

## Rhineland Bastards

By Asad Raja

In 1919, France stationed tens of thousands of soldiers in the Rhineland to ensure it remained a demilitarized area as was agreed under the Treaty of Versailles. These included black soldiers from Morocco and Senegal, many of whom had relations with the local German women. The children from these relationships were called “Rhineland Bastards” by the press and when the Nazi Party came to power, they became a target of persecution. Sterilization of many of the children began in 1937 but they were always restricted and denied freedoms. The Nazis also hated black culture and prohibited jazz music or other items of cultural significance.

### Scene One

*A dim room somewhere in Mainz on March 2nd, 1936. Swing jazz is playing quietly. A group of Afro-German youths sit around a record player that is playing a vinyl. Their ages range from 14 to 16. Amongst them are **KURTZ**, **ANKA**, **STEFAN** and **RICHARD** as well as one white German named **DOMINIK**. They are currently in **RICHARD**'s apartment.*

**RICHARD** Where did you get it?

**DOMINIK** You know my father has contacts abroad? They send him these records occasionally.

*The group take a second to absorb the lively and exciting sounds they've never heard before.*

**ANKA** I want to dance.

**KURTZ** No Anka, I've seen you dance before. It's hideous.

**RICHARD** Benny Goodman huh?

**DOMINIK** Yeah, apparently.

**ANKA** It's really just another incredible thing they've been hiding from us. They manufacture this soulless culture and force-feed it to us.

**KURTZ** Stop trying to be profound. Anyway, there's something more important to talk about; Stefan has some news.

**STEFAN** *(taken aback)* What? No I don't.

**KURTZ** You're not going to tell them?

**STEFAN** Nothing to tell.

**KURTZ** *(Sighs and stops the music)* Stefan is in love with a Jew girl.

*All tease and laugh.*

**DOMINIK** How cute.

**STEFAN** I'm not in love, Kurtz you kretin.

**ANKA** What's her name?

**STEFAN** She's just some girl me and Kurtz met on Thursday. She's new, in Miss Hoffmann's class.

**KURTZ** Just some girl? That isn't what you were saying about her the other day. I swear you had a full hard on just thinking about her.

**STEFAN** Drink bleach.

**KURTZ** Look at him getting all defensive! We get it Stefan, she's all yours.

**STEFAN** Can we just get it on record that this is just some girl I met two days ago. And also that Kurtz is a massive arse.

**ANKA** You still haven't told us her name though.

**STEFAN** She's called Friede. Brown hair, Jewish-looking.

**DOMINIK** She sounds sexy.

**STEFAN** Well she's decent looking I suppose.

**KURTZ** *grins*

**STEFAN** Shut up.

**KURTZ** I didn't say anything!

**STEFAN** You didn't have to.

**KURTZ** You can't deny that you're interested in getting to know her. She seemed to like you back if that helps.

**STEFAN** I guess I wouldn't mind hanging out with her some more. She seemed nice enough.

**RICHARD** You should bring her here sometime, introduce her. It's always cool to have more people.

**DOMINIK** Speaking of which, where's Karl?

**KURTZ** Dunno. Why do you care?

**DOMINIK** I don't really, I was just wondering. Aren't you guys friends with him?

**KURTZ** Well, no. He's just sort of around occasionally.

**RICHARD** Karl's a strange one.

**DOMINIK** Really? I don't think I noticed.

**ANKA** He's right. I saw him the other day and he just sort of stared at me, kinda gawking.

**KURTZ** What a creep.

## **Scene Two**

***KARL** examines his own face in a mirror hanging in his small and dull kitchen. He then smiles and laughs and starts speaking to himself as he creates a situation in his own mind*

**KARL** Yeah I know, I'm just so awesome. So damn awesome. No shut up I didn't ask you Kurtz. Prick. Oh hey Anka. You have the most amazing eyes. Oh really? That's what you think of me? Man you're so amazing. Why do you even hang out with those guys? You're way too good for them. *(Coming out of his daydream)* I'm one to talk, I'm the one standing here daydreaming about being friends with them. I'm such a fucking loser. *(Beat)* No I'm not. They're the losers. They're the self-centred arrogant losers that I'd never want to be. So why the hell do I care about them so much? *(Beat)* No they're not losers.

They're just about the opposite of losers. Dominik hangs out with them for God's sake, how could they be losers?

**JULIANE** enters

**JULIANE** Who are you talking to darling?

**KARL** Huh? I wasn't. No one. I was just... How are you?

**JULIANE** (*Removing her coat and sitting down*) Alright. I don't know if they've changed the chemicals that go into those shells but I swear my hands have started to smell even weirder. Did you get up to much today? Did you meet up with any friends?

**KARL** No I didn't really feel like it...and they were busy. I made dinner; it's still on the stove.

**JULIANE** Oh, didn't you have any yourself?

**KARL** No, I wasn't hungry. I was just heading off to bed if that's okay.

**JULIANE** At least keep me company for a few minutes Karl. We haven't been talking much recently. Is something wrong?

**KARL** sits down timidly.

**KARL** How do you mean?

**JULIANE** I don't know. Something's changed about you. We used to depend on each other so much but...you've become so distant now.

*Pause*

**KARL** Yes mother. I'm sorry.

**JULIANE** Things have worked out strangely for you I suppose. And it's my problem too for constantly needing someone to lean on. It's just hard sometimes, ever since he left. It's hard to hear the things they say. Like when they claim I'm a rape victim. It was all easier to block out when he was here. I could just look into his eyes and know that none of their words mattered. But ever since he's had to go back things have gotten so much worse. (*Beat*) Don't listen to anything they ever say though Karl. He was the most gentle and humble man I ever knew. I

hope you grow up just like him. And there I go again, monologuing about your father. Sorry. I just need to vent sometimes.

**KARL** Am I even a real Rhineland Bastard mother?

**JULIANE** Hey! Don't call yourself that! Don't you dare call yourself that! God made you more than that. Do not succumb to the labels they make for you.

**KARL** Richard said he was proud of calling himself that. He said it represents the struggle we've had to go through.

**JULIANE** It's still easy to get misconstrued. Don't forget that it's the same label they use to justify all the false accusations and the banning of a whole culture.

**KARL** Yes mother. Am I one of them though?

**JULIANE** What do you mean?

**KARL** Most of the guys from class knew their fathers. Some of their fathers haven't even been dismissed from their posts here yet. How can I be part of this if I don't even know where I came from? I don't even know the roots of my culture. I mean, shouldn't I be a certain way? I know it's ridiculous but I almost wish I was fully part of that culture. I'd still be treated the same but I'd be more proud. This would all be more relevant and real for me. I would be persecuted but at least I would be persecuted for who I am and what I know. I feel like there would be more dignity in that. It's just frustrating not knowing who I really am.

**JULIANE** You mean you feel like an outsider looking in?

**KARL** I used to feel that way. But to be honest, I don't think I'm on the outside looking in. I'm getting persecuted all the same aren't I? And I know I'm not on the inside looking out. There's nothing within me telling me I'm a Rhineland Bastard. Instead, it's like I'm in the dead centre, looking around.

**JULIANE** *(Smiling)* That's an interesting vantage point.

**KARL** Yes. Can't say I'm particularly enjoying the view though.

### **Scene Three**

**DOMINIK** enters his expensive looking apartment late in the evening. His father, **HANS**, is in his study working. **DOMINIK** tries to sneak to his room making as little noise as possible.

**HANS** Dominik

**DOMINIK** *(Aside)* Shit

**HANS** You said you'd be in the library.

**DOMINIK** Yessir. I was.

**HANS** And afterwards?

**DOMINIK** I just went to see some friends.

**HANS** You went to see the bastards. That's why you're home so late.

**DOMINIK** No Sir I was just...

**HANS** Don't try lying to me boy. You must understand that they aren't your friends. You do not associate yourself with them. Do you know what happens to people who associate themselves with them?

**DOMINIK** Yessir. You've shown me the pictures.

**HANS** That's right. A concentration camp isn't a nice thing. *(Beat)* Do you know how dangerous this is? Do you know what the Fuhrer says about sympathisers? *(Pause)* Look at me when I'm speaking to you. Have some respect. You think I'm a coward don't you? Let me tell you right now, that there's a difference, Dominik, between being brave and being a fool. You think it's brave to be friends with bastards? No. There's nothing brave in that. You're no moral beacon for anyone. Because morality is not part of the question nowadays. It's all about keeping your head down and getting on with life with as little trouble as possible. When I tell you to stop hanging around those kids I don't do it because I lack a heart I do it because I have a head. I do it because I care about our wellbeing and not theirs. That doesn't make me selfish or cowardly it makes me rational. You have nothing to gain and a lot to lose by being friends with them. You can hate the Fuhrer's actions towards them as much as you want deep down but you better bite your tongue and straighten out your act before you fuck everything up. Do you know what would happen if the authorities found out a military general's son was a sympathiser? All of this, all of these luxuries that you enjoy, will be gone in an instant. You and me will be in a camp. No question. Is that what you want? Well?

**DOMINIK** No Sir. But I don't want to lose my friends either.

**HANS** Why is it that your only friends are bastards? There's plenty of good aryan's at your school. Yet you go all the way to the outskirts of Mainz to that secret Jude school... Is it the feeling of authority? The automatic superiority you feel when you're with them?

**DOMINIK** No Sir. I just prefer them. No elitism, no entitlement. They're nicer to me and it's not because I'm white.

**HANS** Stop kidding yourself. They have no choice but to crave your attention.

**DOMINIK** *(Meekly)* That's not true.

**HANS** They like you because you're able to overlook the fact that they're negroes. And that's something amazing that they're not used to. And them liking you, embracing your friendship so tightly, allows you to like yourself and tell yourself you have the moral high ground compared to others. When in actual fact you just love the attention.

**DOMINIK** *(Tears coming down his face)* I don't think like that Sir.

**HANS** You need to realise the reality of the situation. You can't see them anymore. I'm setting you a curfew.

**DOMINIK** Please

**HANS** Dominik. This is for the better. We need to stay safe.

#### **Scene Four**

**STEFAN** and **KURTZ** skip stones on a quiet pond after school. Neither are successful in their attempts.

**KURTZ** You're gonna have to do better than that to impress Friede.

**STEFAN** If you don't shut up I'll skip this next one off your head.

**KURTZ** Relax, it's okay to like a Jew. *(Beat)* How far have you gotten with her?

**STEFAN** What? What are you talking about? I just met her the other day. You've been with me every time I've seen her.

**KURTZ** I know...I was just wondering.

**STEFAN** I bet holding hands constitutes second base for you anyways.

**KURTZ** What's that supposed to mean?

**STEFAN** You're great at talking, I'll give you that but...you can't hide shit from me. You've never even touched a girl.

**KURTZ** Are you serious?

**STEFAN** Yeah? Who was your first?

**KURTZ** You don't know her.

**STEFAN** Right, my bad.

**KURTZ** Fuck you, I get more action than you.

**STEFAN** Yeah. Alright.

**KURTZ** How about this. How about I kiss Friede right in front of you when she comes. And you're not gonna do anything to stop me either because you've got no balls.

**STEFAN** Cool. Here's your window. *(Calling off stage)* Hey Friede, over here! *(FRIEDE enters)* Oh by the way Kurtz is about to kiss you, just thought it was only fair to give you a head start if you want to run.

**FRIEDE** No I won't run. *(Turning to KURTZ)* You a good kisser?

**KURTZ** What? Yeah I'm really good. I've done it lots of times before. Actually oh shit I have to be home now see ya. *(Exits quickly)*

**FRIEDE** He's cute

**STEFAN** Yeah the cutest. So you were actually gonna kiss him?

**FRIEDE** *(Shrugging)* Probably. If he hadn't run off.

**STEFAN** Oh right.

*FRIEDE skips a stone and it goes far*

**FRIEDE** I actually used to think that you two were together.

**STEFAN** What do you mean?

**FRIEDE** I mean, whenever I saw you in class you seemed really close.

**STEFAN** Yeah we are close...what's your point?

**FRIEDE** You know who that school is for. Jews, Afro-Germans and...

**STEFAN** You thought I was gay? What made you think I was gay? I'm not gay.

**FRIEDE** Firstly, I was just kidding. Secondly, do you take offence?

**STEFAN** Well...kinda.

*FRIEDE looks at him judgmentally*

**STEFAN** I know it's stupid. It's just, you won't believe how much effort guys put into not seeming gay.

**FRIEDE** That's dumb.

**STEFAN** Yeah it is pretty dumb.

**FRIEDE** So what are you then?

**STEFAN** Well...I'm just an Afro-German. Just a straight Afro-German.

**FRIEDE** *Just* an Afro German? And you're content with that?

**STEFAN** I don't think I get to choose.

**FRIEDE** Maybe not the raw ingredients. But you are your own sculptor. Even if it is hard to believe nowadays. Truth is, everyone will see you how they want to see you until you make them see you in some other way. *(Beat)* I guess I expected you to have made a move on me by now if you weren't gay.

**STEFAN** Oh...

**FRIEDE** I'm trying to flirt with you.

**STEFAN** Oh...thanks...

**FRIEDE** Thanks? Ouch.

**STEFAN** What? I'm just...nervous.

**FRIEDE** No you're not. You're good at this. The actual reason is one you're too embarrassed to admit. It's because I'm Jewish.

**STEFAN** What? What's that even got to do with anything?

**FRIEDE** You're scared enough of wearing your own identity. To be with a Jewish girl would be like embracing any and all harassment.

**STEFAN** Hey I'm not scared of my identity. Where are you getting all this from?

**FRIEDE** It's the same with everyone. I don't even blame you. That's just how things are going. It's become so common to be terrified of the implications of just being you.

**STEFAN** Well don't act like you're not scared either. Don't act like you don't want to distance yourself from all that. I suppose you like the sound of living in a concentration camp? The Rhineland being demilitarized doesn't makes us completely exempt. Besides, that cunt Hitler has balls the size of boulders, he'll march the military right in here someday soon I'm telling you.

**FRIEDE** You don't get it. None of you do. It doesn't make a difference talking about uniting against oppression and creating resistance when they've already gotten to you. I'd rather die a Jew than live a coward. That's the way it should be. Hell I'm proud to be a-

**(OFF STAGE)** Jude! A bastard's with her! What are they doing here?

**ARYAN 1** Piss off you two this is our spot.

**ARYAN 2** Yeah don't you realise no one wants to be disturbed by your presence.

**STEFAN** Sorry, sorry (*making to leave*).

**FRIEDE**     *(Holding him back)* Actually, he's not sorry. We were here first.

**ARYAN 2**    You leave now or else we'll stop being so polite.

**ARYAN 1**    You do realise what the Fuhrer would do to people like you right?

**FRIEDE**     Fuck your Fuhrer.

**ARYAN 2**    *(Grabbing **FRIEDE**)* You're done.

**STEFAN**     Friede! *(Stepping forward)*.

**ARYAN 1**    Don't be a hero *(pulling a switchblade on him and grabbing his shirt)*.

*There is a panic as **STEFAN** resists **ARYAN 1** whilst **FRIEDE** shouts for him to get away. **ARYAN 2** is holding her fast. **STEFAN** finally breaks away from the aryan's grasp and runs off stage.*

**ARYAN 2**    Stop screaming Judenscheisse *(throwing **FRIEDE** to the ground)*.

*Lights black out*

### **Scene Five**

***KARL** is sitting on a swing in an empty park not far from the pond mentioned in the previous scene. He sits silently staring at the ground for a while before getting up, going to DSC, and addressing the audience in a monologue. As he speaks, faint screams can be heard in the background.*

**KARL**        I'm choking myself. My hands are tightening around my own neck and I laugh sadistically as I watch myself gasp for air. I reduce myself, shrink myself down until I'm microscopic and forever insignificant and then stamp down on myself with a heavy boot. I corner myself and let loose with punches and kicks that will leave permanent scars. And as I do so, screaming profanities and telling myself exactly what I don't want to hear, I become the centre of my universe. My surroundings cease to exist. Me and my experience is the only thing that matters anymore. And just like that, the violent self-loathing becomes violent narcissism. Do I even care if anyone extends a helping hand? I'm too stuck in my own head, too obsessed with my stagnant and murky reality to realise that the outside world still exists and that, at any point, I can dive head first into it as it rolls in ecstasy at my feet. I can curse fate for handing me the short straw all I

want but the only thing that really matters is that I'm not eternally damned to having a certain situation and change is always an option.

*(Pause)*

And while I sit here with my feigned emotional tragedy the actual tragedy goes on. The reality of which exists in stories about friends of friends. And I never stop to consider that that could be me. So I continue to bore myself with these menial issues about what they think of me. And that small pest manages to consume me. If I wasn't so self-obsessed that would not be possible. If I wasn't so self-obsessed I'd do something to resist the greater injustice. If I wasn't so self-obsessed maybe I would have heard the screams of a Jewish girl a moment ago. Maybe I would have rushed over to her before the kick to her face that would break her nose, leaving her lying unconscious, bleeding on the grass. But instead I thank God it wasn't me and continue to drown in relatively meaningless woes.

**STEFAN** *sprints on stage frantically. He spots **KARL** and rushes towards him.*

**STEFAN** Karl! They got Friede! You've got to help, we've got to stop them, I could hear her screaming.

**KARL** Stefan *(startled)*. What's going on? Who's Friede?

**STEFAN** Just come on you have to help me. We have to help her. Come on what are you waiting for! She was screaming! Didn't you hear her screaming?

**KARL** No I... I was kinda zoned out. Where is she?

**STEFAN** *(Grabbing **KARL**)* Just come with me.

**KARL** Yeah, of course. Just let me know what you need me to do. *(Following **STEFAN** as he leads the way to **FRIEDE**)*

**STEFAN** We need to fucking help her!

**KARL** How though? You said we had to stop someone - who? Is it aryan?

**STEFAN** Yes fucking aryan.

**KARL** Okay so what are we going to do, fight them?

*They arrive to see **FRIEDE** lying unconscious and bleeding by the pond.*

**KARL** Oh fuck. (*Rushes over to her and lies beside her*). She's breathing. And she still has a pulse. What do we do?

**STEFAN** How the fuck should I know? I didn't plan for this!

**KARL** Wait where are the aryanans?

**STEFAN** They must have run. But they might be back, we have to get her somewhere safe.

**KARL** Give me your sweater.

**STEFAN** What?

**KARL** Her nose is bleeding like crazy. I need something to soak it up.

***STEFAN** takes off his sweater and gives it to **KARL**. **KARL** props her up against a tree and holds it against her nose. He takes a water bottle from his bag and moistens her lips. He then uses the bag to prop up her legs.*

**KARL** Hopefully she'll be awake soon.

**STEFAN** (*Calmer*) How did you know to do that?

**KARL** I used to want to be a doctor.

*(Pause)*

**STEFAN** And now?

**KARL** I don't really think much about professions anymore. It doesn't look like we're gonna get much of a say on our future anyway.

**STEFAN** She'd tell you to be your own sculptor.

**KARL** Ah. Has that mentality got anything to do with the aryanans doing this?

**STEFAN** Yup. She tried to be her own sculptor so they sculpted her nose. It was brave though. I haven't met anyone like her. She's a breath of fresh air.

**KARL** Funny, looks like *she's* gonna have some trouble breathing fresh air in the next couple of weeks.

**STEFAN**     *(Grinning)* You're not that awkward.

**KARL**        I think that's the nicest thing anyone has ever said to me.

**STEFAN**     *(Laughing)* It's just the other guys were talking about you the other day. They had you down as awkward. Even though they don't even know you very well. Because they haven't given themselves a chance to get to know you. Well I can hardly talk, I just go along with them like a sheep. Guess I need to do some more sculpting myself. But at least I don't claim things like that. Those guys can be such dicks sometimes.

**KARL**        Yeah I guess. They are right though. I am awkward. Especially around you guys. That's what insecurity and paranoia does to you. It makes me jealous when I see you all together. And that just drives me more neurotic. But if I just let go and stop obsessing over myself, over what people think of me, I can just breathe. That's more the type of person I want to be.

**STEFAN**     That actually makes a lot of sense. I think that's why I held myself back with Friede. It's so easy to get caught up in what you're afraid people might say and think, you just compromise your own happiness for them. God that sounds so dumb when I say it outloud. Friede must think I'm a jerk.

**KARL**        Why don't you ask her yourself. She seems to be waking up.

**STEFAN**     Friede! How are you feeling?

**FRIEDE**     What's going on? Are the aryans gone? Shit my nose!

**KARL**        The bleeding's stopped but it's still swollen.

**FRIEDE**     It fucking hurts. Is it broken?

**KARL**        Looks like it.

**FRIEDE**     Who are you?

**STEFAN**     He's Karl. He's a friend. Karl where should we take her?

**KARL**        It looks like she still needs a doctor. Hang on isn't Anka's mum a nurse?

**STEFAN**     Yeah I think she is. She lives close too - let's go.

## **Scene Six**

*On a street corner lit by a single, dim streetlight. **KARL, STEFAN** and **FRIEDE** stand outside a small, ugly bungalow. **STEFAN** knocks on the door for the second time. A nervous voice is heard.*

**WOMAN**     Who is it?

**STEFAN**     We're friends of Anka. We need to speak to her.

**WOMAN**     What do you need?

**STEFAN**     We just need to speak to her, it's an emergency. We're from the Jude school. Tell her it's Stefan.

**WOMAN**     Alright, hang on.

***ANKA** opens the door after a moment.*

**ANKA**         Stefan? What's going on? Shit who is she? What happened to her?

**STEFAN**     That's Friede. We were hanging out after school but then a couple of aryan's came. I managed to escape but one of them broke her nose. We were wondering if you could -

**ANKA**         Wait what is *he* doing here? Was he with you as well?

**STEFAN**     No I just saw him after it happened and asked him to help.

**KARL**         Hi Anka.

**ANKA**         Hi...

**STEFAN**     Look we need your help. We need you to get your mum to look at her.

**ANKA**         Why? The bleeding's stopped hasn't it? Just get some rest Friede it'll be fine.

**FRIEDE**     I was just hoping... because I hear she's a nurse so I thought if it wasn't too much to ask...

**STEFAN** Her nose is crooked Anka. And she says it hurts like crazy. Come on if we could just come inside for like five minutes -

**ANKA** Woah we have people sleeping in here, nobody's coming inside. Plus they hate it when anyone has visitors. It already freaked everyone out enough with the knocking. There's eleven of us in here, all Jews and bastards. If those aryan's you mentioned are still somewhere about... we can't risk people knowing about this place you know. In fact I would prefer if you keep this address to yourself from now on.

**STEFAN** I'm sorry I just... we were desperate. We didn't know where else to go. Are you sure she can't just come out and take a quick look?

**ANKA** *(Looking back into the bungalow)* People are getting fussy. Sorry, I wish I could help. But honestly Friede it looks fine. Just rest it. See you tomorrow Stefan.  
*(Shuts the door)*

**STEFAN** That was blunt.

**FRIEDE** It's okay, it's hurting a little less now.

**KARL** It still looks pretty swollen though. And crooked.

**FRIEDE** So not much different from usual...

**STEFAN** *(aside)* She just closed the door. She didn't even care to do us a small favour.

**KARL** For the swelling keep a cold towel on it. And try to keep it as still as possible.

**STEFAN** *(aside)* She didn't even ask whether we were alright. I told her we had just been attacked by aryan's and she just didn't give it a second thought.

**FRIEDE** Thanks. My head was really spinning when I woke up and it hurt like hell but it's not so bad anymore. You guys made me feel looked after.

**STEFAN** *(aside)* I thought she was a friend. I thought she'd be more than willing to help out. But she was only concerned about it inconveniencing her.

**KARL** I'm glad. You should probably stay away from that spot from now on though.

**FRIEDE** I'll see. I do like that spot.

**KARL** You must enjoy having your nose broken.

**STEFAN** *(aside)* Paranoia. That's what it was. She could see it was just us. But she was still so afraid. You could see it in her eyes she was terrified. Terrified of...

**FRIEDE** Terrified of the implications of just being herself?

**STEFAN** Exactly. *(Then realises where he has heard that before)*

*Pause*

**FRIEDE** It's really late my father will be worried. I better head home. Thanks for everything you two.

**KARL** We'll walk you home. Where do you live?

**FRIEDE** No don't worry about that I live right around the corner from here actually. See you guys in school. *(Hugs both of them)*.

**STEFAN** I'm sorry. I get it now.

**FRIEDE** Don't be sorry. Shit's scary. Do you know how petrified I was when those aryan's turned up?

**STEFAN** You didn't seem scared. You were so bold.

**FRIEDE** Sometimes you've got to force yourself not to be scared. Standing by in fear doesn't help anyone.

**STEFAN** Friede.

**FRIEDE** Yeah?

**STEFAN** ...Nothing

**FRIEDE** Alright. Goodnight guys. *(Exits)*

**KARL** Are you alright?

**STEFAN** Yeah. It's just been a weird day.

**KARL** I should probably head home. Urm...see you around.

**STEFAN** Wait. Karl wait. I've never paid you any respect. I judge you based on other people's prejudices of you. You just wanted to extend your friendship to us and we never even gave you half a chance. And today I needed someone to help me. And I stumbled onto you. And you helped me. And you didn't expect anything in return. Now you're just going to say "see you around" and leave? What's wrong with you?

**KARL** You think I helped you, when in reality you helped me. You gave me what I needed today. A chance to get out of my own head. When I'm alone I tend to eat away at myself. So thank you.

**STEFAN** You should come to Richard's tomorrow.

**KARL** I don't think they enjoy having awkward Karl around. Last time I went I felt pretty out of place.

**STEFAN** They don't know you. Everyone just ignored you because it was convenient. But that was wrong. Come tomorrow and let me introduce you properly. Dominik asked about you the other day if that helps.

**KARL** Dominik asked about me? Wow. Alright I'll come. You won't ignore me when you're with them will you?

**STEFAN** Karl, you're a friend now.

**KARL** *(Smiling)* See you there Stefan.

### **Scene Seven**

**RICHARD, KURTZ and ANKA** sit together in **RICHARD's** apartment. Everyone is listening intently as **ANKA** talks.

**ANKA** Of course I had to tell him no. I could see she was fine. Besides I wasn't going to let in a random girl and that creep Karl. I don't trust them. It's actually quite inconsiderate of Stefan to have brought them around. I don't want strangers knowing about that address. Plus it was evening, people were sleeping. He really freaked them out when they heard someone knocking at the door.

**KURTZ** Was he alright?

**ANKA** Yeah he was fine, he managed to escape.

**KURTZ** I hardly saw him at school today.

**RICHARD** Neither.

**ANKA** Probably hanging out with his new friend.

**KURTZ** I still don't understand why Karl was there.

**ANKA** He found him after it happened and asked him to help apparently. I was really surprised to open my door and see him though.

**KURTZ** Why didn't he just come find me? He knows I've always got his back. Karl must have been useless.

**RICHARD** I guess he just called upon the first person he saw.

**KURTZ** Well he's very unlucky that happened to be Karl. Do you know where he is?

***STEFAN** and **KARL** enter together.*

**STEFAN** Hey guys. I brought Karl with me.

**KARL** Hey everyone.

**STEFAN** I got to know him yesterday, he's cool.

**KURTZ** Yeah Anka told us all about it.

**STEFAN** Oh right...

**ANKA** How's Friede?

**KARL** The swelling's gone down. It's still crooked though. She was saying sorry for disturbing you.

**ANKA** Oh that's fine. Told you she would be alright.

**STEFAN** Yeah but I guess it would have been nice for her not to have a crooked nose permanently. But yeah our sincerest apologies for daring to ask a favour.

**ANKA** What's that supposed to mean?

**STEFAN** We weren't asking for much. Just for your mum to take a look at her. I thought you wouldn't mind helping out a friend.

**ANKA** Hey! That's not fair! You can't just turn up to my house late one night with two random strangers and expect me to let you in! It's not like I didn't want to help you.

**STEFAN** That's how it seemed. Wasn't it Karl?

**KARL** She just seemed...nervous.

**ANKA** And who are you to judge me? I don't even know you.

**KARL** Sorry, I didn't mean to...

**STEFAN** He wasn't judging, he was just being honest. And besides you're one to talk. All of you judge Karl so much but none of you even know him.

**KURTZ** I think you need to relax Stefan. Just sit down.

**RICHARD** What's bothering you?

**STEFAN** I just feel like everyone is so scared. All the time. It's like we're letting ourselves be backed into a corner. But if we just stood up and decided to stand united and be bold instead... It's like we've let their labels for us become the labels we use for ourselves. And also we don't sculpture ourselves enough. Friede explains it better...

**KURTZ** How would we do that then? How would we become bolder?

**STEFAN** We could start by standing up to those damn aryan.

**ANKA** So you're saying we should fight back when they threaten us? Are you mad? We'd be killed. Or at the very least end up like Friede.

**STEFAN** But we shouldn't be afraid of that!

**KURTZ** Stefan, mate, listen to what you're saying. We shouldn't be afraid to be killed whilst standing up to some scummy aryan? Does that sound logical to you?

**STEFAN** It's about something bigger though! It's about being part of something bigger!

**ANKA** That's a dangerous mentality to have Stefan. We care about you. We don't want you risking your safety for no good reason.

**KURTZ** You sound like you've been brainwashed or something. This isn't the same Stefan I was with yesterday.

**STEFAN** You guys are so narrow minded sometimes. That's the same reason you've never accepted Karl. It's not his problem, it's yours.

***KARL** shuffles awkwardly in his seat*

**KARL** Where's Dominik?

**RICHARD** He should be here in a bit.

**STEFAN** It's so easy for you lot to talk. Talking about being denied rights. Talking about a soulless culture. But standing up and doing something about it just seems absurd right?

**ANKA** Would you drop it Stefan? We're just as frustrated as you are!

**STEFAN** You're not though! None of you are half as frustrated as I am!

**RICHARD** Alright Stefan. Here's the deal. All the things you just mentioned - uniting against oppression, being bold in the face of aryan - all of that sounds great. If I were a couple years younger, I'd be sold. But the truth is, back then I was naive. Like you're being now. You have to consider the reality of what you're saying. Do you really think a group of teenage bastards will be able to topple an entire regime? Even if it was somehow possible, do you really expect the people in this room to try and stand up to blind oppression? Risk their lives for a seemingly hopeless cause? This isn't make-belief. Friede's real nose got broken when a real aryan kicked her with his real boot. So don't try and tell us we shouldn't be afraid. It's not cowardly to be afraid of the reality we're living. It's rational. Because there's a difference, Stefan, between being brave and being a fool.

*Sudden knocking at the door. **RICHARD** gets up and opens it. **HANS** stands in the doorway with his hand clamped on **DOMINIK's** shoulder who stands with him, distraught.*

**RICHARD** What's going on?

**DOMINIK**     *(shattered)* I'm sorry.

**HANS**           I'm Dominik's father. You must be the bastards he likes to hang around.

**STEFAN** *stands up.*

**HANS**           Sit down.

**STEFAN** *hesitates and then sits.*

**HANS**           I didn't want Dominik visiting you people any more. If he had just listened to me and stopped coming here everything would have been alright. Instead he tried sneaking out here today. So I decided to come with him. *(Beat)* It's important that you all realise that this is the last time any of you will see Dominik. And that if he comes here again...well I now know this address and I'm a military general so you can imagine what I'll do.

**ANKA** *breaks into tears.*

**HANS**           No need to cry. Everything was looking rather futile for you lot anyway. The Fuhrer is remilitarizing the Rhineland in a few days and will be increasing gestapo numbers in the area to crack down on any dwelling like this one. You're fate's been sealed already. *(Beat)* Well, we're off. *(Exits)*

**DOMINIK** *takes one last look at his friends and then turns and leaves. The group sit in silence for a few moments. The lights then fade out as "I Got Mine" by Frank Stokes starts to play.*

**END.**