

Clown Show for Bruno

by Murray Mednick

Clown Show for Bruno was first produced by Padua Playwrights at ArtShare, Los Angeles under the direction of Guy Zimmerman, and with the following cast:

Emilio Daniel Stein

Jacko Bill Celentino

Cleo Dana Weiluns

Cleo Kali Quinn

Characters

CLOWNS

Emilio

Jacko

Cleo

They play all the parts, using MASKS

Bruno

Josephina (Juna)

Father

Mother

Landau

Gunther

Sophia

CHORUS (*in italics*)

Any of the clowns can say the chorus lines.

With drawings from the works of Bruno Schulz, a portrait of his friend, Romana Halpern, and the photo of Felix Landau on his horse, with gratitude to Jerzy Ficowski and his book, Regions of the Great Heresy.

Scene

A bench on a stage.

A chair.

And so and so

Here we go

For Bruno

Gnome of gnomes

Shot twice in the head

In Dro-Ho-Bytz

On Mickewitz and Cyacky

See-Ah-Kee

Right on the corner

By a Kraut named Gunther

So.

Sex-obsessed libidinous

Jew Bruno Schulz

Like you and me

God bless the motherfucker

Set up by history

Yet another stupid human illusion

*As the race propagates and multiplies
Itself to extinction*

*C'est la vie
Bring on the clowns!*

- Emilio** It's very appealing because
It's me
Also.
It's me
I am Bruno.
I am Bruno Schulz
Also.
At any rate I can identify
As they say
With him.
He was into kings and queens and gnomes
And sex.
Who knows if he ever got laid
Bruno
Except with an occasional whore
Who knows?
- Jacko** I'll bet he did.
- Cleo** I'll bet he didn't.
Ask me why.
- Jacko** Why?
- Cleo** Because he never does.
- Jacko** Who's dat?

Cleo Him. Emilio. Dis.
 It's so crass.
 It's so incredibly crass.

Jacko Who's dat?

Cleo Da Katzenjammer Kid
 Dat's who.

Emilio Ha-ha.
(They all crack up.)

All Okay.
 All right.
 Okay.

Emilio That's enough.

Cleo Fine and good.

Jacko Why is dat?

Cleo Why?

Jacko Why, because he never.

Together He's a gnome
 He's a gnome
 He's a little Jewish gnome
 And he never.

Jacko He's kinda insecure, dat.

Cleo Dat he is.

Jacko So he never.
 He puts his arms around a lady
 And he kisses her
 On da nose!

Cleo Oh, God, it's so crass.

Jacko What about you, lady?

Cleo Say again?

Jacko I say, What about you, lady?

Cleo I stink it's crass.
(They crack up again)

Jacko All's well.
Fine and good.
He should be ashamed.

Cleo I'm sure he is.
I'll bet he is.
Are you?

Emilio Yes, because I'm looking at dem.
I can't stop lookin' at dem and dinkin'
About dem.

Cleo Say again?

Emilio Thinking about them or it.

Cleo It?

Emilio You know, fornication and copulation.

Cleo It's so crass.

Jacko Give him a break, why don't you?
Lighten up.
Kind out.
And by that I mean like
Butt out or bug out.

Emilio Or fuck off.

*What is it anyway but biology
Biology as the rabbis say
Between the pisser and the asshole
Because the human stuff
(Or stiff)
Needs to procreate
And that's why.*

Cleo So what?

Jacko It needs to procreate and replicate
And duplicate.

Cleo So what?

Jacko So it can go on
And keep going on.
So I ax myself sincerely—

Cleo What's dat?

Jacko Going on for what?
Is it to satisfy and gratify,
Mortify and glorify,
Horrify and multiply?

Cleo Oh, stop.

Jacko After all, a person can live without sex.

Together Monks do it.
Bruno did it.
Emilio does it.

Emilio We don't do it
Me and Cleo,
Cleo and I

Cleo We do too do it!

Emilio That's what I said?
Is that what I said?

Cleo It's so crass.

Jacko They live without
And they don't complain.
They don't suffer,
They don't pine,
They don't waste away.

Cleo They don't sulk,

They don't kill their lives.
Wives.

Emilio I know some stories you wouldn't believe. Jews in the mountains. They thought there was free love. Stories you wouldn't believe. We should do a show.

Cleo Oh.

Jacko No.

Cleo Oh, no.

Emilio We should do a show about that.

Jacko Dis is it, eh?
Dis is da show.

Emilio "Lifetime Affairs"
We'll call it.
Where people made arrangements.

Cleo No, Bruno.

Jacko It's a true story.

Cleo Bruno Schulz.

Emilio Clowning for Bruno
We should call it.

Cleo No.

Jacko I don't like it.

Cleo No.

Emilio Fine and good,
Just as well,
I won't tell you.
Fine.

Jacko Now he's pouting.
He has his pout face on.
Look at dat pout face.
Isn't dat nice?

Emilio No, I'm happy now.

Jacko You see dat?

Emilio I'm happy.

I'm very happy now.

Jacko You see dat?

Dat's duh happy face.

Youse see a difference dere?

Cleo Ha-ha

No difference between the pouty face and the happy face.

Emilio In those days there was no di-vorces

Ya know?

Cleo Yeah, yeah?

Emilio So Lily and Junie and Pookie and I don't know who else, they rented an apartment in Wonderland, and there they could meet with their true loves who was not their es-spouses.

Jacko Don't tell me any stories okay?

Emilio This was in da mountains in the turties and the forties, or the fifties...

Let's go to Dro-Ho-Bytz in 1934.

(The BRUNO MASK and the JOSEPHINA MASK)

Bruno There is a Jewish religion
But it don't go
deep.

Josephina Deep?

Bruno No. Of course, it's a beautiful religion.

Josephina You, you should know.
You should save more.
You should shave more.
Blend in better.

Bruno I agree, definitely.

Josephina You should slave more,
You should try and sell more
art more.

Bruno I agree. Definitely.

Josephina And stand up straight.

Bruno Can we go back?

Josephina Because you stoop already.

Bruno Can we go back?

Josephina Back?

Bruno Five minutes ago,
Or sooner.
I kissed you
and you ducked.

Josephina Yes?

Bruno You didn't like it?

Josephina I liked it.

Bruno Then why?

Josephina Men—all they want is one
thing.

Bruno I'll worship you. I'll get down on my knees.

Josephina Stand up, Bruno.
Stand up.
And be a man.

Bruno I'll worship you.
I worship you.

Josephina Be a man.
For what is life but to bear children
And die?
I am a Christian now.
Converted.

Bruno That's okay.
Immortal?

Josephina Yes, Darling.

Bruno Good, good. Good, good, good.

Josephina Good?
Why Good?

Bruno How could it be bad?

Josephina I'm not sure I want to.

Bruno What?

Josephina Fornicate
Or co-habitate.

Bruno That's okay.
That's fine.

Josephina I think we should
Wait.

Bruno Fine and good.

Josephina Don't you think?

Bruno I do, I do,
Very good.

Josephina And you?
Immortal?

Bruno Who me?, not me.

Josephina Oh.

Bruno Jew, me.

Josephina I know.

Bruno Jew I am.
Excuse me.
I am a Jew.

Josephina So?

Bruno Immortality, no.

Josephina No?

Bruno No.

Josephina What happens
Then?

Bruno We die.

Josephina What happens then?
And then?

Bruno We stay.

Josephina Oh.
It's terrible.

Bruno But I don't know
Really.
You?

Josephina No.

Bruno The blood survives.

Josephina I see.

Bruno The family line.
The name, maybe.

Josephina Schulz?
(Laughter)

Bruno Schulz, on and on.

Josephina You have art.
You have writing.

Bruno My father.
I feel remorse.

Josephina What
Your father?

Bruno We should marry.

Josephina I don't know.
Your father?

Bruno He don't feel good.

Josephina You see?

Bruno Otherwise.

Josephina What?

Bruno Is fine with him.

Josephina I should go.

Bruno Oh.

Josephina I'll go.

Bruno Go.

Josephina No.

Bruno He's sick.

Josephina I know.

Bruno Why wait?

Josephina No way.

Bruno Why not?

Josephina Sex is for marriage only.

Bruno So?

Josephina I don't know.

Bruno Come on.

Josephina No.

Bruno Why not?

Josephina Bye, Bruno. (*End MASKS*)

*And he fell into a sexual rage
Which stayed in the center of his chest*

*Growling as she left the cafe
He is a nonviolent fellow
After all.*

*Life seemed incomprehensible—
People were going on with their business—*

Their meaningless and stupid activities—

*As if nothing had happened to him
Bruno,
At all, nothing at all,
Just a moment in time
And that's all there is, he thought
A moment in time*

A moment in time

While she

While she

*She is walking down the street
And people are looking at her butt*

Clowns OY!

*Her sexy little butt
It's just a wonderful thing to look at*

*Wonderful
(A Bruno Schulz drawing here)*

Poor Bruno.

Clowns In lust!

*He had said one more extra thing
Too late and too useless and vain
And he knew it and ate it
Like the snail he was or is
Caught out of his house
His pride and well-being.*

So.

Emilio Revealed and destroyed.

*Stepped on like the worm
He is or was.*

Jacko Say again?

Cleo Say what?

Jacko Revealed what?

Emilio Pride revealed.

Jacko Destroyed what?

Emilio Well-being destroyed.

Cleo You can't be was and is at da same time.

Jacko AHA!

Cleo Too loud.

Jacko Excuse me?

Cleo Too loud.

Emilio No need to shout.

Cleo And at the same time—

Jacko What?

Cleo And at the same time people—

Jacko People?

Cleo You know, like us.

Jacko Okay, they were?

Cleo Peoples was having ideas and making plans.

Jacko Like us?

Cleo Ideas about life and plans for the future.

*It's disgusting in a way,
Wouldn't you say?*

*Which lead to a gunshot in the head.
End Bruno.*

So.

(FATHER MASK and BRUNO MASK)

Bruno Dada? Daddy? Papa? Father?

Father We all come from afar.

From a far land.

Far away.

Desert and mountain.

The forest and the sea.

We come.

Jungle and prairie.
Hill and savannah,
We come from
There.

Bruno Okay.

Father From there. (*End mask*)

Bruno Okay.

Cleo So how ya doin'?

How are ya,

What's up?

Bruno Say?

Cleo How ya doin, how are ya, what's up?

Bruno Fine.

Cleo Good.

Bruno Good, good, good.

Cleo What are you taking now?

Pills?

You take pills?

Bruno I do, because I'm sick.

Cleo Why are you sick?

Bruno I don't know.

Cleo Is it the pills?

Bruno I don't know. No.

Cleo What's wrong with you? There's always something
wrong with you. I'm sick of it.

Bruno I'm fine.

Cleo That's not what you said.

That's not what you just said.

Bruno I'm tursty.

Cleo Take a drink of water.

Take a drink.

Bruno I'm nauseated.

Cleo Don't worry, you're not gonna die.

Bruno We're all gonna die.
We get old and die.
We get old and sick and die.
Every single one of us. (*MASK*)

Jacko Except for dose who suffer sudden death.

Cleo Exacto.

Emilio Like Bruno.

Jacko With a bullet into his brain.

Cleo *C'est la vie.*

Emilio Exacto.

Cleo *Fait accompli.*

Emilio *Exactement.*

Cleo *Mais oui.*

Jacko *Je ne sais pas.*

Emilio *C'est mort.*

Cleo Boom, right into the head.

Emilio And down he goes and his inner life went with him.
And down he goes
Down he goes.

Cleo His love life and his thoughts
His hopes and dreams
Turned to soup on the sidewalk.

(*In the ghetto*
In Drohobyz)

Emilio His talent.

- Cleo** His talent, too, of course.
- Emilio** I just want to have an ordinary normal life.
- Jacko** Which is?
- Emilio** What's dat?
- Emilio** Like in a penthouse overlooking the Pacific at night, with nice furniture, maybe white, or beige, where I can bring my girls, and we can smoke a joint and look out at the moonlight on the ocean, and have a lot of foreplay, and gossip about the business and the people we know, and have a drink, and have a smoke, and be happy, and my conscience wouldn't bother me one bit.
- Jacko** Is dat so?
- Emilio** Not one bit. Or have another ordinary normal type of life, where I come home to my wife, and she says, "Oh, I'm so tired tonight, honey."
- Cleo** I'm so tired tonight, honey.
- Emilio** Just totally normal and expected and nonviolent and no questions asked. "I'm so tired tonight, honey," and she's totally mine, no questions asked.
- Cleo** "Oh, " with a sigh, "I'm so tired tonight."
- Emilio** No question about it, I can see the look in her eyes that she loves me. She's my wife and there's no questions asked.
- Cleo** Is this also true in Drohobyz?
- Emilio** Among the Jews of Drohobyz?
- Emilio** Why yes it is.
- Emilio** Oh, Yes it is.
- Jacko** Dis here is da GUNTHER MASK.
- Jacko** Dis here is da LANDAU MASK
- Cleo** Two KRAUT MASKS
- Emilio** It's too soon now, am I right?

Cleo Put away the Kraut masks.

Jacko I'm sorry.

Cleo Put 'em both away, please.

Emilio He jumped his cue, him.

Jacko I'm sorry.

Emilio We're back in Drohobyz.

Jacko Put on da BRUNO MASK.

Emilio Okay.

Cleo I'll put on da MOTHER MASK.

Emilio Okay. (*MASK*)

Bruno Mother.

Mother What?

Bruno Mother.

Mother You have your job?

Bruno Yes, Mother.

Mother It's good. You have your family?

Bruno Yes, Mother.

Mother You have your health?

Bruno Yes, sure.

Mother Good. Good, good, good.

Bruno Life, Mother.

Mother Marriage, Bruno.

Bruno I'm afraid.

Cleo (See, women persecute him because they know he fears them. You see that? You understand that?)

Jacko Put down da mask.

Cleo I put it down already.

Emilio He likes to stay in his room.

Cleo He has fantasies?

Emilio He has fantasies.

Cleo It's so crass.

Emilio He worships them and he fears them.

Jacko He kisses their feet in his dreams.

Cleo He sucks on their toes.

Jacko But they won't put out.

Cleo Not even in his dreams.

Jacko Not even then. Ha.

Cleo Even though he bows, even though he cringes.

Emilio Yes.

Cleo Because he smells bad, probably.

Jacko Probably.

Cleo And his clothes aren't quite clean.

Jacko Probably not.

Cleo He wears the same shirt day after day after day.

Emilio Yes.

Cleo So he stinks.

Emilio What else?

Cleo He's so nervous, he shakes.

Emilio True.

Jacko He shakes and he quakes.

Emilio He does.

Jacko And he's intimidated by so much as a glance.

Cleo A look.

Jacko Over da shoulder.

Cleo A look of scorn.

Jacko A scornful look over da shoulder and he's done.

Cleo He's finished.

Emilio His gaze goes out the window and into the sky. Grey sky
of Dro-ho-byz, over the market square, while the light is
slowly changing, darkening to his liquid dark, his animate

darkness, his darkness ending timeless days.

(*MASK on*)

- Bruno** Father.
- Cleo** Put on the mask. (*FATHER MASK*)
- Father** Hello, my son.
- Bruno** How are you, Father?
- Father** All life is energy. All matter is energy. Energy cannot die. Only the form changes. So there is no time and there is no death.
- Cleo** I don't know what that's supposed to mean.
- Bruno** Okay.
- Cleo** Take off the mask.
- Jacko** (*MASK off*) What are dey supposed to dink about dat?
- Emilio** It's how he was, Bruno's father. He had a big head.
- Jacko** He had a big head?
- Emilio** He had a big head.
- Cleo** What does that have to do with anything?
- Emilio** And his brother-in-law was a dwarf.
- Cleo** My God that's—it's ridiculous.
- Emilio** I don't know, maybe he was just a retard.
- Cleo** You don't know what you're talking about. As usual.
- Emilio** He was a mystic and a philosopher.
- Cleo** The brother-in-law?
- Emilio** No, the father.
- Cleo** There are only two things, actually, sex and money, and Bruno had neither one of them.
- Jacko** What about dis? Someone got it into their heads that they had to kill all the Jews. Why? Because they eat too much or drink too much.
- Emilio** Or breathe too much.

Cleo Or fuck too much.

Jacko Or take up da space of da German race.

Cleo Ha! It's so stupid!

Emilio Father had a dry goods store in Dro-ho-byz—a typical Jewish activity, that.

Jacko What about dis? They shot him dead and fullfilled his dread. How's dat?

Cleo Oh, stop it. It's so incredibly crass.

Emilio He was afraid of time, Bruno. (*MASKS*)

Josephina Bruno?

Bruno Yes, my dear Josefina.

Josephina You don't have to say that.

Bruno My dear Juna.

Josephina Don't say it if you don't mean it.

Bruno I won't. Sorry.

Josephina Regarding Kafka.

Bruno Yes?

Josephina Can I use your name?

Bruno Why?

Josephina No one's ever heard of me.

Bruno I wouldn't say that, exactly.

Josephina You never know what to say.

Bruno I do sometimes.

Josephina When?

Bruno Only when I write.

Josephina Yes. There you have a voice.

Bruno It's true. If only I had time.

Josephina You have plenty of time. You're a teacher.

Bruno I have no time.

Josephina You act condemned.

Bruno I never have time.

Josephina You're not condemned.

Bruno I feel condemned.

Josephina You are not.

Bruno I must have a sabbatical, or I will never write again.

Josephina Well, so what? So what if you never write again?

Bruno I suppose that wouldn't be such a great tragedy.

Josephina Regarding Kafka, once again, may I use your name for my translation?

Bruno If that's what you want.

Josephina It will help me to get it published, so that's what I want.

Bruno Then, of course, Juna, why not?

Josephina Because you are known, and I am not.

Bruno You are known, Josefina Zelinska.

Josephina Because you wish to know me carnally, you wish to know me biblically. Bruno Schulz. The Jew from Droho-byz who writes fables.

Bruno A few people, some writers, journalists.

Josephina It doesn't matter, everything disappears into time.

Bruno Josefina Zellinska.

Josephina What, Bruno? (I know what you want.) (*Silence*) For God's sake, man, speak up! These silences are interminable!

Bruno I'm sorry.

Josephina What's the matter with you?

Bruno I'm frightened.

Josephina Of what?

Bruno I don't know. (Of you)

Josephina (Of me?) (*Silence*) Bruno!

Bruno You, Josefina.

Josephina I can't help it! It's not my fault!

Bruno No, of course not, you're absolutely right, Juna.

Josephina Was it sex? Were you asking for sex?

Bruno (Yes) I'm sorry.

Josephina You know it's impossible. You know it's a sin. I am a Catholic, after all.

Bruno Marriage, then. I want to marry.

Josephina Then you must convert, like me. You have no business being a Jew.

Bruno My parents are Jews.

Josephina So were mine.

Bruno It's good to be a Jew. A Jew can be anything.

Josephina All right, I won't interfere.

Bruno If everything disappears into time, Josefina, then where is the sin?

Josephina Right there, Bruno, right in there. (*Points at his heart.* MASKS) Shave and a haircut, Emilio, shower and a bit of mouthwash, and den we'll see.

Emilio Yes, yes, of course, right away.

Cleo It's so incredibly gross.

Emilio I'll take care of it.

Cleo And shine your shoes and change your clothes.

Emilio I will.

Cleo Put on something nice. You have a tie?

Emilio I do. I think I do. I'm not sure.

Cleo You should have a tie.

Emilio I do. I probably do.

Cleo You have a clean shirt?

Emilio Uh, yes.

Cleo Put that on, too.

Emilio Okay.

Cleo Make sure it's ironed.

Bruno I will, dear. *Tout suite.*

Cleo And don't call me dear.

Bruno I won't.

Cleo Deer are for forests. (*Laughter.*)

Jacko Dat was terrible.

Emilio I'm so glad.

Cleo What?

Emilio I had a prior life, like Bruno. A youth, like Bruno.

Cleo Yes? So?

Emilio I appreciate it. All the romance, all the sex.

Cleo Tell me, did you get a lot?

Jacko Dat is crass, dat is incredibly crass.

Cleo Tell the truth.

Jacko No. Da answer is: no.

Emilio I did.

Jacko Good for youse.

Cleo He's lying.

Emilio I fucked my wife every week, once or twice a week.

Cleo What? Ha!

Emilio I'm not lying.

And what I got, I liked.

Jacko Tell me your dreams, tell me your fantasies, dat.

Cleo Oh, stop!

Emilio Not Bruno, I don't think Bruno.

Jacko Youse don't think Bruno What?

Emilio Ever got any, ever.

Jacko But dat's all right.

Dat's all right.

Cleo He lived.

Emilio But not for long.

Cleo He survived.

Emilio Unhappily.

Cleo He did his work.

Emilio Rarely.

Cleo When he could.

When he had time.

When he wasn't depressed.

Emilio And nearly all of what he wrote like *Messiah* was lost,

Cleo When the Germans came to Dro-ho-byz.

Emilio So. (*MASKS*)

Bruno Josefina.

Josephina Yes?

Bruno I want to talk.

Josephina Talk. (*Silence*) See you're doing it again. We can't talk if you don't talk.

Bruno (That's obvious!)

Josephina Shut up, you!)

Bruno Each day I make a drawing or a painting. I tell a story on the blackboard. Usually it's a myth, you know, I mean a fairy tale. They have kings and queens and gnomes.

I also draw adorable girls.

Josephina No doubt!

Bruno Can I show you?

Josephina You can if you want.

Bruno (*Drawing on transparent "blackboard"*) And this will illustrate my feeling for the world, Juna, my true feeling for the world.

Josephina It's a feeling of dread, isn't it? Isn't it something like that?
Something dreadful?

Bruno Yes, and strange. Strange winds and dark skies, and forests.

Josephina I mean, in addition to that. Something dangerous,
something evil.

Bruno I go to school in the morning and I teach until night.
And then I go home to my family. I don't have time to
write, usually.

Josephina Thank God you have a job, thank God you have a home.

Bruno This is true, Josefina, though I don't know about the
God part.

Josephina We are poor creatures, Bruno, and our lot is a sad one.

Bruno I'm happy when I draw, I'm happy when I write.

Josephina You draw these little men, and there's one who looks like
you, always, and they are cowering in front of women.

Bruno Yes, because I adore them, the way I adore you. I want to
embrace you and crawl inside you at the same time.

Josephina That's a bit revolting, Bruno.

Bruno Oh.

Josephina It's all right, don't stop. I'm sorry. Continue.

Bruno I try to capture the past as present, the way it is in
childhood, the feeling of that—being free of time.

Josephina And then where are you?

Bruno Ah. I'm in an artistic world then. I'm an artist, then.

Josephina But you are also here, Bruno, in this world. And you
have to provide. And you can hardly provide for the
family you have. And that's the truth of the situation,
no matter how you look at it.

Bruno Yes, it is hopeless.

Josephina There is hope, but it's not in this world. (*LIGHTS change, the drawing glows with light*) Ah, beautiful, my good friend. Very beautiful.

(*End MASKS*)

Cleo Emilio?

Emilio Yes?

Cleo You wanted to say something?

Emilio I just wanted to say, summer nights in the mountains, coming out of the hotel lobby at night, or the dining room, and the girls are walking by in there fluffy skirts, and their ribbons and bows, and they're all excited.

Cleo And so were you, I'll warrant.

Emilio Yes, and the air was rich with life, the air itself was living and true.

Cleo So excited you couldn't contain yourself.

Emilio Just barely. Gulping air. Life! Life! (*MASKS on*) Juna, my dear Juna.

Josephina Yes, dear Bruno?

Bruno We must rendezvous, you and I.

Josephina Yes, allright, yes. If you insist.

Bruno You don't want to?

Josephina No, I do. I do want to. Yes.

Bruno Meet me. At the Hotel Paradise, at six-o-clock, on Sunday.

Josephina I can't Sunday. Not Sunday.

Bruno Saturday, then.

Josephina All right.

Bruno (We'll fuck, at last.)

Josephina No, no, no, no.

Bruno You do want to, yes?

Josephina Yes, yes.

Bruno Good. I'll see you then. (*Pause*)

Josephina Bye, bye. (*Masks off*)

Emilio Uh, Jacko?

Jacko Yes?

Emilio What now?

Jacko You do the scene. Do the scene. (*Masks back on*)

Bruno Oh.

Josephina Okay.

Jacko The Hotel Paradiso.

Josephina Hi, Bruno.

Bruno Hi, Juna.

Josephina Hi.

Bruno Hi.

Josephina Hi.

Bruno I was just thinking.

Josephina What were you thinking?

Bruno Life, how life.

Josephina What?

Bruno Came to be.

Josephina Sex.

Bruno Right. But also, why.

Josephina Hair. Why do people have hair?

Bruno Good, yes, good.

Josephina Different colors, hair.

Bruno Good, good, good.

Josephina Why?

Bruno I don't know why.

Josephina You draw hair?

Bruno I do.

Josephina You draw faces.

Bruno The same face. It's all one face.

Josephina Your face.

Bruno My face.

Josephina And the girls.

Bruno The girls, too.

Josephina Don't pull too hard on my head.

Bruno I won't.

Josephina You can kiss me, but not too rough.

Bruno I will.

Josephina Relax. Breathe.

Bruno I am.

Josephina Take a deep breath.

Bruno Okay.

Josephina Take another deep breath.

Bruno Okay.

Josephina Did you brush your teeth?

Bruno Yes.

Josephina Did you wash your hands?

Bruno I did.

Josephina Lie down, Bruno.

Bruno And you?

Josephina In a minute.

Bruno What's wrong?

Josephina Nothing. I was just thinking.

Bruno What were you thinking?

Josephina We both have to work.

Bruno I know that.

Josephina We both put in very long hours.

Bruno This is true.

Josephina But at least you get some recognition.

Bruno Just a little, Juna, not too much.

Josephina Bruno Schulz.

Bruno Not much at all.

Josephina More than me.

Bruno I don't make a dime from it.

Josephina I translated Kafka.

Bruno Not one.

Josephina And you got the credit.

Bruno That was the plan, Juna.

Josephina I'm only saying. I work in the girls school twelve hours a day. I'm exhausted.

Bruno I'm sorry.

Josephina Teaching those stupid kids I don't know what.

Bruno I agree completely.

Josephina Lie still.

Bruno I haven't moved.

Josephina Don't.

Bruno One day I'll be free of shop-teaching.

Josephina When?

Bruno God willing in a year or two.

Josephina Bad things are happening, Bruno. Bad things happen in this world. Bad things are happening now.

Bruno We can enjoy each other.

Josephina I can't do this.

Bruno Why not?

Josephina I have to go.

Bruno Juna, I won't move.

Josephina I'm going.

Bruno It's not bad.

Josephina Write to me, Bruno.
Bruno Goodbye, Josephina.

(*MASKS off. EMILIO mimes walking, and then riding in a bus.*)

Bruno thinks about the wonders of marriage, of the beauty of buttocks and loving smiles, the ordinary blessings of a woman with a man, with a family; that he wants to marry and he never will, and then he gets on a bus all alone, on the bus back to Dro-ho-byz.

Clip-clop. Germans marching. He passes Germans on the way, Germans on motorcycles, Germans in trucks, Germans marching, clip-clop on their way, on their way to Dro-ho-byz.

Cleo (*Showing*) This is the Landau mask, the Felix Landau mask.
Emilio This is Felix Landau,
Jacko A half-Jew him,
Emilio Come to Dro-ho-byz to kill the Jews.
Jacko Say Hello, Felix. (*Puts on LANDAU MASK*)
Landau Hello.
Cleo Introduce yourself.
Landau My name is Felix Landau, how do you do?
Cleo Very well until you came along, thank you.
Emilio Say something about yourself.
Landau There's not much to say, really.
Emilio Tell us about life on earth, how you murdered 20,000 Jewish people and then we'll bring in Bruno.

- Cleo** It's so fucking idiotic. There's not a single human being who is not an idiot. That is my honest opinion.
- Emilio** Let's hear from Felix.
- Cleo** No. You mentioned life on earth and I'd like to go further with that idea.
- Jacko** Go further, go further, what does that mean, "go further?"
- Emilio** Take off the Landau mask.
- Landau** That doesn't fucking mean anything. You can't go further when you aren't anywhere in the first place. You can't go any further. This is it. This is as far as you can go.
- Emilio** Who's talking? Is that Landau?
- Landau** Dah! This is the end of the line! Last stop! Fini!
Zein gazunt! (MASK off)
- Cleo** This is so confusing.
- Emilio** You don't have to be Jewish.
- Cleo** For what?
- Emilio** To be an idiot.
- Cleo** Oh!
- Emilio** Is what I'm saying.
- Cleo** We all knew that already. Didn't we?
- Jacko** Yes.
- Emilio** Of course.
- Jacko** Absolutely.
- Cleo** So we don't need to hear it again. You get that?
- Emilio** Yes.
- Cleo** We don't need to hear about it, and I'm sure they agree.
- Emilio** I'm sure all the idiots agree.
- Cleo** That you don't have to be Jewish to be an idiot.
- Jacko** There you go.

Cleo But it helps! (*Laughter*)
Jacko Dat's dat.
Emilio Onward and upward. (*BRUNO AND JOSEPHINA MASKS ON*)
Josephina Bruno?
Bruno Josephina?
Josephina Of all the Jewish idiots, you are certainly one of them.
Bruno Was that a joke?
Josephina Never mind. And your fears and mine, they come together. Your fears and mine, they bump each other. I'm sorry, my dear. I don't mean to hurt you. And yet we see together, don't we? We see something coming in the world, in the earth and in the sky, something coming to murder us, we see it coming, like my dear Kafka, my dearest Kafka, he saw it coming, too, and he too never had a woman.
Bruno The poor bastard, the poor sonofabitch.
Josephina How are those thoughts related?
Bruno Excuse me?
Josephina How are those two thoughts related?
Jacko That he saw it coming and that he never had a woman? You don't see the connection dere? You fucking idiot? (*MASKS off*) Now what is dat? Is dat da pouty face? Passive-aggressive? Look at dat face. Is dat da hurty face?
Cleo Snot.
Jacko Does that mean no, it's not, or snot?
Cleo No.
Jacko Dat dare is da nasty face. Look at da nasty face, dere.
Emilio I'm okay, now. I'm cool.
Cleo So what was the problem?
Emilio You didn't take my arm.

Cleo When?

Emilio While walking.

Cleo While walking?

Emilio While walking.

Cleo While walking.

Emilio What I said.

Cleo Oh.

Emilio Which offends me, Cleo, because you're taller than me and bigger than me, especially in your high heels, and then you go your own way, leaving me hanging out there on a limb before the probing, unwelcoming eyes of others.

Cleo Oh.

Emilio Jacko, you have an opinion?

Jacko No.

Cleo You were offended.

Emilio I knew that. I knew that already, so what you had to say was useless.

Cleo Don't ask me anymore then.

Emilio I was asking for a deeper insight.

Cleo I had no idea you were offended.

Emilio I knew that. I knew you had no idea, which is why I brought it up. If I thought you knew already, I wouldn't have brought it up.

Cleo I'm sorry, actually.

Emilio It's amazing. It's an amazing phenomenon.

Cleo What is?

Emilio That this can happen. Peoples walking and talking and having no idea.

Jacko And so da German army comes walking into Drohobyz.
Clip-clop-clip-clop.

Cleo Where's Bruno?

Jacko And wid guns, da fucking idiots.

Cleo And Josephina, where is she?

Jacko And plans.

Emilio God, I can hardly stand it. Juna, he called her. Juna.

Cleo I think she's in Warsaw or someplace around now.

Emilio Beautiful, gorgeous, Juna. Long legs and a sexy smile.
It's lovely to be alive and loved.

Cleo Yes, but we're all hanging around like we're immortal.

Jacko So? Dat's dat. What else are we supposed to do?

Cleo And we're not. (*Big wink*) He wrote to his women,
Bruno, as opposed to sleeping with them, he wrote
to them. He was one of the greatest letter writers of
all time.

Jacko Correcto! Exacto! But every single person alive will
vanish sooner or later. It is one of da strangest phenomenal
factos imaginable.

(*BRUNO and JOSEPHINA MASKS on*)

Bruno Dear Juna, darling Juna....

Josephina Yes, Bruno?

Bruno I write to protest, Darling, the integrity of my desire.
(*MASKS off*)

Cleo What is that supposed to mean?

*This was in the thirties, while the Germans were
concocting their plans, and Bruno had decided to stand
up, he had decided to stand up in the face of rejection,*

of humiliation and intimidation, he, the mark of all time, so he wrote a letter. (MASKS back on)

Bruno And so, to continue, which is to say,

Josephina Yes? Yes?

Bruno That is to say, if you will permit me, I, from here on, from this moment, I refuse, on my honor, refuse any further sexual contact.

Josephina Oh!

Bruno With you.

Josephina On what grounds?

Bruno On Freudian grounds, that is to say, which is to say,

Josephina Yes? Yes?

Bruno Sadoch and Masoch, that is to say, sado-masochistic, I would say, are the grounds. And therefore, even though I love you, and you have the most beautiful cunt in Dro-ho-byz, maybe the most beautiful cunt in all of Poland, but definitely in Dro-ho-byz, beautiful in its fragrance, beautiful in its aspect between those shapely thighs, lovely as it is, and even as I long to get those long legs up in the air and even as I yearn to hear your almost mournful cries—

Josephina Oh! Oh!

Bruno Even so, I must refuse, I must decline, on my honor, to go any further with this—what shall we call it?—arrangement, prenuptial or whatever—if first of all I must be abused, that is to say, raked over the coals, be demeaned and debased, and my heartfelt election, I mean erection, circumcised as it is, be willfully insulted and denied, or dismissed, in the name of feminine vulnerability,

or womanly scruples, or virginal horror, or excessive sensitivity, therefore, I, Emilio, I mean Bruno, declare this relationship—finis!

Josephina Oh!

Bruno And so, Cleo, that is to say, Juno, or Juna, or Josephina, you may no longer fear for your lately Christian soul, nor recoil at my constant Jewishness, or loom over me in your high heels—that's all done!

Josephina But Bruno!

Bruno Though we share the dread, you and I, of darkness on the horizon, of immanent catastrophe, of certain doom, of withering and unstoppable time, and though I love you truly, you, Juno, I mean Juna, you in your fragile and frightened essence, but mostly your sex and desire, and also your mind, Kafkaesque, or grotesque in its complexity, we share the dread, you and I and Kafka, and my father and all the Jews of Dro-ho-byz—

Josephina Bruno!

Bruno I must retract, I must withdraw, I welcome solitude, I embrace my lonely destiny—well, anyway—I return to the bosom of my family and my tribe, home to Drohobyz—that mythical country in my mind, of my childhood, of my art, and fall backward and downward into my literary world and into my irreplaceable, impeccable privacy.

Jacko Bravo! Bravissimo, Emilio! Bravissimo, Bruno!

Emilio (*Mask off*) Thank you.

Jacko Pause. Pause. And then what happened? Then what happened?

Cleo You said that twice.

- Jacko** I'll tell you. Victory is short-lived. The moment passes.
He gets down on his knees and he begs forgiveness.
- Cleo** Bruno?
- Emilio** Cleo, oh Cleo.
- Cleo** What?
- Emilio** I'm sorry.
- Cleo** For what?
- Emilio** I'm not nice. I had a difficult childhood and I'm not nice.
- Cleo** I'll say.
- Emilio** That's why I'm sorry.
- Cleo** It's about time.
- Jacko** For what, Emilio, for what?
- Emilio** For being aggressive, for challenging someone's integrity
in favor of my own, for being right every single second
of every single day.
- Cleo** I forgive you. (*He weeps*) Don't cry.
- Emilio** "If I want to convey my present state, the image of being
awakened from a deep sleep comes to mind. One awakens
to phantoms, still seeing the world of dreams sinking
away into forgetfulness, with fading colors still before his
eyes and feeling the softness of a dream beneath his
eyelids—" So spoke Bruno on the page, in Drohobyz,
between August 20th and August 26th, 1937, to the
beautiful Romana Halpern.
- Cleo** I just want to say, you know, that this was a beautiful
and very intelligent woman, Romana Halpern, and
she was shot. They tracked her down and murdered her.
What is it with these fucking people?
- Emilio** I don't know. (*Show picture here of the beautiful
ROMANA HALPERN.*)

Jacko (Of audience) I'm talking to dem! Dem!

Emilio A bit of a biographical note here, if I may:

Cleo (Mimicking) If I may, If I may. Good grief!

Emilio Romana escaped from the Warsaw ghetto, settled her son in the countryside and moved to Cracow, where she worked as a secretary under an assumed name. In 1944 the gestapo found her and shot her. (*MASK on*)

Bruno “Dear Roma, ... Somehow I’m afraid to move to Warsaw. I’m afraid of relationships and people. Most willingly I would retreat with some one person into complete quiet and like Proust undertake the final formulation of my world. For some time I was bolstered by the thought I would take my retirement.”

Jacko At forty percent salary, I might add.

Cleo I might add! Goodness!

Bruno “Now I have moved away from that idea because I would be unable to support my family.”

Cleo That must strike a bell with you, Emilio.

Emilio (*Lowering MASK*) Excuse me?

Cleo Bell. Strikes.

Emilio Yes. Family. Save.

Cleo And?

Emilio Failed miserably.

Jacko Let’s hear from Bruno.

Bruno (*MASK on*) “Do you know a good neurologist in Warsaw who might treat me for nothing? I am definitely sick—some breakdown, some beginning of melancholy, despair, sadness, feeling of unavoidable defeat, irretrievable loss.”

Cleo Sounds like someone we know, eh Jacko?

Jacko De facto!

- Cleo** Don't cry and don't cringe and go on and say something.
- Bruno** "I must get advice. But I don't believe in doctors."
- Cleo** A-ha! I'm with him there!
- Bruno** "I am not writing about my plans and work, I can't write. It makes me too nervous and I cannot talk about it calmly. Don't neglect me this way anymore. Write something sometime! I send heartfelt good wishes. Bruno Schulz. June, 1939." (*Photo of ROMANA fades*)
- Cleo** (*MOTHER mask*) Don't be so passive, Bruno, don't be so doomed.
- Jacko** Get a grip.
- Mother** Do something about your body odor, like take a nice bath, change your clothes. You get used to living without a woman, you don't know how to take care of yourself, you let things slide. And you see how you stoop? You stoop. You don't need to stoop. You're not old. You're not an old man. Stand up straight, Bruno.
- Bruno** Thank you.
- Jacko** He's too much in his own world. Bruno's world. Dere is another world, Bruno. And it's coming to get you. Oops. I didn't mean to say dat.
- Bruno** "These early images mark out for artists the boundaries of their creative powers. Their creative work is a deduction upon given assumptions. They do not discover anything new after that, they only learn to understand better and better the secret entrusted to them at the outset; their creative effort is an unending exegesis, a commentary on that one verse assigned to them." (*MASK off*)
- Cleo** That's so Jewish I can't believe it. It is so Jewish.
- Emilio** I get it. You probably don't get it.

Cleo I get it, I get it.

Jacko Whatever it is, it's too subjective. In my opinion.

Emilio Here's another one, if they can stand it. (*BRUNO MASK on*)
“The father hugs the child, folds him in his arms, shields him from the natural element that chatters on and on.”

He's referring to a song of Goethe's here.

Bruno But to the child these arms are transparent; the night reaches into him, and through the father's soothing words he continually hears its frightening seductions. And oppressed, full of fatalism, he answers the night's importunities with tragic readiness, given over wholly to the mighty element from which there is no escape.”

Cleo Good grief!

Emilio (*MASK off*) I can remember, I remember now.

Jacko Oh, no.

Emilio People would talk about the old homeland and they'd have that look, like you didn't understand reality. I wasn't so bad then. I wasn't such a bad guy then. I tried to talk to my mom, I tried to talk to my dad.

Jacko But every ting dat happened led inevitably to dis right here. Am I right? (*FATHER mask on*)

Father There are memories. We remember everything, for life. There is a spirt life where the memories live. Certain moments are burned into our souls and we remember them with anguish. Moments of lying, of indecision, of violence, of ignorance. We remember from a place of fundamental, eternal laws. This is akin to what they think about in India. Am I right? (*MASK off*)

- Jacko** Dat's right. Dis here is Felix Landau. We're in Dro-ho-byz in nineteen forty-two. (*LANDAU MASK on*)
- Landau** Hello. How are you? I'm just a regular guy and my racial characteristics are average.
- Cleo** My God, he's a moron.
- Landau** Gunther!
- Cleo** (*GUNTHER MASK*) What, Landau?
- Landau** Come and see me.
- Gunther** What for?
- Landau** We got da whole city to play wid here.
- Gunther** I know dat.
- Landau** We got all da Jews in a corner.
- Gunther** We took over da joint, as the saying goes.
- Cleo** (As da saying goes. Good grief!)
- Landau** We can do what we want.
- Gunther** I knew dat already.
- Landau** At last.
- Gunther** I couldn't agree more or less.
- Cleo** (Another fucking moron!)
- Landau** I got nice digs, how 'bout you?
- Gunther** It's great, I love it here, it's absolutely charming.
- Landau** Good. Good, good, good.
- Gunther** Okay, okay. (He is an absolute bourgeois, him.)
- Landau** We could hire artists.
- Gunther** (A storekeeper type, they let him loose on the Jews.)
- Landau** I don't mean hire, I mean command.
- Cleo** (Enslave!)
- Landau** I mean enslave. You could have one or more, and I could have one or more.
- Gunther** I'll need a few. I'll take a few.

- Cleo** (They could have any Jew they wanted.)
- Landau** You could have any Jew you want.
- Cleo** (For sex or whatever. Art.)
- Landau** I'm a family man myself, of course, as you know, and so on.
- Gunther** Yeah, yeah. (I know you, schemer and shopkeeper)
You know already who you want?
- Landau** Bruno Schulz!
- Gunther** It's okay.
- Landau** Fine with me.
- Gunther** Good. I'll take whatshisname, the schmuck whathisname, along with his wife and daughters.
- Landau** Good, good, good. Look at dis! Look out da window at dis!
- Gunther** Holy shit, Yids working in da garden!
- Landau** Yids working in da garden! I'll get my gun!
- Gunther** Get your gun, Landau! (He's a crackerjack shit, him!
I mean shot. He's always fatal, Landau, Landau is, to the Yids.)
- Landau** Bang! Bang!
- Gunther** Good shooting, Landau!
- Landau** Bang! Bang! Dere, dats enough, I killed four!
- Gunther** This is fun, Landau! This beats working any day!
This is not bad!
- Landau** Yeah, I'm gonna have him come in, paint the walls, do a few things.
- Gunther** Who's dat, Landau?
- Landau** Bruno Schulz!
- Gunther** Fine and good.
- Landau** Fair and square, even-steven, one potato, two.

Cleo What?

Landau Shake and a hug, Gunther.

Gunther Shake and a hug, Landau. (He's a fucking Viennese cabinet-maker, and his stepfather was a Jew, believe it or not.)

Landau (He was one of those guys, you know, he coughs and spits, he doesn't care who's next to him, he croaks and grunts and farts, my Dad Landau.)

Gunther (Now he's da Jew-killer of Drohobyz)

Landau (We can't stand each other. I mean me and Gunther.)

Emilio Bruno and his family, his mother and brother and his dwarf uncle, were moved to a room in the Ghetto. They were starving. (*MASK on*)

Bruno Still, the sky was the same and the light was the same. The air was the same. Still, I remembered my childhood, which had a luminous glow, while everyone I knew, the Jews of Drohobyz, were sick and dying or murdered. I was used to working for the government or the police. I had painted pictures of Stalin that were greatly admired.

Landau Bruno Schulz!

Bruno Yessir.

Landau I'll be your savior!

Bruno Good, sir. Good, good, good.

Landau I'll protect you, Schulz, and keep you alive, you little putz.

Bruno Thank you, sir.

Landau I like art. I'm an artist myself. So I'll spare you.

Bruno Thank you.

Landau I'll keep you alive. (*Pause*)

Bruno Nothing, sir.

Landau What do you mean, nothing?

Bruno Nothing to say, sir.

Landau Just as well. You'll paint some frescoes for my kid. In his room. Fairy tales, which you're good at. And you'll paint my portrait, me on my white horse, showing murderous determination and medieval chivalry, mixed. That'll be good.

Bruno Good, sir. (*Show picture of LANDAU on his horse*)

Landau You don't need to say anything.

Bruno No, sir.

Landau You're such a total masochist, you must enjoy humiliation. Bowing and scraping and groveling and eating shit. Am I right?

Bruno Right sir, totally right.

Landau That's another reason I want to keep you alive, You'll enjoy it and I'll enjoy it, too. That way I get to kill and save at the same time. And serve the Reich, and support art, and get my jollies and rewards and perks. Understand? You don't need to answer. So, that's it. Do you know fine carpentry? Measurement? The various woods? A fine finish? Nevermind. You wouldn't know. You're a high school shopteacher, a failure. Don't wince, Schulz. You like to be hammered verbally, yes, no reply needed, nor expected. You'll start tomorrow. Get a good night's sleep. You look like shit. You look like you won't make it through the night, Schulz. If you want, I'll kill the rest of your family so you can recuperate without people bothering you. Just a joke, Schulz. Don't speak. Stay out of the way. I don't want my kid to see you or hear you, and my girlfriend neither. She's a honeypie, Schulz. She'll only kick you around, smack you around, much to your

enjoyment I'm sure, but I want her to myself, Schulz. So, agreed? Just nod Yes, Schulz. What's in it for you? Survival, Schulz, a little bread and jam, a little soup, you won't starve to death right away, you can take something to your old mother and your brother and you dwarf cousin or whatever he is. Don't feel bad. My stepfather was weird, too, like my father. Big head, no manners, sloppy. Anyway. I didn't mean to talk so long. Something in me must like that. Get the fuck out, Schulz and come back in the morning.

- Emilio** (*Lowering MASK*) Bruno wanted to survive. They say he was completing his masterpiece, *Messiah*.
- Cleo** What does that mean, Messiah?
- Emilio** It means the coming of the Lord.
- Cleo** What does coming of the Lord mean?
- Jacko** Maybe the fullness of time or the ending of time.
- Emilio** Good, Jacko.
- Jacko** Don't tell me good.
- Emilio** Good, good, good.
- Jacko** You're not superior to me. You're not better than me.
- Emilio** Sorry.
- Jacko** That's why I said that.
- Cleo** And you don't know.
- Emilio** What?
- Cleo** What it means. The fullness of time or the ending of time. Neither one.
- Emilio** The important thing is what Bruno meant.
- Jacko** Which we will never know now.
- Cleo** Because the poor motherfucker never had time!
- Jacko** Because his manuscript was forever lost. (*FATHER MASK ON*)

Father Everything that goes into the ground is lost. It becomes dust, it becomes soil, it becomes fragments of air, of the sky. These fragments glisten like diamonds of another dimension, like jewels of the sun, jewels that can only be seen by giants, by masters of seeing, by seers.

Emilio (*BRUNO MASK on*) Father, I feel I will never see your grave again, never place a stone there and say a greeting. To feel my fingertips place lightly the little pebble, light as air, light as a grain of dust.

The next day and the days after Bruno Schulz got up and went to work for Felix Landau. (JACKO puts on LANDAU mask, CLEO puts on FATHER mask, EMILIO puts on BRUNO mask.)

Father Bruno.

Bruno Yes, Father.

Father We are energy, pure and simple, it swirls and rotates and serves. In our Good Book (praise His name), it is the fire of Moses at the burning bush. This is Messiah, a Holocaust from a higher world.

Bruno (*Falling to his knees*) Oh! Oh! Oh!

Landau Up, Bruno. Up, up, up. My girlfriend wants to take a glance at you. Don't look here, don't cower. She's not in the room. She can see you through my secret spy-hole. You can't find it, you can't see it. An example of superior German technology, Schulz, mirrors and wires and copper tubes. There, it's done. She saw you. You missed it, Schulz, a flickering light. We must humble ourselves

before women, Schulz. But of course you knew all that already. You can say something now, if you want.

Bruno I'm sorry.

Landau Is that all you can think of saying? At a time like this?
You fuckhead! You jerk!

Bruno I feel like there's a world behind the world, and there I stand between, balanced on a crack of ice. There I stand accused, like Kafka, of an eternal crime.

Landau Don't start thinking things, Bruno. It never works.
It's in your imagination. It's never true and it's never real.
This could lead to a nuthouse, Schulz.

Bruno Oh please, no!

Landau Sure, you want what you don't want. You're a candidate, Schulz, for head-squeezing. But I'll take care of you, I'll protect your rights.

Bruno Thank you.

Landau Not that you have any. You have no rights, none at all.

Gunther Knock, knock.

Landau WHO'S DERE?

Gunther IT'S GUNTHER.

Landau Come in.

Gunther What's that?

Landau Dat's Bruno Schulz, the author and artist. He will paint my walls.

Gunther He's filthy.

Landau Yes.

Gunther He's emaciated.

Landau Yes.

Gunther He'll die soon.

Landau Yes. Groan and croak.

Gunther I'm sure of it.

Landau What you want, Gunther?

Gunther I came to tell ya.

Landau What?

Gunther I came to tell ya to leave off.

Landau Leave off what?

Gunther My Jewess, my Sophie.

Landau It's not me. I wouldn't touch her.

Gunther Not you?

Landau I never touched her. Not that I wouldn't want to, believe me, she's a honey pie that one.

Gunther Who's touching her?

Landau No one I know, Landau.

Gunther (You fuck, you slime bag.)

Landau You feeding her? You protecting her?

Gunther You know I am, Landau.

Landau She comes out into the garden does she? Picks a few tomatoes, a cabbage, a parsley, and so on?

Gunther Yes. (You bag of slime.)

Landau I haven't shot her, have I? Look, she's out there now, little Sophie, tight little Sophie, bending over, and so on.

Gunther Don't touch her, Landau. That's all.

Landau I haven't shot her, have I? Look, I'll prove it. BANG! BANG! Two kids I got, they'll never get bar mitzvahed, Gunther. But Sophie's still there. Look. See her crouching there, in the dirt?

Gunther She's mine, Landau.

Landau Of course she is, Herr Gunther.

Gunther That's all. So I warn you (you stupid maggot-eating shit.)

- Landau** (You fucking her, Gunther? Because you couldn't get any on the straight, on the legit and legal?) She take care of you okay?
- Gunther** Nevermind. It's none of your business.
- Landau** Fine and good. I stand corrected. (And erected).
- Cleo** And so on and so forth.
- Gunther** That's all I have to say for now.
- Landau** Good luck in camp, Gunther.
- Gunther** Excuse me?
- Landau** I don't know why I said that.
- Gunther** Goodbye then.
- Landau** Where's the romance, Gunther? What happened to romance? Twilight in Paris, a small room, a girl. A narrow street, a light, a bistro. When life was full and sweet and erotic. Is it youth, Gunther? Has it gone away with our youth?
- Gunther** Never had it, Landau. (It's up your ass)
- Landau** Or is it myth, like this little Jew thinks it is?
- Gunther** Only in the movies, Landau, that's all.
- Landau** Good point, Gunther.
- Gunther** That's all. Remember what I said. (*MASK off*)
- Cleo** Hello again. Hi, there.
- Landau** You see how it is, Bruno? The women rule. The girl's on top, pussy reigns. Ah, she saw you! That's all right. Don't cringe. Stay where you are. Just a moment, Bruno, a moment in time, a flickering view, a peephole vista. You can relax now. Don't tiptoe around, don't cower like a mouse, or a rat. You know how it is, Bruno, after a city is bombed, the rats come out, and maggots as big as fists, and the stench can make a strong man faint. Ah, you

hear that, Schulz? A fake female giggle. She's behind one of these walls here. Watching. Don't freeze, Bruno. Go on with your work. I know you're sex-crazed, I know and she knows, Schulz. It's the way of things, it's the nature of things. You can't help it, it's not your fault.

Cleo And so on and so forth.

Landau You hear that? She's in the walls, Bruno, she's in the walls. Not Sophie. Sophie's out in the garden, as beautiful a maidel as you'll ever see, Bruno, but she belongs to that idiot clown, Gunther. She appears to be losing weight, unfortunately, by the hour, by the minute. It's my girlfriend I'm talking about, Masha, who likes to keep an eye out. For men she can crush, Bruno. Men with dicks. So I keep her locked up, when she isn't servicing me or my horse. Ha, ha. Just a joke. I'll be back in a minute. Meanwhile, try not to think about things.

(*MASK off. BRUNO draws as we hear his letter:*

Bruno My dear friends, I write to you from the brink of an abyss. I feel I am near death. Death is in my chest, in my limbs, in my brain. Perhaps it is no better where you are, but it is the end for the Jews of Drohobyz. Were it not for employment with the Jew-killer Landau, for which I earn two loaves of bread and a little soup for me and my family—once in a while a stinking Polish kielbasa, an apple—I would be finished by now. Still, my work is interesting and good. I draw fairy tales for the Landau piglet. It is what I used to do in school, and it comes naturally and easily, even though I can be murdered at any second. Can you secure for me a passport and the necessary papers? I need to leave here soon, very soon.

Regarding my literary work and the artistic folios, I am doing what I can to protect them, but the best thing of course is for me to get away from here. This would leave my family exposed to the packs of dogs and hyenas, but if I were free I might be able to do something. In this situation I can do nothing but watch as day by day they starve to death. Well, you know this terror, worse than anything in the Good Book of our fathers, perhaps in the history of mankind. I must add—

there are grace notes. The sky for example gives me great pleasure when I remember to look up. How I love the sky in all its permutations, day and night! The sky above gives deep satisfaction—color and movement!—and at the same time release, a moment's release from bondage that is biblical in its proportions, its dimension, a mythology to obscure all myth forever. For now I say goodbye, looking forward desperately to even a word or two from you so as to lighten even a little this immense captivity.

Yours always, Bruno Schulz.

(JACKO puts the LANDAU MASK back on)

Landau Anyway, you know what happens to the intellectuals, the artists, the poets, Schulz, they're too effete for this kind of thing. They don't last. We put 'em to work and they don't last. My girlfriend, Masha—that's her name, Masha, not to be confused with Gunther's Sophie, the garden wench who bends over to show me her cunt—was a teacher, Schulz, like you. She taught French literature, of all things. Baudelaire, Rimbaud. Now she's in the

walls. Masha in the walls, a sex slave. She won't last.
You know the saying, "the Jews are watching us?" The
question is, will the Jews be watching when they're all
gone, Schulz. You can stop and think about it now.
Think, Schulz. (*A pause while BRUNO thinks.*)

Bruno Yes.

Landau How so, you piece of shit, if they're gone from the face of
the earth?

Bruno From their vantage point in the sky, sir.

Cleo (*Hissing*) I SEE YOU. I SEE YOU.

Landau Hear that, Schulz?

Bruno No, Sir.

Landau That was Masha. (*Looking out "window"*) Ah, there she
is, my dear Bruno. Sophia!

Cleo (Don't confuse Masha and Sophia—Masha is in the
walls, Sophia is in the garden.)

Landau Come and look. Put down your paint and come and
look. There, Gunther's little slave. As you can see, he's
not feeding her. Sophie Horowitz I think it is. Do you
know her?

Bruno Not personally, sir.

Landau You don't know her from school?

Bruno No, sir.

Landau She's a teenager.

Bruno She didn't take shop or drawing, sir.

Landau She seems very nice. Don't you think so?

Bruno Yes, sir.

Landau Not like the rest of her brutish kind. You think?

Bruno No, sir.

Landau A certain gentility, a certain refinement.

Bruno She's from an old Hassidic family, sir.

Landau I should put her out of her misery. That would be the kind thing to do, I think. Don't you?

Bruno No, sir.

Landau (*Shouting*) Hey! Down there! You! Sophia! That's right, you!

Cleo (*SOPHIA MASK*) Please don't shoot, Herr Commandant!

Landau I just want to ask you something!

Sophia Please ask me, Sir.

Landau See how polite she is, Schulz? (*Shouting*) I want to ask you about your master, Lieutenant Gunther!

Sophia What, sir, please?

Landau What does he do to you?

Sophia He tortures me and rapes me, sir. He makes me do things.

Landau What things?

Sophia God forbid, sir.

Landau Does he feed you?

Sophia Yes, sir, thank God.

Landau Leave God out of this. In this instance, I am God. This is the Reich. What does he feed you?

Sophia Carrots and radishes, sir. And sometimes soup.

Landau Anything else you want to say?

Sophia Thank God, sir. Praise God.

Landau What is this God thing with you people? Go back to work! Dig, do your onions or whatever the fuck it is you do down there!

Sophia Thank you for not shooting, sir!

Landau Dig! No more talking! (*SOPHIA mask off*) Still here, Schulz?

Bruno Not dismissed, sir.

Landau Dismissed. Go home, Schulz. Your day is done. (*BRUNO hesitates*) Back to the ghetto, Schulz! What are you waiting for?

Cleo Food, you scumbag!

Landau Oh. Masha! Masha! Where's this idiot's food? Masha! (*Two loaves of bread are pushed out of the "walls."*) There. Crawl. (*BRUNO crawls toward the bread.*)

Cleo (*GUNTHER mask*) I see you got your Jew working.

Landau Yes, I do. (*They watch him crawl*)

Gunther He's a good crawler, this Jew.

Landau Yes, he is, isn't he? And an artist, too. Look.

Gunther Oh, my. He's good. He is good. What do you call that?

Landau Art.

Gunther No, I know that, I mean what style.

Landau This is a fresco. (He knows nothing about style.) It's his own style. The Jew's a genius. He's also got a book he wrote hidden somewhere. Maybe in the walls. It's called *Messiah*.

Gunther Burn the house down, then.

Landau Later. I live here now. Obviously. (*BRUNO crawls off with the bread.*) So. What brings your awful presence?

Gunther The shit is hitting the fan, Landau.

Landau What shit? What fan?

Gunther The police and the soldiers. They want action.

Landau Restless are they?

Gunther Yes, things are getting out of control.

Landau All right.

Gunther All right?

Landau Time for an action.

Gunther Action, Landau?

Landau That's me, Gunther, a man of action.

Gunther What are you doing?

Landau I'm loading my rifle, Gunther.

Gunther Don't start something, Landau.

Landau But something has to be started. Didn't you just say that?

Gunther Not exactly. (Oh, God—what have I done?)

Landau No going back now, Gunther.

Gunther Wait a minute, Landau. Wait! Not Sophie!

Landau BANG! BANG!

Gunther Not SOPHIE!

Landau Too late, Gunther. Now it's done I can't take it back.
Don't you find that strange?

Gunther YOU KILLED MY JEWESS! YOU WILL PAY FOR THIS!

Landau Very strange. Blood will run in the streets now, blood is soaking into the garden. What once was Sophie, splattered all over the vegetables. You wonder what a human being is, don't you?, what it's for, how it came to be. Sky above, earth below, Sophie's gone, she'll never know... and so on and so forth. (*Masks off*)

Bruno was on his way home, and Gunther went looking for him, killing people on his way, killing Jews, enjoying himself, enjoying his frenzy, enjoying the spectacle,—a spontaneous shooting spree by the Germans, the army and the police, the bureaucrats and the functionaries running all over the place shooting Jews, chasing them into alleys and apartments and shops, into doorways and halls, on the street—it was like shooting rats, but Gunther was looking all around for Bruno.

- Cleo** Who is walking down Cyacky street.
- Jacko** On Mickewitz and Cyacky
See-Ah-Kee.
- Cleo** Right on the corner. (*Resumes GUNTHER MASK.*
They mime the following)

Hunched over, eyes on the ground, Bruno Schulz walks down Cyacky street in the Dro-ho-byz ghetto carrying two loaves of bread, when Gunther traps him against the wall and shoots him twice in the head.

BANG! BANG!

Again.

Hunched over, eyes on the ground, Bruno Schulz walks down Cyacky street in the Dro-ho-byz ghetto carrying a loaf of bread, when Gunther traps him against the wall and shoots him twice in the head.

BANG! BANG!

Again.

Hunched over, eyes on the ground, Bruno Schulz walks down Cyacky street in the Dro-ho-byz ghetto carrying a loaf of bread, when Gunther traps him against the wall and shoots him twice in the head.

BANG! BANG!

Emilio He was buried that night in the Jewish cemetery of Drohobycz and his bones were never found.

And so, and so.

The End