new dance. The young men don swastika armbands. A young man takes WILLI's flag and throws it to the ground. The females slowly dance off. The males march off. HANS is left behind. WILLI picks up his flag. HANS and WILLI look at each other as the lights fade to black.

SCENE 2**MULTIMEDIA: Antigone photo or Scholl siblings**

MOHR

You stayed with the League of German Girls?

SOPHIE

Yes. I was told that if I didn't, I wouldn't be able to go to the University.

MOHR

So you figured out how to live within the system even if it went against your moral code.

SOPHIE

There was no war - yet. Nobody was dying.

MOHR

You and your siblings were arrested in 1937.

SOPHIE

It had nothing to do with anything. They were investigating a group that my brother Hans belonged to.

MOHR

It was not sanctioned by the party.

SOPHIE

No. But it was perfectly harmless. Just a group that got together and went hiking and skiing.

MOHR

You were let go the next day.

SOPHIE

Yes – I was only sixteen and aside from some reading material that was considered “degenerate,” nothing of importance was found.

(Lights change. SOPHIE (age 16) joins FRITZ (age 20) and they enter her home. Books, letters, papers are strewn about.)

SOPHIE

Thanks for bringing me back. I didn't want to spend one more minute at their headquarters. I was a bit shaken.

FRITZ

Of course. I should go. It's not seemly –

SOPHIE

Yes. Mother and Father will be back this evening. They're hoping to at least bring back Elisabeth and Inge. I can't imagine any wrong doing on their part. We're all still school children!

FRITZ

I am sure all will be resolved happily.

SOPHIE

Yes. Happily.

FRITZ

The police don't believe in cleaning up after themselves. Let me help you put things away.

SOPHIE

They went through my letters from Hans. What did they think they would find? It's mostly talk about the food and weather during his service. Of course, maybe they've banned certain foods and eating a kartoffel goes against the party!

FRITZ

Anything missing?

SOPHIE

Can't tell yet. Mother said they walked off with my Heinrich Heine book of poetry. Silly police – I've committed so many to heart. They can't take him away from me. Funny.... look.

FRITZ

Antigone?

SOPHIE

I was reading it when the police came. I even underlined some passages.

FRITZ

I guess they weren't looking for Greek theatre – only books written by Jews and Russians.

SOPHIE

It's ironic that they consider ancient Greek safe. Here. Read what I underlined. Start with King Creon. I'll read Antigone.

Sophie – I feel silly/

FRITZ

/Read it!

SOPHIE

Am I a hero or a villain?

FRITZ

SOPHIE

A powerful King with his own moral code. Antigone is his niece. Read

FRITZ
(Reading Creon.)

You were seen kneeling on the ground by your dead brother covering his body with dirt.
You were seen crying to the gods with prayers.
Is that true?

SOPHIE
(As Antigone.)

I admit it. Openly and honestly.

FRITZ

You – memorized this?

SOPHIE

Keep reading.

FRITZ
(As Creon.)

Were you aware that I issued a proclamation forbidding his burial?

SOPHIE
(As Antigone.)

Yes. It was well-known.

FRITZ
(As Creon.)

Yet, you still dared to break my law.

SOPHIE
(As Antigone.)

My brother needed to be buried. That is Zeus's law. I did not think a mortal law should override the laws of the gods.

FRITZ
(As Creon.)

He is an enemy of the state and as such, I have forbidden his burial.

SOPHIE
(As Antigone.)

I had no choice. His spirit needed a burial. What sort of sister would I be to deny his spirit?

FRITZ

What does this mean?

SOPHIE

In times of trouble, if a King decrees something that goes against what you believe God wants – who do you listen to?

(Beat.)

SOPHIE (cont'd)

I think about these things. A lot.

FRITZ

What happens?

SOPHIE

He sentences Antigone to death. And – she dies. Almost everyone in the play dies. Except the Chorus.

FRITZ

Sophie/

SOPHIE

/It's not what I want! I just think about all these new laws – friends no longer in school. The Nuremberg rallies – I'm arrested with my siblings – because of what? Because my brother hikes in the woods with a group not sanctioned by the party? Because of the reading material in my home?

FRITZ

You're scaring me.

SOPHIE

Germany is scaring me.

FRITZ

Just don't/

SOPHIE

/I won't. I want to live.

FRITZ

Good. Because I want you to live. A long life.

(THEY finish cleaning up as the light fade to black.)

SCENE 3

MULTIMEDIA: Kristallnacht

MOHR

You have a boyfriend. Fritz Hartnagel.

SOPHIE

Yes. A soldier. He is stationed at the Eastern front.

MOHR

Will you marry?

SOPHIE

Probably. After the war.

MOHR

Do you wish for children?

SOPHIE

Why do you care?

MOHR

I am looking for ways to make you sympathetic to the judge. I am looking to keep you alive.

SOPHIE

We are finally in agreement about something.

MOHR

After your arrest, you were a model citizen. You stayed with the German Youth. You served your country as a teacher and a factory worker. I believe that the treason charges against you could be lessened. I believe that you were influenced. There is nothing in your history to suggest you would go against the Fatherland.

SOPHIE

And for that I am sorry. Sorry for the Germany I continue to love. Sorry for the friendships I let go. Sorry for accepting laws that I questioned. By November 1938, I knew better. I saw – everything. But I kept my mouth shut.

(The interrogation is halted by the sound of broken glass. A violent, piercing sound. Lights change. SOPHIE (age 17) and ELISABETH (age 18) are walking the streets of Ulm. It is November 10, 1938.)

ELISABETH

Sophie, we should go home. Nothing looks – safe.

SOPHIE

I need to see.

(They walk in silence. Music may underscore - Johann Strauss, Brahms, Rachmaninoff or of your choosing. The now-occasional sound of glass is heard intermittently.)

SOPHIE (cont'd)

All Jewish shops.

ELISABETH

Yes.

SOPHIE

The synagogue?

ELISABETH

Destroyed.

SOPHIE

Why?

ELISABETH

Don't question. The street has ears.

(They continue walking. LUISA (age 17) is spied.)

SOPHIE

Luisa? LUISA!

(LUISA shakes her head and runs away.
ELISABETH reaches for SOPHIE'S hand and
SOPHIE grabs it. The sound of broken glass is
heard once more as the lights fade to black.)

SCENE 4

MULTIMEDIA: Sophie's Sketches

MOHR

In the spring of 1939, you travelled with your boyfriend.

SOPHIE

The streets do have ears By that time he was my fiancé.

MOHR

Unseemly.

SOPHIE

We had separate rooms, I can assure you. My mother saw to that.

MOHR

What was the purpose?

SOPHIE

Does everything need a purpose? Fritz was on his way to war and I would be teaching soon. It was a last effort to be carefree.

MOHR

Where did you go?

SOPHIE

You know, don't you? Worpswede.

MOHR

The degenerate arts colony.

SOPHIE

I toyed with becoming an artist. I loved to sketch – it still relaxes me.

(SOPHIE (18) picks up a sketchpad and draws as
FRITZ (22) enters. They are outside in Worpswede
– possibly on a picnic or a park bench or by a lake.)

FRITZ

I have to go. (Beat.) Sophie, it's time -

SOPHIE

I know. Why do weeks like this have to end? Couldn't we just run away somewhere?
Switzerland?

FRITZ

It's a long walk.

SOPHIE

I like to hike.

FRITZ

It's a long hike.

(Pause.)

SOPHIE

I'll walk you to the train station.

FRITZ

No. This is how I want to remember you. Out in the country. Sketching. After this
wonderful, romantic week.

SOPHIE

I keep thinking something terrible will happen to us – that we will pay for our perfect
week. We're at war yet we've just taken time off for pleasure. How dare we find one
minute of enjoyment during these times. I'm sure it is illegal. (Beat.) Where will you be
going?

FRITZ

I don't know. I get my papers tomorrow.

SOPHIE

We're gearing up for war. Everyone says so.

FRITZ

Yes.

SOPHIE

It will never be like this again. These times will change us.

FRITZ

What brought us together will not change.

SOPHIE

How can you be so sure? I feel as if I change every day. Every breath changes me. I can't quiet my mind – it dips in and out of the political arena. Silly, isn't it? Women are not supposed to be political. I should be keeping the home fires burning for you and sending you off with freshly-baked bread. Will a sketch do?

(She shows him a sketch.)

FRITZ

Is that you? In a long cloak?

SOPHIE

It's me. As Antigone. And me again as her sister Ismene. It's me wishing I was the brave bearer of all that is right and good. And me as her sister who wants to be safe.

FRITZ

Please be the "safe" sister. For me.

SOPHIE

And you. For me.

(There is a hug and a kiss. It speaks of love and fear and sadness. FRITZ breaks it off. SOPHIE gives him one of the sketches from her book. He folds it and puts it in his pocket.)

FRITZ

I love you.

(SOPHIE indicates "love back." FRITZ exits without looking back. SOPHIE watches until he is out of sight and sketches.

ELSA enters. She sees SOPHIE and walks over to her.)

ELSA

Hello. I've been seeing you around here a lot lately.

SOPHIE

Am I that conspicuous?

ELSA

I saw you at Martha Vogeler's home. And then later around town with a rather striking fellow.

My fiancé. SOPHIE

A soldier? ELSA

Aren't all men these days? SOPHIE

Are you an artist? ELSA

I sketch. SOPHIE

Did you enjoy visiting with Frau Vogeler? Everyone does. ELSA

I enjoyed seeing her weavings. She's masterful. SOPHIE

Indeed she is. ELSA

(Indicating sketchbook.)

May I see? ELSA (cont'd)

I – suppose. SOPHIE

I'm Elsa Weil. I live in town. ELSA

Sophie Scholl. If you live in this community, you must be the artist. SOPHIE

Not so! I'm afraid I'm all about the words. I had hoped for a life in theatre – even dreamed about going to America and to their Hollywood but – ELSA

The times changed all that. SOPHIE

ELSA

And lack of money. These are quite good. Greek?

SOPHIE

I'm working on an assignment to illustrate scenes from Hanspeter's *Peter Pan*.

ELSA

Are you setting Peter Pan in Greece?

SOPHIE

It's Antigone – do you know Antigone?

ELSA

It would be a great role for me.

SOPHIE

And this is her sister Ismene. I just haven't figured out the colors for their dresses. Is Ismene in white for her purity and adherence to Creon's rules or is Antigone ...

(Pause as SOPHIE looks at ELSA.)

ELSA

You're trying to figure out if I'm "safe" or not.

SOPHIE

Yes.

ELSA

I should think the same about you. Especially with a soldier-fiance. (Beat.) I am. Safe.

SOPHIE

How would I know? You could – be a spy.

ELSA

I could. You have no way of knowing. Maybe we should just talk in theatrical terms. We'll both stay cautious. Much easier on both of our nerves. I wouldn't put Antigone or Ismene in white. It would give them a ghostly look under the lights. Unless that's what you want. I like Antigone in blue. I would look good in blue. I think there is a purity of the heavens in that color and of course she does wind up in the heavens...

SOPHIE

So no red for Antigone?

ELSA

Not unless you want her to be a harlot!

Or bloodied.

SOPHIE

(Pause.)

Maybe they should both be in red. Antigone and Ismene are blood-sisters after all. And their dead brothers are their blood-brothers. Who bloodied each other to their deaths.

ELSA

Red is too obvious. Why not put Antigone and Ismene in the same dress but change the design. Ismene's dress could be more constricting and Antigone's more open.

(SOPHIE sketches.)

You're fast.

SOPHIE

You've inspired me.

(Stops sketching.)

I want to be Antigone.

ELSA

There's an actress in you!

SOPHIE

No. I mean – I want to be like her. I want to live my ideals. But I'm Ismene. I want to be safe. I want to live. I have two brothers just like she did. And two sisters. Suppose my father was the King of Ulm – that's where I live. And when he died, my brothers jointly inherited the kingdom. But – they're too young to rule. So my uncle takes over.

ELSA

Your ... Uncle Creon?

SOPHIE

Yes. And when my brothers come of age, they find they don't want to rule together and fight and kill each other – just like in the play. So my Uncle Creon comes back to power and decides that my brother Hans should get a proper burial. But my brother Werner should be left in the street to become food for the birds and maggots. And anyone who tries to bury Werner will be killed. What would I do? I'd like to think I'd be Antigone and defy the order and give my brother a proper burial.

ELSA

We all want to be Antigone.

But we're all Ismene.

SOPHIE

We're a little bit of both.

ELSA

That gives me hope.

SOPHIE

It should. (Pause.) Are you staying at the hostel?

ELSA

Yes. Until the weekend.

SOPHIE

I may stop by. I'd love to see your illustrations of Peter Pan.

ELSA

So would I! I really should be working on them. Stop by. I'd love the company.

SOPHIE

It's a beautiful day.

ELSA

It is. When, I am outside I think, "How can there be anything wrong in the world?" I want to climb every tree and jump in every river and just be a little girl again – all muddy and scraped and drunk from the outside.

SOPHIE

Do it, Sophie. Breathe the world in before we lose it.

ELSA

(ELSA and SOPHIE share a glance – maybe even a hug. ELSA exits as the lights go down.)

SCENE 5

MULTIMEDIA: Alexander Schmorell

LIGHTS up on MOHR and SOPHIE.

MOHR

What was the result of your time at the Arts Colony?

SOPHIE

I loved it there. All that beauty in a world determined to be ugly. In the end, I decided not be an artist. I was hoping I would meet like-minded people who wanted to use their artistic abilities to influence the workings of the world. Everyone was Ismene.

MOHR

Ismene?

SOPHIE

Yes. Everyone was quiet. It's as if you stayed silent and made no noise, the bogeyman couldn't come for you. I was hoping for some noise. I was disappointed.

MOHR

So you gave up drawing?

SOPHIE

Oh no! I gave up wanting that to be a career. I still draw. It quiets my mind.

MOHR

What did you do when you returned from the Arts Colony?

SOPHIE

I finished my secondary schooling.

MOHR

And then?

SOPHIE

What is the point? You know this stuff!

MOHR

Continue.

SOPHIE

I became a Kindergarten teacher at the Froebel Institute. I was hoping that this would fulfill my Labor Service requirement for the University. But of course it didn't. So I taught preschool in Blumberg for six months.

MOHR

What was your experience in the service?

SOPHIE

The experience with the children was sweet. But my skills as a teacher were limited by the Party. There was so much I couldn't say, do, teach. It was too regimented. It didn't allow for any growth in the children.

MOHR

It is controlled growth.

SOPHIE

Teachers expand their world. I was an indoctrinator. Why would you control a child's growth? It's ridiculous!

MOHR

You guide the child from a young age so that when he is an adult, he is one with his country.

SOPHIE

It's creating one brain instead of allowing them their own thoughts, their own feelings.

MOHR

It ensures that when they grow up, they will be with the Party and they will not be brought up on treason charges as you are.

SOPHIE

People value freedom of thought!

MOHR

On the contrary, People value safety. After your service, what did you do?

SOPHIE

I applied to the University of Munich. I started there in May, 1942 for the summer session.

MOHR

What are you studies?

SOPHIE

Philosophy and Natural Biology.

MOHR

When did you become a member of the White Rose Society?

SOPHIE

I didn't.

MOHR

Answer the question.

SOPHIE

If you mean the group of friends I met in Munich/

MOHR

/Yes.

SOPHIE

There was no “membership” nor was there any sort of “society.” It was simply a group of friends that liked to go to concerts together, go skiing, hiking/

MOHR

When did you become a member?

SOPHIE

There is no membership!

MOHR

We are gathering names.

SOPHIE

What names? People come by on a Friday night and we’d stay in and listen to music and have all those kinds of discussions that students have – or we’d go out to listen to music. On weekends, we’re walking in the English Gardens or getting out of the city/

MOHR

/Go back to the discussions. I am interested in the discussions.

SOPHIE

Literature ... poetry ... theology ...

MOHR

Politics.

(Beat.)

MOHR

Politics.

(Beat.)

MOHR

Do you have a friend – one Alexander Schmorell?

(The lights change and SOPHIE moves to ALEX’S home. SOPHIE (age 21) is sketching and ALEX is sculpting although you could also have him sketch. It is May, 1942.)

SOPHIE

I want a world where this is all we do.

ALEX

After the war.

SOPHIE

So many things are “after the war.”

ALEX

After the war, I will return to Russia.

SOPHIE

You came here so young – you are more German than Russian now.

ALEX

On the contrary, I grow more Russian every day. My blood runs through its forests and mountains – never to be tamed by man.

SOPHIE

Will you practice medicine there?

ALEX

When my mind is finally free, I will be an artist.

SOPHIE

Yet you study medicine.

ALEX

There is no propaganda in medicine. Its facts cannot be twisted and coiled to suit the political climate. All discussions in classes revolve around conforming to National Socialism. There is no care to find any truth. Facts no longer matter. Words have no meaning. During this war, I am better suited to medicine even if it’s not my first love. What will you do after the war?

SOPHIE

I am not suited to the German ideal of kitchen, church, children. But I do want a full life – to be useful, to marry. Someday.

ALEX

It’s hard to come of age during a time of “after the war” and “someday.”

SOPHIE

Yes.

ALEX

We should play a game... “when the war ends, I will...”

SOPHIE

“When Hitler loses, I will get my country back.”

ALEX

Sophie ... that’s treason.

SOPHIE

“When Hitler loses, we will be allowed freedom of thought.”

(Beat.)

I know.

ALEX

Be careful, my dear.

SOPHIE

“When Hitler loses, we will rebuild.” Your turn.

ALEX

Sophie ...

SOPHIE

He must lose. It’s the only way Germany can win. Have you read these?

(SOPHIE brings some papers to ALEX.)

ALEX

Bishop Galen’s sermons. I have copies. It’s a wonder the Gestapo hasn’t arrested him.

SOPHIE

“Deporting the mentally ill to the great unknown never to be heard from again.” *Are we doing that?* Thou shall not kill. Thou shall not kill. Thou shall not kill. It’s all through his sermons. And yet, we kill. It seems we kill the most vulnerable.

ALEX

Take care where you share these.

SOPHIE

Do you do what I do? Share small snippets of conversation, listen to someone’s humor and then try to decide what side they’re on.

ALEX

We all do that. It's how we found each other.

SOPHIE

I don't remember a world where we didn't do that. I want a world where we talk, argue, go home and no one gets arrested.

ALEX

I love the beauty of your convictions. So alluring ... inside and out.

SOPHIE

Alex?

ALEX

My Russian soul – appreciates the good.

SOPHIE

I should/

ALEX

/Yes/

SOPHIE

/Go. It's getting late and I have a 9 a.m. lecture tomorrow.

ALEX

Talk to your brother tomorrow.

SOPHIE

I always do.

ALEX

There are things you should know.

SOPHIE

What?

ALEX

Talk to him.

(SOPHIE packs up. She goes to ALEX and they hug. A kiss is almost possible but doesn't happen.)

ALEX (cont'd)

Good night.

SCENE SIX**MULTIMEDIA: The White Rose Society**

LIGHTS UP on MOHR and SOPHIE

MOHR

This is the last time, I will ask. If you do not answer, I will write down your refusal. The judge will not look kindly on that. What was your involvement with the leaflets?

SOPHIE

I don't know anything about leaflets.

MOHR

These leaflets turned into the Gestapo matched the ones found in your apartment.

(MOHR picks up one.)

“Every civilized German should be ashamed of National Socialism. This shame will be passed to our children. How will we look them in the eye?”

This is a call to resist within our country. Punishable by death.

LIGHTS change to HANS'S and SOPHIE'S (age 25) apartment. ALEX and TRAUTE are there. It is June, 1942.

TRAUTE

“If the Germans remain a spiritless and cowardly mass, then they deserve the government they have. Everyone cannot wait for another person to make a start. It is up to us to work against fascism, to work against this scourge of mankind.”

Do you think there are enough people who think this way?

HANS

You found some in Hamburg. Alex and I have found a few in Munich. There are more. We just need a secure way to find each other.

TRAUTE

I love the Goethe quote – about falling and perishing or rising up in freedom.

ALEX

Hans thought that might appeal to their German-identity?

TRAUTE

Not their nationalism?

HANS

I don't use that word in a positive context.

ALEX

How many were typed?

TRAUTE

About eighty.

ALEX

That's not nearly enough. We need a mimeograph machine.

TRAUTE

First things first. We need to get these out into the world. We will need stamps, envelopes and more paper. All are hard to obtain.

ALEX

I'd like to see them left everywhere – in classrooms, in phone booths, in library books.

HANS

We're only starting with eighty. Seventy actually. Christoph brought ten to Innsbruck.

TRAUTE

Christoph should not be involved. He has children to look after.

HANS

It was his choice. He was adamant. He said he knew people who would be interested in them. We need to get some out of Munich. They need to be in all German cities and towns.

TRAUTE

I will bring some to Hamburg.

ALEX

You know the danger if you're searched.

TRAUTE

As a woman, I am less likely to be searched than Christoph. Plus I can always bat my eyelashes and exclaim, "Why, sir – I had no idea what was in them. I was merely doing a favor for a friend."

ALEX

And when they ask, what friend?

TRAUTE

I will give them the name of someone I know – who's dead. I read obituaries. When will the next leaflet be ready?

ALEX

We're working on it. It's stronger and longer. It has a few quotes in incorrect German from our abysmal leader and some facts. It mentions the 300,000 Jews that have been murdered in Poland. People need to know. People need to be appalled.

TRAUTE

Are you sure about the killing of Jews in Poland?

ALEX

Yes, it was confirmed by soldiers who were there. This knowledge is not known here. Now it will be.

TRAUTE

The next hard question is, "Will they care?"

ALEX

They have to! This is a heinous crime. And who is not to say that one day they may decide to round up the Jewish population in Germany? And after that, round up all young girls and send them to Nazi brothels?

TRAUTE

That's ridiculous.

ALEX

Is it? Brutality spawns more brutality.

TRAUTE

How many leaflets will be created?

HANS

As many as it takes.

TRAUTE

You'll need more than eighty of each to be far-reaching.

HANS

There is someone – who I won't mention – who may be lending us money to buy a mimeograph machine. In the end, there will be thousands of leaflets produced. Buying the stamps and enough paper and envelopes will be a challenge. We need thousands. Tens of thousands to be effective.

TRAUTE

So we each go to different post offices and buy a handful of stamps at a time.

ALEX

It's still too many stamps per person. Eyebrows will be raised.

HANS

We will do a few at a time.

ALEX

So you, me, Traute, and Christoph.

HANS

We need to keep this small. It's safer.

ALEX

Maybe Sophie can buy some stamps.

HANS

My sister? No. Too dangerous.

ALEX

From our conversations, I think she'd like to be involved. She's pretty passionate about fighting the regime.

HANS

Alex, do you like my sister?

ALEX

Of course.

HANS

I mean – *like*?

ALEX

I do find her passion and intellect ... attractive.

HANS

Yes. And ...

ALEX

In another country, in another time – I might've tried to ignite a spark. But after the war – I go to Russia. Sophie stays home and marries her German soldier and we will always be friends.

TRAUTE

Where is Sophie?

HANS

She's with Fritz. He's on leave for a few days. He goes back to the Russian front tomorrow.

ALEX

And we all go in July. I hope we don't have to patch her boyfriend up. As for now, we need to get as many leaflets in circulation before we go.

The lights change to FRITZ and SOPHIE. It is the same afternoon. They are in the English Garden in Munich.

SOPHIE

No!

FRITZ

Soldiers are not equipped for the winter. There have been no new uniforms issued. They are threadbare. Boots have holes. Socks have unraveled. Cold comes quickly to Russia.

SOPHIE

I will not solicit donations for sweaters for the soldiers. You will get nothing from me.

FRITZ

Many may get ill. Some may freeze to death. Is that what you want?

SOPHIE

Of course not. I find it horrible that German soldiers are suffering. I also find it horrible that Russian soldiers suffer. I want the war to end. All the suffering to end. Outfitting the soldiers with sweaters will just prolong the war.

FRITZ

Would you have me freeze to death?

SOPHIE

I would have you home. The only way that will happen is if the war ends. We need to lose. It's the only way to get rid of Hitler. For the good of all people including the German people he has to go.

FRITZ

Sophie ...

SOPHIE

After the war, I envision conversations. "Were you ever arrested in the Third Reich?" And when someone says "no," the reply will be "If not, why not?"

FRITZ

I tremble for you.

SOPHIE

I was already arrested, remember? Don't worry about me. I'm in class most days and studying.

(Beat.)

I have something for you. To read on the train.

FRITZ

Catholic sermons?

SOPHIE

From Bishop Galen. I'll warn you now – there's a lot of stuff about "thou shall not kill" in there. Tough reading for a soldier going to fight. I rewrote it in my own hand with lots of hearts and flowers. I made it look like a love letter. Promise me you'll read it.

FRITZ

Promise me you'll take care.

SOPHIE

You're the one returning to the Russian front.

Lights fade to black.

SCENE 7

MULTIMEDIA: The Pamphlets

Lights up in HANS and SOPHIE'S apartment. HANS is editing a leaflet. SOPHIE enters. HANS hastily tries to put the papers away but SOPHIE see's him. It is later that same evening.

HANS

Good evening. You're back earlier than expected. How was the day with Fritz?

SOPHIE

It was good to be with him. However brief. He had to visit with his family before he leaves. What's that you're trying to hide from me?

HANS

Homework.

SOPHIE

You usually don't hide your homework. It's always spread all over the place making it impossible to find a chair to sit down.

HANS

Don't be silly.

SOPHIE

I'm hardly ever silly - anymore. Show it to me. I won't tell.

HANS

I was just writing something.

SOPHIE

Good! I'll edit. It'll take my mind off things. You can't refuse your sister.

(HANS hands SOPHIE his writings.)

“The family unit is as old as mankind. It is in original families that man began to understand the common good. From this bond of family, man created a society based on justice and the same common good. Our current government should mirror that good society but instead it works against us.”

This is – wonderful! Did you really write this?

HANS

With Alex.

SOPHIE

Homework? For which of your medical school courses?

HANS

It's – private homework.

SOPHIE

Where does it go?

HANS

Into the world. We hope.

SOPHIE

What happens next?

HANS

We buy paper, make copies, buy stamps, distribute them. It's not easy.

SOPHIE

I like a challenge.

HANS

No, Sophie. Not you. It's too dangerous.

SOPHIE

You have to let me. It's what I have been yearning for. All I do is talk. These speak to me. But you need more – you need to give people something to do – a call for action. What can we do?

HANS

There's been enough violence. I won't incite anyone.

SOPHIE

But this is more talk! We read and we talk. We read and have discreet conversations in the shadows. We read some more and continue to do nothing! Nothing but talk!

HANS

I don't need you to come home and interfere with work that I have been doing with Alex for months!

SOPHIE

I'm not/

HANS

/You are Sophie. (Pause.) I need to be careful. Lives are at stake.

SOPHIE

I believe in passive resistance. No one gets hurt.

HANS

We get hurt if the Gestapo finds out who wrote them.

SOPHIE

We could all get hit by a bomb tonight and die. Why am I not scared of that? I am more scared of suddenly dying and looking into the face of eternity with the realization that I saw evil. I knew evil. And I did nothing.

HANS

I want our efforts to grow. But I don't want to be part of anyone dying.

SOPHIE

But you're not asking the German people to lay down their lives. Fear is everywhere. Fear is in this apartment right now. You're scared. I'm scared. I'm scared for you. Now. And later. (Pause.) When do you leave for Russia?

HANS

In a few weeks. Do not be worry about me. I will not be shooting at people or being shot at. I will be fixing them up.

SOPHIE

And Alex?

HANS

Do you like Alex?

SOPHIE

Of course.

HANS

After spending the afternoon with Fritz?

SOPHIE

Asks the brother with many girlfriends! There's nothing between Alex and me. Just a harmless flirtation. But I do worry about your time at the front.

HANS

We won't be fighting. We will be patching. And can you picture Alex shooting a Russian? He'll be starting conversations about the genius of Tolstoy with everyone he meets. Take heart, we will be doing something good. I need to get back to work. I want a few more pamphlets done before I leave. As for you, forget you ever say them.

SOPHIE

That's not how I work. I'm here to stay.

HANS

No.

SOPHIE

You have no choice. If you don't allow me to part of it, I shall write my own pamphlets.

(Beat.)

(HANS shows SOPHIE all the leaflets.)