

Antigone in Munich

RUNNING TIME: 80 minutes (approximate)

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

CAST: 8-12

Cast of 12: 7f, 5m

Cast of 8: 4f, 4m

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

Extras possible in Scenes 1, 3, 9 and Epilogue

Sophie (f) ages from 13-21, capable of exuberance and introspection at the same time (Sophie could be divided into two parts: Sophie as a 13-16 year old teen and the 21 year old Sophie who stood trial and is shown in flashbacks. Director's choice.)

Hans (m) (25), part trust-fund college kid, part hero

Robert Mohr (m) 35, interrogator, believer in National Socialism; a middle-manager

Luisa (f) age 13-14, Jewish, trying to be a normal child in trying times

Elisabeth (f) ages 18 to 22, wants to toe the line and stay under the radar of the Nazi party

Fritz (m) ages from 19-25 – the good soldier who changes from experience

Elsa (f) 18 – there's an actress inside her

Alex (m) 25 – torn between love of Russia and Germany, artist's soul

Traute (f) 24 – always questioning

Willi (m) 25 – always against the Reich, has a need to put things right; workaholic

Anneliese (21) – protected by her brother Willi, naive

Doubling: Cast of 8

Sophie (f)

Hans (m)

Mohr (m)

Elisabeth (f)

Elsa/Anneliese (f)

Luisa Traute (f)

Fritz/Willi (m)

Alex (m)

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

Antigone in Munich

TIME: 1933-1943

PLACE: Germany

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

EPILOGUE: University of Munich, June 1943

Antigone in Munich

PROLOGUE

MULTIMEDIA: Atrium, University of Munich

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

Blackout.

SCENE 1

MULTIMEDIA: Photo, Sophie Scholl

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

MOHR

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

SOPHIE

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

MOHR

/You were seen with them.

SOPHIE

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

MOHR

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

SOPHIE

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

MOHR

/You were carrying the leaflets.

SOPHIE

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

MOHR

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

SOPHIE

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

MOHR

Treason is punishable by death. Do you understand?

SOPHIE

Yes.

MOHR

Do you want to die?

SOPHIE

No.

MOHR

Then tell the truth.

SOPHIE

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

MOHR

We went through your home. We found the typewriter/

SOPHIE

/used for our class papers/

MOHR

/with the same type as the leaflets/

SOPHIE

/not typed by us!

MOHR

/Extra postage stamps were found ...

SOPHIE

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

MOHR

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

SOPHIE

What are you talking about – seventh leaflet?

MOHR

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

SOPHIE

No.

MOHR

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

SOPHIE

Will it matter?

MOHR

It could save your life.

SOPHIE

Why do you care?

MOHR

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

SOPHIE

You know all that.

MOHR (Gentler. Changing tactics)

It's just a formality. Let's get through is. Name, please.

SOPHIE

Sophia Magdalena Scholl.

MOHR

Date and place of birth.

SOPHIE
May 9, 1921, Forchtenburg, Germany.

MOHR
Are your parents German?

SOPHIE
Yes.

MOHR
Are your grandparents German?

SOPHIE
Yes.

MOHR
What religion are you?

SOPHIE
Lutheran.

MOHR
Are your parents and grandparents Lutheran?

SOPHIE
Yes.

MOHR
When did you move to Ulm?

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

MOHR
We want a factual history of your life. It will give us an understanding of what happened to turn you against Germany.

SOPHIE
I could never turn against Germany. Its beauty, its literature – it's in my blood.

MOHR
Something changed.

SOPHIE

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

MOHR

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

SOPHIE

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

MOHR

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

SOPHIE

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

MOHR

One learns to obey both.

SOPHIE

Is that what you do?

MOHR

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

SOPHIE

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

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

LUISA

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

SOPHIE

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

LUISA

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

SOPHIE

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

LUISA

I agree. Punishment is easier.

SOPHIE

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

LUISA

My pleasure!

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

SOPHIE

I could dance all day!

LUISA

Dance and sing and ski and swim and read –

SOPHIE

- and eat! I almost forgot. From lunch.

(SOPHIE pulls out a roll.)

LUISA

Brochten! My favorite.

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

SOPHIE

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

LUISA

Sweethearts!

SOPHIE

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

LUISA

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

SOPHIE

Hans? *My brother Hans? Dreamy eyes!*

LUISA

Sort of.

SOPHIE

He's too old for you. Plus he's very busy. He doesn't have time for girls.

LUISA

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

SOPHIE

Hans?

LUISA

Yeah. Movie-star-eyes Hans.

SOPHIE

Hans!!!!

LUISA

Yes. Hans!/
/

SOPHIE

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

LUISA

Of course.

SOPHIE

Come to the meeting –

LUISA

I'm Jewish, Sophie.

SOPHIE

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

LUISA

The wrong kind of German.

SOPHIE

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

LUISA

They don't allow Jews.

SOPHIE

That's just silly.

LUISA

Haven't you noticed/

SOPHIE

/I have to –

LUISA

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

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

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

Beat.

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

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

MOHR

You stayed with the League of German Girls?

SOPHIE

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

MOHR

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

SOPHIE

There was no war - yet. Nobody was dying.

MOHR

You and your siblings were arrested in 1937.

SOPHIE

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

MOHR

It was not sanctioned by the party.

SOPHIE

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

MOHR

You were let go the next day.

SOPHIE

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

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

SOPHIE

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

FRITZ

Of course. It's the least I could do for all of you. Hans is a good friend. This is all – nonsense.

SOPHIE

Arresting children – a peculiar sort of government-sanctioned nonsense.

FRITZ

I should go. It's not seemly –

SOPHIE

Yes. Mother and Father will be back this evening. They're hoping to bring back Elisabeth and Inge. What could they have done wrong? We're school children!

FRITZ

I am sure all will be resolved happily.

SOPHIE

Yes. Happily. With “ever after” to follow.

FRITZ

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

SOPHIE

They went through my letters from Hans. Did they like my praise of Mother's strudel? Did they want a recipe? Or were they dismayed I complained about the four days of rain last winter? Is that against party rules? *What are they looking for?*

FRITZ

I don't think they even know. Is anything missing?

SOPHIE

Can't tell yet. Mother said they walked off with my Heinrich Heine book of poetry – he's apparently banned. Silly police – I've committed his poems to heart. Look.

FRITZ

Antigone?

SOPHIE

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

FRITZ

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

SOPHIE

There's a touch of irony there. Read what I underlined. Start with King Creon. I'll read Antigone.

FRITZ

Sophie – I feel silly/

SOPHIE

/Read it!

FRITZ

Am I a hero or a villain?

SOPHIE

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

FRITZ

(Reading Creon. Haltingly – he's not an actor.)

You were seen kneeling on the ground by your dead brother covering his body with dirt.

You were seen crying to the gods with prayers.

Is that true?

SOPHIE

(As Antigone. She is an actress!)

I admit it. Openly and honestly.

FRITZ

You – memorized this?

SOPHIE

Keep reading.

FRITZ

(As Creon.)

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

SOPHIE

(As Antigone.)

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

FRITZ

What does this mean?

SOPHIE

In times of trouble, if man's law demands something that goes against what God wants – who do you listen to?

(Beat.)

I think about these things. A lot.

FRITZ

What happens?

SOPHIE

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

FRITZ

Sophie/

SOPHIE

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

FRITZ

You're scaring me.

SOPHIE

Germany is scaring me.

FRITZ

Just don't do anything/

SOPHIE

/I won't. Truly.

FRITZ

Good.

(THEY finish cleaning up as the light change back to SOPHIE/MOHR.)

SCENE 3

MULTIMEDIA: Kristallnacht

MOHR

You have a boyfriend. Fritz Hartnagel.

SOPHIE

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

MOHR

Will you marry?

SOPHIE

Probably. After the war.

MOHR

Do you wish for children?

SOPHIE

Why do you care?

MOHR

I am looking for ways to make you sympathetic to the judge. A fiancé at the Russian front is helpful. I am looking to keep you alive.

SOPHIE

We are finally in agreement about something.

MOHR

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

SOPHIE

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

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

ELISABETH

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

I need to see.

SOPHIE

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

All Jewish shops.

SOPHIE (cont'd)

Yes.

ELISABETH

The synagogue?

SOPHIE

Destroyed.

ELISABETH

Why?

SOPHIE

Don't question. The street has ears.

ELISABETH

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

Luisa? LUISA!

SOPHIE

(LUISA shakes her head and runs away. SOPHIE wants to follow. But ELISABETH grabs SOPHIE'S hand. The sound of broken glass is heard once more as the lights change to SOPHIE/MOHR.)

SCENE 4
MULTIMEDIA: Sophie's Sketches

MOHR

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

SOPHIE

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

MOHR

Unseemly.

SOPHIE

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

MOHR

What was the purpose?

SOPHIE

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

MOHR

Where did you go?

SOPHIE

You know, don't you? Worpswede.

MOHR

The degenerate arts colony.

SOPHIE

I toyed with becoming a degenerate artist. I love to sketch.

(SOPHIE (18) takes a sketchpad and draws as FRITZ (22) enters. They are outside in Worpswede – on a picnic by a lake. They are comfortable with each other – very much in love.)

SOPHIE

Peel me a grape, kind sir.

FRITZ

You ate the grapes.

SOPHIE

Then a strawberry.

FRITZ

You ate those, too. (Beat.) I have to/

SOPHIE

/No. I'm sketching you. Don't move/

FRITZ

We've been together for five days and you are just starting to sketch me now?

SOPHIE

Yes. You can't go anywhere. Not till I'm done.

(FRITZ covers her hand with his.)

Sophie, it's time –

SOPHIE

No!

(FRITZ takes the sketchbook and glances at the pages.)

FRITZ

Aren't you on assignment to illustrate *Peter Pan*?

SOPHIE

Yes.

FRITZ

Are you setting *Peter Pan* in Greece?

(Grabbing sketchbook back.)

SOPHIE

It's – Antigone.

FRITZ

The dead princess?

SOPHIE

Yes.

FRITZ

Why are you/

SOPHIE

/I don't know. I can't get her out of my head.

FRITZ

And who is this?

SOPHIE

Antigone's sister. Ismene. The sister who wishes to follow man's law instead of God's.
The sister who wishes to be safe.

FRITZ

Promise me you'll be the "safe" sister. Look at me, Sophie/

SOPHIE

/Let's run away – go to Switzerland.

FRITZ

It's a long walk.

SOPHIE

I love to hike.

FRITZ

It's a long hike. (They can't let go.) It's getting late/

SOPHIE

/I know. I'll walk you to the train station.

FRITZ

No. This is how I want to remember you. Out in the country. In your element.

SOPHIE

Where will you be going?

FRITZ

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

SOPHIE

We're gearing up for war.

FRITZ

Yes.

SOPHIE

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

FRITZ

What brought us together will not change.

SOPHIE

How can you be so sure? I feel as if I change every day. Every breath changes me. I breathe in the hardships of our times.

FRITZ
Stay safe, Sophie. For me. Please.

SOPHIE
And you. Stay safe. For me.

(There is a hug and a kiss.)

FRITZ
I love you.

SOPHIE
Always.

(FRITZ exits without looking back.)

SOPHIE (whispering to his back)
Auf Wiedersehen.

(SOPHIE watches until she cannot watch anymore.
She throws her sketchpad and buries her head. .
ELSA enters. She sees the thrown sketchbook and
brings it to Sophie.)

ELSA
Are you all right? I thought – you might – want this.

(There is no answer. ELSA gently puts the
sketchbook next to SOPHIE. SOPHIE looks up.)

SOPHIE
Thank-you/

ELSA
/Can I do/

SOPHIE
/No! I'm fine. Thanks you.

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

SOPHIE
Am I that conspicuous?

ELSA

It's a small town. The locals notice the tourists. I've seen you around with a rather striking fellow.

(SOPHIE just looks at ELSA.)

ELSA (cont'd)

Is anything wrong?

SOPHIE

No.

(SOPHIE takes her sketchbook and hugs it.)

ELSA

You're wondering if I am safe. (Beat.) I am. Safe

SOPHIE

How would I know?

ELSA

You wouldn't. So we'll stick to "safe" topics. Are you an artist?

SOPHIE

I sketch.

ELSA

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

SOPHIE

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

ELSA

Not a bit! I had hoped for a life in theatre – even dreamed about going to America and to their Hollywood but –

SOPHIE

The times changed all that.

ELSA

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

SOPHIE

I'm supposed to be working on an assignment to illustrate scenes from *Peter Pan*. But my mind wanders to Antigone – do you know Antigone?

ELSA

Of course! It would be a great role for me.

SOPHIE

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

ELSA

I wouldn't put Antigone or Ismene in white. It would give them a ghostly look under the lights. Unless that's what you want. I like Antigone in blue. I would look good in blue! I think there is a purity of the heavens in that color and of course she does wind up in the heavens...

SOPHIE

So no red for Antigone?

ELSA

Not unless you want her to be a harlot! Although that would be an interesting take on the character – completely out of context - but fun to play.

SOPHIE

Red for blood would work.

(Pause They look at each other.)

Maybe they should both be in red. Antigone and Ismene are blood-sisters after all.

ELSA

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

(SOPHIE sketches.)

You're fast.

SOPHIE

You've inspired me.

(Stops sketching.)

I want to be Antigone.

ELSA

There's an actress in you!

SOPHIE

No. I mean – I want to be like her. I want to live my ideals. But I'm Ismene. I want to be safe. I want to live.

ELSA

We all want to be Antigone.

SOPHIE

But we're all Ismene.

ELSA

We're a little bit of both.

SOPHIE

I was looking for Antigone here.

ELSA

You found her!

SOPHIE

No. I mean – I was looking for some noise – in the art here – something that reflected the times. Shouldn't art do that?

ELSA

Art is subjective. It's different things to different people. I think of our little colony as an oasis – a break from the times. There is so much beauty here/

SOPHIE

/Masking the ugliness.

ELSA

You won't find any ugliness here.

SOPHIE

No. You're right. I won't.

ELSA

Think of it as a good thing. It was lovely to meet you. I'll let you get back to your work. It's a beautiful day.

SOPHIE

It is. Very beautiful.

(ELSA exits as the lights switch to SOPHIE/MOHR.)

SCENE 5
MULTIMEDIA: Alexander Schmorell

MOHR

You are not currently studying art.

SOPHIE

No. I did love Worpswede. All that beauty in a world turning ugly. I was hoping to meet like-minded people who wanted to use their art to influence the workings of the world. But everyone was quiet – in a hidden safe of their own making. It's as if you stayed silent and made no noise, the bogeyman couldn't come for you. I was hoping for some noise. I was disappointed.

MOHR

So you gave up drawing?

SOPHIE

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

MOHR

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

SOPHIE

I finished my secondary schooling.

MOHR

And then?

SOPHIE

What is the point? You know this stuff!

MOHR

Continue. Please.

SOPHIE

I became a Kindergarten teacher at the Frobel Institute. And then taught preschool in Blumberg to fulfill my service requirements.

MOHR

What was your experience in the service?

SOPHIE

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

MOHR

It is controlled growth.

SOPHIE

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

MOHR

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

SOPHIE

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

MOHR

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

SOPHIE

People value freedom of thought!

MOHR

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

SOPHIE

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

MOHR

What are you studies?

SOPHIE

Philosophy and Natural Biology.

MOHR

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

SOPHIE

I didn't.

MOHR

Answer the question.

SOPHIE

I did.

MOHR

When did you become a member?

SOPHIE

I don't know what you mean.

MOHR

It's on the leaflets - The White Rose Society.

SOPHIE

I don't know anything about the leaflets.

MOHR

I want to know about The White Rose Society.

SOPHIE

There is no/

MOHR

/Hans told us there is.

(Beat.)

SOPHIE

There is – a group of us who go hiking, skiing, attend concerts – that sort of thing.

MOHR

Write pamphlets/

SOPHIE

No!

MOHR

We are gathering names.

SOPHIE

What names? People come by on a Friday night – it's different every weekend! Friends!
Friends who listen to music and have all those kinds of discussions that students have!
On weekends, we get out of the city to hike in the mountains/

MOHR

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

SOPHIE

Literature ... theology ...

Politics. MOHR

(Beat.)

Politics. MOHR

(Beat.)

MOHR
Do you have a friend – one Alexander Schmorell?

(The lights change and SOPHIE moves to ALEX'S home. SOPHIE (age 21) is sketching ALEX and ALEX is sculpting or sketching. It is May, 1942.)

SOPHIE
I want a world where this is all we do.

ALEX
After the war.

SOPHIE
So many things are “after the war.” Turn left.

ALEX
Not my best side.

SOPHIE
Right then. A little more.

(SOPHIE is not happy with the pose and gets up and gently puts her hand on his cheek, moving his head. ALEX briefly touches her hand. It briefly affects them. SOPHIE sits back down.)

Don't move.

ALEX
Are you admiring my classical Roman profile?

SOPHIE
Peculiar.

Sorry?

ALEX

I drew you looking like Peter Pan.

SOPHIE

That English boy who is determined to remain a boy?

ALEX

Yes.

SOPHIE

My Russian soul is wounded.

ALEX

Your Russian soul is delicate.

SOPHIE

Forget the profile. Try me full-faced - as a thinker! Look at my eyes! Do they remind you of Tolstoy!

(ALEX poses)

Or an artist? Do I look “soulful” enough for you?

(ALEX poses)

Or better yet – the man who is one with the great outdoors! That is how I want to be remembered!

SOPHIE

Remembered?

ALEX

Later. When I am old and white-bearded.

SOPHIE

After you have grown up!

ALEX

Out of the mouth of a schoolgirl.

SOPHIE

Is that how you see me?

ALEX

No. There are no more Peter Pans. We grew up before we left Primary School.

SOPHIE

No wonder I yearn for childhood. Maybe after the war, I will rediscover it.

ALEX

After the war, I will return to Russia. It is there that I will become the man I wish to be.

SOPHIE

Will you practice medicine in Russia?

ALEX

I will be an artist.

SOPHIE

Yet you study medicine.

ALEX

There is no propaganda in medicine. Its facts cannot be twisted to suit the political climate. For now, I am better suited to medicine. Its facts are not under attack. But when I am free – I will sculpt. I will live out in the country with my clay and stone and find what is hidden inside. It will be a simple life,

SOPHIE

You? Leading a simple life? Alex - with his wining and dining and concerts/

ALEX

/Diversion, Sophie. They are ways to black-out the outside world. But when the war is over, I will return to what is dear to me. Art. Russian literature. Nature.

(Beat)

What will you do after the war? When you're all grown up?

SOPHIE

Listen to American jazz – cranked up loudly on the phonograph! Buy every banned book legally and read them all! Put huge amounts of jam on bread because it isn't rationed!

ALEX

/But – what will you *do*?

SOPHIE

Live peace. Teach peace. In the mountains where you can touch the sky.

ALEX

You're a dreamer.

SOPHIE

I've wanted to bring the natural world to people since I was knee-high. "Keep true to the dreams of your youth."

ALEX

That's a Russian ideal.

SOPHIE

Hardly! A German quote! Friedrich von Schiller. It's truth. You can be forty, fifty and beyond and still hold on to your early dreams. My body will age. My dreams won't.

ALEX

May they still be intact later – when all this ends.

SOPHIE

They will be. It's what keeps me sane.

ALEX

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

SOPHIE

"When Hitler loses, I will get my country back."

ALEX

Sophie ... that statement is treasonous.

SOPHIE

Not here! Not in your apartment. "When Hitler loses, we will be allowed freedom of thought."

ALEX

Be careful, my dear.

SOPHIE

"When Hitler loses, we will rebuild." Your turn.

ALEX

Sophie ...

SOPHIE

He must lose. It's the only way Germany can win. Have you read these? I've been meaning to show them to you. He teaches peace. With hard truths.

(SOPHIE brings some papers to ALEX.)

ALEX

(They both hold the letters for a moment.)

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

SOPHIE

"Deporting the mentally ill to the great unknown never to be heard from again." *Are we doing that? Killing innocents that have no defense?* Thou shall not kill. Thou shall not kill. Thou shall not kill. It's all through his sermons. And yet, we kill - the most vulnerable.

ALEX

Take care where you share these.

SOPHIE

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

ALEX

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

SOPHIE

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

ALEX

I love the beauty of your convictions.

SOPHIE

Alex?

ALEX

Just appreciating ... what's good.

SOPHIE

I should/

ALEX

/Yes/

SOPHIE

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

ALEX

Sophie. (Pause.) Talk to Hans tomorrow.

SOPHIE

I always talk to him.

ALEX

There are things you should know.

SOPHIE

What?

ALEX

Talk to him.

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

ALEX (cont'd)

Good night.

SCENE SIX

MULTIMEDIA: The White Rose Society

LIGHTS UP on MOHR and SOPHIE

MOHR

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

SOPHIE

I don't know anything about leaflets.

MOHR

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

(MOHR picks up one.)

MOHR (cont'd)

“Every civilized German should be ashamed of National Socialism. This shame will be passed to our children.”

This is a call to resist. Punishable by death.

LIGHTS change to HANS'S and SOPHIE'S (age 21) apartment. ALEX and TRAUTE are there. It is June, 1942. They are folding leaflets.

TRAUTE

Where are the leaflets?

HANS

Shh! Sophie hasn't left yet. Here – have a book! We're studying.

(HANS, TRAUTE and ALEX quickly enter into “make believe we're studying mode.” SOPHIE enters – with coat dressed to go out.)

SOPHIE

Aren't you three the pretty picture of the “Good German Students?”

HANS

We devote all our waking hours to God and country!

SOPHIE

Right. Why do you all look like you're up to mischief?

ALEX

Mischief? Never!

HANS

You're running late.

SOPHIE

I'm fine. How are you Traute?

TRAUTE

As fine as ever – except for the final papers hanging over my head.

SOPHIE

Enjoy your studies! I'm off.

(SOPHIE exits.)

TRAUTE

The leaflets?

(HANS hands TRAUTE some leaflets. She reads them.)

TRAUTE

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

It’s a mouthful. But to the point. You two do have a way with words.

HANS

Enough to make you swoon?

TRAUTE

I do *not* swoon.

HANS

There was that week in Hamburg –

TRAUTE

With music and dancing and flirtation. I’ll admit to the fun of it. I deny the swoon.

ALEX

While I do appreciate a good love story, I have a seminar in less than hour. So if we could leave “Our Week in Hamburg” and get the leaflets ready, I would appreciate it.

TRAUTE

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

ALEX

Hans thought that might appeal to their German-identity. It’s a tad philosophical for this Russian.

TRAUTE

Why not appeal to their nationalism?

HANS

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

ALEX

I wonder if we’re targeting the right people.

(Reading slowly and deliberately.)

ALEX (cont’d)

Nothing is so unworthy of a civilized nation as allowing itself to be governed without opposition by an irresponsible clique that has yielded to base instinct.

It sounds as if we are reaching out to professors or poets.

HANS

You helped draft this!

ALEX

I'm aware of that. I believe in the process. I did want to see some of these quotes edited out. My neck is just as precious as yours. I'm not sure this will speak to the average German citizen.

HANS

We need to reach the thinkers.

ALEX

I'm worried we will amass an army of philosophers and nothing will get done.

HANS

I think we start with most educated.

ALEX

I don't share your bull-headed obsession that we should target the intelligentsia!

HANS

They were complicit in allowing Hitler to rise!

ALEX

Words against bullets. Who will win?

TRAUTE

There are a lot of words. I know. Hans and I typed them. We went through two ribbons.

ALEX

How many did you type?

TRAUTE

Eighty? One hundred?

ALEX

We need more.

HANS

Says the man who types with two fingers and didn't type one of them.

ALEX

I want this to be effective. We need more.

HANS

Of course. I'll put an ad in the newspaper for a typist tomorrow.

ALEX

Don't get testy. I'm just stating a fact.

TRAUTE

We have these! They exist now! We need to pass them out. We need stamps, envelopes and more paper. It's all rationed.

ALEX

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

TRAUTE

Here you are, Dreamer. Leave them everywhere.

HANS

Stop! We only have about eighty left. Christoph brought ten to Innsbruck.

TRAUTE

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

HANS

He was adamant. His step-mother is Jewish and they're very close.

TRAUTE

I will bring some to Hamburg.

ALEX

You know the danger if you're searched.

TRAUTE

I am less likely to be searched than Christoph. Plus I can always bat my eyelashes and exclaim,

“Why no, sir – I had no idea what was in them. I was merely doing a favor for a friend.”

ALEX (As the officer)

“And what friend would that be?”

TRAUTE

“Why. Otto Gerber, sir. A deer, sweet gentleman.”

ALEX

Otto Gerber?

TRAUTE

He died last week. I memorize obituaries in case I need them. When will the next leaflets be ready?

ALEX

We're working on it. It's even longer.

(Some exasperated glances between the three.)

I know. There are a few quotes in incorrect German from our abysmal leader and some facts. It mentions the 300,000 Jews that have been murdered in Poland. Those are the words that are important. People need to be appalled.

TRAUTE

Are you sure about the killings in Poland?

ALEX

Yes. Confirmed by Willi when he spent time at the Warsaw Ghetto. This knowledge is not known here. Now it will be.

TRAUTE

This is making me sick. (Pause.) The next hard question is: "Will they care?"

ALEX

They have to! This is a heinous crime. And who knows? One day they may decide to round up the Jewish population in Germany!

TRAUTE

How could they do that?

ALEX

The same way they did it in Poland. Maybe, they'll round up all the pretty, Jewish girls and send them to Nazi brothels!

TRAUTE

That's ridiculous.

ALEX

Brutality gets easier after the first time.

TRAUTE

How many leaflets will be created?

HANS

As many as it takes.

TRAUTE

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

HANS

I *may* have someone who *may* be lending us money to buy a mimeograph machine.

TRAUTE

My fingers just got very happy.

HANS

There are no guarantees. But if it works out, there will be thousands of leaflets produced. You think it's hard to buy stamps and envelopes now? It's going to get harder. We need thousands. Tens of thousands to be effective.

TRAUTE

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

ALEX

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

HANS

We will do a few at a time.

ALEX

So you, me, Willi, Traute, and Christoph. And ten thousand stamps. Not possible.

HANS

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

ALEX

We need to branch out. Create a web – where we each have our contacts and they have contacts but we only know our own.

HANS

How can we be assured that those we don't know aren't spies?

ALEX

We can't know.

HANS

Too risky.

ALEX

Did you think trying to overthrow the Nazis would be safe?

HANS

I don't want to die. (Beat.) I don't want any of us to die.

TRAUTE

Good. We are in agreement that we want to live. We'll figure out how to get the ten thousand leaflets out when they actually exist. And we'll brood over our network of would-be spies when we have the spies in place. For now, let's distribute what we have. I have a few stamps. Anyone else?

HANS

I'll get some tomorrow.

ALEX

Maybe Sophie can buy some stamps.

HANS

My sister? No. Too dangerous.

ALEX

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

HANS

Alex, do you like my sister?

ALEX

Of course.

HANS

I mean – *like*?

ALEX

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

HANS

She's with Fritz.

ALEX

He'll have no competition from me. After the war, I am returning to Russia. Sophie will marry her German soldier and we will always be friends.

HANS

Good.

ALEX

Where did Sophie go?

HANS

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

ALEX

And we all go in July. I hope we don't have to patch up her boyfriend.

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

SOPHIE

No! I refuse! Why would I do that?

FRITZ

Because you love me. We are not equipped for winter. There have been no new uniforms issued. Our jackets are threadbare. Boots have holes. Cold comes quickly to Russia.

SOPHIE

I will not solicit donations to buy sweaters for the soldiers. You will get nothing from me. Even if you are dressed as a patchwork quilt.

FRITZ

Many will get ill. Is that what you want?

SOPHIE

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

FRITZ

Would you have me freeze to death?

SOPHIE

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

FRITZ

Sophie ...

SOPHIE

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

FRITZ

Shh. People have big ears.

SOPHIE

Don't worry about me. I'm the good German girl, remember?

FRITZ

I remember someone wishing to be Antigone...

SOPHIE

Only if I have to bury a loved one. Don't let that happen. Please. (Beat.) I have something for you. To read on the train.

FRITZ

Catholic sermons? Are you Catholic now?

SOPHIE

Don't change the subject. They're from Bishop Galen. There's a lot of stuff about "thou shall not kill" in there. Tough reading for a soldier going to fight. I rewrote it in my own hand with lots of hearts and flowers. I made it look like a love letter. Promise me you'll read it.

FRITZ

Of course. My family's waiting – come with me to dinner.

SOPHIE

So your mother can look down her nose and ask me if I've been arrested again?

FRITZ

She doesn't do that!

SOPHIE

She did do that!

FRITZ

Once.

SOPHIE

Once was enough.

FRITZ

Promise me you'll take care.

SOPHIE

You're the one returning to the front. Oh! Here.

(SOPHIE hands him some knitted mittens.)

SOPHIE (cont'd)

They're a big raggedy – I never could knit well. But they'll keep you warm. I ... really don't want you to freeze to death. I hope the soldiers don't make fun of you when they see them.

FRITZ

They'll be jealous.

SOPHIE

I do want you back home – with all your fingers and toes.

(SOPHIE watches FRITZ leave.)

Optional Intermission

SCENE 7

MULTIMEDIA: The Pamphlets

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

HANS

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

SOPHIE

Perfectly lovely and over too soon. He had to visit with his family before he leaves. What's that you're trying to hide from me?

HANS

Homework.

SOPHIE

You usually don't hide your homework.

HANS

Don't be silly.

SOPHIE

I'm never silly - anymore.

HANS

I was just writing something.

SOPHIE

Good! I'll edit. It'll take my mind off things.

HANS

It's nothing.

(SOPHIE grabs his writings.)

SOPHIE

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

SOPHIE (cont'd)

This is – wonderful! Did you really write this?

HANS

With Alex.

SOPHIE

Homework? For which of your medical school courses?

HANS

It's – private homework.

SOPHIE

Private homework that you were working on with Alex and Traute!

HANS

... yes.

SOPHIE

Where does it go?

HANS

Into the world.

SOPHIE

What happens next?

HANS

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

SOPHIE

I like a challenge.

HANS

No.

SOPHIE

It's what I have been yearning for. All I do is talk. I need to do! How can I help? Type? Edit? Distribute?

HANS

No! It's too dangerous.

SOPHIE

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

HANS

I want our efforts to grow. But I also want you safe.

SOPHIE

Fear is everywhere. Fear is in this apartment right now. You're scared. I'm scared. I'm scared for you. (Pause.) When do you leave for Russia?

HANS

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

SOPHIE

And Alex?

HANS

Do you like Alex?

SOPHIE

Of course.

HANS

After spending the afternoon with Fritz?

SOPHIE

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

HANS

Don't. We will be healing. And can you picture Alex shooting a Russian? He'll be starting conversations about the genius of Tolstoy with everyone he meets. We'll be

HANS (cont'd)

doing something good. I need to get back to work. I want a few more pamphlets done before I leave. As for you, forget you ever saw them.

SOPHIE

I'm here to stay.

HANS

No.

SOPHIE

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

(Beat.)

(HANS shows SOPHIE all the leaflets. SOPHIE returns to MOHR.)

SCENE 8

MULTIMEDIA: The Russian Front

AT RISE MOHR is continuing his interrogation of SOPHIE.

SOPHIE

I know nothing about the leaflets!

MOHR

You were caught holding them in the atrium.

SOPHIE

Hans and I were waiting for Gisella. They were everywhere. We picked some up –

MOHR

Older ones were found in your apartment. Tell me about the leaflets!

SOPHIE

I don't know/

MOHR

/You know more than you say. You were seen with them. You know what was in them.

SOPHIE

I don't/

MOHR

/You at least know of their existence. How much more do you know?

SOPHIE

Nothing! Nothing! Nothing!

(The lights change. We are in SOPHIE'S and HANS'S apartment. It is July 1942. It's around midnight. HANS is seen working. SOPHIE could do this scene while on the platform with MOHR.)

SOPHIE

I'm scared. Aren't you?

HANS

Sometimes. But never at night.

SOPHIE

But that's when I'm alone with my thoughts. That's when I scare myself.

MOHR'S VOICE (in the dark)

What do you know?

HANS

The night is our friend. We are undetected in the dark. You can quit at any time.

SOPHIE

I know. I'm being silly. It's just the darkness. It's when I wonder, "What if we get caught? What will they do for information?"

HANS

If we get caught, deny. Deny everything. Do not waver.

SOPHIE

But what if/

HANS

/Deny. I will never give you up. Never. I will die first.

(The lights fade to black. In the dark we hear MOHR.)

MOHR

How much more do you know?

(The lights go up and SOPHIE returns to MOHR. In the dark we hear Hans.)

Deny!
HANS

Nothing.
SOPHIE

/Hans confessed.
MOHR

(Beat.)
Your brother confessed to writing them.

SOPHIE
He wouldn't – unless - you tortured him!

MOHR
No. You will see him tomorrow in court. He smiled when he confessed. He was proud.

SOPHIE
You're lying to get information from me.

MOHR
See for yourself.

(MOHR hands Sophie a paper that has the confession.)

MOHR
It's over. Save yourself. You knew about the leaflets. They were in your possession, in your apartment and created by your brother. Did you know what they contained?

(A beat. Or two.)

SOPHIE
No.

MOHR
(Grabbing the papers back in frustration.)

That's what Hans said.

(Beat.)

SOPHIE

There's been news from the Russian front. News that German soldiers were abandoned on the battlefield. Is that true?

MOHR

Where did you hear that?

SOPHIE

Rumors. Talk.

MOHR

Who told you that?

SOPHIE

Conversations! I don't remember who said what to everything.

MOHR

Did you know what was in the leaflets?

SOPHIE

If I say, I didn't know?

MOHR

You will get prison time but your life will likely be spared.

SOPHIE

Likely?

MOHR

There are no guarantees. We are at war. Treason during times of war carries heavy penalties. *Did you know what was in them?*

SOPHIE

If I am sentenced to death, I have ninety days under law before the sentence is carried out. Is that correct?

MOHR

Yes.

SOPHIE

A lot can happen in ninety days. Germany could lose the war.

MOHR

The sentence will be carried out. Tread carefully. What do you know?

SOPHIE

I know Germany was defeated at Stalingrad. The Americans are mobilizing against us. Germany left their soldiers stranded in Russia – to die. Germany will run out of soldiers and lose the war.

MOHR

On the contrary, we have been training soldiers for ten years. There is an endless supply. Germany will win.

SOPHIE

Will you be sending thirteen-year-old soldiers to fight your battles?

MOHR

They are eager to go.

SOPHIE

The war will be over in ninety days.

(Pause.)

Yes. I distributed the pamphlets.

MOHR

Did you know what was in them? Answer carefully.

SOPHIE

You will be executing my brother?

MOHR

Yes.

SOPHIE.

(SOPHIE needs a moment to process what she just heard. And to make a decision.)

I knew what was in the pamphlets.