

REWINDING THE WAR

A PLAY

BY

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AND

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Rewinding the War is a play in five acts.

The action is set in 2014, and much of what happens (particularly in the first 3 acts) is connected with the 100th anniversary of the outbreak of the First World War (in 1914).

The play is set therefore, in a certain way, in two different times – 1914 and 2014.

At the heart of the play is the need for Western, Central and Eastern Europe (including Russia) to be in full and harmonious interrelationship, and for their different and complementary qualities to be recognized and enabled to develop. The possibility of this was destroyed by the First World War and today, in 2022, is being even further destroyed. The aim of '*rewinding the war*' relates to how we might find a way 'back', in future, to such a harmonious interrelationship.

The play is therefore set, in the first three acts, in three different places – London (West), Berlin (Middle) and Sarajevo (East).

One of the characters, Marko, refuses merely to 'commemorate' the First World War, hoping to make people realize that: "we're not remembering a war, we're still in it, the same one, and it'll go on for ever until we change it." He makes the decision therefore to go "to where the war is happening now... to Ukraine".

The action therefore moves, in Act Four, to Odessa in Ukraine.

In 2014, when the play was written, the world's attention was focussed on Ukraine, as the "Maidan Revolution" (Feb 2014) had just taken place on the streets of Kiev. The world's attention is focussed there even more urgently now, in 2022, and so Marko's words (above) and the play remain, unfortunately, highly pertinent to today.

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CHARACTERS

LONDON

Norman Armitage – a journalist

James Zacchary – an old friend of Norman's, who has offices in Ukraine

Jemima Zacchary – a senior television news presenter in the UK

Charles – a person of high influence in the overall direction of UK policy

Paul – Norman's secretary

SARAJEVO

Vida Dragic – a spiritually-minded dancer, who is married to Marko

Zoran Zelko – a friend and colleague of Vida and Marko

Marko Dragic – a performance artist and activist, who is also an actor (and plays the role of Helmuth von Moltke in the play being put on in Berlin.)

BERLIN

Elsa – a theatre director, who is creating a new play about the causes of World War One. It is to be performed in good theatres in several capital cities of Europe.

Jorg – a friend of Elsa's and an actor in the company.

Andreas – an actor in the company.

Wilhelm – an actor in the company.

Klaudia – an actress in the company. (The same actress can play Klaudia and Jemima Zacchary.)

THE PLAY WITHIN THE PLAY

Elsa's play is called 'War Guilt' and is based on authentic historical documents. Rehearsals of several scenes from it intersperse 'Rewinding the War'. The following characters (from the time of the First World War) appear in the play, after the names of the actors in Elsa's company who play each character.

Jorg – Archduke Franz Ferdinand; Prince Lichnowsky; Alfred, Lord Milner; the Kaiser.

Andreas – Gavrilio Prinzip; the British Foreign Minister, Sir Edward Grey; Bethman-Hollweg, the German Chancellor; C.H. Norman.

Wilhelm – the governor of Sarajevo, Potiorek; driver; Bertrand Russell; Minister for War; (in Act Five) Rudolf Steiner.

Klaudia – Sophie Chotek; Nora, Edward Grey's secretary.

Marko – Helmuth von Moltke, Head of German Army at beginning of WW1.

Elsa – (in Act Five) Eliza von Moltke, widow of Helmuth von Moltke.

REWINDING THE WAR

by Richard Ramsbotham and Gino Paccagnella

ACT ONE

SCENE ONE

BERLIN

A THEATRE

*Scene begins in stress – it is outside Sarajevo Town Hall – June 28th, 1914:
immediately after the first assassination attempt – a bomb thrown at their car.*

Potiorek/Wilhelm: Your excellency, we welcome you here with love and devotion.

Franz Ferdinand/Jorg: Love and devotion! As you all know, I have wished to bring peace to these lands – to create harmony between the Austrian, Hungarian and Slavic lands – my heart is bound to this as to my wife, Sophie – but we come here to Sarajevo – on this day so fraught with history, trying to bring peace – and are greeted with... bombs! It's outrageous. There is no future if we cannot bury these differences."

He gets in the car with Sophie.

Franz Ferdinand/Jorg (*a bit worried*): 'What on earth's going on?'

The one holding the door/Wilhelm – 'Excuse me your Excellency, no one had told the driver of the change of route. We must reverse – and go back along the river.'

Franz Ferdinand: But we're almost stationary! What are you doing?

Gavrilo Princip appears – with a revolver.

Franz Ferdinand: Oh my God! No! No!

Gavrilo Princip shoots twice - both Franz Ferdinand and Sophie fall

Franz Ferdinand: Sophie, please don't die. Not you... for the children.

They collapse – and perhaps the car too – leading to giggles:

Andreas: It's not going to work. It's ridiculous, Elsa. We'll be laughed out of the theatre.

Elsa: It's not ridiculous. Everyone always tries to make it sound like some completely random event, that *just so happened* to set the events in motion that led to the First World War. But who were they? (*Helping Nora and Jorg to get up.*) Our murdered couple. Were they really so random? What did they want that was so dangerous? (*Turning towards Andreas:*) And what about you, Gavrilo Princip? A puppet, presumably. (*Perhaps she pretends to control him by puppet strings.*) But where did all the strings lead to? You're so pathetically thin. Could you really have triggered a world war? Then who did? That's what we need to show.

Andreas: I don't understand.

Elsa: I know.

Jorg: But we know who was pulling the strings. The Black Hand.

Elsa: Silence, Franz Ferdinand, you're dead.

Elsa is looking around

Nora: (*getting up.*) So am I, but what do you want Elsa? How else could we do it?

Elsa: I don't know. But we're artists.

Nora: So?

Elsa: So we can't just repeat some endlessly repeated story and call it art. We have to make what's invisible visible. That's our job. Show people the inside of what's happening.

Nora: How do we do that? With something like this. It's a permanently imprinted image on everyone's consciousness. Like 9/11.

Elsa: Exactly. So we have to go back before it was imprinted. We're not showing history – handed down stories – we want to show it in the process of becoming. As a *present* happening.

Andreas: So what we just did was ridiculous?

Elsa: Maybe, Gavrilo. But we can't bypass the assassination. It *did* trigger everything that came afterwards. But what was *really* going on? What was it really like for you all?

Elsa: How do you act someone who knows they're going to their own death?

Franz Ferdinand/Jorg: Did I?

Elsa: Very well indeed. It had even been announced in a Paris newspaper. You gave a friend of yours the names of certain Austrian and Hungarian politicians who knew your death had been decreed. Seven weeks before, (while your wife was putting your children to bed,) you told your nephew, Karl, that your assassination would be very soon now. When he told you not to be silly, you told him it could not be stopped, that you had made all the necessary arrangements, and even prepared your tomb.

So, if they knew in Austria – and in Paris – that your death had been decreed – it makes it a bit odd, to say the least, that our little puppet Gavrilo Princip

was only being controlled from Serbia. It doesn't make sense – and we have to make sense – that's what art does...

Princip/Andreas: But I didn't know that. I knew about the Black Hand, but nothing else...

Elsa: Of course you didn't. But how did it feel?

Princip/Andreas: It was all in slow motion. Like it wasn't me. Like the world stood still... And I was right in the middle of this whole massive drama... and I was just a player, watching it...

Elsa: Good! So that's what we want to see. It's much more interesting.
And what about you, Sophie?

Sophie/Nora: Me?

Elsa: Why did you go with him?

Sophie/Nora: Sorry?

Elsa: You weren't meant to. You were meant to stay in the Town Hall. That's what was planned. But you suddenly changed your mind. Said you didn't want to be separated from him. That you'd go wherever he went. So you chose your own death.

Sophie/Nora: Well, I didn't know...

Elsa: No, not with your normal mind... but it's what you did... So in that moment, when you chose to stay with him, you chose to die with him... and somewhere, in some little part of us, we need to feel that...

Sophie/Nora: Deep!

Elsa: I'm not trying to be deep. I'm just trying to be artistically true.

Wilhelm: But what are you trying to prove?

Elsa: I'm not trying to prove anything. It's 2014. Everywhere you look someone's trying to prove something about the war. And we're not. We're just trying to make it live. And lies and handed-down images don't live. They're like stones. So they have no place here. (This is the theatre.) So how about we see the preparations? Gavrilo Princip – Gabriel the First – who gave you the first orders? Who might they be? Improvise them making the decree... decreeing that he must die... Why? What what's the real reason? Then find how the order gets to you... The one who walks up to the car and fires the gun. Franz Ferdinand, improvise first finding out about this... your fears... having your worst fears confirmed, beyond all doubt... and preparing your own grave. And Sophie, you agree to go with him.

Each makes a small start with these improvisations

Elsa: Good. So that's the beginning. Next time we'll go back before the beginning. To 1904... Ten years earlier... And we'll see those who would take England and Germany into war. Andreas will become our English Edward Grey. And you'll meet Marko, our Helmuth von Moltke.

Wilhelm: Where is he now?

Elsa: Where do you think? Sarajevo.

SCENE TWO
SARAJEVO
CAFÉ ON STREET

Marko and Vida. Together with friends of theirs

Vida: So... let's just do the opening for him, shall we?

Zoran: *(with a smile):* What, here?

Vida: Yes, why not? It's as good as anywhere.

Zoran: Ok. But you should be dressed as a soldier.

Vida: I know.

(Ideally the following piece would be accompanied by some kind of dance.)

Vida: "The world is giving birth to a new time. I dream of a new Europe. So let us still remain soldiers after the war. For we are fighting, in this war, despite what is being said by the newspapers and politicians, not against guns or armies, or any outer enemy, but against the poison in us all, the using up of the world (*Die Ausnutzung der Welt*), against utilitarianism in all forms, the inner invisible enemy of the European spirit. Yes:

*The scribes and politicians shove
And bawl allegiance to the state.
But those who love the greater love
Lay down their life, they do not hate."*

Vida: What do you think? You like it?

Marko: It's very powerful. Like everything you do. Who wrote it?

Vida: The German Franz Marc and the Englishman Wilfred Owen. They both died in the war.

Marko: Franz Marc, the painter?

Vida: Yes. We want to do something different for the war centenary – create a conversation between the true voices of the artists from all sides. And Marko... please... we want to ask if you'd be part of it... It needs a really strong performer at the centre of it... Then it could really be heard.

Marko: Oh, come off it, Vida.

Vida: What do you mean?

Marko: You know I don't do this kind of thing.

Zoran has been holding out strong hopes that Marko would join them. He knows it could gain them funding for the piece, as well as greater interest, bigger venues, etc.

Zoran: But we can do it differently. We can do it any way you want.

Marko: Sorry, but I don't do memory pieces.

Zoran (*heated*): How can you say that about Vida's work? Didn't you like it? Look. There's going to be so much attention on Sarajevo – and we could make something very special – something that can speak for all wars.

Marko: You can do whatever you want, Zoran. (*Zoran probably deflated from this point on.*) But you've no right to talk to me about Vida's work. As for me, I do something different.

Zoran: Which is?

Marko: It's not enough for me just to do artistic work.

Zoran: But you're such a brilliant actor. It's who you are.

Marko (*towards anger*): It's not who I am. It's what I do – sometimes. And I'm already in a play about the war - in Germany – it'll touring all over the place. But here!! No. *Here* - something *would need to happen*.

Zoran (*somewhat interested*): Like what?

Marko: I don't know. But the war's never stopped here, has it? You can still feel it everywhere. So I'm not going to do some happy little memorial at some charity event.

Vida: How dare you call it that. You've no idea what really changes things. Artists have changed more than a million activists.

Marko: Ok, Vida, ok. (*He comes up to her – maybe touches her cheek.*)

I'm sorry. You know I love your work. I just can't stand this stuff about World War One. Seems like a kind of victor's parade. Franz Marc's right – about needing to remain soldiers... and fight the 'invisible enemy' now.

Vida: And do what?

Marko: Whatever it takes.

SCENE THREE

LONDON

A SMART FLAT

The flat of James and Jemima Zacchary.

At the start Vladimir Putin should be visible on television screen.

James: It's the Cold War all over again. That's what it's all about. And he knows very well that if he can keep Ukraine as part of Russia, then Russia can be a superpower again. Unbelievable, isn't it, that he thinks he can just walk over other countries – and get away with it?

Norman: So what do you think should happen there?

James: Well, free elections, for one thing. And the rule of law. And stop it being run from Moscow. Put in some decent structures – and it can start being part of the rest of Europe.

Norman: So the West should step in and show them what to do?

James: But it's what they all want. Some proper leadership – to show them how else the country could be run.

Norman: It's double standards, James. Russia's an evil old-style invader, but if there's a complete Western takeover, well, that's people's own free choice?

James: It's not a takeover – they're just choosing to be like everyone else.

Norman: Choosing? They *chose* the last president – in an election – but now, apparently, it's democracy to have violent, bloody revolution on the streets.

James: You've got no idea how people actually feel there. Let's change the subject. We're never going to agree about this.

Norman: But why not, James? We've managed to stay friends all these years – we must have *some* common ground?

James: Well, we're both interested in exactly the same things and places... but from a completely different side. You're a kind of national traitor, Norman... In the war, you'd have been shot! (*Laughs.*)

Norman (*really shocked at this*): It's not funny, James. I'm not interested in being on anyone's side. I just want to find out what's *right*. And what *isn't* right is the West forcing the whole world to accept its agenda.

James: Exactly what I meant. In the First World War you'd have been shot. Jemima's completely inside World War One at the moment – you might have seen her programmes?

Norman: Yes, of course I have.

James: And now some people are trying to say that Germany wasn't responsible for the war. But of course she was – and needed to be stopped. And was stopped. And now look at her. She's an example to the rest of Europe.

Norman: I'm doing whole next issue of the journal on World War One – so maybe we should leave it. Though what do you think of this new abuse of the war poets – making out they've been a negative influence on people – I suppose you think the poets are traitors too, do you?

James: Look, I was joking. Of course you're not a traitor. The war poets? It's very moving stuff, I know... But maybe it was too much, what they said. Politically.

Norman: Shame on you. Don't you remember reading Wilfred Owen at school? Maybe that was the one place we agreed. You loved him as much as I did.

James: Golly, yes. It's years, though, since I've read him. I should have another look.

Norman: Come on, James, back to Ukraine. You've got offices there – you know far more about it than I do – are you seriously telling me the revolution just happened spontaneously – with no Western interference?

James: Well, we've supported the changes, of course.

Norman: What do you mean "supported"? Watching it or bringing it about?

James: Watching... yes... then supporting the people we want to see in place.

Norman: I'm not an idiot, James. You know as well as I do a revolution like that can't happen without massive organisation and funding. The EU even run training now in 'facebook revolutions'.

James: (*Knows he's losing.*) Rubbish! The whole country wanted the President gone.

Norman: Well, it certainly wasn't the whole country. And even if lots of people *did* want change, would it ever have led to all-out revolution in the streets, without Western backing?

James: Of course it would.

Norman: I don't believe you.

James: (*says nothing.*)

Norman: You know the whole situation there. Would you swear on oath that organisations like yours have done nothing to try and bring these changes about?

James: Swear?... well.... no... our offices have been working flat out on this for months... in a manner of speaking... trying to keep up with the changes.

Norman: Finally! Thank you. And what about actually sparking the revolution – on the streets? How does that happen?"

James: I don't know.

Norman: Really?

James: What are you trying to suggest, Norman? You saw what happened. The police were shooting randomly at peaceful protesters. Of course they were going to fight back.

Norman: And the snipers?

James: What are you referring to?

Norman: You must have heard about it. The leaked conversation describing how the same snipers shot both policemen and protesters. (*Gets out document and hands it to James.*) Look – these are photos of the bodies. And these are a doctor’s words who examined them:

James (*reads*): “It is the same handwriting, the same type of bullets.”

Norman: Yes. And what did our high English lady say, right at the top of security in the region? “That’s interesting. Gosh.” Whose is the handwriting, James? That’s what I want to know. Huh?

James: (*Extremely uncomfortable now.*) You’re ridiculous, Norman. But I tell you – you can say this stuff to me – but don’t you dare speak one word about it to anyone else. Do you hear me?

Norman doesn’t reply.

James: Anyway, you’ve got to be going now. Jemima’s about to get back – and we’re going out. And you and her have hardly ever...

Norman: No we haven’t. We’re different universes. You married a powerful lady, James.

James (*with a slight laugh, but giving Norman his coat*): Well, you haven’t changed much, have you? Good to see you. Give my love to your parents.

Norman: I will. Thanks. Good to see you too. I'll send you our world war one issue when it's ready.

James: I look forward to seeing it. Ok then...

The door clicks. Jemima is back.

Under his breath, James sighs.

James: Norman's still here. He was just going.

Jemima (*reaching out her hand*): I can see. Hello, Norman.

Norman: Hello.

Norman: I've been watching your programmes on the War.... We're busy with it too.

Jemima: Everyone is. Well...

Norman: I hope you don't mind my saying this. But there *were* a few inaccuracies in your opening programme.

James: Come on, Norman. Just send us a copy of the journal.

Jemima: What inaccuracies?

Norman: Well, for one thing you said that there were no significant events taking place in Germany about the First World War.

Jemima: Well are there?

Norman: Yes, there are actually. Well one anyway. There's a play being put on – called "*Die Schuld am Kriege*" - 'War Guilt' – that will be touring several capitals in Europe.

Jemima: It's all right, James. We've still got a few minutes. And I suppose *you* are somehow involved in this play?

Norman: Me? Not at all, no. It'll be opening in Berlin in August. With a German female director. I only know about it because a Bosnian friend of mine is in it, playing Helmuth von Moltke. Here's the flyer he sent me.

Jemima (*reads*): "A play that challenges popular opinion about World War One – overturning the lasting image of Germany's "sole guilt" – and examining, among other things, English-speaking responsibility for the war. Based on authentic, rarely quoted documents." Hmm.

Norman: Well, don't you think you should give it some coverage?

Jemima: No. We've quite enough already. My people will be in touch with you. Goodbye.

She walks away.

Norman: Goodye. Bye James.

It's very frosty. Norman leaves. Norman turns round.

James: Bye.

Jemima (*furious*): How dare you have him here when I get back? That was your plan, was it?

James: No, of course not, he just turned up. I could hardly just shut the door on him. He's one of my oldest friends. Despite his views. He was our best man!

Jemima: I know he was. Why else do you think I'd have done him such a favour?

James: But... do you think it was wise?

Jemima: Oh, what can he say in a few minutes? And he's right, we do need to mention some other voices. So people can see them for what they are. But I can't stand him. And I never want to find him here again, do you understand? Sorry, James!

ACT TWO
SCENE ONE
BERLIN
A THEATRE

The Coefficients Dining Club – London – about 1904. Very smart London hotel in St. James’s – St. Ermin’s Hotel. Present are: Edward Grey; Halford Mackinder; Alfred Lord Milner and Bertrand Russell (who has some characteristics of H.G. Wells).

Elsa: So... are we ready to go? St. Ermin’s hotel, London. 1904. Very posh. Surrounded by Scotland Yard, the Home Office and MI5. The chink of crystal and the shine of silver. Even today, proud of its links to the British Intelligence Community. Back then, the regular meeting place of the “Coefficients”, a dining club of some of the most influential ‘gentlemen’ in the land. Too many for our small cast. So, can we first just say who we are?

Jorg (*steps forward*): Alfred, Lord Milner.

Elsa: Yes – Milner was a freemason – later a member of the War Cabinet - and founder of the Round Table – and you also speak the views of another of the Co-Efficients, Halford Mackinder, England’s political geographer. Wilhelm...

Wilhelm (*steps forward*): Bertrand Russell.

Elsa: Yes – and with a few trait of H.G. Wells. And finally Andreas...

Andreas (*steps forward*): Sir Edward Grey.

Elsa: Sir Edward Grey, who as Foreign Minister 10 years later will take England into war.

Each smiles as he is mentioned.

Elsa: Any questions?

Jorg: The words are a bit awkward, Elsa. It might all sound very stilted.

Elsa: It doesn't matter. These guys *were* stilted. Most of it is direct quotation. Just make it as natural sounding as you can. Sir Edward's getting towards the end of his speech – about joining with France against Germany – which so outraged Bertrand Russell. Immediately after this section Sir Edward Grey's secretary, Nora, takes us straight to 1914 and the meeting with the German ambassador on the brink of war.

They nod slightly – being ready to start.

Elsa: So. St. Ermin's hotel, St. James's. 1904. Go...

Grey: (*closing his speech*): "A united Germany...aspires to deprive us of our position on the ocean...Great Britain is therefore confronted with the development of a new sea power founded on the same economic basis as herself, and impelled by a desire to be supreme. But *l'océan ne comporte qu'un seul maître*. (The ocean can only have one master.) We have secured in the past the sovereignty of the seas, and our sceptre cannot be wrested from us without a desperate and bloody struggle... Germany is already stronger at sea than either France or Russia. It may be as well for them, therefore, to make up their minds what they might gain if the German eagle replaced the Union Jack as the symbol of sea power.

We approach the delicate question of our relations with Russia with considerable diffidence, but of all countries in the world the Power which would have most reason to rue the substitution of Germany for Great Britain as the mistress of the seas would be Russia.

For the objective of those ambitious dreamers known as the Pan-Germanic League is the supersession of the *Slav* by the *Teuton*.

An *entente* between us and Russia would, I am sure you would agree, not only be for the advantage of civilisation, but would also bring us back into friendly relations with France –

Should Russia wish to come to us, we shall certainly meet her cordially... If, on the other hand, Russia and France choose to combine with Germany in an attempt to replace our sovereignty by that of Germany, then England will know how to meet them. We seek no quarrel with any Power but if one is forced one upon us, we shall not shrink from the ordeal... Germans would... do well to realise that if England is driven to it, England will strike home....Let them be clear that in a conflict with Great Britain, misery would be caused to large classes of the German population, through far-reaching commercial depression leading to total financial collapse.”

[Verbatim from ABC Memorandum – Published in National Review, 1901 – co-authored by Grey.]

Milner: Bravo, Edward. At last Britain is having the courage to call things by their true name. Though I trust you weren't serious speaking of France and Russia joining forces with Germany. Our friend Halford Mackinder's put it clearly enough: (*reads*) 'If Germany were to ally herself with Russia, the empire of the world would be in sight. West Europe must therefore oppose itself to any Power attempting to unite the resources of Eastern Europe with the 'pivot-region' or heartland of Europe and the world." Britain and France have long been opposed to Russia becoming such a dominating force and *even more* to German domination. Thus we must enter into as strong an agreement as possible with France... (*Something else slips in now*): And besides... it is our task, is it not... to ensure... in future... that Russia falls more and more under our... tutelage.

Bertrand Russell: This is outrageous. These policies of yours will unquestionably lead to war. Where have you dreamed them up? You treat whole cultures and peoples like little counters in some game, that nothing in the world will stop you from winning. What's possessed you? I thought the aim of this illustrious club was to shine light on the needs of the world, so we can be of some help, not to make the whole world in our image.

Milner: Mr. Russell – we do indeed wish to be of quite especial benefit to the world. But we are not cosmopolitans (*from Milner's 'Credo'*); nor have ever aspired to

be. We clearly recognize it as part of our duty and heritage to ensure the world bears the stamp of our people and not that of any other. (Quotation from Lord Rosebery.)

Russell (*very uncomfortable*): This is grotesque imperialism.

Milner: Do you not value the Empire – and its infinite benefit for mankind?

Russell: There are a thousand things I value above empire. Freedom for one thing. Why on earth should anyone ‘bear the stamp of our people’? This is national egotism. (*Losing his cool now.*) I’d happily wreck the whole Empire before seeing one person sacrifice their freedom.

Milner: This is intolerable.

Russell: It certainly is. I’m warning you. This can only lead to war. You’re spouting the same policies as those Saturday Review articles. “Be ready to fight Germany – as Germany must be destroyed.” Is that what you all want? Braggings of Empire – but just shamelessly serving your own interests.

Grey (*gets up*): Enough, Bertrand. Enough.

Russell: Yes, Mr. Grey, It’s more than enough. I *resign* from your little Coefficients Club. Little children jockeying for war.

Milner and Mackinder rise angrily to their feet.

Russell: Sorry, gentlemen, I don’t do fighting... It’s all right... I’ll go easily, governor. No need to push me. I’m gone.

Straight into Nora – Edward Grey’s secretary – ten years later.

Nora: Well, poor little Edward Grey. He never was very bright, you see. It always seemed to me that he didn’t have one thought in his head. But he took us into war! Funny that, isn’t it. Maybe it was someone else’s thoughts, I don’t know. I mean look at that that ABC document Bertrand Russell was so furious about. It’s got Edward Grey’s signature to it all right. So he must have signed it, maybe he even writ it out – but *thought* it, himself? That wasn’t really his way. “No one at home” I used to say, sometimes – “no one at home today, is

there, Mr. Grey?" And I think he thought it was quite funny. But other days, when there was someone else around, he suddenly seemed to know what he was – and he was very, very good at *sounding* just like the other person. Which is why, in the end, I think he was dangerous. You never knew who was leading him. But someone was. Otherwise how could little Mr. Grey have taken us into war?

Perhaps I was the only person in the world who actually witnessed how this happened. Right on the very brink of war, August 1st, 1914, Mr. Grey was visited by the German ambassador, Mr. Lichnowsky, who was all flustered – like it was the last chance or something, which it probably was. And I could hear the whole conversation through the door.

SCENE WITH LICHNOWSKY AND GREY

Nora: Good morning, Prince Lichnowsky – Sir Edward is expecting you.

Lichnowsky: Thank you.

He moves past and encounters Edward Grey.

Lichnowsky: Good morning, Foreign Minister.

Grey: Good morning, ambassador. Do take a seat.

Lichnowsky: Thank you. But I shall stand if I may. We face matters of gravest consequence. With armies massing everywhere, Europe is a tinder-box – one false move and it could explode. Mr Grey, if Germany gives her promise *not* to violate Belgian neutrality, could Britain promise *not* to enter the conflict, on the side of France, and to remain neutral?

Grey: Prince Lichnowsky... Hnnn... Britain's hands are still free. What our attitude will be on all these disturbing events is not yet clear, and will largely be decided by public opinion. So, on the grounds alone that you mention, no, ambassador, we would not, as such, be in a position to offer the assurance you are looking for.

Lichnowsky: Then what would it take? There will be fighting. That is clear. But it could still – Mr Grey, it must! – remain localized. If Britain enters the fray, it could begin a war from which Europe will never recover. Name the conditions for England to remain neutral. Whatever they would be. If Germany would promise not to attack France - despite France's ceaseless warmongering would guarantee her integrity - would this satisfy our British friends? And enable you to remain neutral?

Grey: Prince Lichnowsky, Britain's involvement on the continent... is her own affair. I can give you no promises on these or any other terms. How can we know how things will turn out?

Lichnowsky: Then nothing we can say or do can make any difference?

Grey: Perhaps that is how it appears to you. I can only repeat myself. We must keep our hands free. Good morning.

Lichnowsky: Goodbye.

They come out of their roles.

Lichnowsky actor: So go on, tell me, Edward – for what?

The actor playing Grey: I beg your pardon?

Lichnowsky actor: Well come on, it was 100 years ago... and we're both dead now – so tell me, Lord Grey, keep your hands free *for what?*

Grey: Well.. err...

Lichnowsky: Or let me put it this way. If you had spoken differently, world war one might never have happened. At that moment, Edward, it was in your power to stop it. One word from you – and everything could have been different. So why didn't you speak? Why didn't you give any conditions? I don't understand.

Nora: Thing is, you see - he never actually even mentioned your conversation to the cabinet – when they were discussing whether to go to war.

Lichnowsky: What?!!

Nora: Not a word. People still don't even mention it much today. But one or two people, when they did find out, were furious, and asked Grey in Parliament why he'd rejected all your proposals.

Lichnowsky: And what did he answer?

Nora: You might not want to know, Mr. Lichnowsky. What he said was, that you weren't acting on any authority, that you and he was just having a private chat. That what you'd said to him didn't actually have any relevance for the war.

Lichnowsky: (*crushed*): Good God! But you could have stopped the whole thing.

Grey (*walks out. As he passes Lichnowsky*): 'Sorry old chap!'

Elsa: Mmm. Excellent. I like that conversation. Let's leave it in.

SCENE TWO
SARAJEVO
FLAT OF MARKO AND VIDA

*In the midst of a party that Marko and Vida have put on for Norman,
who is visiting them.*

Zoran: So what brings you here? Something special. Just a holiday?

Norman: Not quite a holiday, no. Though it's wonderful to be here again – I was here just before the war – in 1992 - unforgettable... that's when I met

Marko and Vida – no, I’m very busy with issues around world war one – I run a magazine – and I wanted to meet up with Marko – about the play he’s doing – and I thought, well, it all started here, the first world war, so maybe it’s important to be here 100 years later.

Norman: Maybe you don’t want to talk about it here, Marko, but how’s the play going?

Marko: It’s ridiculous. Well no – it’s quite amazing, in fact - and very bold, for Germany. But why on earth anyone ever thought that I should play the head of the German army - Helmuth von Moltke – well, that’s ridiculous, isn’t it? A crazy Bosnian artist as the leading Prussian general? Have you seen a picture of him? Look at the hat he wears?

*He puts on some kind of object into which he inserts a sharp point
and then mocks part of the line from the film ‘Gladiator’.*

Marko: “Commander of the armies of the North – loyal servant to the true Emperor.”

Vida (*takes hat off him*): You’re in no position to mock, Marko. Von Moltke’s a far greater individual than that. He’s very special.

Marko: Oh?! And since when did you know so much about him? You’ve never said a word.

Vida: I hardly know anything. Just your script. But I can feel it from how he speaks. Maybe the director wanted people to look at him differently.

Marko: Well, she’ll achieve that.

Norman: Do you think I could see the script sometime?

Marko: Noone’s meant to see it before the opening.

Norman: I understand – but maybe there’s something you can say about it?

Marko: Yes, I don’t think she’ll mind. We’ll look at it tomorrow.

Norman: Is this it here?

Looking at tall stack of papers

Marko: That lot – no – that’s just – *(he’s getting little drunker now)* – I don’t know – odd pieces about Sarajevo – take a look – yeah, some of that might interest you... Anyway, see you soon... Helmuth von Moltke’s craving a little fresh air – *pulls out a cigarette* - and the night sky... Daswidania! *(Leaves the room.)*

Vida: It’s beautiful you’re here, Norman... And for Marko too. It’s been so many years, eh? Since you were here. We were so young. But we sensed something, didn’t we?

Norman: They were special days... what was it? A week or two... But they’re still a big part of my life.

Vida: And so much has happened since. But we’re still the same underneath, aren’t we?

Norman: I hope so. Though the world’s a whole lot faster...

Vida *(jumps up maybe):* Not as fast as we are... When you’re a dancer, Norman, you can make time do what you want... you can even stop it altogether sometimes.

Norman: I’d love to see something you do. Is there anything you could show me?

Vida: Like what?

Norman: Anything... something Bosnian, maybe?

Vida: Yes, ok, this is a new piece I've been working on.

*One day you'll come
And reduce my city to rubble
Savagely saying*

*It is razed
And razed
Its faithless
Faith*

*But then you'll be amazed
To hear me walking through
The city again*

*Secret and sly
You'll burn my home to the ground
But by a miracle I will still be dreaming here on earth
(Like a watchman
Forbidding others to dream or think)
You'll laugh and roar
That I am
No more*

*But you know nothing
About the icy well
From which
I drink*

Marko: (*comes back in*): What's that?

Vida: It's a Mak Dizdar poem.

Marko: I've never heard it before. I love it. What's it called?

Vida: Message.

Marko: That's exactly what it is. Is that all of it?

Vida: No, there's lots more of it, but....

Norman is meanwhile mesmerized by the C.H. Norman passages.

Norman: Sorry, Marko – but where did you get this??

Marko: Why?

Norman: I thought I'd read everything about the Sarajevo assassination. But I've never seen this before. Ever.

Marko: Everything's here in Sarajevo!

Norman is leafing through the C.H. Norman passages.

Norman: Do you know what this says?

Marko: Remind me.

Norman: Fuck it!

Vida: Norman! Where's our polite English gentleman.

Norman: Sorry, but I can't believe this... And finding it here!

Listen to this: "The recent quarrel at the Paris conference of the Grand Orient of France destroys to all reasonable minds the theory that Germany alone created and caused the war. 'It was the Secret Societies of Europe, through

Serbia, who started the war.' When I attempted to publish this, I was jailed for the remainder of the war, at times even in a straitjacket."

Marko: You're such a journalist, Norman. This stuff's irrelevant now.

Norman: It's not irrelevant at all.

Marko: It is for me. Do you want to know who my hero was in World War One? Andrej Belyj.

Norman: Who?

Marko: Another crazy Slavic artist. Have you heard anything like this?
"In August 1915 I accomplished a deed – I have no idea how. Deep down within me, I overcame the Hydra of the War – killed the dragon of the war - that state power with its dark secret organisations which called it up – and did so on behalf of the brotherhood of peoples, and all the forms of love unknown to me."

Now there's a deed!

Norman: But what did he do?

Marko (*Laughs*): I have no idea! But it wasn't a joke. (*Reads again*):
He said he felt like someone carrying a bomb, whose meaning he did not know, but that was his task and no one else's to throw. Not a real bomb. A life-bomb. His own life. Pitched into the middle of the raging catastrophe of the time. And that's me. I don't know how – but somehow – that's what I've got to do.

Norman: You're losing me, Marko... I'm not sure I know what you're on about.

Marko: Something's got to happen. This centenary does matter, I know that. Something does have to happen. But what? A different kind of act altogether -

that shifts something in people – so they realize we’re not remembering a war, we’re still in it, the same one, the same one, and it’ll go on for ever unless we change it.

Norman: But what exactly? What kind of thing?

Marko: I don’t know yet... but I can see parts of it... Please hear me out... We can include pieces you’ve been working on as well... it’ll be a joint creation... and will be unforgettable... if we’re lucky, it’ll be seen by millions of people...

We have to get ourselves to where the war is happening now. To Ukraine.

Zoran: To where the fighting is? And do what? (*He’s terrified.*)

Marko: Don’t worry, Zoran. It’ll be quite safe. We just go *near* where it’s happening. We just find where the media are.

Zoran: And?

Marko: And... *on June 28th*, at the exact hour that the assassination took place in Sarajevo, 11 in the morning, Vida and I appear, hopefully on the steps of some Town Hall, looking identical to Franz Ferdinand and Sophie Chotek...

Vida: Excuse me?!

Marko: We can do it, Vida. I’ve got theatre friends in Kiev. They can help us. Maybe they can even get us an open-topped car we can leave in.

Vida: You want to get us shot? In the car?

Marko: No, Vida... I want to try and ‘kill the dragon of the war’ in public. The main thing will be on the steps... everyone will be so aware of that anniversary, that we’ll immediately catch people’s attention, and the media’s as well, if at the exact moment the royal couple appeared outside the

Sarajevo Town Hall in 1914, their look-alikes appear outside a Town Hall there, today, at an equivalent pressure-point.

Zoran: So it *is* a reconstruction. I thought you said...

Marko: It's not a reconstruction – or only to seize people's attention. Franz Ferdinand couldn't say anything, could he, before he was shot? But if he comes back from the grave, he can say *a lot*. He can tell us everything he knows about his own death – and those responsible for it. And then he can change and become the voice of the present. And speak truths about what's going on in Ukraine. Then we'll kill the dragon of the war... in public... then finally, the real victim... the silenced voice of Europe herself will speak out something of her own tragic story during the last hundred years. And if anyone jumps in to stop us, we'll make it part of it, and at that moment Gavrilo Princip – or his lookalike - will jump in too and shoot us... and this time everyone who sees us dying will know exactly why it's happening.

Vida: Dying!

Marko: Just pretending to. You'll be Princip, Zoran – with a pretend gun.

Zoran: Sounds a really safe job to be the one waving a gun! Thanks, Marko.

Marko: Well, you'll need to be filming as well, before that. Obviously we hope that the mainstream media will enjoy it – and broadcast it everywhere... but we can't be sure... so we'll do it ourselves as well – put it on the web and if we're lucky it'll go viral... and no one will be able to say we didn't celebrate the centenary. What do you all think?!

Zoran: Don't even ask. I think you're completely nuts.

Marko: Thanks! Norman?

Norman: Well, it's certainly you all over. If you could manage to pull it off – safely... t could be your greatest hour...

Marko (*really smiles*): I think so too... You see what happens when we're together, Norman...

(*To Vida*): And you, my dear. What do you think? Are you willing to do it with me?

Vida: You've finally cheered up, haven't you? So how could I say no? It'll be an honour to die with you! And we'll make it very artistic!

Marko: I love you, Vida. Are you serious?

Vida: Of course I am.

Marko (*to the others*): You see? We have perfect understanding of one another's work. Now Mr. Englishman, it's time to see you dance! (*Scene ends with dancing.*)

SCENE THREE
LONDON – EARLY MORNING
ST. JAMES'S PARK

Jemima is meeting with the head of the whole UK World War One celebrations. They get on well. They occasionally meet in the park – it's near where both of them work – and they know they won't be overheard.

Charles: Anyway, Jemima, we're delighted with how your programmes are going. It's given us a wonderful beginning to it all. The ratings are very high... you've pitched it just right. Wonderful, isn't it, there's been such an interest? The perfect curtain-raiser for the Summer – and for when the war actually begins, in August – if you know what I mean.

Jemima: Of course. Not easy to get the right balance. Between showing up Germany as the Prussian war-monger responsible for it all – while not upsetting any feelings, and acknowledging her central role today in the EU. But I think we did it. And the drama helped a lot. The British love drama. Just to see the Kaiser and von Moltke and Churchill... not so abstract then.

Charles: No.

Jemima: So what was it, Charles? Anything special? We're all set for the Summer, aren't we?

Charles: More than set. It'll be bigger than the Olympics if we can get it right. And so it should be. Or it'll build on the Olympics. Just got to get that same national spirit going right across the country. Make everyone feel the atmosphere, if we can, of what it was like to go to war, when the whole world depended on it. No, nothing special. But I had a meeting last night, with the Bow Group, and they thought it might be a jolly good thing if you joined us at our next meeting. Pretty important, I think, just so you get the whole context for it all.

Jemima: I'd be honoured. Where and when?

Charles: St. Ermin's. June 24th.

Jemima: Definite?

Charles: Yes.

Jemima notes it in her phone diary.

Charles: Before that, a couple of them were a little worried about those two programmes later on allowing different viewpoints about the war.

Jemima: We wanted everyone to feel included. The 'No Glory Campaign' is quite popular.

Charles: The pacifists, yes. No problem there. But some of the others. We don't want any conspiracy theorists. International voices are ok... if they're respectable... but I'd leave out the others. Like that friend of (your husband's.)

Jemima: Count it done.

Charles: Where is he, by the way? Your husband.

Jemima: He's back in Kiev again.

Charles: Oh? Another story.

Jemima: Yes.

They walk warmly off.

ACT THREE

SCENE ONE

BERLIN

THEATRE

Elsa: So, everybody, a very warm welcome to Marko. Our Bosnian Helmuth von Moltke. We've been looking forward to this for such a long time. I certainly have.

Marko appears on the stage as von Moltke – he has met them before, but not yet on the stage for a rehearsal.

Marko: Guten Tag!

Elsa: It's a slightly difficult scene to start with, Marko. You're with the Kaiser. Last time we saw Sir Edward Grey in England and what he said to the German Ambassador. This scene takes place around the same time as that one, but relates to something completely different that Sir Edward Grey had also said to Lichnowsky. Grey, who we saw last time making no promises at all, earlier that day had actually promised Lichnowsky that on certain conditions not only England but France as well would keep out of the war. Von Moltke arrives at German High Command just after they've received the telegram announcing this. Let's just run it, shall we, and see what happens? Ready, Marko?

Marko: Yeah.

Elsa: Everyone else?

Jorg: Yes. We'll just imagine the champagne!

Moves straight into

Kaiser (Jorg): Pop! *(Of imaginary champagne cork as they toast one another.)*

Kaiser: Von Moltke! Celebrations are in order! England are refusing to enter the conflict. And they have pledged to keep France out of it as well, if we promise not to attack France. *(He waves Lichnowsky's telegram.)* Straight from the horses mouth! Sir Edward Grey himself has told this to our ambassador.

Bethmann-Hollweg – Chancellor of Germany (Andreas): Can you believe it, Moltke?! The great European war you have been fearing has been averted!

Minister for War (Wilhelm): At the eleventh hour. Incredible, no!

Kaiser: It is a miracle! Those English, I tell you, they are the world masters of diplomacy. How can they have pulled this off? A toast, gentlemen! Russia, of course, cannot be stopped, but it is nevertheless still cause for celebration. With friends in the West it surely gives us more hope too against Russia.

Von Moltke is unable to join in this heightening illusion and excitement.

Kaiser: You seem unwilling to celebrate, Moltke.

Waving document at him.

Do you not believe it? Here, take a look!

Bethmann-Hollweg: A military man perhaps cannot trust the ways of diplomacy!

Von Moltke: Your Majesty, you have only just given the order, for mobilization. It is absolutely imperative that this... *(doesn't know what to call it)* telegram... should not interfere with this. What on earth can England do to stop France from attacking us, if she chooses to? And if she finds us completely unprepared... God help us!

Bethmann-Hollweg: It is much more imperative, your Majesty, that we do *nothing* that might endanger this peace-offer from England. It is our one chance to avert this war. The army is already set to march through Luxembourg. This must be prevented, or it will immediately be seen as a threat against France.

Von Moltke: That is not possible, your Majesty. If we alter the plan now, in any way, it will be disastrous.

Kaiser: *Everything* is possible. (*urgent – to the Minister for War.*) Telegram my orders immediately that the army must *not* enter Luxembourg.

Von Moltke: But the trains, your Majesty. Our whole plan depends on using the Luxembourg railways. Every aspect of the plan has been coordinated to the minute. What do you propose we do?

Kaiser (*almost mocking*): You will have to find some other trains, Moltke! For these ones are unavailable.

Von Moltke: But your Majesty... (*more and more difficult for him*)... this would bring catastrophe... we would never recover ... I beseech you... please withdraw this order...

Kaiser: I will do no such thing. Your advice is not welcome here, Moltke. You may go. You will return with some new plans in the morning. Good night.

Von Moltke (*alone – and apart*):

When I arrived home it was as if I had been broken apart and I shed tears of despair. The nonsensical nature of England's proposal had been clear to me from the start. For nearly ten years I had witnessed the English side propagating the most dreadful lies about us, and depicting Germany as the most evil spirit on the face of the earth. I knew that the first shot fired between England and Germany would give the sign for a general European massacre involving unimaginable atrocities. Germany has absolutely no

desire to unleash such a war, which would annihilate the culture of almost all of Europe for decades to come.

But for Germany *not* to have come to the aid of its allies, when their whole existence was in danger, would have contradicted all the sensitivities of its people. We had therefore had to mobilize, to be able to defend Austria against Russia. The moment we did so, Russia was able to announce “we are being attacked by Germany” – and thus secure the support of France, treaty-bound to join the war if Russia should be attacked. (LINES TO BE OMITTED IN PERFORMANCE, BUT HELPFUL FOR ACTOR AS BACKGROUND.)

Through the hideous logic of a nightmare, the civilized states of Europe would very soon begin tearing each other apart.

I knew all this. And thus had prepared our armies to defend ourselves as best we could; preparations which involved the most intricate web of planning.

I could not help suspecting that this telegram from England, was an attempt to dupe us, to delay our mobilization, leaving us completely unprepared for war when it came.

The Kaiser’s complete dismissal of my concerns was not only the destruction of all I had stood for, personally, but would also, I knew, usher in the destruction of Germany.

Hence the dark and sombre mood in which I arrived home. I remained like this in my room until, at eleven o’clock at night, I suddenly received the order to return at once to the Kaiser’s palace.

‘The Kaiser received me in his bedroom. He had already been in bed, but had risen again and slipped on a coat. He handed me a despatch from the King of England.’ (This quotation from von Moltke’s diary is instead of a stage direction.)

Kaiser: Here, Moltke. I have just received this from the King of England. He denies any knowledge of any guarantee by England to prevent France joining the war. Lichnowsky “misunderstood”. They have been playing with us! And we look like fools! Our armies are in your command, Moltke! So now – you may do as you wish!

Moltke (*alone*): This was my first experience in this war. Had the English telegram arrived 30 minutes earlier, the Kaiser, I am sure, would not even have agreed to mobilize. Germany would have been crushed from both sides. I have never recovered from the impression of this experience. Something

within me was destroyed that could never be restored. All my confidence and trust were shattered.

Afterwards, Marko himself is quite affected by this. He walks off stage.

Marko: Well, Herr von Moltke, perhaps we do have something in common after all.

SCENE TWO

LONDON

THE OFFICES OF NORMAN ARMITAGE'S JOURNAL

Norman's newspaper office. Lots of papers. (Possibly the news is on.) Trying hard to get his issue out on time.

Norman

Paul – younger all-round indispensable person for the journal

Jemima – (her voice on the phone)

Norman is on the telephone. To the owner of the journal who is telling him a junior minister has demanded one of the central articles in the forthcoming issue be removed or face huge libel action.

Norman: But it's absurd. We've been through it with a toothcomb. It's impossible there's anything libellous in it. But why do we have to listen to them? From the foreign office! But it'll ruin the whole issue. It's the core article, for heaven's sake! *(Puts down the phone.)* Jesus!

Paul *(enters):* I think you need to see this. It's from the distributor.

Hands Norman a printed email.

Norman: 'We apologize for the unfortunate timing, but owing to financial pressures we are no longer in a position to'... What??

Paul: What can we do about it?

Norman: I don't know. But it's essential people can hear these things. I'm not backing down.

Starts busying himself with things or thoughts.

Paul: Shall I get you a cup of tea?

Norman: Yes, thank you...

Paul leaves. Norman picks up his phone.

Norman: Jemima Zacchary please... It's Norman Armitage... It's about a documentary of mine she's broadcasting.

Norman: Jemima!

Jemima: *(cannot be heard.)*

Norman: I'm having a bit of trouble here, with the journal. Some legalities. But I just wanted to give you my assurance we'll completely clear the programme – there'll be nothing whatsoever your legal team can't approve of.

Jemima: *(cannot be heard.)*

Norman: But we talked it all through.

Jemima: *(cannot be heard.)*

Paul *(comes in):* Sugar?

Norman: Shh!

He puts the phone on loud speaker.

Norman: Please, Jemima. I've really appreciated you offering this. People have got to hear more than one view. It'll be completely factual - with no attacks on anyone else's views. I'll make it shorter if you want.

Jemima: Look, I told you... the schedule's been completely rethought.

Norman: Well, how? You've still got to represent other views. I speak for a huge number of people. Just tell us what you'd need from us.

Jemima: ... I can't say, I'm afraid. We just don't know as yet. But we're needing to keep our hands free at the moment.

Norman: So it's no in other words.

Jemima: *(cannot be heard.)*

Norman: You can't do this Jemima. Well, say hello to James from me. Tell him C.H. Norman sends his regards. Goodbye.

Jemima: Goodbye.

Paul: Who on earth's C.H. Norman?

Norman: You don't know? I thought maybe I should keep quiet about him. I'm not going to anymore. His is an incredible story. Or all too horribly credible. They should put it on the stage.

Paul: In that play you've been talking about?

Norman: Brilliant! It's brilliant, Paul. Yes, they just might do it. Wouldn't that be wonderful? To have it seen in Berlin. I'll ask Marko about it. Get me a pen, would you?

Paul: You're going to write with a pen?

Norman: Yes. With real ink. I want to do it freehand.

He holds up his hand – then starts writing. End of scene.

SCENE THREE

SARAJEVO

Vida and Zoran rehearsing

Vida (*performs*):

I'm waiting for you

You'll burn me I know

At your divine

Your shining

Stake

And on your awesome

Awful

Scaffold

I

Shall

Not

Shirk

Till you have done your task

And your flame

Has done

Its

Work

In my place

Ashes will lie

And for them women will vie

But then you'll be amazed

To hear me walking through

The city again

For by a miracle I will still be dreaming here on earth.

For know

You only took his body into your keeping

But that body was only

His prison

And his

Weeping

I've long grown used to your ravages

As to the icy waters swept savagely along

By this night river of darkness that grows

Ever more swift

And strong

Zoran: You've changed it a bit.

Vida: Marko has. He loves this piece. He wants it to open the whole happening in Ukraine.

Zoran: So he's definitely doing it?

Vida: Definitely. Nothing will stop him now.

Zoran: And you, Vida? Will you do it, as well?

Vida: I have to. I know how much it means to him. And I trust him. When he's like this I trust him. He's himself again. What about you, though? You don't need to. I can just do it on my own with him, and with some of his Ukrainian friends.

Zoran: You're not getting rid of me that easily. Besides, there were about three things Marko wanted me to be doing.

Vida: So you'll do it?

Zoran: Of course I will.

Vida: Bless you! You'll never forget it. I promise!

SCENE FOUR

BERLIN

THEATRE

Elsa: Take a look, Norman. See what you think. I'm so grateful for what you sent. I've adapted it, so it can be part of the play, but all the facts are there, and a lot of it's just as Norman wrote it. The other Norman!

Norman (*smiles*): Yes. So you think you'll use it?

Elsa: I certainly hope so. I find it completely fitting. And direct. It's like a leaked conversation – from 1914. But we'll have to see what everyone thinks. It's some time later. He's in prison. Looking back.

The lights change.

The actor (Andreas) playing Norman is already in position. He's in a prison

cell, with Bertrand Russell in the next door cell. (Played by the actor who

played Bertrand Russell in Act One – Wilhelm.) Norman can't see Russell, but they can hear one another. Norman's focus isn't particularly on Russell, but on the telling of his story. Russell sometimes interrupts with questions, but only at the end of the scene will it become clear who Russell is.

Norman: It was the morning of June 28th, 1914. Sunday. I had a few things to see to in my office, so I left *The National Liberal Club*, where I was living, and headed off down the Strand. On the way, just outside the Law Courts, I saw an old acquaintance of mine, Adolphe Smith, who seemed strangely agitated. He came up to me and asked if I'd looked at the telegrams in the club before I left. I said I had. He asked if there was any news from Sarajevo. 'Where?' I said. For I must confess I'd hardly ever heard of the town before. 'Sarajevo', he repeated. 'A town in Bosnia.' 'No', I said, there'd definitely been no news from there. This was around 11.30 a.m. Smith became even more flustered, and muttered something like: 'it can't have gone wrong, can it?' 'What was it you'd been expecting?' I asked, but he seemed not to hear my question, and walked on.

Norman: You might remember that the *first* assassination attempt on Franz Ferdinand – the bomb – took place at about 9 a.m. So what's important is that at 11.30 a.m. Adolphe Smith, in the Strand, London, was *expecting* the news to have come in about the assassination in Sarajevo, which hadn't actually happened, but *should* have done.

Russell (*through the wall*): Good god! So who is he, this Adolphe Smith.

Norman: We've known each other for years. About seven years before the war he invited me, with a few others, to found a London branch of the French Freemasonic Order, the *Grand Orient*.

Russell: And did you?

Norman: No. Smith kept trying to persuade me to do so, telling me how most of the leading politicians of France, Belgium and Italy were members, but after the first meeting, I began to research their real political goals, and became filled with greater and greater distrust. I discovered that these involved completely altering the structure of Europe, by means of a war, and that the growing tension between England and Germany served their goals very well. I was editor of a journal, in London, where I attempted to point out, as thoroughly as I could, the dangers of our present policies. Till I received a telephone call from the owner, saying that Sir Edward Grey himself was demanding these articles be stopped.

Russell: Grey? He would. So that is why you are here?

Norman: Oh no. That was well before the war. No, it was for the events of June 28th. Later that afternoon, after meeting Smythe, I was playing bridge with some friends connected to the big newspaper syndicates in London. They were late. When they arrived, they gave us the news about the assassination in Sarajevo, and told us the whole newspaper had been called in, something unheard of for a Sunday afternoon, and that they had been told that the "signal for a European war", expected for so long, had finally been given. Only then did I understand the colossal significance of Smythe's question to me in the morning.

Russell: So they put you in jail just for being told too much by your well-connected friends?

Norman: Well, I was determined that everyone should know this, so I started lecturing about it, everywhere I could, in 1916. The War Cabinet – Milner and co – ordered every single document I owned to be seized. So I tried getting the lecture published instead, and next minute... I'm in here.

Russell: No, they wouldn't like that, Milner and Grey. There's free speech, as long as you don't say anything. I used to know them by the way.

Norman: Really? What's your name?

Russell: Bertrand Russell. And you are?

Norman: Norman. Clarence Norman.

Russell: Blimey! I thought I'd said a lot. Not quite as much as you!

Elsa: Like it?

Norman: I love it. But do you really dare to tour with that?

Elsa: I don't see why not. It's the truth. We're not making anything up. It's all been published.

Jorg: I don't care, Elsa, I think it's too much.

Elsa: I wonder what Marko would think. You found it in his house, didn't you?

Norman: Yes.

Elsa: Somehow I think he'd have liked it. It feels like it could be happening now. Anyway, we don't need to decide on it today. Let's sleep on it.

Jorg: Good.

They all get up and start moving – to go home.

ACT FOUR
SCENE ONE
BERLIN
A THEATRE

Elsa and the rest of the cast – just at the very end of Elsa’s announcement to them that the play has been closed down

Elsa: So that’s it. We have to be out by next week. We’ll start clearing everything tomorrow. I can’t deal with it today.

Wilhelm: Is there no way back, Elsa?

Elsa: None. They’re closing for God’s sake. So we haven’t got a theatre.

Wilhelm: And somewhere else?

Elsa: Nothing. We’ve tried. Please. I need time to myself. We’ll come back tomorrow.

The cast all leave.

Elsa: *(alone. Speaking to her dead husband.)*

Five years’ work. Stopped. Eh, Frans? Talk to me. What do we do? It’s *our* work, this, isn’t it? I had no interest in these things at all. But when I found all your papers, so carefully arranged, I almost felt you were asking me to make a drama of it. Were you? When everything came together so easily I felt sure you were helping me. That we were doing this together. Working like we’d never been able to when you were alive.

And the day this theatre opened its doors to us, I dreamed about you; and it was really difficult at first; there was this huge cold dark space... but in the midst of it there was this tiny, thin chink of light... a strange light... ‘cause it was warm as well... and gently spreading. And what’s happened now? Is it all blotted out again? It’s what it feels like.

Say something, Frans.

Anything.

I've hit the wall.

Badly.

She tidies her things... picks up loose papers.... She reads:

Oh my God! What's this? Helmuth von Moltke:

"My soul is suffering with her... Only slowly will it be found that this book contains something quite different from other writings about the sad era of the war. For it contains the unadorned truth while the others conceal the truth behind illusions. But the fog of illusions is still thick, and so the simple truth is not yet recognized. Nonetheless, despite the many obstacles it will encounter, it will eventually find its way."

Thank you!

We're going on. I've no idea how. But we're going on. We'll do it anywhere. In Budapest. Some little event somewhere. Wherever. We'll just read it if we have to. But nothing will stop us now.

SCENE TWO

ODESSA, UKRAINE

JUNE 28TH, 2014 – 10.30 A.M.

Marko has made it to Ukraine – with Vida and Zoran.

*Marko now moves forward – fully dressed as Franz Ferdinand –
with Vida next to him as Sophie Chotek*

Marko – speaks as Franz Ferdinand *(to the assembled press and small crowds)*

“So this is it. The moment has arrived. One hundred years ago, exactly, we stood, my beloved Sophie and I, on the steps of another town hall, and soon afterwards were shot at close range and killed. There was no chance to say anything, no time for anyone to catch their breaths or understand, and in 37 days the whole of Europe was at war with itself.

But a hundred years have passed. We return. Able to speak at last not only of what was happening then, in 1914, but also of what is happening here around us.

We are not held back by borders – so here we are – where the battle has been raging the hardest - Odessa, Ukraine – before this building – Trade Unions House – that was witness to such gruesome atrocities and murder.

They ever so slightly loosen garments.

Were history to repeat itself, who would we be today?

Which couple, were they to be gunned down today, not far from where we stand, might unleash, as we did, a world war? Ladies and gentlemen, think for a moment who this might be.

How about... Victoria Nuland and Geoffrey Pyatt? “They’re not a ‘couple’, of course. She’s married to another, who has mapped out the future of Europe in advance, Robert Kagan, but it’s her and Geoffrey Pyatt who, like Archduke and Archduchess, walk through Ukraine’s cities arm in arm.”

(Ideally the following two images would be projected on a screen behind Marko.)



The U.S. Secretary for Europe and Eurasia and the U.S. Ambassador in Ukraine. Whose conversation about the future of Ukraine was famously hacked, and whose infamous lines spread quickly round the world:

SOPHIE: (Nuland) “Fuck the EU!” **MARKO:** (Pyatt) “Exactly!”

Before you scoff at this idea, be aware that exactly thirty-seven days after the massacre in this building they were both here in Odessa. Not in this spot here – they decided *not* to visit this building. They were wiser than we were. Decided they’d prefer *not* to be assassinated.

But imagine they had been! The two most high-ranking U.S. representatives in Ukraine – assassinated here by a Russian-backed sniper. It would, I’m sure you will agree, have been well able to trigger world war.

First slight hints of uneasiness – in crowd or with Zoran or somewhere.

But...

Noises are heard...

Zoran *(calls out):* ‘Marko! Move!’

Marko stays where he is.

Marko: But we are not here to try and start another war, but just to stop the old one...

first shot...

Marko: For Europe... (*would have ended: 'For Europe was the real victim of the war.'*)

Three shots – and Marko falls.

Vida: Help, Zoran! Help!

Vida: No, Marko, no!

Vida (*she closes her eyes for a moment*): Please... please... oh God!

SCENE THREE

LONDON AND BERLIN

It could be that there is one TV monitor is watched by James in London and the theatre group, plus Norman, in Germany.

Jemima: “There was a sudden outburst of fighting in the city, and among the casualties was a Bosnian actor, Marko Dragic, who was accidentally caught in cross-fire, and died instantly from his wounds. Dragic, 42, from Sarajevo, was part of an artistic commemoration of the assassination of Franz Ferdinand 100 years ago. Besides tributes to the actor, the folly of his attempting to film in these circumstances has been universally condemned.”

James: “Norman. It’s James here. I just wanted to say I’ve just heard about the death of your friend from Bosnia. I’m so sorry. Let me know if there’s anything I can do. Thinking of you old chap. Take care. James.”

Norman's phone goes again.

Norman: Vida? Where are you? Yes... yes, we've just seen about it on the television. Where are you? Oh God... Please be very careful, Vida... Zoran's there, good... Tomorrow? Look, if there's anything at all I can do... I'm in Berlin... of course I can be there... On Saturday? I'm sure the whole group would want to be there... definitely... We'll do it with you... I'm with you, Vida... All my love to you... Good bye.

ACT FIVE
SCENE ONE
SARAJEVO
AFTER MARKO'S FUNERAL

In a large indoor space – a wide inclusive 'theatre in the round'.

It is the evening of Saturday, July 5th, 2014.

The funeral has been in the afternoon – up on a hillside overlooking Sarajevo.

Zoran:

SREBRENICA
Spring Kacuni by the window fade joylessly
daring to bow
before the troubles ahead
deep despairing darkness
floats up
for a moment
all is silenced
Souls from heaven are touching our paths
and memories, however painful,
illuminate time.

Mirsad Čičkelić

SREBRENICA
Kačuni proljetni o prozorskom oknu uminu nerado
povijajući se smjelo
pred nedaćom koja slijedi
tmina dubokog očaja
ispliva na površinu
zamrlo je sve u trenu
Duse sa nebesa prosvijetljavaju nam pute
a sjećanja ma koliko bolna
prosvjetljavaju vrijeme. (ORIGINAL BOSNIAN)

Vida: Thankyou, Zoran. My name is Vida... Dragic... Marko's wife...

It's unbelievable to see so many people here. And at the funeral this afternoon. The response has been so overwhelming that we wanted to make this open – and I know it's what Marko wants too.

It's impossible... so many people just thought he was crazy... it must have appeared like that... I thought so too for a moment... but now... I don't understand it all... but it's what he wanted, somehow... that everyone would

come and would do something together... so please... if anyone wants to offer anything... please feel free... if we can just listen to each other... and feel the right moment to speak... or improvise something... for Marko... and for everything he wanted to bring about.

Thank you all so much for being here...

Please... whoever would like to speak.

She may indicate to Zoran quietly to follow her – or even hand him slip of paper.

A silence... then Zoran gets up.

Zoran: My name is Zoran Zelko. I was there in Ukraine with Marko and Vida. Vida has asked me to read some words by Franz Marc from 1916. We once showed one of Franz Marc's pieces to Marko, and he wasn't interested – he said it wasn't contemporary, and that he wanted to do something that was now – that he had to make something happen. I was upset with him. I don't even know why I went with him. But I knew I had to. And for Vida. And he said: "make a video, Zoran' – even if no one films us, everyone will watch the video." And I thought no one would watch it. But then... (*goes quiet as he remembers the shooting*) And now the video's gone 'viral', and been seen everywhere. And everyone's here, just like he wanted. Except Marko's not here. And then in his diary, glued at the back, Vida found this – written by Franz Marc to his mother just before he was killed:

"I understand well that you speak so easily of death as something which doesn't frighten you. I feel precisely the same. In this war, you can try it out on yourself – an opportunity life seldom offers one... Nothing is more calming than the prospect of the peace of death... the one thing common to all... Whoever strives from purity and knowledge, to him death always comes as a saviour."

I hope so, Marko. You beautiful, crazy friend.

He sits down. The characters are seated in different places in this round space. So they could also be in the audience in a traditional theatre.

Elsa stands up.

Elsa: Perhaps I can speak next. My name is Elsa Roechling – a theatre director from Germany. It is my first time in Bosnia. They are such terrible circumstances. But it is wonderful to see Marko's friends – and Vida – I feel so at home here – and I know many others feel the same. I have been directing a play that Marko was in. Later on, we hope we can show you some of it. Now, though, perhaps I can just say something about him as an actor. The first time I saw Marko on stage, in a play in Zagreb, I was spellbound from the minute he came on. I'd never seen anyone perform like he did. All that 'beautiful craziness' you spoke of was mastered, held, so you felt there was a fire on the stage that could never burn you, that could do anything it wanted and made the tiniest little thing thrilling and alive. When I started with play, and wanted to show the complexity of Helmuth von Moltke, who could so easily be caricatured, I knew I wanted Marko to do it. I still don't fully understand why, though I have no doubt that it was right.

The theatre was closed we were performing in – but we still wanted to find a way to go on. And now this has happened. We all felt the enormity of it on the hillside this afternoon at the funeral. None of us will be the same again. None of us. Well we'll try and show you some of the play later. Thank you.

She sits down. Somewhat overcome by the mood that's descended on her – the mood of the funeral in the afternoon.

Norman gets up from fairly far back in the hall. He feels a certain weight of responsibility, being the only English person connected to Marko and those who know him – nevertheless this is no burden to him, as he is so immersed in the huge changes he has been going through since Marko's death – and even, in a way, since his journal was closed down and he went to Germany.

Norman: My name is Norman Armitage, from England. I have been a friend of Marko's and Vida's for more than 20 years. Thank you, Elsa, for

mentioning what happened on the hillside this afternoon. I know we all felt it. That gigantic hush descended on us all. So much has happened. More than it's possible to make sense of. But perhaps I can say something of what's been pouring into me since the moment we heard the news about Marko. I don't know where to begin.

I suppose my theme, for years, as a writer, has been *untruth* - wherever it manifests in politics and history.

But these last few days, I haven't been thinking so much about untruth but about truth. And I've realized something it might take me the rest of my life to live into. Marko's last words – Vida told me – were 'for Europe'. But she said that what he was wanting to say: "For Europe was the true victim of the war." *Europe* was the true victim of the war. A week ago I wouldn't have known what that meant. But I've been in Berlin with the theatre company, and going over and over what Marko was trying to do in Ukraine. And I'm beginning to see. There *is* a heartland. That thing that so many Western politicians have been so terrified of. But why should one be frightened of the heart? And it's here – in the middle of Europe. And the only way forward is if this 'heartland' can be allowed to be itself. A *living* being, balancing East and West.

And it was *this* being that was the *victim* of the world wars – and needs to be invited back.

Perhaps I've said too much. But I could say so much more. Like about Marko – a Bosnian - dying dressed as Franz Ferdinand. The heir to the Austrian Empire. It's absurd. Until you learn that Franz Ferdinand actually wanted something different – and who it was who stopped him. And the mystery keeps growing. I hadn't known a thing about Helmuth von Moltke. I remember laughing with Marko about how ridiculous it was that he should play this role. There's been so much negative publicity about von Moltke in England that I'd had no idea that the life of this man at the head of the German army can completely transform one's whole picture of the relationship between Central and Eastern Europe. In a redemptive way. And Marko played him as well.

Well, what do you think, Elsa? Perhaps we should have the play now?

Elsa: Yes, unless anyone else is wanting to speak.

James stands up. Jemima – who has not been wholly comfortable at all – almost tries to stop him, but James does not listen to her.

James: I would. I won't be very long. My name's James Zacchary – from England. I work in Eastern Europe. Ukraine and other countries. I never met Marko. But I am an old friend of Norman, who has just spoken, so I feel Marko to be a friend too. Norman and I are very different. We often disagree on things. But when you spoke just now, I understood you better than I ever have. (*Jemima glares at him – at least inside.*) I'd never seen it quite like that – how you speak about Europe. Well. Maybe it doesn't mean much. But I just wanted to say that it is special to be here – among you all. Something I've never experienced. Thank you.

Moves back – Jemima and he stand slightly apart from one another.

Vida is a bit far away now... she hasn't been able to focus on what James has been saying, and not on all of what Norman was saying. She's been living under extreme circumstances, and this is momentarily taking its toll.

Elsa stands up. Looks at Vida, who smiles at her, as if to say she is very happy for Elsa to bring parts of the play now.

Elsa: Well, now we'd like to show you something from the end of the play we've been doing with Marko. I wasn't sure if it would be right to do this here, but I have talked it all through with Vida, and she feels very strongly that it would be.

Norman Armitage, who has almost become part of our company, and knew Marko so well, will speak Marko's part, that of Helmuth of von Moltke. I play von Moltke's wife, Eliza; and Wilhelm plays their friend and spiritual teacher.

The actors step forward.

Elsa (*continues, a little shyly*):

The most extraordinary part of von Moltke's story is that after his death, this spiritual teacher was able to remain in communication with him, and wrote down many long messages from him to his wife Eliza – saying all sorts of things about what von Moltke was experiencing after his death, and about the war as well. It might sound incredible, I know, but they're all published now - you can read them – so we dared to include this part too in our play.

You'll first see von Moltke's intense suffering after being dismissed from his position, followed by his death, and then ... what happened afterwards.

SCENE TWO

The scene begins with Norman speaking words that Marko spoke in Act Three.

Norman as Helmuth von Moltke (*alone*): I have never recovered from the impression of this experience. Something within me was destroyed that could never be restored. All my confidence and trust were shattered.

Von Moltke is so shattered by this, that he becomes ill, and is bedbound – at an extremity of suffering. Eliza is present.

A letter arrives from Rudolf Steiner – which Eliza reads out loud:

Eliza: It is a letter to you from Rudolf Steiner. Shall I read it to you?

Helmuth: Please.

Eliza: "I am writing these lines to you, Excellency, after strongly experiencing you inwardly. It was impossible to write them in any other way than I have. Take them as a sign of my deepest devotion."

“The experience of satisfaction the physical world in itself gives - has run its course - fulfilled its task – your *suffering* leads beyond itself. It is the seed, as it were, of that *light* which wants to be borne out of darkness.”

“You are having to experience how hard it is to live on the threshold where the spirit meets the human soul. This spirit is there, shining its protective light over the soul. But this light is very different from how people often imagine the light of the spirit to be. And so the experience of this light will often give rise to feelings which *appear* to reveal the opposite of what they really lead to. The soul may then feel as if it had been *abandoned*. Yet such feelings of abandonment bear within them the seed of that strength which leads with even greater certainty to the spirit.

“The soul must endure the arduous path of Truth so it rightly feels the power of the spirits of error. One may all too easily succumb to the temptations of the spirits of *deception* unless one has been strengthened by suffering *disappointments* in calmness and equanimity. Many a dark cloud is still on the horizon... But the direction in which all leads has been imprinted in your soul for years, Excellency. And this direction’s source is the benign guidance of Central Europe.”

*Von Moltke dies – which must somehow be made visible –
and Rudolf Steiner speaks of him at a memorial gathering*

“We have suffered a painful loss in these days. The soul of Herr von Moltke, as you know, has recently passed through the portal of death. He stood fully and actively in the midst of contemporary life, this life which has now reached one of the greatest crises humanity has ever faced. He was a man who led armies, who stood in the very centre of events and yet who also sought truth with the most holy thirst for knowledge imaginable in anyone of our day. This is what is so exemplary. May many, many more do as he did!”

Rudolf Steiner comes over and speaks to Eliza von Moltke.

Rudolf Steiner:

My very dear Frau von Moltke,

It is a joy to see you again. I leave tomorrow for Berlin. But wanted to talk with you one more time about your husband before I go. His connection with you is very strong indeed and it may well be possible for you to sense this. I have clearly perceived the thought from him:

“I hope ‘she’ is able to feel the presence of my being around her.”

Norman, as von Moltke, possibly appears briefly in the background.

He is always attentive to your thoughts and follows them closely.

I am now always able to find myself in complete connection with him by means of this verse. *(Steiner gives this verse to Eliza.)*

The soul has much to say to you. While I am away, if you will allow me, I will put down in writing his words to you and have someone deliver them to you personally. If you are agreeable.

Eliza: Of course. *(Holds onto the verse.)* I await them eagerly. And I will try to feel him round me when I read. Thank you.

Rudolf Steiner: It is for me to thank you. Auf Wiedersehen. You will hear from me soon.

Eliza: Auf Wiedersehen.

They shake hands warmly and Rudolf Steiner leaves.

Once he has left, Norman enters as Helmuth von Moltke.

After-death messages from Helmuth von Moltke are now received

by Eliza von Moltke from Rudolf Steiner.

Eliza reads the messages.

But Norman – Helmuth von Moltke – speaks them.

Norman/HvM:

“The body is no obstacle any more. Gradually the pain of suffering is fading just as the seed of a plant fades when it has to bring forth the new plant. And already the new plant is growing.

“I will be able to become a helper through what I have suffered on earth, even now, but through more spiritual means than I could have believed possible on earth, for spiritual means are the only rightful ones for Central Europe.

“The world has sunk away for which my soul thought it had to fight. The world for which it was really necessary to fight – the world of the spirit - cannot sink away. Human beings need only let it come near them. Short-sighted people are now saying: we are *guilty* of having brought about this terrible catastrophe. While on earth my soul could not have summoned the only thought fitting at the present time: this catastrophe of humanity was necessary, it had to happen. We did not cause the war; but it was our task by destiny to be the first to perish in this catastrophe, (together with unsustainable existence of our state,) and to see that the new must now be built from the spiritual.”

Norman *stays in position. But Marko’s voice* is now heard speaking.

Elsa looks up. She is no longer reading – but hearing.

She starts to hear Marko.

Marko: Do not worry; trust in the spirit of the inner power of all that is truly human. Now you are witnessing that which is human falling to pieces. But there is nothing in these pieces that the human spirit should have built upon; it has to build upon itself. I can speak to you like this from here; I could not have done so while in the body. Trust in the spirit that works within you.

Possibly with the next two paragraphs,

Elsa reads from a different piece of paper each time.

Norman: “In 1914 only if we had been carrying a new spirit would we have been able to advance westwards with good fortune. But there was nothing spiritual living among those who set off into battle. There was a good power above us; but we did not want to set off in its name. So this good power will have to wait until Central Europe is purified and becomes able to serve this power.”

“The world needs the light which can spring from western civilization and from Central European culture and spirituality. Truth must hold sway. Otherwise not only German culture will perish; the entire European world will perish, too, and Eastern Europe would have to be rebuilt from Asia. That must not happen. Europe must come to its senses and find its way to the spirit.”

Marko speaks again – again Elsa looks up and listens:

Marko: The greatest misfortune *had* to come; it is unfolding right now, so that the bridge to connect both worlds could be built. People who want to accomplish things on earth must become builders of bridges.

Possibly Vida starts to move to the next section – as if she is also moved by the spirit presence she now apprehends – and spiritual trial.

Perhaps both Marko’s and Norman’s voices: “The year 1914 will be inscribed as a year of terrible crisis in the evolution of the earth. If spiritual knowledge does not spread a time will come when black ahrimanic birds, hovering over the heads of people, will form a barricade between human beings and the spiritual world... The black birds want to spin a web of materialism around mankind.

This could still be averted. The genuine spiritual world still hovers above people’s heads. My soul wants to send out thoughts to push the black birds of ill omen back into the earth. May those close to me unite with me in these thoughts – many things could then still turn out better.”

Now Vida actually apprehends Marko – as himself (not as von Moltke)

Marko: My ‘I’ wants to live in the thoughts of my loved ones so that it may help them through the darkness of the times. I often accompany them. They have been drawn into many a turbulence. But this is all destiny and must be suffered. We will all find each other in the end. The trials of our suffering will prepare us for our future tasks.

As this passage ends, Marko leaves, and Vida is left in immediate after-presence of this communion. Others too have been greatly affected by it.

Vida *(to Elsa)*: Thank you, with all my heart. *(To the audience)* And thank you all for helping to create this event together. We wish you all a safe journey home. Thank you again. Good night.

Vida leaves – followed by the other performers.

THE END.

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