

# GR AK SCI X3

GRAMSCI x 3 ■ WILFRED WATSON ■ LONGSPOON PRESS

#33



The greatest Marxist writer of the twentieth century, paradoxically, is also one of the greatest examples of the independence of the human spirit from its material limitations.

*James Joll, Gramsci*

---

WILFRED WATSON

LONGSPOON PRESS

GRAMSCI x 3

Copyright 1983 Wilfred Watson

**Canadian Cataloguing in Publication Data**

Watson, Wilfred, 1911-

**Gramsci x 3**

A play.

ISBN 0-919285-16-3

1. Gramsci, Antonio, 1891-1937 - Drama.

I. Title.

PS8545.A87G7 C812'.54 C83-091257-6

PR9199.3.W37G7

**Gramsci x 3** has been set in Univers 10-point type.

LONGSPOON PRESS

c/o Dept. of English

University of Alberta

Edmonton, Alberta T6G 2E5

Books may be ordered from your bookstore or directly from the publisher.

Credits:

Editing for the press: *Shirley Neuman*

Cover and Book Design: *Jorge Frascara and Shirley Neuman*

Typesetting: *May Chung*

Printing: *Speedfast, Edmonton*

Financial Assistance: *Alberta Culture*

*The Canada Council*

**Contents**

Acknowledgements 6

Gramsci 1

*The young officer from Cagliari* 7

Gramsci 2

*Finding Tatiana* 77

Gramsci 3

*The doing-to-death-of Antonio Gramsci* 131



## Acknowledgements

---

Without Giuseppe Fiori's *Antonio Gramsci; the life of a revolutionary* (translated by Tom Nairn) this dramatic (and highly speculative) fantasy about the martyrdom of Antonio Gramsci couldn't have been written. *Gramsci x 3* freely deconstructs Fiori's biography, which shouldn't be held responsible for the persecution of fact and, especially, the fictionalization of character, required to translate the life of a revolutionary into an allegory about theatre as a revolutionary art.

ww

---

Longspoon Press thanks the Istituto Gramsci, Roma, for providing the photographs from which illustrations for *Gramsci x 3* were developed.

# GRAMSCI 1

---

The young officer from Cagliari



### The characters

tiu Gramsci, *Nino Gramsci's 79-year-old father*

Edmea

Teresina, *granddaughters to tiu Gramsci and nieces to Nino Gramsci*

Peppina Montaldo, *a friend of Edmea*

chorus of women *from villages about Ghilarza:*

*Abbasanta, Sèdilo, Ottano, Dualchi, Neoneli, Bortigeli*

the young officer *from Cagliari*

a boy

Tatiana Schucht, *sister-in-law to Nino Gramsci*

Prologue, April 28, 1937

**Ghilarza, Sardinia**, a village half-way between *Oristano* and *Macomèr*, near *L. Omodeo*, and the villages of *Abbasanta*, *Sèdilo*, *Ottano*, *Dualchi*, *Neoneli*, *Bortigeli*, and *Gavoi*. The house of *tiu Gramsci*, seventy-nine-year-old father of *Antonio Gramsci*—*Nino Gramsci*. Backstage, *tiu Gramsci*'s bedroom. Offstage left, the village street. At rear stage right is a large poster of *Mussolini*.

**Scene one:** lights up to *Teresina* and *Edmea*, granddaughters of *tiu Gramsci*, and nieces of *Nino Gramsci*. *Teresina*, except for *Nino*'s hunchback, could be his double. She is seventeen years of age, tiny and delicate-boned, breasts undeveloped, with a huge head of black hair in marked contrast to her size and delicacy of body—giving her the lion-like appearance of *Nino*. *Edmea* is a little older, appears much older. They struggle to reverse the *Mussolini* poster panel. Reversed it reads: *GHILARZA*.

SARDINIA, APRIL, 1937. **Blackout.**

**Scene two:** lights up to *Edmea* and *Teresina*. The kitchen of *tiu Gramsci*'s house.

**Edmea** He 1 wasn't  
due 2 to  
arrive 3 until  
the 4 27th,  
Teresina. 5  
I know, 6 I know,  
Edmea. 7 And  
it's 8 only the 9  
28th 1 today.  
But 2 he  
wrote 3 us  
that 4 he'd be 5 out  
of 6 prison on 7 the  
21st, 8 Edmea. One 9  
thing 1 at  
a 2 time,  
Teresina. 3  
Oh,  
that? 4 Shit,  
it's 5 nothing  
but 6 blood,  
Edmea. 7  
It's

an 8 event,  
Teresina. 9  
I 1 should  
feel 2 irritable,  
should 3 I?  
I 4 haven't  
a 5 headache.  
I 6 don't  
feel 7 irritable  
either. 8 I don't. 9  
I 1 feel  
the 2 same  
as 3 I  
always 4 feel.  
No 5 occasion  
for 6 celebration.  
Let's 7 save  
that 8 for uncle 9  
Nino. 1  
But  
it 2 is  
an 3 event.  
It 4 means  
that 5 you're  
perfectly 6 normal,  
Teresina. 7  
Coming  
at 8 seventeen years 9  
of 1 age?  
I 2 don't  
want 3 to  
be 4 normal.  
I 5 want  
to 6 be  
a 7 misbegotten  
Gramsci. 8 Like  
uncle 9  
Nino. 1 Or  
like 2 grandad  
Gramsci. 3  
4  
I 5 wish

pause

I 6 had  
a 7 hunchback.  
**Edmea** But 8 you  
haven't 9  
Teresina. 1  
No,  
I 2 haven't.  
**Edmea** Your 3 back  
is 4 very  
straight. 5  
If  
only 6 it  
weren't. 7  
Why?  
**Edmea** Whatever 8 for,  
Teresina? 9  
Shall 1 I  
tell 2 you?  
Why 3 would  
I 4 like  
to 5 be  
frail 6 and  
sickly 7 and  
have 8 a  
hunchback? 9  
You 1 wouldn't  
understand. 2  
You 3 wouldn't  
understand. 4  
*pause*  
You 5 wouldn't.  
*pause*  
6 So  
that 7 I  
could 8 be  
a 9  
genius 1 like  
uncle 2 Nino.  
**Edmea** He 3 isn't  
a 4 genius,  
Teresina. 5 He's  
a 6 man  
of 7 action,  
which 8 you  
could 9  
never 1 be.  
Lenin 2 thought

Nino 3 Gramsci  
was 4 a  
genius. 5  
**Edmea** If  
he 6 was  
a 7 genius,  
it 8 was  
despite 9  
his 1 physical  
condition, 2 not  
because 3 of  
it. 4  
I'm 5 glad  
for 6 your  
sake 7 you've  
a 8 strong  
healthy 9  
body, 1 so  
that 2 you  
can 3 marry  
and 4 bear  
children. 5  
**Teresina** We  
don't 6 need  
any 7 more  
children. 8  
**Edmea** And  
you 9  
want 1 to  
be 2 like  
uncle 3 Nino!  
The 4 more  
children 5 we  
have, 6 the  
more 7 communists.  
**Teresina** You're 8 all  
talk, 9  
like 1 your  
father, 2 and  
grandad 3 Gramsci.  
You're 4 not  
noticeably 5 pregnant,  
**Edmea** 6  
No,  
because 7 I

want 8 to have 9

my 1 babies  
at 2 the  
right 3 time.  
Of 4 course.

**Teresina**

do 6 uncle  
Nino 7 any  
babies. 9  
good 8 having

**Edmea**

That 1 was  
aunt 2 Julka's  
fault. 3 Poor  
aunt 4 Julka!

**Teresina**

that 6 bastard  
Mussolini's 7 fault.  
She 8 had  
to 9

be 1 smuggled  
out 2 of  
Italy 3 when  
uncle 4 Nino  
was 5 arrested.

One 6 baby  
in 7 arms,  
one 8 in  
her 9

belly. 1 The  
bastard! 2

**Edmea**

Don't  
talk 3 like  
that, 4 even

Teresina. 6 Even  
to 5 me,  
the 7 walls

have 8 ears.

**Teresina**

in 1 Sardinia.

**Edmea**

Everywhere, 2 Teresina.

**Teresina**

Well 3 not  
in 4 the

Ghilarza. 6  
village 5 of

Not 9

**Edmea**

Everywhere,  
Teresina. 7

**Teresina**

in 8 the  
home 9

of 1 grandfather  
Gramsci. 2

**Edmea**

Everywhere,  
Teresina, 3 everywhere.  
Mussolini 4 is

**Teresina**

a 5 bastard.

## BLACKOUT

**Teresina** during blackout

I've 6 said  
it. 7 I'll  
say 8 it  
again. 9

LIGHTS up to scene as before, Edmea and Teresina. During the blackout the poster with Mussolini's face is turned round to show Mussolini glaring.

**Teresina** struggling with Edmea to reverse the poster

I 1 don't  
care 2 who  
hears 3 it.

shouting

MUSSOLINI 4 IS

A 5 BASTARD.

## BLACKOUT

LIGHTS up to scene as before, and Mussolini's face.

**Edmea**

Shut 6 up,

Teresina.

struggling to reverse poster.

7 You'll

wake 8 up

grandad 9

Gramsci. 1 And

if 2 you

want 3 to

be 4 like

uncle 5 Nino,

you'll 6 have

to 7 watch



Teresina

that 8 tongue  
 yours. 1 How  
 do 2 you  
 think 3 uncle  
 Nino 4 has  
 managed 5 to  
 survive 6 ten  
 years 7 in  
 prison? 8 Not  
 shooting 1 off  
 his 2 head.  
 I 3 am  
 like 4 uncle  
 Nino. 5 Yesterday  
 grandad 6 Gramsci  
 mistook 7 me  
 for 8 him.  
 He 9  
 did, 1 Edmea.  
 I 2 was  
 coming 3 in  
 from 4 outside,  
 and 5 grandad  
 ran 6 towards  
 me, 7 to  
 embrace 8 me,  
 and 9  
 crying 1 out,  
 Nino, 2 my  
 son 3 Nino.  
 He's 4 almost  
 blind, 5 Teresina.  
 Nino, 7 I  
 said, 8 it's  
 me 9  
 Teresina 1 your  
 granddaughter. 2 And  
 I 3 hugged  
 him 4 and  
 kissed 5 him.  
 What 6 did  
 you 7 do

Edmea

Teresina

Edmea

Teresina

Edmea

Teresina

BLACKOUT

that 8 for,  
 he 9  
 said. 1  
 He's  
 eating 2 his  
 heart 3 out  
 with 4 expectation,  
 Teresina. 5  
 What  
 did 6 you  
 do 7 that  
 for, 8 he  
 asked 9  
 me. 1 Kiss  
 you, 2 I  
 said. 3 No,  
 he 4 said,  
 trick 5 me  
 like 6 that.  
 It's 7 only  
 The 9  
 the 8 28th.  
 old 1 man  
 should 2 know  
 what 3 getting  
 released 4 from  
 prison 5 means.  
 He's 6 been  
 in 7 prison.  
 He 8 should  
 know 9  
 you 1 don't  
 get 2 out  
 as 3 soon  
 as 4 your  
 time's 5 up.  
 Mussolini 6 hates  
 letting 7 us  
 from 9  
 get 8 out  
 under 1 his  
 thumb. 2 I'll gag...

There is a knocking at the outside door.

LIGHTS up to *Teresina* and *Edmea* struggling with the *Mussolini* poster, to get it reversed. The knocking continues. They get the poster turned round. Then *Teresina*, with a shriek, runs to the door. But the poster when reversed shows the same glaring *Mussolini*.

**Teresina** It's 1 uncle  
Nino! 2

*Flings the door open.*

Peppina  
Montaldo. 3

*Peppina Montaldo enters.*

Curses,  
Peppina 4 Montaldo  
on 5 your  
head! 6 We  
thought 7 for  
sure 8 it  
was 9  
uncle 1 Nino!

*Peppina Montaldo stares at Teresina, and says nothing. Then turns to Edmea.*

**Edmea** Peppina, 2 what's  
wrong, 3 Peppina?

**Peppina** It 4 isn't  
true, 5 is  
it, 6 Edmea,  
that 7 Nino  
Gramsci 8 is  
dead? 9

It 1 came  
over 2 the  
wireless, 3 Edmea.  
Why 4 no,  
Peppina. 5 You  
knew 6 we  
were 7 expecting  
him 8 home  
yesterday. 9

**Edmea** But 1 I'm  
not 2 worried.  
You 3 know  
what 4 it's  
like 5 crossing  
the 6 water  
from 7 the

continent 8 to

Cagliari. 9

**Peppina**

Then 1 you're  
not 2 worried,  
Edmea. 3

**Edmea**

No,  
Peppina, 4 I'm

not 5 worried.  
Not 6 much.  
Not 7 more  
than 8 usual.

The 9

wireless 1 is  
lies 2 an  
endless 3 string  
of 4 lies.  
Here 5 it  
is. 6 Whatever  
it 7 is  
in 8 America.

**Teresina**

Well, 9

**Edmea**

I'm 1 worried.  
Not 2 by  
the 3 bad  
news. 4 We  
always 5 hear  
it 6 first.  
It's 7 the  
good 8 news  
we've 9

*pause*

*pause*

learned 1 to  
fear. 2  
3 Nino's  
being 4 sent  
to 5 the  
special 6 penal  
establishment 7 at  
Turi 8 for

medically 9

incapacitated 1 prisoners,  
by 2 order  
of 3 Mussolini  
himself, 4 an  
act 5 of  
personal 6 clemency.

endured 8 that.  
 his 1 being  
 transferred 2 to  
 a 3 private  
 clinic 4 in  
 They 6 had  
 a 8 special  
 for 1 him,  
 with 2 the  
 windows 3 and  
 doors 4 reinforced  
 bars. 6 with 5 iron  
 Not 7 to  
 keep 8 Nino  
 Nino 1 was  
 bedridden. 2 But  
 to 3 keep  
 the 4 doctors  
 out. 5 Well,  
 Nino 6 endured  
 when 8 he  
 moved 1 with  
 Mussolini's 2 especial  
 blessing 3 to  
 the 4 clinic  
 at 5 Quisisana  
 in 6 Rome,  
 where 7 he  
 now 8 is.  
 That 9  
 was 1 two  
 years 2 ago.  
 But 3 what  
 did 4 you  
 hear 5 on  
 the 6 wireless,

**Teresina**

Peppina? 7  
 I  
 didn't 8 hear  
 on 1 the  
 wireless 2 myself.  
 But 3 that's  
 what 4 they  
 said 5 came  
 over 6 the  
 wireless. 7  
 What,  
 Peppina? 8  
 That  
 Gramsci 1 was  
 dead. 2 Just  
 after 3 he'd  
 been 4 released  
 from 5 prison.  
 And 6 they  
 enumerated 7 all  
 the 8 special  
 he'd 1 received  
 from 2 the  
 prison 3 medical  
 services, 4 I  
 expect? 5  
 Hell...  
 It 6 may  
 be 7 true  
 and 8 it  
 may 9  
 not, 1 Teresina.  
 We 2 must  
 be 3 brave,  
 for 4 grandad's  
 sake. 5  
 Excuse  
 me. 6 Eek...

**BLACKOUT** as Teresina makes her dash offstage, suppressing a cry of dismay.

**LIGHTS** up to Peppina Montaldo and Edmea. The poster of Mussolini is illuminated by a strong band of sunlight, and is in high emphasis.

**Peppina** The 1 curse?  
**Edmea** It 2 was  
 slow 3 coming.  
**Peppina** Who 4 wants  
 it? 5  
**Edmea** You  
 knew 6 about  
 it? 7  
**Peppina** It's  
 item 8 one  
 in 9  
 gossip 1 from  
 here 2 to  
 Santulussurgiu. 3  
**Edmea** We've  
 rented 4 uncle  
 Nino 5 a  
 room 6 there.  
 A 7 very  
 nice 8 room.  
 He'd 9  
 asked 1 us  
 to. 2  
 On 3 the  
 ground 4 floor.  
 It 5 wasn't  
 easy 6 to  
 find 7 one  
 on 8 the  
 ground 9  
 floor, 1 but  
 he's 2 too  
 weak 3 to  
 climb 4 so  
 many 5 stairs.  
 He 6 wants  
 to 7 live  
 out 8 the  
 rest 9  
 of 1 his  
 days 2 in  
 the 3 hills  
 of 4 his  
 boyhood. 5  
 So 6 you

**Peppina** knew 7 about  
 Teresina? 8  
 What  
 is 1 there  
 to 2 talk  
 about, 3 except  
 the 4 curse,  
 and 5 HIM.  
*She nods in the direction of the poster head of Mussolini.*  
 It's 6 safer  
 not 7 to  
 talk 8 about  
 him. 9  
 We 1 should  
 be 2 talking  
 about 3 how  
 the 4 kingdom  
 of 5 Sardinia  
 led 6 the  
 way 7 and  
 gave 8 Italy  
 her 9  
 freedom, 1 and  
 was 2 rewarded  
 with 3 Mussolini.  
**Edmea** You're 4 right,  
 Peppina, 5 it's  
 safer 6 not  
 to 7 say  
 anything 8 about  
 him. 9  
**Peppina** Perhaps 1 Nino  
 Gramsci 2 will  
 change 3 all  
 that. 4  
 Do 5 you  
 think 6 he  
 will 7 recover,  
**Edmea** Edmea? 8  
 No-one  
 recovers 9

from 1 ten  
years 2 in  
a 3 Fascist  
jail. 4

Yes, 5 he

pause

will 6 recover.

7 He's

very 8 strong.

9

Unless 1 the  
news 2 is  
right. 3

You  
don't 4 believe

the 5 news?

I 6 don't

know 7 what

to 8 think,

Peppina. 9

Re-enter Teresina.

**Teresina**

I've 1 been  
checking 2 up  
on 3 grandad.  
He's 4 O.K.

He's 5 sleeping

soundly. 6

## BLACKOUT

*During the darkness there is music or sound effect suggesting an invasion of bicycles.*

*LIGHTS up to Edmea, Teresina, Peppina Montaldo, as before, with the face of Mussolini scowling at them, but the focus of light is gone, and the acting area is somewhat darkened, as if the sun had gone behind clouds. The bicycle theme, music or sound, intensifies, then stops abruptly. There is a knocking at the door.*

**Teresina**

I'm 1 sure  
it's 2 not  
uncle 3 Nino  
this 4 time.

*Teresina runs to the door. She opens it, and in come, one by one, chorus of women. They wheel in their bicycles, which are highly assorted, of all shapes and sizes, matching the women themselves. A formidable collection of women and machines. Chorus/1 is from the village of Abbasanta, Chorus/2, from the village of Sèdilo, Chorus/3, the village of Ottano, Chorus/4, the village of Dualchi, Chorus/5, the village of Neoneli, Chorus/6, the village of Bortigeli. As they enter, they chatter about the Gramscis, in particular about Teresina, who has only just begun to menstruate.*

**Edmea**

Thank 1 god,  
Peppina, 2 you  
came. 3 Teresina!

*Teresina goes to Edmea.*

Teresina, 4 take

Peppina 5 Montaldo

with 6 you

and 7 go

and 8 mount

guard 9

over 1 grandad  
Gramsci. 2 Don't  
let 3 anyone  
bother 4 him.

*To Peppina*

he 6 sleeps

The 5 longer

the 7 better,

Peppina. 8

**Teresina** *taking Peppina by the hand*

Aunt

Julka 9

sent 1 it  
me 2 from  
Russia. 3

*She shows Peppina a tin flageolet.*

The  
words 4 on it

are 5 Russian.

"Speak 6 through

me." 7 I

love 8 it.

Grandad 9

hates 1 it.

*As Teresina is speaking, the chorus starts to chant, all at once, but not in unison. Teresina places the flageolet to her lips and, at first silently, and then as the chorus gets noisier, actually blowing the tin flute, pipes Peppina through the chorus offstage to tiu Gramsci's bedroom.*

**Chorus**

We 1 heard  
it 2 over  
the 3 wireless,  
we 4 heard

it 5 over

the 6 wireless,

over the wireless, 7 over the wireless,



over the wireless, 8 over the wireless,  
over the wireless... 9

*Exit Teresina and Peppina.*

**BLACKOUT** *The chorus continues chanting "over the wireless" until a fortissimo climax is reached.*

**LIGHTS** up to Edmea, confronted by the chorus. After the chorus has climaxed, it silences. Then separate speakers start to elaborate.

**Ch/Abbasanta** They 1 said  
he 2 had  
only 3 just  
been 4 released

**Ch/Sedìlo** They 6 said  
he 7 had  
been 8 chronically  
ill 9

**Ch/Ottano** for 1 years.  
That 2 the  
king 3 wanted  
to 4 pardon

**Ch/Dualchi** him. 5  
That  
the 6 king  
wanted 7 to  
release 8 him  
long 9

**Ch/Neoneli** ago. 1  
But  
he 2 wouldn't  
a 3 bond  
sign 4 to  
keep 5 the  
peace. 6

**Ch/Bortigeli** We  
came 7 to  
find 8 out  
the 9

**Ch/Abbasanta** truth. 1  
And  
to 2 offer  
our 3 condolences.

**Edmea** Yes, 4 of  
course! 5

**Ch/Abbasanta** From

the 6 village  
of 7 Abbasanta...  
village 9

**Ch/Sedìlo** From 8 the  
of 1 Sedìlo...  
**Ch/Ottano** From 2 the  
village 3 of  
Ottano... 4

**Ch/Dualchi** From  
the 5 village  
of 6 Dualchi...

**Ch/Neoneli** From 7 the  
village 8 of  
Neoneli... 9

**Ch/Bortigeli** From 1 the  
village 2 of  
Bortigeli... 3

**Ch/omnes** Condolences...  
**Edmea** ironically You 4 are  
very 5 kind.

# **BLACKOUT**

**LIGHTS** up to Edmea and chorus, as before. Enter *tiu Gramsci*, with *Teresina* and *Peppina Montaldo*.

**tiu Gramsci** I'm 1 not  
an 2 invalid.  
I 3 can  
still 4 walk  
without 5 assistance!

*He pushes himself free of Teresina's and Peppina's support.*

**tiu Gramsci** Has 6 Nino  
Gramsci 7 my  
son 8 come  
home 9

to 1 us  
at 2 last,  
as 3 he  
promised? 4

**Teresina** Not  
yet 5 grandad.

**tiu Gramsci** Then 6 what  
are 7 all  
these 8 women

doing 9  
here? 1 Couldn't

they 2 leave  
 their 3 bicycles  
 outside? 4

*Edmea exchanges glances with Peppina Montaldo and with Teresina.*

**Edmea** Grandad...  
**tiu Gramsci** They've 5 come

to 6 see  
 if 7 Nino  
 has 8 come  
 home? 9

**Edmea** Grandad, 1 it's  
 not 2 exactly  
 that, 3 grandad...

*Tiu Gramsci turns a questioning face to the chorus of women, one by one. They remain silent, motionless, frozen.*

**Edmea** Grandad... 4  
**tiu Gramsci** Nino  
 Gramsci 5 is  
 dead, 6 isn't  
 he? 7 My  
 son 8 is  
 dead, 9

**Edmea** isn't 1 he?  
 We 2 don't  
 know 3 that  
 he 4 is,  
 grandad! 5  
**tiu Gramsci** Don't  
 play 6 games  
 with 7 me,  
 young 8 woman!

**Edmea** Grandad, 9

the 1 news...  
**tiu Gramsci** Is 2 he  
 dead 3 or  
 isn't 4 he?

**Edmea** They've 5 only  
 heard 6 a  
 report 7 on  
 the 8 wireless,  
 that's 9  
 all, 1 grandad!

**Ch/Abbasanta** It 2 may  
 be 3 true  
 or 4 it

signor... 6  
 may 5 not,

**Ch/Sedìlo** She's  
 right, 7 Signor

**Ch/Ottano** Gramsci... 8  
 It's  
 just 9  
 a 1 report  
 on 2 the  
 wireless... 3

### BLACKOUT

*LIGHTS up to Edmea and Peppina. They try to get tiu Gramsci to retire to his bedroom, but he won't have any of it. He turns back to the chorus.*

**tiu Gramsci** You 1 heard  
 that 2 my  
 son 3 was  
 dead, 4 didn't

**Teresina** you? 5  
 Grandad,  
 don't 6 raise  
 your 7 voice  
 like 8 that,  
 grandad! 9  
 They 1 are  
 friends, 2 neighbours,  
 Sardinians, 3 good  
 people... 4

**Edmea** They  
 wanted 5 us  
 to 6 hear  
 the 7 news  
 from 8 friends,  
 grandad. 9  
 That's 1 why  
 they've 2 come,  
 and 3 to  
 offer 4 their  
 condolences 5 to  
 uncle 6 Nino's  
 kinspeople. 7

## Teresina

were 8 going  
 to 9  
 send 1 them  
 away, 2 grandad,  
 knowing 3 how  
 exhausted 4 you  
 were 5 with  
 the 6 disappointment  
 of 7 expecting  
 uncle 8 Nino  
 home 9  
 day 1 after  
 day. 2

## Ch/Abbasanta

She's  
 right, 3 signor...

## Ch/Sèdilo

we 4 were

about 5 to

leave... 6

## Ch/Ottano

after

we 7 had

passed 8 on

our 9

condolences 1 to  
 your 2 granddaughters  
 and 3 kinspeople.

## Ch/Dualchi

If 4 indeed

condolences 5 were

in 6 order,

signor. 7

## Ch/Neoneli

see, 8 signor,

You

we 9

only 1 heard  
 it 2 on  
 the 3 wireless,  
 signor. 4

## tiu Gramsci

What

did 5 the

foreign 6 newspapers

say? 7

## Ch/Bortigeli

are 8 in

We

Fascist 9

Italy, 1 signor!

We

## tiu Gramsci

I 2 thought  
 we 3 were  
 in 4 Sardinia!

## Ch/Abbasanta

We 5 are  
 in 6 Fascist  
 Sardinia, 7 signor!

*Edmea and Peppina try to get tiu Gramsci to retire, at this point. But as before, he won't have any of it.*

## Edmea

Grandfather, 1 please...

## tiu Gramsci

They 2 don't  
 have 3 to  
 tell 4 me

where 5 we

are! 6 I

haven't 7 lost

my 8 mind!

Condolences 9

be 1 damned!

## Edmea

Grandad... 2

## tiu Gramsci

I  
 don't 3 want  
 their 4 condolences...

## Edmea

Please... 5

## tiu Gramsci to chorus

I 6 and

my 7 kinspeople

they 8 don't

want 9

any 1 condolences!

What 2 the

Gramscis 3 want

is 4 justice!

## Ch/Abbasanta

ironically

Justice, 5 signor?

## Ch/Sèdilo

It 6 shouldn't

be 7 hard

to 8 find

justice 9

here 1 in

Sardinia. 2

## Ch/Ottano

If

that's 3 what  
 you 4 want,

signor. 5

**Ch/Dualchi**

if 6 you And  
 can't 7 find  
 any 8 justice here 9  
 in 1 Sardinia,  
 you 2 can  
 certainly 3 go  
 looking 4 for  
 it 5 over  
 the 6 water  
 in 7 Italy.

**Ch/Neoneli**

If 8 what the 9  
 Gramscis 1 want  
 is 2 justice...  
 Let 3 me  
 tell 4 you something... 5

*He escapes out of the protection of Teresina, Peppina and Edmea, and jumps up on a chair.*

**Edmea**

**Teresina** He'll 6 ruin Grandfather...  
 himself... 7 pause

pause

8

pause

**tiu Gramsci**

I 1 know  
 what 2 Sardinian  
 justice 3 is  
 like. 4 pause

And 5 I  
 know 6 what  
 Italian 7 justice  
 is 8 like.

**Chorus** *severally*

Tell 9

us 1 what  
 it's 2 like  
 in 3 Italy...  
 We 4 know

**Ch/Abbasanta**

what 5 it's  
 like 6 in

Sardinia... 7

**Ch/Sedìlo**

Tell  
 us 8 what the 9

**Ch/Ottano**

police 1 are  
 like 2 in  
 Cagliari, 3 signor...  
 Cagliari 4 is

Italy... 5

Cagliari

might 6 just

as 7 well

be 8 in

Italy. 9

for 1 all  
 the 2 difference...  
 I 3 know  
 what 4 the

police 5 are

like. 6 And

I 7 know

what 8 prisons

are 9

like. 1 too.  
 I 2 have  
 been 3 to  
 prison. 4 I

have 5 spent

five 6 years

in 7 one.

**Edmea**

Shut 8 up,

grandfather! 9

**tiu Gramsci**

Don't 1 you  
 tell 2 me  
 to 3 shut  
 up, 4 signorina!

No-one 5 is

going 6 to

tell 7 me

to 8 shut

up, 9

not 1 even  
 Signor 2 Mussolini!  
 Let 3 him  
 say 4 what

he 5 has

to 6 say —

he's 7 going

to, 8 anyways.

**Teresina**

**Peppina**

do 1 him  
good 2 to  
speak 3 out,  
Edmea! 4

**Edmea**

But  
we 5 don't  
know 6 that  
uncle 7 Nino  
Gramsci 8 is  
dead, 9

**Ch/Abbasanta**

grandad. 1  
*sarcasm*  
we 2 only  
heard 3 of  
it 4 over

the 5 wireless...

**tiu Gramsci** *interrupting*

But 6 I  
do 7 know,  
I 8 do  
know, 9

I 1 do  
know, 2 I  
do 3 know,

*Persisting until he has attention*

I 4 know  
what 5 it's  
like 6 to  
be 7 sentenced  
to 8 rot  
in 9

prison. 1

**Ch/Sèdilo** *mocking*

Kyrie  
eleison... 2

**Ch/Ottano**

Christe 3 eleison...

**tiu Gramsci**

At 4 my  
trial... 5

Kyrie

eleison... 6

**Ch/Ottano**

Christe

eleison... 7

**tiu Gramsci**

judge 8 at

the

my 9

It'll 9

**Ch/Sèdilo**

trial... 1

Kyrie

eleison... 2

**Ch/Ottano**

Christe

eleison... 3

**tiu Gramsci**

the

judge 4 at

my 5 trial...

called 6 me

up 7 to

the 8 bench...

**Ch/Sèdilo**

Kyrie 9

eleison... 1

**Ch/Dualchi**

Shut

up, 2 I

want 3 to

hear 4 what

the 5 signor

has 6 to

say! 7

It's

**Ch/Neoneli**

not 8 the

church 9

which 1 is

to 2 blame,

but 3 the

pope! 4

**Ch/Bortigeli**

Bullshit,

the 5 church

is 6 a

lot 7 of

bullshit! 8

**Ch/Neoneli**

It's

the 9

pope 1 that's

to 2 blame...

**Ch/Abbasanta**

Dry 3 up,

for 4 christ's

sake! 5

**tiu Gramsci**

The

judge 6 called

me 7 to

come 8 forward

to 9

the 1 bench



so 2 that  
he 3 could  
talk 4 quietly

and 5 privately

to 6 me.

7 Francesco

Gramsci, 8 he

said, 9

this 1 court  
finds 2 you  
to 3 be  
innocent 4 of

any 5 wrong-doing.

I 6 can't

he 7 said,

and 8 I

won't 9

sentence 1 an  
innocent 2 man  
for 3 a  
crime 4 he

hasn't 5 committed.

Though 6 the

prosecution 7 has

gone 8 through

your 9

books 1 with  
a 2 fine  
comb, 3 in  
fact 4 with

a 5 maliciously

fine 6 comb,

no 7 evidence

of 8 corruption

has 9

been 1 found.

But 2 there

are 3 some

irregularities— 4 it

might 5 be

better 6 for you,

with 7 a

Sardinian 8 woman

for 9

a 1 wife

and 2 a  
large 3 family,  
and 4 a

crippled 5 son,

I 6 believe,

if 7 you

chose 8 to

plead 9

guilty 1 to  
these 2 irregularities  
so 3 that  
I 4 can

give 5 you

a 6 purely

nominal 7 sentence.

8

Suppose 9

I 1 don't

I 2 said.

You 3 have

made 4 powerful

enemies, 5 he

told 6 me.

You've 7 already

spent 8 fifteen

months 9

in 1 Oristano  
prison 2 awaiting  
trial. 3 My  
friend, 4 he

told 5 me,

you 6 voted

the 7 wrong

way. 8 If

you 9

are 1 acquitted,  
they 2 will  
persecute 3 you  
for 4 the

rest 5 of

your 6 days.

And 7 your

children 8 after

you. 9

And 1 your

pause

wife's 2 family,  
as 3 well.  
Think 4 about

it, 5 my

pause

son. 6

I 7 don't

like 8 it,

I 9

pause

said. 1

Neither 2 do  
I, 3 said  
the 4 judge.

But 5 look,

he 6 said,

at 7 my

position. 8 If

I 9

punish 1 you,  
I'll 2 be  
pointed 3 to  
as 4 an

unjust 5 magistrate.

6 If

I 7 don't

pause

punish 8 you,

what 9

pause

happens? 1

I 2 shall  
be 3 denounced  
as 4 a

traitor. 5

pause

Either 6 way,

he 7 said,

I 8 lose

out. 9

If 1 I  
do 2 as  
you 3 say,  
I 4 asked.

I 5 will

give 6 you

the 7 lightest

possible 8 sentence.

Alright, 9

I 1 said,

I 2 will  
plead 3 guilty  
to 4 these

irregularities. 5

pause

I 6 think

it's 7 the

best 8 course,

the 9

judge 1 said —  
he 2 repeated,  
I 3 will  
give 4 you

the 5 lightest

possible 6 sentence.

Taking 7 into

consideration 8 the

months 9

I've 1 already  
spent 2 in  
jail, 3 I  
asked. 4 Yes,

he 5 said,

taking 6 into

account 7 the

time 8 spent

in 9

custody. 1 Then  
the 2 judge  
gave 3 me  
a 4 paper

to 5 sign,

pleading 6 guilty

to 7 certain

irregularities, 8 and

promising 9

not 1 to  
discuss 2 the  
matter 3 further. —  
I 4 signed

it. 5 —He

then 6 sentenced

me 7 to

FIVE 8 YEARS

EIGHT 9

MONTHS 1 AND  
TWENTY-TWO 2 DAYS

IMPRISONMENT 3

FIVE 4 YEARS

EIGHT 5 MONTHS

AND 6 TWENTY-TWO

DAYS 7 IMPRISONMENT!

8 Your

honor, 9

I 1 gasped.

With 2 time

off 3 for

good 4 behavior,

he 5 added.

6 I

served 7 every

day 8 of

it, 9

because 1 I

broke 2 my

bond 3 and

insisted 4 I

was 5 an

innocent 6 man.

I 7 also

served 8 more

than 9

my 1 time,

because 2 after

I 3 was

technically 4 released,

I 5 was

held 6 in

custody 7 until

I 8 signed

a 9

paper 1 declaring

I 2 was

truly 3 sorry

for 4 my

misdeeds. 5 It

enumerated 6 all

the 7 offences

I 8 had

been 9

charged 1 with,

as 2 well

pause

pause

pause

as 3 the  
irregularities 4 I'd

pleaded 5 guilty

to. 6

Ch/Abbasanta

We

don't 7 believe

you, 8 signor...

Ch/Sèdilo

This 9

couldn't 1 have

happened 2 in

the 3 good

old 4 days

before 5 Mussolini...

Ch/Ottano

Before 6 Mussolini

things 7 were

different... 8

Ch/Dualchi

Signor,

you're 9

destroying 1 our

faith 2 in

Fascism 3 ...

## BLACKOUT

LIGHTS up to chorus picking up its bicycles preparatory to leaving. Tiu Gramsci leaps up on to the kitchen table, crying "wait." The outer door is flung open wide. Enter the young police officer from Cagliari, in full focus. The bicycles are an obstruction. He waves them aside. He gosesteps up to the portrait of Mussolini. He stands before it with his arm raised in a Fascist salute.

Ch/Abbasanta

It's 1 the

YOUNG 2 officer

from 3 Cagliari...

Ch/Sèdilo

It's 4 the

young 5 POLICE

officer 6 from

Cagliari... 7

Ch/Ottano

it's 8 that

christ,

young 9

cocksucker 1 from

Cagliari... 2

Ch/Sèdilo

young 3 the

officer 4 police

Cagliari... 5

**Ch/Dualchi**

cocksucker... 6

young

**Ch/Neoneli**

police

officer... 7

etc

cocksucker...

*The young police officer from Cagliari stands in front of the portrait of Mussolini, consulting his notebook. Then he turns suddenly.*

**Cagliari**

What 1 did

I 2 hear

you 3 say?

**Ch/Ottano**

Good 4 morning,

officer... 5

**Cagliari**

thought 6 I

asked 7 you

a 8 question?

**Ch/Ottano**

We 9

supposed 1 it

was 2 just

a 3 comment...

**Ch/Abbasanta**

We 4 were

simply 5 saying,

officer, 6 that

the 7 injustice

that 8 Signor

was 9

telling 1 us

about 2 couldn't

occur 3 today

in 4 Fascist

Italy. 5

**Cagliari**

Oh.

Mussolini 6 will

not 7 tolerate

injustice, 8 either

in 9

Italy 1 or

here 2 in

Sardinia. 3

**BLACKOUT****Ch/Abbasanta***during darkness*

Mussolini

himself 4 has

had 5 to

take 6 the

blame 7 for

injustices 8 perpetrated

by 9

his 1 henchmen,

eh? 2

LIGHTS up to Edmea, Teresina and Peppina. They are trying to get tiu Gramsci down from the table. He won't listen to them.

**Cagliari**

What's 1 going

on 2 around

here? 3

**Edmea, Teresina, Peppina***all speaking at once*

Help

us 4 to

lift 5 the

old 6 man

down 7 before

he 8 does

himself 9

an 1 injury!

**Cagliari**

There's 2 no

law 3 against

standing 4 on

a 5 table...

**Chorus***severally*

That's 6 the

young 7 officer

from 8 Cagliari,

alright! 9

**Cagliari**

Not 1 that

I 2 know

of... 3

**Chorus***severally*

That's

him 4 alright...

If 5 it's

**Cagliari**

his 6 own

table... 7

But

**Teresina**

he'll 8 do

himself 9

an 1 injury...

**Cagliari** *turning his back on tiu Gramsci*

Where 2 shall

I 3 find

Nino 4 Gramsci?

**Chorus** *from all sides*

is 6 dead!

Nino 5 Gramsci

**Cagliari**

I 7 said,

where 8 shall

I 9

find 1 Nino

Gramsci? 2

**Ch/Abbasanta**

Nino

Gramsci 3 is

dead! 4

**Ch/Sèdilo**

The

news 5 just

came 6 over

the 7 wireless...

**Cagliari**

I 8 wouldn't

be 9

so 1 sure

of 2 that!

**Ch/Ottano**

It 3 belongs

to 4 Mussolini —

you 5 should

know... 6

**BLACKOUT**

LIGHTS *up to tiu Gramsci.*

**tiu Gramsci**

Murderers 1 and

assassins! 2

*The young officer from Cagliari takes a step back, and writes in his notebook.*

**BLACKOUT**

LIGHTS *up to tiu Gramsci.*

**tiu Gramsci**

They 1 can

sentence 2 me

to 3 twenty

years 4 in

the 5 Bocca

of 6 Caterina

Sforza 7 if

they 8 please,

for 9

saying 1 it,

but 2 when

I 3 heard

that 4 Nino

Gramsci 5 was

being 6 released

from 7 prison,

I 8 knew

he 9

was 1 on

the 2 brink

of 3 death,

and 4 that

I 5 should

never 6 see

him 7 again!

**Cagliari**

I 8 asked

you 9

a 1 question.

All 2 of

you 3 pay

attention. 4 I

expect 5 your

co-operation. 6 Now:

I'll 7 give

you 8 one

more 9

chance. 1 Where

is 2 Nino

Gramsci? 3

**tiu Gramsci**

I'll

tell 4 you

where 5 he

is! 6

**Cagliari**

I

am 7 listening!

Where 8 is

he? 9

**Teresina**

That 1 god-damn,

incredibly 2 god-damn

stupid 3 officer —

signor 4 please,

help 5 us

to 6 lift



man 8 down the 7 old  
from 9  
the 1 butcher  
table, 2 before  
he 3 ruins  
himself... 4  
**tiu Gramsci** resisting, provoked  
Nino  
Gramsci 5 has  
been 6 murdered!  
**Teresina** Grandfather, 7 we're  
not 8 sure  
he's 9  
dead. 1 We're  
not 2 even  
certain 3 he's  
been 4 released...  
**Cagliari** He's 5 been  
released 6 alright.  
I 7 wouldn't  
be 8 so  
sure 9  
he's 1 dead —  
yet! 2  
**tiu Gramsci** I  
know 3 he's  
dead, 4 I  
know 5 he's  
been 6 murdered  
and 7 I  
know 8 who's  
murdered 9  
him. 1  
**Cagliari** Mussolini  
murdered 2 him,  
I 3 suppose?  
**Teresina** He 4 didn't  
say 5 that.  
He 6 didn't.

*The officer writes in his notebook.*

**Teresina** You 7 said  
it. 8

**tiu Gramsci** I'll  
say 9  
it 1 now.  
Mussolini 2 murdered  
him. 3

*Officer writes in his notebook.*

**Teresina** We  
don't 4 even  
know 5 he's  
dead. 6

*The young officer from Cagliari stares at Teresina. A flash of understanding visibly illuminates an intelligence of which he is noticeably vain.*

**Cagliari** That's  
correct, 7 Signorina  
Gramsci. 8 You  
are 9  
**SIGNORINA** 1 Gramsci,  
aren't 2 you?  
You 3 look  
like 4 **SIGNORINA**  
Gramsci 5 to  
me. 6 But  
are 7 you? —  
We 8 don't  
know 9  
Nino 1 Gramsci  
is 2 deceased,  
do 3 we,  
Signorina 4 Gramsci?

*pause*

**tiu Gramsci** 5  
And  
I'll 6 tell  
who 7 his  
other 8 murderer  
is. 9

**Cagliari** Yes? 1  
**tiu Gramsci** I'll  
lead 2 you  
to 3 him.  
**Cagliari** Yes? 4 Who?  
**tiu Gramsci** Follow 5 me. —  
The 6 king...

*Tiu Gramsci takes a running jump off the butcher table and lands with a bellyflop on the kitchen floor, an inert heap. Edmea runs to him. The officer stops Teresina from going to the old man's aid.*

# **BLACKOUT**

LIGHTS up to Teresina, Peppina and the young officer from Cagliari.

**Teresina** to officer

Go 1 and  
fetch 2 a  
doctor! 3

**Peppina**

I  
am 4 a  
trained 5 nurse...

*She pushes past the officer from Cagliari. Pillows and blankets are got for tiu Gramsci.*

**Peppina**

what 6 he  
needs 7 is  
a 8 priest.

Quick! 9

**Teresina** to officer

Fetch 1 a doctor...  
Do 2 I  
look 3 as  
if 4 I

**Cagliari**

had 5 a  
doctor 6 up  
my 7 sleeve?

**Teresina**

Or 8 a  
priest... 9

**Cagliari**

Or 1 a  
priest 2 up  
my 3 trouser  
leg? 4

A 5 nice

little 6 trick.

But 7 I

don't 8 fall

for 9

it. 1

*Some of the women of the chorus start to leave to find a doctor.*

**Cagliari**

Don't  
anyone 2 leave!  
break 3 They

told 4 me  
in 5 the  
manual 6 of  
instruction 7 to  
beware 8 of  
Sardinian 9  
break

to Teresina

tricks. 1  
2 I  
have 3 seen  
through 4 your

clever. 6 But  
plot. 5 Very  
not 7 clever  
enough. 8

**Teresina**

**Cagliari**

**Teresina**

**Cagliari**

Plot?  
What 1 plot?  
To 2 hide  
Nino 3 Gramsci.  
I 4 have

discovered 5 just  
where 6 Gramsci  
is 7 in  
hiding. 8

**Teresina**

**Cagliari**

He's  
hiding 1 here.  
I 2 said,  
I 3 have  
discovered 4 his

**Teresina**

We 6 can't  
hiding 5 place.  
stop 7 you  
from 8 searching

the 9  
house 1 if  
you 2 insist.  
3 Now  
step 4 back

and 5 let  
me 6 go  
to 7 my

grandfather's 8 side.

**Cagliari**

**Teresina**

Why 1 not?

No. 9

Why 2 can't  
I 3 go  
to 4 my

grandfather? 5

*pause*

**Cagliari**  
**Teresina**  
**Cagliari**

Because... 6

Yes?

Because... 7 though

he 8 may

be 9

your 1 grandfather,  
you 2 are  
not 3 his  
granddaughter. 4 **YOU**  
**ARE** 5 **NINO**  
**GRAMSCI!** 6

# **BLACKOUT**

LIGHTS up to *Teresina, Cagliari, chorus, as before.*

**Cagliari**

A 1 very  
clever 2 deception!  
Listen 3 to  
this, 4 everyone! —

the 5 young

officer 6 from

Cagliari 7 has

gone 8 raving stark raving

mad, 9

he 1 thinks

I 2 am

Nino 3 Gramsci!

If 4 you

please, 5 signor —

I 6 am

his 7 niece.

He 8 is

my 9

uncle. 1

I

appeal 2 to  
these 3 ladies!

'Struth, 4 signor...

If 5 you

think 6 he

could 7 pass

*to officer*

*to chorus*

**Chorus** *severally*  
**Teresina**

himself 8 off,

a 9

forty-year-old 1 man,  
as 2 me,  
you 3 are  
just 4 simply

stupid. 5

I

find 6 myself  
exceptionally 7 clever.

What 8 did

you 9

say 1 your  
name 2 was?

Teresina 3 Gramsci.

And 4 what

is 5 your

relationship 6 to

Nino 7 Gramsci?

Niece. 8

My

information 9

says 1 that

he 2 has

a 3 sister

named 4 Teresina.

She 5 is

my 6 aunt.

At 7 first

I 8 took

you 9

for 1 Gramsci's  
double. 2

I

am 3 flattered...

I 4 recognized

the 5 resemblance

right 6 away.

I 7 really

am 8 flattered,

signor... 9

Gramsci 1 is  
five 2 feet  
tall. 3 So  
are 4 you.

Yes. 5

**Cagliari**

**Teresina**  
**Cagliari**

**Teresina**  
**Cagliari**

**Teresina**

**Cagliari**

**Teresina**

**Cagliari**

**Teresina**

**Cagliari**

**Teresina**

**Cagliari**

has 6 a  
small 7 delicate  
girl's 8 body  
and 9  
a 1 large  
lion-like 2 head.  
So 3 have  
you. 4

**Teresina****Cagliari****Teresina**

Perhaps.  
Most 5 certainly.  
But 6 he  
is 7 very  
ill 8 and  
has 9  
a 1 hunchback.  
I'm 2 in  
good 3 health,  
and 4 my

back 5 is  
perfectly 6 straight.

**Cagliari** *unimpressed*

You 7 could  
pass 8 for  
him. 9  
He 1 could  
pass 2 for  
you. 3

**Teresina****Cagliari**

Impossible.  
Perhaps. 4 That's  
just 5 what  
I 6 said,  
at 7 first.  
But 8 then  
my 9

special 1 training  
in 2 sensitive  
police-work 3 came  
to 4 the  
rescue. 5 *pause*

Isn't 6 it  
strange, 7 I  
said 8 to  
myself, 9  
no-one 1 around

Gramsci

here 2 knows  
where 3 Nino  
Gramsci 4 is,

and yet 5 here  
is 6 someone  
who 7 is  
his 8 double!  
Then 9

the 1 thought  
whistled 2 through  
my 3 brain —  
suppose 4 this  
person 5 isn't  
Gramsci's 6 double,  
but 7 Gramsci  
himself. 8 *whistles*  
Eureka, 9

I'D 1 SEEN  
THROUGH 2 YOUR  
TRICK! 3 *pause, smiles*  
4 You're

coming 5 along  
with 6 me,  
Nino 7 Gramsci!  
I'm 8 not  
Nino Gramsci! 9

**Teresina****Cagliari****Teresina** *laughing in spite of herself***Cagliari**

I 1 say  
you 2 are.  
You 3 are  
stupid. 4  
I  
am 5 really  
very 6 clever.  
My 7 seeing  
through 8 your  
trick 9

**Teresina** *break*

was 1 really  
brilliant 2 police-work.  
I 3 am  
flattered 4 to  
be 5 mistaken  
for 6 Nino  
Gramsci. 7

**Cagliari**

am 8 not  
 you 1 when  
 I 2 say  
 I 3 was  
 almost 4 taken  
 in 5 by  
 you. 6

**Teresina**

This  
 is 7 the  
 second 8 time  
 the last 1 two  
 days 2 this  
 has 3 happened.  
 Nevertheless 4 I  
 am 5 not  
 Nino 6 Gramsci.  
 He 7 is  
 my 8 uncle.  
 I 9  
 am 1 his  
 niece. 2  
 I'm 3  
 not 4 even  
 his 5 double.  
 I'm 6 the  
 wrong 7 sex  
 for 8 that.

**BLACKOUT**, with the light lingering on the figure of Teresina.

LIGHTS up to Teresina, the police officer, and chorus.

**Teresina**

What 1 are  
 you 2 taking  
 Nino 3 Gramsci  
 in 4 for?

**Cagliari**

I'm 5 not  
 at 6 liberty  
 to 7 say!

**Ch/Abbasanta**

Routine 8 police  
 interrogation? 9

**Cagliari**

It 1 could  
 be. 2

**Ch/Sedìlo**

Or  
 routine 3 police  
 harrassment? 4

**Cagliari**

No  
 comment. 5

**Ch/Ottano**

At  
 Nino 6 Gramsci's  
 trial 7 the  
 prosecutor 8 repeated  
 Mussolini's 9  
 instruction 1 that  
 it 2 was  
 necessary 3 to  
 prevent 4 Gramsci's  
 brain 5 from  
 functioning 6 for  
 twenty 7 years.  
 Is 8 this  
 what 9  
 you 1 have  
 in 2 mind —  
 to 3 succeed  
 where 4 others

**Cagliari****Ch/Dualchi**

have 5 failed?  
 No 6 comment.  
 Have 7 you  
 been 8 told  
 about 9  
 the 1 Matteotti  
 affair? 2 You're  
 not 3 old  
 enough 4 to

**Cagliari**

remember 5 that?  
 No 6 comment.

**BLACKOUT**

LIGHTS up to police officer, Teresina, chorus.

**Cagliari to chorus**

These 1 questions  
 don't 2 concern  
 me. 3 But  
 I 4 will  
 pass 5 them  
 on 6 to

the 7 proper  
 authorities, 8 who  
 decide 1 to  
 answer 2 them  
 with 3 the  
 castor-oil 4 bottle.

I 5 said  
 before 6 and  
 I 7 repeat

what 8 I  
 said 9

before, 1 I  
 expect 2 your  
 full 3 co-operation,  
 and 4 I

intend 5 to  
 have 6 it.

She's 7 coming

in 8 with  
 me. 9

**Teresina**

You're 1 not  
 so 2 sure  
 that 3 I  
 am 4 Nino

Gramsci. 5 *she waits*

6 Then  
 why 7 did

you 8 say,  
 SHE'S 9

coming 1 in  
 with 2 me?  
 All 3 I  
 require 4 is

reasonable 5 certainty.

**Cagliari**

Supposing 6 I  
 only 7 look  
 like 8 Nino  
 Gramsci? 9

They 1 will  
 say 2 that  
 the 3 brilliant  
 young 4 officer

from 5 Cagliari

can't 6 tell  
 the 7 difference

between 8 a  
 teen-age 9

girl 1 and  
 the 2 leader  
 of 3 the  
 Italian 4 communists.

Mistakes 5 occur.

No-one 6 will  
 want 7 to  
 forget 8 this

one. 9

Even 1 I,  
 with 2 my  
 brain 3 squeezed  
 almost 4 to

a 5 pulp

with 6 grief,  
 cannot 7 help

laughing 8 at  
 you, 9

I've 1 never  
 known 2 anyone  
 so 3 colossally  
 stupid! 4

**Cagliari**

I believe 5 in

checking 6 and  
 cross-checking. 7 I  
 warn 8 you

not 9

to 1 laugh  
 too 2 soon.  
 I'm 3 not  
 as 4 stupid

as 5 you

think. 6  
 7 Pay

*break*

attention. 8

# **BLACKOUT**

LIGHTS up to officer, Teresina, chorus.

**Cagliari**

Pay 1 attention.  
 Do 2 as  
 I 3 say.



**Teresina  
Cagliari**

Take 4 off  
your 5 clothes.  
Me? 6 Why?  
It's 7 a  
direct 8 order.  
It's 9

not 1 debatable.  
Yes, 2 you.  
Pile 3 up  
your 4 clothes

in 5 a

heap 6 here.

Why? 7

I

said 8 take

off 9

your 1 clothes.  
Why? 2

So

that 3 I  
don't 4 mistake

you 5 for

the 6 wrong

Gramsci. 7 Do

as 8 you're

told. 9

Take 1 off  
your 2 clothes,  
take 3 them  
off 4 quickly!

Here? 5

No-one

but 6 women

present. 7

My

grandfather 8 is

here. 9

**Cagliari**

He's 1 not  
likely 2 to  
object. 3

**Teresina**

And  
then 4 you

will 5 cease

molesting 6 us?

That's 7 what

you 8 came

here 9

for, 1 wasn't

it, 2 to

harass 3 us

because 4 we

are 5 Nino

Gramsci's 6 kinspeople?

Let 7 me

tell 8 you

something. 9

I 1 am

proud 2 of

the 3 fact

that 4 he

is 5 a

communist. 6

I

should 7 warn

you 8 that

I 9

was 1 the

best 2 pistol-shot

in 3 my

class 4 at

the 5 academy.

*takes out pistol*

**Teresina**

I 6 will

undress. 7

**Cagliari**

**Teresina**

When 8 you

Quickly.

have 9

put 1 that

weapon 2 away.

*He puts the gun back in its holster.*

Turn 3 your

back. 4

Oh no —

as 6 stupid

I'm 5 not

as 7 all

that. 8 I'm

not 9

going 1 to

take 2 my

eyes 3 off  
 you. 4 I'm  
 going 5 to  
 enjoy 6 every  
 bit 7 of  
 the 8 fun.  
 Otherwise, 9

when 1 I  
 turn 2 round,  
 you 3 will  
 have 4 vanished

down 5 a  
 rathole. 6

**Teresina**  
**Cagliari**

Rathole?  
 Communists 7 are  
 social 8 rodents.

**Teresina**

I 9  
 disagree. 1 Though  
 I 2 am  
 not 3 one,  
 neither is 4 my

father 5 one,  
 nor 6 my

grandfather. 7 Nor  
 none 8 of

my 9  
 kinspeople 1 except  
 Nino 2 Gramsci.  
 After 3 Lenin,  
 he 4 is

the 5 greatest

communists. 7

**Cagliari**

The  
 biggest 8 rat

of 9  
 all! 1 Hurry  
 up! 2 You're  
 wasting 3 my  
 time! 4

**Teresina**

What  
 do 5 you  
 hope 6 to  
 prove 7 by  
 it? 8

**Cagliari**  
**Teresina**

Plenty.

I'll 9

tell 1 what  
 you'll 2 find  
 out. 3 You'll  
 find 4 out

I've 5 the

sex-organs 6 of

a 7 seventeen-year-old

girl. 8

**Cagliari**

It's

a 9

risk. 1

**Teresina**

Very well,

you 2 can  
 inspect 3 my  
 sex. 4

**Cagliari**

Whether

it 5 is

or 6 isn't

a 7 man's

cock, 8 it'll

be 9

something 1 to  
 remember 2 you  
 by. 3

*Teresina puts her hands up to the back of her neck, and frees her hair from her dress. Then she turns to the chorus.*

**Teresina**

I  
 can't. 4

**Cagliari**

I'm

waiting, 5 Nino

Gramsci. 6

*pause*

**Teresina** *blurts it out*

I'm 7 menstruating.

**BLACKOUT**

*LIGHTS up to chorus. It surrounds the young officer from Cagliari.*

**Chorus**

Don't 1 let  
 him 2 get  
 away... 3 Seize  
 him... 4 Disarm

him... 5 Tie  
 him 6 down  
 on 7 the  
 table... 8

*The young officer from Cagliari is over-powered and shackled to the butcher-table.*

# Cagliari

You 1 are  
 interfering 2 with  
 an 3 officer  
 in 4 the

# Ch/Abbasanta

his 6 duty!  
 course 5 of  
 Bullshit, 7 you  
 mean 8 exceeding

# Cagliari

duty... 1  
 This  
 is 2 an  
 offence 3 against  
 the 4 Fascist

# Ch/Sedìlo

state! 5  
 It  
 came 6 over  
 the 7 wireless  
 that 8 Nino  
 Gramsci 9

# Cagliari

was 1 set  
 free 2 from  
 police 3 surveillance...  
 I 4 can

# Ch/Ottano

explain 5 everything!  
 You 6 came  
 here 7 with  
 the 8 intention  
 of 9

# Ch/Dualchi

sexually 1 molesting  
 the 2 Gramsci  
 girl! 3  
 Fetch  
 the 4 castor

oil! 5  
 Let's  
 give 6 him  
 the 7 works,

the 8 full  
 castor 9

# Ch/Neoneli

oil 1 treatment!  
 Take 2 off  
 his 3 boots...  
 Rip 4 off

# Ch/Bortigeli

# Ch/Abbasanta

his 5 pants...  
 We'll 6 teach  
 the 7 young  
 officer 8 not  
 to 9

# Ch/Sedìlo

meddle 1 with  
 young 2 girls...  
 Here's 3 the  
 castor-oil... 4

# Ch/Ottano

and  
 here's 5 a  
 funnel 6 to  
 stick 7 in  
 his 8 mouth...

# Ch/Dualchi

his 1 mouth  
 up... 2

# Cagliari

Jesus,  
 help... 3

# Ch/Neoneli

Let's  
 dose 4 him

# Ch/Bortigeli

with 5 coal-oil...  
 Castor-oil's 6 too  
 good 7 for

# Ch/Abbasanta

such 8 shit...  
 Edmea, 9  
 where's 1 the  
 coal-oil... 2

*Exit chorus to fetch coal-oil.*

# BLACKOUT

**Cagliari** during blackout

Jesus Christ,  
 Jesus Christ, 3 Jesus Christ...

*LIGHTS up to chorus returning with coal-oil.*

# BLACKOUT

**Cagliari** as before, "Jesus Christ," etc.

*LIGHTS up to chorus assembled with coal-oil around the officer shackled to the butcher-table.  
 A sense of grim vengeance replaces the chorus's initial hysteria.*

**Ch/Sèdilo**

Let's 1 dose  
him 2 with  
it 3 first...

**Ch/Ottano**

No, 4 pour  
it 5 on  
his 6 balls...

**Ch/Dualchi**

Rub 7 it  
into 8 his

**Ch/Neoneli**

Rub 1 it  
up 2 his  
asshole... 3

**Cagliari**

Jesus Christ...  
help... 4

**Ch/Bortigeli**

Jerk  
him 5 off

**Cagliari**

with 6 it...  
Jesus Christ... 7

**Teresina**

For 8 Christ's  
sake, 9

stop 1 it,  
haven't 2 we  
got 3 enough  
trouble 4 already?

**Ch/Abbasanta**

He's 5 asked

**Ch/Sèdilo**

for 6 it.  
Teresina, 7 Teresina,  
come 8 here,  
Teresina... 9

**BLACKOUT****Cagliari** *during blackout*

Jesus, 1 Jesus etc.  
Teresina, 2 Teresina etc.

**Ch/Sèdilo**

LIGHTS up to officer shackled on butcher-table, chorus, Teresina.

**Ch/Sèdilo**

Teresina, 1 come  
and 2 see  
what 3 a  
Fascist 4 prick  
looks 5 like,  
Teresina... 6

**Teresina**

to Peppina, who has stayed at tiu Gramsci's side, with Edmea  
Peppina,

help 7 me

to 8 make

them 9

stop, 1 Peppina...

**BLACKOUT**

LIGHTS up to Peppina Montaldo

**Peppina**

Why 1 should  
you 2 care,  
Teresina? 3

**BLACKOUT**

LIGHTS up to Peppina Montaldo, officer

**Cagliari**

Jesus... 1 you'll  
pay 2 for  
this... 3 Jesus Christ.  
Jesus Christ, 4 Jesus...

**Ch/Abbasanta**

You 5 haven't  
learned 6 anything  
yet, 7 have  
you? 8 ...

**Ch/Sèdilo**

he 1 wants  
to 2 get  
away 3 with  
his 4 skin,  
change 6 his  
he'd 5 better  
tune! 7  
If 9

**Peppina**

want 8 some  
coal-oil? 1  
more 9

Peppina pours coal-oil on officer's groin.

**Cagliari**

Jesus Christ  
Jesus Christ, 2 Jesus...

**Peppina**

You're 3 not  
even 4 hurt  
yet! 5 The  
Fascists 6 can

out. 8 But  
dish 7 it  
they 9  
can't 1 take  
it. 2

*She rubs the coal-oil in, and the officer screams.*

**Teresina**  
you 3 see  
they'll 4 only  
Nino 6 for  
punish 5 uncle

**Peppina** grimly  
He's

**Teresina**  
dead. 8  
We  
don't 9

*pause*

**Peppina**  
He's  
dead. 4  
fire 6 to  
Let's 5 set  
his 7 joystick!

*Peppina strikes matches, but hesitates to use them.*

Let's 8 burn  
his 1 genitals...  
Jesus Christ, 2 Jesus...  
to Edmea  
Edmea, 3 they're  
going 4 to  
burn 5 the  
house 6 down.  
Let's 7 get  
grandfather 8 out  
of 9

**Ch/Abbasanta**  
here. 1  
signorina's 2 right.  
Don't 3 let's

burn 4 the  
house 5 down  
to 6 get  
rid 7 of  
the 8 garbage.  
Let's 9

drag 1 him  
outside 2 and  
set 3 fire  
to 4 him  
publicly 5 as  
a 6 warning  
to 7 the  
Italians 8 that  
we 9

have 1 had  
enough 2 of  
Fascist 3 hooliganism!  
But 4 how?  
Someone 5 come  
with 6 me.

**Ch/Sedìlo**

**Ch/Ottano**

*Exit chorus/Ottano with chorus/Dualchi. They return with a long pole.*

**Ch/Neoneli**  
Drape 7 him  
on 8 the  
pole. 9

## BLACKOUT

LIGHTS up to chorus with young officer from Cagliari hanging by his feet and his hands from pole.

**Cagliari** Jesus christ, 1 jesus christ...  
*pause* 2

**Ch/Dualchi**  
Let's 3 deliver  
him 4 to  
the 5 local  
police 6 station  
and 7 let  
his 8 friends  
finish 9

**Ch/Cortigeli**

him 1 off.  
If 2 we  
want 3 him  
to 4 burn,  
we 5 must

see 6 to

it 7 ourselves!

*Exit chorus with the young officer from Cagliari hanging from a pole. Exit Peppina, carrying the officer's clothing.*

*Re-enter Peppina. She holds up the policeman's notebook for Teresina to see.*

**Peppina** This 1 will  
really 2 burn  
you 3 up,  
Teresina. 4

The 5 young *pause*  
officer 6 from  
Cagliari's 7 notebook.

**Teresina** Notebook? 8  
**Peppina** Yes,  
Bible. 9

**Teresina** Bible? 1  
**Peppina** His  
mass-book. 2 *break*  
Let 3 me  
read 4 you  
this. 5

*Reads*

"Though it is expected that Antonio Gramsci will predecease his release from police surveillance, dated April 25, 1937, in the event that this expectation is frustrated, police measures will be in order to restrain any activities on his part, and/or by others on his behalf, contrary to the intentions of his sentencing, June, 1928. Possible activities include medical or other treatment likely to reverse the medical prognostic."

**Teresina** What 1 does  
it 2 mean?  
**Peppina** I 3 don't  
know. 4 Cold-blooded  
murder. 5

Then  
the 6 young  
officer 7 from  
Cagliari 8 was  
merely 9  
following 1 orders.

**Peppina** And 2 wasn't  
to 3 blame?  
**Teresina** No. 4  
**Peppina** He  
was 5 to  
He 7 wasn't  
following 8 orders. He 9

seems 1 to  
have 2 been  
advised 3 as  
to 4 his  
best 5 interests,  
career-wise. 6 The  
way 7 to  
get 8 ahead in 9

the 1 Fascist  
party. 2  
**Teresina** What  
do 3 you  
want 4 me  
to 5 do  
with 6 it?  
**Peppina** *leaving* Hide 7 it.  
Pass 8 it on 9

to 1 Nino's  
friends. 2  
If 3 he  
has 4 any... *Turns*

*Exit*

# **BLACKOUT**

LIGHTS up to Teresina, Edmea. Edmea sits beside the Gramsci, who is still unconscious.

**Teresina** How 1 is  
he, 2 Edmea?  
**Edmea** The 3 same.  
He's 4 still  
unconscious. 5 We  
should 6 get a 7 priest.  
**Teresina** What 8 good's



priest? 1 a 9 break  
 What 2 shall  
 I 3 do  
 with 4 this?

*Indicates notebook*

**Edmea**

5 Hide  
 it 6 and  
 when 7 we  
 can 8 we'll  
 get 9  
 it 1 to  
 aunt 2 Tatiana.  
 She'll 3 have  
 it 4 smuggled

out 5 of

**Teresina**

the 6 country.  
 What 7 will  
 they 8 do  
 to 9  
 us? 1

**Edmea**

Nothing.  
 Torture 2 us,  
 to 3 get  
 it 4 back,  
 if 5 they  
 knew 6 we  
 had 7 it.  
 But 8 they  
 don't. 9

**Teresina**

You 1 don't  
 think 2 they'll  
 miss 3 it?

**Edmea**

I 4 don't

know. 5

**Teresina**

Where  
 shall 6 I

hide 7 it.

**Edmea**

I 8 don't  
 know. 9

**Teresina**

What 1 will  
 THEY 2 do  
 to 3 him?  
 I 4 don't

**Edmea**

know. 5

**Teresina**

He's  
 just 6 another  
 poor 7 kid  
 from 8 Cagliari,  
 Edmea. 9

*Knocking at door*

How 1 can  
 I 2 make  
 myself 3 look  
 less 4 like  
 uncle 5 Nino?

*Knocking, urgent*

Cut 6 off  
 my 7 hair.  
 Grow 8 large  
 breasts. 9

**BLACKOUT**

LIGHTS up to Teresina. She puts the notebook down on the table and runs to the door. She opens it, and a telegram boy on a unicycle enters. He doesn't manage the unicycle very well. The bicycles left by the women of the chorus are a hazard. But he manages to reach the portrait of Mussolini. He dismounts. Cocks his snoot at the Fascist leader.

**Boy** picks up notebook left on table by Teresina

What 1 are  
 you 2 going  
 to 3 do  
 with 4 this?

**Teresina**

**Boy**

*sniffing it*

Hide 5 it.  
 And 6 then?  
 It 7 smells  
 of 8 coal-oil.

I 9

will 1 take  
 it. 2

**Teresina**

What  
 for? 3

**Boy**

To  
 give 4 it  
 to 5 the  
 right 6 person.

**Teresina**

**Boy**

Who's 7 that?  
 I 8 don't  
 know. 9  
 I'll 1 find

out. 2 Trust  
me. 3

**Teresina** There's  
a 4 telegram

**Boy** No. 6 There's  
for 5 us?  
a 7 telegram  
for 8 Signor  
Gramsci. 9

**Edmea** He's 1 not  
to 2 be  
waked 3 up.  
Where 4 is

**Boy** Peppina 5 Gramsci?

**Edmea** Dead. 6 Give  
the 7 telegram  
to 8 us.  
We 9  
are 1 the  
granddaughters. 2

**Boy** giving Teresina telegram

I  
know 3 that.

*He mounts unicycle, starts to leave.  
dismounting, turns*

A 4 lot  
of 5 bicycles.

*He mounts bicycle. Then dismounts, turns.*

Which 6 of  
you 7 did  
he 8 rape?

*Exit*

**Teresina**

It's 1 from  
aunt 2 Tatiana.  
Uncle 3 Nino  
is 4 dead,  
he 5 died

on 6 April 27,  
early 7 yesterday  
morning. 8

*Reads*

"Will write later,  
love, Tanya." 9

**Edmea**

Is 1 that  
all? 2

*Teresina gives Edmea telegram.*

That's  
all. 3  
Uncle 4 Nino

*pause*

*Teresina bursts into tears.*

6  
is 5 dead.  
7 Nino  
Gramsci 8 is

dead. 9

## BLACKOUT

### EPILOGUE

LIGHTS up to Tatiana. She has been writing letters. These have been to relatives and friends of Antonio Gramsci, informing them of his death on April 27, 1937. She has just finished a letter to Teresina and Edmea, which has been very difficult for her to write.

**Tatiana** reads

Tatiana, 1 to  
and 2 Teresina  
Edmea, 3 sad  
Your 4 greetings.  
uncle 5 Nino  
died 6 Gramsci  
a 7 month  
today, 8 ago  
9 May  
the 1 twenty-seventh.  
release 2 His  
from 3 prison  
a 4 came  
few 5 days  
he 6 before  
died, 7 but  
authorities 8 the  
9 hadn't

got 1 round  
complete 2 to  
the 3 formalities  
to 4 required  
discharge 5 him.  
will 6 I  
write 7 more

I've 8 when  
 9 got  
 over 1 my  
 physical 2 own  
 weaknesses, 3 which  
 minor 4 seemed  
 as 5 long  
 he 6 as  
 was 7 being  
 to 8 subjected

9 cruelties

which 1 were  
 to 2 intended  
 break 3 his  
 but 4 spirit  
 never 5 did.  
 was 6 He  
 arrested 7 in  
 8 Rome

9 November

eighth, 1 1926,  
 sent 2 and  
 to 3 the  
 of 4 island  
 Ustica, 5 where  
 prisoners 6 political  
 were 7 kept  
 house 8 under

9 arrest.

In 1 January  
 he 2 1927  
 was 3 transferred  
 prison 4 to  
 in 5 Milan.  
 May 6 In  
 1928 7 he  
 tried 8 was

9 at

Rome 1 and  
 to 2 condemned  
 twenty 3 years'

A 4 imprisonment.  
 medical 5 examination  
 him 6 revealed  
 to 7 need  
 medical 8 special

9 treatment

not 1 available  
 prison 2 in  
 and 3 recommended  
 He 4 clemency.  
 instead 5 was  
 to 6 sent  
 the 7 prison  
 at 8 hospital

9 Turi.

After 1 five  
 of 2 years  
 medical 3 neglect  
 he 4 there,  
 was 5 transferred  
 a 6 to  
 clinic 7 in  
 and 8 Formia

9 after

there, 1 to  
 clinic 2 another  
 in 3 Rome,  
 he 4 where  
 died, 5 just  
 his 6 before  
 release 7 from  
 not 8 custody,

9 just

afterwards, 1 as  
 I 2 intended.  
 will 3 write  
 length 4 at  
 later 5 and  
 spare 6 not  
 you 7 or  
 the 8 myself

9 truth. Your aunt Tatiana.

# GRAMSCI 2

---

Finding Tatiana



### The caricatures

Eugenie Schucht, *sister to Julia and Tatiana Schucht*

Julka (Julia) Schucht, *wife to Nino Gramsci*

Nino Gramsci

Tatiana Schucht, *sister to Julia and Eugenie Schucht*

Benito Mussolini

Chorus of animals, etc.

**Scene one:** *Moscow, a sanatorium; sometime after Julka conceived Delio, in October, 1923.*  
*Julka is visiting Eugenie. She shows her a violin she has had restored.*

**Eugenie** Everyone loves  
 Nino, Julka,  
 all Moscow, Julka.

**Julka** I'm beginning  
 to weaken  
 myself, I'm ashamed  
 of myself,  
 Eugenie, it's  
 wrong, Eugenie, wrong...  
 sinfully wrong...  
 viciously wrong...  
 depraved, corrupt, decadent, **BOURGEOIS**.

**Eugenie** He likes  
 you, he  
 likes you very  
 much, Julka,  
 very much,  
 Julka, that's obvious.

**Julka** But you  
 found him  
 first, that's what.

**Eugenie** Everyone knows  
 that Lenin  
 found him first.  
 Lenin brought  
 Gramsci here,  
 everyone knows that.

**Julka** What if  
 he did?  
 I think of  
 Nino Gramsci  
 as yours,  
 and why not?

**Eugenie** Because I'm  
 old enough  
 to be his  
 grandmother; and  
 because it's  
 you he likes.

**Julka** You know  
 I've no  
 room for a  
 man in  
 my heart,  
 Eugenie. Why are  
 you smiling?  
 I've yattered  
 on about them,  
 even about  
 Nino Gramsci, about  
 his hunchback,  
 about his  
 lion-like head, his  
 bird-like legs,  
 about his  
 feet smelling of  
 Rome, his  
 clothes smelling  
 of the pissoirs  
 of Paris,  
 his breath  
 fragrant with Cagliari  
 sardines — I've  
 room in  
 my mouth  
 for anything. But  
 my heart  
 is filled  
 to the brim  
 with...

**Eugenie** Filled to  
 the brim  
 with what, Julka?

**Julka** *appraisingly*  
 You're a  
 very beautiful  
 woman, Eugenie, and...

**Eugenie** With god,  
 Julka, no!  
 I thought you  
 were an  
 atheist.



**Julka** I  
am an  
atheist, I  
was born an  
atheist, why  
should I  
change now? This

*holds up violin*

violin is  
my god.  
I worship it  
because it  
believes in  
me.

**Eugenie** The church  
would forgive  
you.

**Julka** I  
don't believe in  
their god.

**Eugenie** It believes  
in your god.

**Julka** *changes subject*  
They've done  
a good  
job in repairing  
it. I  
found a  
wonderful craftsman in  
Delio. Delio  
thinks the  
unknown maker may  
have been  
even greater  
than Guarnerius. Delio  
wanted to  
buy it  
from me. By  
rights it  
should be  
yours, I told  
him. But  
I'm not  
going to give

it to  
him. He's  
going to teach  
me how  
to make  
my own violin.  
The only  
way to  
know a violin,  
Delio says,  
is to  
make one with  
your own  
hands, neck,  
belly, back, sound-post.

*Enter female Medical Attendant with a secret to tell Eugenie. This is obvious, but when she finds Eugenie preoccupied with Julka, she dances away. Before she enters, she is heard singing an old Georgian folk song, "I have a secret./ do you know my secret? / The flowers in the corn-field, shan't hear my secret./ and neither shall you. / The birds by the river, shan't hear my secret./ and neither shall you." Exit Attendant.*

**Julka** *hugging violin*

I wouldn't  
sell it  
for all the  
money there  
is.

**Eugenie** What  
a curious  
turn the conversation  
has taken,  
Julka. You  
declare in one  
breath you  
are an  
atheist, and in  
the next  
breath you  
say your god  
is your  
violin. Then  
you say you've  
had it  
repaired. Then

you talk of  
selling it  
and giving  
it away.

**Julka**

I  
said, **NOT**  
selling it,  
**NOT** giving it  
away — I've  
done worse.  
I've betrayed it.

**Eugenie**

Betrayed it?

**Julka**

Yes.

**Eugenie**

Betrayed  
it, how?

**Julka** *waits*

**Eugenie**

Betrayed  
your violin?  
I don't  
believe it.

**Julka**

Yes, Eugenie, as  
future events  
will make  
ludicrously plain.

**Eugenie**

Betrayed  
your violin,  
how?

**Julka**

How?

**Eugenie**

Can't I ask?

**Julka**

You're my  
sister.

*waits*

Intercourse.

**Eugenie**

Intercourse?

**Julka**

Yes.

Intercourse. Sexual intercourse.

With whom?

Yes, I

do have to  
tell you.

*timing*

I'm carrying  
Nino Gramsci's child.

**Eugenie** *silence*

*Re-enter female Attendant, as before, to find her entry even less auspicious. Exit Attendant, her dancing, and hardly articulated, "Is everything OK?" silently squelched.*

**Julka** *continuing*

Let me  
tell you  
more, and worse.  
I think  
I've fallen  
in love with  
this thing  
in my  
belly, which makes  
me feel  
more guilty  
than poor sick-minded  
blameful Phèdre  
after she'd  
propositioned stepson Hippolytus  
pure of  
stain, prize  
model bourgeois male.

*kisses her hand, applies the kiss to her belly*

**Eugenie** *about to speak*

**Julka**

Shall I go on?

**Eugenie**

*opens her mouth to speak*

**Julka**

Or have I  
struck you  
dumb? Or  
are you aware  
that we  
are not  
alone, and may  
be overheard?

*pats her belly*

**Eugenie**

You are a very strange woman, Julka.

**Julka** That is a typically romantic-bourgeois response, Eugenie.

**Eugenie** You've given me very little time to be a good communist and articulate feelings so full of joy for you both.

**Julka** I don't find incest in tribal societies strange. I've no feelings about homosexual affairs. Industrial society which segregates men into factories and women into offices, makes it seem natural for men to make love to men, and women to women. But to make love to my own child before it's born, what kind of a Phèdre am I?

**Eugenie** But Julka...

**Julka** You're my sister, Eugenie. My only sister, advise me, Eugenie!

**Eugenie** Well, what about Tatiana?

**Julka** What good's Tatiana? She's in Rome, probably murdered by Mussolini. How can she be of any help?

**Eugenie** What a dreadful thing to say, Julka!

**Julka** Oh, I'm sure she's not lying in an unmarked grave, or floating face down in the River Tiber. But she's not

here, Eugenie. You're the only sister I've got I can cling hold of. Help me, Eugenie. As sister, as mother superior, father confessor!

**Eugenie** *trying to gauge the mock-heroic dimensions of Julka's travesty-guilt, and separate fact from myth*

Couldn't you marry Nino Gramsci?

**Julka** Marriage isn't one of the terms of reference.

**Eugenie** I supposed not.

**Julka** I want you to tell me truthfully what you think of me, not bludgeon me with what I ought to do.

**Eugenie** Yes, Julka.

**Julka** How did it happen, Eugenie?

**Eugenie** *raises her nose significantly*

**Julka** How did I latch myself into this triple double-bind, the unborn child's and father's predicaments with respect to mine, my predicament with respect to theirs?

**Eugenie** *smiling*

Oh, Julka, Julka, I know you, so well, whenever you cry out, mea culpa, mea culpa, and beat your breast and tear out your hair, you're about to confess, to confess to some new triumph!

**Julka** You know I'm not a triumphant person, Eugenie!

**Eugenie** *not without raillery*  
Only the intervention of the violin has

saved you from one personal defeat  
after  
another?

**Julka** It's very unsisterly of you to  
suggest that an unwanted pregnancy  
is anything  
but a defeat of calamitous proportions,  
Eugenie.

*Enter female Medical Attendant who checks Eugenie, and exits, without saying anything.*

**Julka** How did Nino Gramsci overcome my  
scruples?  
You know I haven't any. With me  
there's only a realpolitik of wood,  
catgut, horse-hair, varnish and  
resin.  
But I didn't seduce him, neither did  
he rape me.

**Eugenie** I couldn't imagine Nino Gramsci  
raping anyone.

**Julka** But you could imagine your sister  
Julia  
Schucht in the role of a seductress?

**Eugenie** I didn't say so, Julka, did I?

**Julka** It all began with talk of finding  
Tatiana. You know, Eugenie, how we can't  
mention Rome, without recalling that Tatiana's  
lost there? When I return to Italy,  
he promised, I will look for the  
long lost Tatiana. But she's not lost,  
I told him. I told him I  
didn't want him to return to Italy.  
He tried everything to get me to  
give in to my wanting to marry  
him, including crocodile tears for the lost  
Tatiana, great big tears of ludicrous grief.

I told him I didn't want to  
marry him, and assured him that as  
for Tatiana, it was Rome that was  
lost, not any sister of the Schuchts.

**Eugenie** You could do much worse, you know.

**Julka** I couldn't, not even if Benito Mussolini  
lent us his new airplane with gas

enough for a honeymoon along the Adriatic.  
I couldn't, you understand me almost as  
little, Eugenie, as he does. Consider, Eugenie,  
the consequences of a marriage between a  
Sardinian communist lion and a Baltic heifer  
mule communist, especially since he's dead set  
on returning to Italy and my career  
has no future, except here in Soviet  
Russia. I tried to make him see  
that I was married to my violin  
just as he was married to socialism  
in Italy. But you can take your  
violin with you wherever you choose to  
go, he told me. And you can  
belong to the communist party here in Moscow,  
I told him. But you are a woman,  
he said. But that's where he's wrong,  
Eugenie. It is a fate, he said,  
with some disadvantages and some few advantages.  
That's where you're wrong, I told him.  
I'm not a woman, I'm a violinist.  
Pregnancy isn't any advantage to a violinist.  
But what about giving birth to a  
new life, he asked. He conceded I  
was the best violinist he'd ever heard  
play, and he praised my transcription for  
solo baroque violin of the Goldberg Variations.

**Eugenie** He's too noble ever to resort to flattery?

**Julka** He said I restored keyboard Bach back  
to its original horsehair and catgut predication.

It was the violinist, he said, he  
wanted to marry, not just the woman.

**Eugenie** But he wants the woman too, Julka?

**Julka** His next remark shows how little he  
saw what I saw with perfect clarity.  
The more she becomes a woman, he said,  
the more the violinist will burgeon. Surgeon,  
I asked. Blossom, he explained. Blossom, I  
said. Yes, flower, he replied. You don't  
flower into a violinist, I told him.  
You have to wrestle both with yourself  
and the violin, and need all the  
strength of gut you have to match  
it gut for gut. How can I look after



a sick man and bear a child  
and throw myself body and soul into  
the maelstrom j-s bach twists round  
the wooden ladder reaching from hell  
to who knows where? I ask you.

**Eugenie**

My darling Julka, I think I understand.

**Julka**

But not how I happen to be  
carrying Nino Gramsci's child. Here

*touches Eugenie's belly*

is where

it should be, in here, not in here.

*touches own belly*

**Eugenie**

Oh, Julka, dear dear Julka, I wish  
I could bear his child for you,  
dear Julka.

**Julka**

It's you he should marry.

**Eugenie**

In my state of health?

**Julka**

There's nothing  
wrong with you marriage wouldn't cure. You'd  
forget your nerves, trot off to Italy  
with him, mother him, cherish his children, and  
make him  
set limits to his determination to martyr  
himself to the lost cause of Italian  
communism.

**Eugenie**

You flatter me beyond reason.

**Julka**

It's not  
so unreasonable as this catastrophic marriage  
he  
wishes on me, damn him, Eugenie. How  
could Lenin's great marxist theorist be  
so  
impractical? I don't know, I don't know,  
Eugenie, I really don't know.

**Eugenie**

But you're  
not going to marry him?

**Julka**

No, of  
course I'm not. Unless, Eugenie...

**Eugenie**

Unless **WHAT**,  
Julka?

**Julka**

Oh, Eugenie, you will never understand,  
never.

Never, never, never, never, never, never.  
Never.

**Eugenie**

Perhaps Nino Gramsci wanted to have a  
violinist not an English nanny to breast  
feed his children?

**Julka**

Perhaps so.  
It was  
at the  
première  
of my  
Bach transcription  
which he'd  
connived to  
have held  
at Warsaw,  
it happened.  
The angel  
of the  
lord appeared  
to me  
there, and  
I conceived:  
**THIS**, not  
without help  
from Nino  
Gramsci, dear  
Eugenie.

**Eugenie** *hugs Julka*

I have three reasons now not to be sick.

**Julka**

And Tatiana.

**Eugenie**

Well, four reasons.

**Julka**

I have half a dozen reasons to go mad.

I told Nino Gramsci he could make use of  
my body. He didn't have to ask me, or  
make love to me, merely take it on loan.

But I insisted I couldn't marry him.

He could have my body, but not me.

**Eugenie**

What did he say to that.

**Julka**

Nothing.

**Eugenie**

If I didn't know how warm-hearted and  
compassionate you really are, Julka, I'd

be afraid that spending so much time with your violin might —de-humanize you into a violin.

**Julka** Isn't that what I've worked for? To put on the habit of art, versus the hand which shakes?

*drops her voice*

He made arrangements for the première at Warsaw.

Then took me at my word.

**Eugenie** You asked for it.

**Julka** Yes I did.

**Eugenie** Well.

**Julka** *hesitation*

He picked me up as one picks up a violin by the neck, drew the bow hair softly across the strings until the wood began to vibrate. I was on fire with the final rehearsal of the Bach transcription. He thought I was responding to his bowing and fingering...

**Eugenie** They say the sick lion makes the best lover.

**Julka** I was sweating from the Bach transcription. It was Bach caused the floods within me.

But now I find myself making love to this thing inside me, his child.

I am beginning to wonder if I've not fallen in love with him: I hope not.

Oh, I hope so.

**Eugenie**

**Scene two:** begins immediately after Scene one, which it continues, with a change of décor as the scene progresses to put Gramsci in strong focus. LIGHTS up to

**Eugenie** Here is Nino.

Look, Julka, Nino is coming.

Nino is here.

*Enter Medical Attendant with Gramsci and a doctor following*

**Attendant** Signor Gramsci has arrived.

**Julka** SIGNOR Gramsci did you say?

**Attendant** COMRADE Gramsci.

*She moves to one side. Enter Gramsci with Medical Doctor. Gramsci has the slender body, the head and shoulders, and red hair, of the Teresina of GRAMSCI 1, giving him a lion-like appearance. When he turns round, he reveals he has a hunchback. His complexion is sickly, his face luminously pale.*

**Doctor** *to Gramsci*

I would say that for a sick man you are in a very good state of health, but for one in excellent health, you are still a sick man, a very sick man, Signor Gramsci, yes, you are...

As for your return to Italy, don't hurry it.

But Italy has some fine doctors, some of them Fascists, but some of them, and in my opinion, the best of them, not Fascists.

They will take care of you...

**Gramsci** Let me introduce you to my bride.

**Julka** *almost shrieking*  
Nino...

**Eugenie** *turning from Gramsci to Julka, and from Julka to Gramsci*  
Julka darling...



**Gramsci** *introducing Julka to Doctor*  
Julka, my darling, my wife, my bride, mother-to-be of my first-born child...

**Eugenie** *mock reproach*  
Julka...

**Doctor** *to Julka*  
You are the violinist?  
I'd expected you to be a giantess.  
On the concert stage you take on an enormous size.  
As if you were the Hindu goddess Parvati, wife of Siva  
or one of Mantegna's angels...

**Julka**  
Thank you, comrade doctor.  
But I have very black hair.

**Gramsci**  
Not all of Mantegna's angels are blonds.

**Julka** *putting an arm round Eugenie*  
Nino, we have been chatting about you.  
*She embraces Nino.*

**Gramsci**  
*embraces Eugenie*  
Darling Eugenie.  
Forgive me for keeping you waiting so long.

**Doctor**  
You are married to a violin, comrade Gramsci.  
They will love your wife in Italy, where violinists are honoured as if they were classical gods, and violins are considered as necessary to angels as wings.

**Gramsci**  
Oh, she is one of the most... *(hesitates, searching for the word)* ...EXCOGITANT communists I know.

**Julka** *to Doctor*  
But I will never be able to go to Italy.  
I could never desert my sister Eugenie.

**Eugenie**  
I would love to go to Italy.

**Julka**  
But all the best doctors are here.

**Doctor**  
Thank you. There are some good practitioners in Italy.  
They'll take care of him.

*Takes Attendant's hand; starts to leave.*

You must excuse us, comrades.

*Exits, with Attendant*

**Gramsci**  
We must hurry. The *Three Sisters* is waiting for us to arrive.  
Comrade stage manager is one of your admirers.

**Julka**  
He has heard me play?

**Gramsci**  
He insists you are to the playing of the violin what Guarnerius is to the making of it.

*Enter Attendant with cups of soup.*

**Julka**  
There will hardly be time for that.

**Gramsci**  
But you must sip a little soup, and so must Eugenie.

**Eugenie**  
Yes, Julka, we must, so that Nino who needs nourishment more than we do will partake of some.

**Gramsci** *eats soup greedily*  
This is delicious food, Julka.

**Attendant** *whispers to Julka*

**Julka**  
She begs to be allowed to kiss your hand, Nino Gramsci.

**Gramsci**  
But I will instead consider it a pleasure to be allowed to kiss her hand.  
*Takes Attendant's hand, and puts his lips to it*

**Attendant** *excited*  
This is the supreme moment of my whole life.  
*Throws arms round Nino and kisses him on both cheeks*

**Gramsci** *following after as she races for the door*  
Tomorrow is ours, Comrade.

**Eugenie**  
It is as I told you, Julka.

**Julka**  
What did you tell me?

**Eugenie**  
All Moscow is in love with Nino Gramsci...

**Gramsci** *with tray of cups, as Attendant is about to exit*  
What is your name?

**Attendant**  
Remember me as comrade Anna.  
*Exit*

**Eugenie**  
...from Lenin to comrade Anna here.

**Julka**  
But Lenin is dead.

**Gramsci** *joining them*  
I've kept you waiting an interminable time.

**Julka**  
We didn't notice it, did we, Eugenie, we were talking of you, Nino, thirteen to a dozen.

**Gramsci**  
You have told Eugenie of our marriage.

**Julka**  
Yes.

**Eugenie**  
You told me nothing of any marriage.

**Julka**  
I told you everything, except the fact of the marriage itself.

**Eugenie**  
That's the most important part.

**Gramsci**  
She told you nothing of it?

**Julka**  
I left that for you to surprise her with.

**Eugenie**  
Dear Nino, tell me everything.

**Julka**  
How he brought me to my knees.

**BLACKOUT** *as they leave*

**Scene three:** *the lion's den in a city zoo. Enter newsboy with canvas newspaper-bag stenciled INTERNATIONAL NEWS SERVICE. Boy takes brown-paper lunch-bag out of canvas bag, and bites at sandwich. Lion looks up from half-eaten sheep, and roars. Boy takes second bite from sandwich. Lion shakes the sheep's carcass, and roars. This charade is repeated until the boy has finished his sandwich. Then he rolls lunch-bag into a ball and throws it at the lion. This challenge sets the lion off on a demonstration of the sonorities of a lion's roar. It begins with a low deep moaning, repeated five or six times, ending in faintly audible sighs; this moaning is followed with loud, deep-toned, solemn roars, repeated in quick succession, each increasing in loudness to the third or fourth, when the lion's voice dies away in five or six muffled sounds very much resembling distant thunder. Etc., etc.*

*The boy listens, interested but not dismayed.*

**Lion** *approaching the boy as closely as possible*  
What's your name, little boy?

**Boy**  
I.N.S.

**Lion**  
What does that mean, little boy?

**Boy**  
Not much.

**Lion**  
What do the letters I.N.S. stand for?

**Boy**  
International news service.

**Lion**  
I thought there was more to the news than you.

**Boy**  
When there's more news than I can handle, my sister's young man helps me out.

**Lion** *pause*  
Oh.

**Boy**  
But what about the foreign news, little boy?

**Lion**  
He is a foreigner.

**Boy**  
That's bad.

**Lion**  
She couldn't get one of her own kind.

**Boy**  
They all got killed off in the war.

**Lion**  
The peace is worse.

**Boy**  
The Russians betrayed us, sold us out to the Germans.

**Lion**  
Nothing but New Zealand mutton.

**Boy**  
He's an Eye-talian.

**Lion**  
He's OK.

**Boy**  
Couldn't make it in Italy.

**Lion**  
What's going on in the rest of the world, little boy?

**Boy**  
Improving some.

**Lion**  
The French Cock?

**Boy**  
Cockier than ever.

**Lion**  
The German boar?

**Boy**  
Licking its wounds.

**Lion**  
The Spanish Bull?

**Boy**  
Taken up painting.

**Lion**  
The American eagle?

**Boy** *pause*  
Coining money.

**Lion**  
Only Italy is in real trouble.

**Boy**  
I thought Italy was doing remarkably well.

**Lion**  
My sister's young man should know.

**Boy**  
I thought this new fellow they call il dushay — what's his name?

**Lion**  
Benito Mussolini?

**Boy**  
Thank you, little boy.

**Lion**  
Yes, Mussolini.

I thought Mussolini was doing wonders for a small over-populated, under-regulated country.

**Boy** Not what my sister's young man says.

**Lion** At least Mussolini's got the railways running on time.

**Boy** That's a joke.

**Lion** Well, he's drained the marshes.

**Boy** Another joke.

**Lion** At least, he's made up to the church.

**Boy** He crosses himself.

**Lion** The lion shall lie down with the lamb.

*disdainful roar*

**Boy** *fascinated by the exhibition roar*  
How do you do that?

**Lion** *disregarding question*  
At any rate, Mussolini's stopped the worst hooliganism of the Fascist bands which sprang up all over Italy after the war.

**Boy** Fascist propaganda.  
Fairy tales, according to...

**Lion** Your sister's young man, I suppose, little boy?

**Boy** No.

**Lion** Then who? whom?

**Boy** Signor Giacomo Matteotti.

**Lion** Who's he?

**Boy** A lawyer.

*shows Lion copy of "The Fascisti Exposed"*

**Lion** Oh, I've read that.

Matteotti denounces everything Mussolini has done.

He's a communist.

**Boy** No, he's a liberal.

**Lion** Let's give fascism a chance.

If what he said was true, he'd have been murdered long ago.

**Boy** I didn't know you could read.

As well as roar.

**Lion** I'd rather it didn't get into the news.

**Boy** Why not?

**Lion** People are always lending me books as it is.

Then I have to return them.

It's rarely worth it.

If I accept them out of friendship and fail to return them, I've lost a friend.

**Boy** Could you teach me to roar?

**Lion** I could.

**Boy** Then would you?

**Lion** Why do you want to learn how to roar, little boy?

**Boy** It's better than crowing.

**Lion** Or bellowing.

**Boy** Or grunting.

**Lion** Or screaming.

**Boy** It's almost as good as screaming.

**Lion** Anyone can scream.

There is of course an art of screaming.

But no one can roar without training by a master of the art.

**Boy** How much a lesson?

**Lion** Ten and six, for the first lesson.

**Boy** How much for the second lesson?

**Lion** The second is twice as difficult as the first.

The third, twice as difficult as the second.

Hence each lesson will cost twice as much as the preceding one.

The first group of five lessons will cost fifteen and a half guineas.

The second group, also of five lessons, will cost 16 plus 32 plus 64 plus 128 plus 256 guineas, i.e., 496 guineas.

**Boy** I can scarcely afford the first lesson.

**Lion**

You could of course train with an African lion.

**THEIR** rates are much more reasonable, but so is the manner of instruction.

**Boy**

The difference being?

**Lion**

The British lion is incomparably superior, whether for remuneration or recreation.

**Boy**

OK.

After the first ten and sixpence, I'll have to go it alone.

**Lion**

I don't advise it.

Benito Mussolini is an example of an untrained roar.

The voice bounces up.

A mere booming: boom, boom, boom, without nobility, majesty or profundity.

There's nothing earth-shaking in that sort of roaring.

**Boy**

Viva Matteotti.

## **BLACKOUT**

**Scene four:** *Julka's apartment in Moscow. Lights up to Julka and Nino Gramsci. They have been making love.*

**Julka** *getting out of bed first*

portrait sketch of the violinist  
julia schucht

four months gone with child  
getting out

of bed after making love  
with the

italian politician Nino Gramsci and  
attempting to

drown his unwanted child in  
a superflux

of seed... pot shot at Nino Gramsci  
who doesn't

quite know what to make of  
the woman

he forced into marriage with  
him at

the shrine of the black  
virgin of

Czestochova, because she won't follow  
him to

Italy, like his little dog bitch, woof  
woof woof...

**Gramsci** *getting out of bed*

It's because she hates his hunchback.

**Julka**

No it isn't.

**Gramsci**

Yes it is.

You never mention it.

You've never once mentioned it.

**Julka**

Hunchback, hunchback, hunchback, hunchback...

I love your hunchback.

*kisses it*

It frightened me at first.

Now it terrifies me.

It will make it so easy for Mussolini's  
thugs to spot you by.

I won't go to Italy because I don't want you  
to go there, where you'll be murdered for  
sure.

**Gramsci**

Then I'll take Eugenie with me.

**Julka**

Yes, do.

And together you'll find Tatiana.

**Gramsci**

And all the credit for finding the long-lost  
sister will go to us?

What will Tatiana think, when we have to  
tell her you wouldn't come with us, to help  
find her?

**Julka**

She's not all that ugly but she's not the  
sleeping beauty you dream of.

What good finding Tatiana, if you're murdered?



**Gramsci** Don't you see I must go back to Italy where I'm needed.

**Julka** How much longer before you have to leave?

We can't go all over that again.

**Gramsci** I have no right to desert Italy.

**Julka** I love Italy.

I love Italians.

The Italians are beautiful people.

Italy is a beautiful country.

But there's no room there to swing a bow in.

You've no right to take me where I'll be completely useless, and where you'll end up getting yourself murdered, and will let down Russia which needs you even more than it needs me.

**Gramsci** As elected deputy of the people, I shall have immunity.

**Julka** According to Italian law.

But Mussolini is above the law.

**Gramsci** Mussolini has too much sense and too classical a nose to turn contingent opponents into martyrs who would make his name stink to high heaven.

**Julka** He will murder you as soon as he can.

**Gramsci** You don't understand Mussolini as I do.

**Julka** He is a great Italian poet.

**Gramsci** He is a noisy bag of wind.

**Julka** He will weep great big rhetorical tears over you, denounce the thugs he has tipped off to murder you, and use your death to strengthen his leg-hold on the fascisti, whom he now rides precariously to absolute power, but who are his chief preoccupation, a tiger he can ride but not wrestle with.

**Gramsci** But this is the pessimism of the intellect.

**Julka** And I know the answer to that.

Yours is the optimism of the will.

It didn't save Lenin for Russia.

**Gramsci** What sort of a communist **ARE** you?

**Julka** What sort of a communist are **you**?

**Gramsci** I think Stalin who is saturated with pessimism of the intellect has converted you to fascism.

**Julka** Because I think the state is founded on violence?

**Gramsci** What sort of a communist do you think I am?

**Julka** What sort of a communist do you think me?

**Gramsci** I asked you first.

**Julka** I wouldn't care to say.

**Gramsci** Why not?

**Julka** I'm not your sort of communist, you're not my sort.

Wanting to marry, I didn't.

Wanting to have a child, I didn't.

Wanting to raise a family, I didn't.

Wanting to get yourself murdered in Italy, I don't even want you to go there. I want you to write Italy off for the next half-century, at least.

**Gramsci** Go on.

**Julka** When I was researching Bach I read a sermon by a baroque English convert from Catholicism to — I don't know what,

who preached that, if the proud man, the envious man, the wrathful man, the greedy man, the slothful man, the gluttonous man, the lustful man, went to heaven — if they ever managed to get there,

they'd find all those things they hankered after to satisfy their pride, wrath, greed, sloth, gluttony and lust.

Well: you dream of a communist state-to-come where all that the bourgeoisie hankers after as their summum bonum

land, houses and wealth, servants, education, social services, libraries, theatres, concert halls, opera houses, art galleries, every sort of artistic activity, music, dance, painting, sculpture,

will be accessible to all as their indefeasible right.

Am I unfair?

**Gramsci**  
**Julka**

There's some truth in the travesty...  
Wait.

I've not finished yet.

This communist after-world you dream about with all its bourgeois nightmares will come to pass only through the martyrdom of the leaders of the party, blinded to all realities by their optimism of will which tells them their sufferings will not be in vain.

**Gramsci**

Now shall I describe your sort of communism?

It is founded on pessimism of the intellect.

It goes right back via capitalist thought to Julius Caesar, who supposed that people had to be cheated in order to persuade them to choose their own good and the good of their neighbours and countrymen.

Everyone must ruthlessly be dedicated to eradicating every bourgeois tendency and eliminating any danger to the safety of the republic, which is, in theory,

an existence emptied of all content except regulations, existing solely to exist,

to which the only art compatible, is music.

In practice, your sort of communism becomes a bureaucracy of suspicion, in which every citizen is an official spy in a coral-reef of key-holes.

**Julka**

You win, as you always do in wit-combats.

I thought travesty was a transvestite, a masquerade with donkey-skins

with much hee-hawing, and some laughter.

**Gramsci**  
**Julka**

But I strip you naked?

As you always do.

Then abandon me.

What do you call it?

The naked violinist?

**Gramsci**

You are not a professional thinker.

**Julka**

But I do have some passionate thoughts.

The violin is my ideology?

**Gramsci**

Yes.

**Julka**

I hate the contingency of political systems.

**Gramsci**

Simply to exist, is nothing.

**Julka**

But to exist as a non-contingent existence, plus a compatibility with music, isn't nothing?

**Gramsci**

It's to re-invent God as the state, not permitted to you if you turn up your nose at all bourgeois contaminations.

What you mean is, for Julia Schucht the violin virtuoso, communism exists simply for music, and music, for communism.

**Julka**

That's exactly my meaning.

**Gramsci**

It isn't a band-aid for cruelty.

It leaves that to fester everywhere, in the open mouths of ten million unattended wounds.

**Julka**

Humanity is founded on violence.

It is more than one half of love, the remaining part of which is spiked, especially for women, with subtle and poisonous fears and hallucinations.

We're half at it now, blackmailing each other with all the silly pisspot reasons why separation is noble, necessary and not at all unthinkable.

I, so as not to have to go with you.

You, so as not to have to stay here with me.

The fact is, one side of the human brain is the predator's, which invents tools, weapons, tortures, every kind of murder. My kind of communism gives the other side of the brain a chance.

It enlists Caesar in support of Bach.

**Gramsci**

Or Bach, in support of Caesar?

**Julka** *she quickens; a cry of surprise, as if someone had seized her unaware*  
Oh... uh...

**Gramsci** I will try to have an answer for you.  
When I've found Tatiana and  
persuaded her to get you to come to  
Rome...

*sees Julka's exaggerated reaction*

What's wrong?

**Julka** Nothing. Nothing much.

Answer? Is there an answer? Me and my  
cargo are unanswerable.

The ship's cargo shifted, that's all.

Delio has just jumped for joy in the family  
catacomb.

Turned a somersault.

I've quickened.

**Gramsci** Delio? Oh, you mean Lev, don't you?

You thought we'd decided on Lev, didn't  
you?

**Julka** We'd be naming him for a predator?

Or for Delio, who's going to teach me how  
to make a violin?

*as Gramsci leaves*

**Gramsci** I'm leaving you Eugenie. I'll soon find  
Tatiana.

**Julka** No don't go. Come back. Look I've got  
something for Tatiana. It's a copy  
of a poem I'm setting to music.

*shows Gramsci manuscript of poem*

Listen, I'll read it to you.

*she reads, with restrained self-travesty*

whoso list to hunt, I know where is  
an hynde

but as for me helas I may no more  
the vayne travail, etc. etc.

hath wearied me so sore I am of them  
that farthest commeth behind;

yet may I by no means my wearied mynde  
draw from the deer, but as she fleeth

before, faynting I follow; I leave off  
therefore since in a net I seek to  
hold the wind...

whoso list her hunt, I put him out of  
doubt as well as I may spend his time

in vain: for, graven with diamonds in  
letters plain there is written, her

fair neck round about, **NOLI ME TANGERE**,  
do not wish to touch me, etc, etc. for

Caesar's I am, and wilde for to hold,  
etc. etc. though I seem tame.

*Gramsci and Julka speaking simultaneously, contrapuntally*

**Gramsci** I 1 have got

**Julka** 1 yes,

**Gramsci** to go... 2

**Julka** yes, 2 you

3

must 3 go...

4

I'll 4 send the

5

score 5 on

1

to 1 Tatiana

**Gramsci** 2 I've

**Julka** when 2 it's

**Gramsci** simply 3 got

**Julka** finished — 3 it's

**Gramsci** to 4 go

**Julka** for 4 two

**Gramsci** 5 or I'll

**Julka** trombones and 5 double-bass

**Gramsci** never 1 find

1

her... 2

2

3 I hate

**Julka** I love 3 you.

**Gramsci** to 4 leave you...

**Julka** Gramsci 4

**Gramsci** 5 Julia

5



*Exit Gramsci. Julka turns, then turns back to the bed they have been making love in, pulls the bed clothes on to the floor, tramples on them, and shouts out, "Liar, liar, liar, etc." BLACKOUT as the repeated word is transmuted into a sort of violin cadenza mocking her rage.*

**Scene five:** *outside of Matteotti's villa on the Tiber. Before dawn. Matteotti comes out with his briefcase to his car. He stops to look at the reddening sky, checks his watch for the time of sunrise. His assassins wait in the shadows. They have taken off their clothes; they come for him naked, crying out, "Matteotti", "It's got to be Matteotti", "It's Matteotti alright". When the assault is over, their bodies are drenched in blood. They lift up his briefcase. They put a rope around his torso.*

**Matteotti's voice** *coming from a great way, off, i.e., from the back parts of the theatre.*  
I see who you are.

**Chorus** *startled, looks around aggressively*

**Matteotti's voice**  
How did you know I was Matteotti?

**Chorus** *trying to convince itself it isn't hearing what it is hearing by turning to Matteotti's body*

**Matteotti's voice**  
Can you hear me?

**Chorus** *stops trying to scoop up Matteotti's body*

**Matteotti's voice**  
I know who you are.

**Chorus** *freezes*

**Matteotti's voice**  
Can you hear me? Raise your arms if you can hear me.

**Chorus** *tries, is unable, to raise arms or move*

**Matteotti's voice**  
When I was a small boy, my maternal grandfather told me a fairy story about an old grandfather just like him who when he died became a star.

I thought it was a fairy story.

Here's something you can call a fairy story.

I have become a star in space. I can see everything you do.

**Chorus** *steps back from body*

**Matteotti's voice**  
Can you hear me, Amerigo Dumini?  
If you can, raise your right arm.

**Chorus-leader** *moves but doesn't raise arm*

## Matteotti's voice

Now, Amerigo Dumini, listen carefully.

Tell your squadristi to put on their clothes and make themselves decent.

Then I will tell them what you and they can do to save themselves.

**Chorus** *starts putting on clothes*

## Matteotti's voice

The fact that you are in the pay of Cesare Rossi, Mussolini's press secretary, won't help you.

You won't be able to hide my body, even if you drag it half way round the world, it will be found.

It will be easier to hide yourselves, once you have cleaned yourselves up and put on fresh clothing.

So leave my body just where it is, so that it can be quickly found, and given lawful burial.

*The sun rises, and light increases until the figures about the body are in full illumination.*

Amerigo Dumini...

*as the sun rises Matteotti's voice fades*

Amerigo Dumini...

*as if there were still more to be said*

Amerigo Dumini, Amerigo Dumini, etc.

**Chorus** *freezes, as sun rises and the name "Amerigo Dumini" fades into silence; waits, and then attacks the body of Matteotti with utmost ferocity, as if trying to kill it over again. Then they try to drag body off-stage.*

## BLACKOUT

**Matteotti's voice** *at moment of blackout, and with maximal loudness and intensity*  
Amerigo Dumini, Amerigo Dumini...

**LIGHTS up, then BLACKOUT**

**Scene six:** *a farm in rural France; a lion's den in a London zoo; a hillside in New England. These places are rendered tonally, with the resulting contrapuntal collage constituting global reaction to the Matteotti crisis, which threatens to topple Mussolini.*

**LIGHTS up** *to the London zoo-keeper wearing a lion's head, to the French farmer wearing a rooster's head, and to the New England postman wearing an eagle's head. Their appearance is preceded by roaring, cackling and screaming.*

**Cock** *in a flap; hysterical French territorial cackle, directed first to the Lion, then to the Eagle.*

**Lion** *tries to calm the Cock; bursts of less than calm roaring, obviously disturbed by the disturbance.*

*Enter paperboy with newspaper bag stencilled INS. He sits down. Starts to read newspaper.*

**Eagle** *U.S. isolationist screaming, directed at the Lion.*

**Cock** *to newspaper boy: "What is all this hullabaloo about"; cackling; gesturing.*

**Boy** Nothing much.

*noise increases*

**Cock** *repeats question, cackle, gesture*

**Boy** Matteotti's disappeared.

**Cock** *retreats, concerned cackle*

**Eagle** *screaming: "What's going on?"*

**Boy** Matteotti's been murdered.

**Lion** *roaring: "What does the French press and the U.S. press have to say about that?"*

**Boy** Nothing much.

**Cock** *cackles: "Matteotti's been assassinated".*

**Lion** *roaring* Well?

**Boy** Yup.

Matteotti's been assassinated.

The opposition has traced the slaying to Amerigo Dumini, a thug in the pay of Cesare Rossi, Mussolini's press secretary.

Mussolini denies all knowledge of it.

**Lion** *roars* This is most untimely and unfortunate...

**Boy** *interpreting*

It is most untimely and unfortunate...

**Lion** *roars* Just as Mussolini was getting Italy back on its feet.

**Boy** *interpreting*

Just as Mussolini was getting Italy back on its feet again.

Cripes.

Death and lamentation.

**Lion, Cock, Eagle** *pronounced and solemn mourning*

**Boy** *singing* The old black mare she ain't what she used to be...

Exit. **BLACKOUT**

**Scene seven:** *lights up to Mussolini, at the telephone. He wears a dressing gown, which is draped across his shoulder like a Roman toga.*

**Mussolini** *with utmost contempt*

...majestic sir, your ever subservient servant doesn't

conform to these complaints, which were they not... did they not proceed from so exalted a mouth, I should call abuse.

*waits, listens*

Your majesty, I am glad you speak to me as a friend.

*waits, listens*

We have friends everywhere.

England will put its navy at my disposal.

France will provide me with an army.

The US will rent me navy vessels or aircraft as long as I pay cash in advance.

But I don't need this friendly assistance, predicated as it is in contempt of you and us.

The Matteotti affair is going according to plan.

Matteotti had to be silenced in the most brutal way possible.

In order to create, which has been done, as extreme a sense of outrage as possible, so that all your majesty's enemies would feel brave enough to reveal themselves.

Even Antonio Gramsci, the hunchback communist, who hates you in the abstract with more intelligence than ten Matteottis, is returning to walk into my trap.

When the entrapment is completed, I will be able to re-establish your throne on an unimpeachable basis, and with the state secured, rebuild classical Rome.

I can understand your majesty's misgivings.

I am not faltering.

The Matteotti affair wasn't a mistake.

**Scene eight:** *the after-image of Mussolini on the telephone is allowed to persist. Then, lights up to Julia Schuch and her sister Eugenie.*

**Julka** *to Eugenie*

No, Eugenie, I don't think the Matteotti affair will topple Mussolini. Dictatorships thrive on such atrocities. Only when he goes to war, and is defeated, will he come tumbling down.

Absurd humpty-dumpty that he is.

**Eugenie**

Nothing's absurd to me. I don't try to make sense of things any more, not since...

*she hesitates*

**Julka** Not since when, Eugenie?

**Eugenie** Not since your marriage to Nino Gramsci.

**Julka** *laughs, then*  
I didn't lie to you, the truth was so awkward, so blown up with bourgeois turpitude, desperate probabilities, ludicrous eventualities, it was like trying to dock a balloon in its hangar on a windy day, some of its preposterousness had to be scuttled.

Don't you see why, dear Eugenie?

**Eugenie** No, I don't.

The preposterousness of your motivation in the deception capsizes the witchcraft of the deceived sister, dearest Julka, and my crying out, help, help me to understand it goes unheard.

**Julka** *laughing*  
Oh, you were to be his proxy for me, Eugenie, not you my proxy for him.

I've had the strangest dream about Tatiana.

**Eugenie** That's because Nino has probably found her.

**Julka** I'm sure he has, Eugenie. What a man we've inflicted on Tatiana as brother-in-law!

The very first person he speaks to in Rome will be Tatiana. He'll rush up to the first woman he sees and say to her, you must be Tatiana Schucht because I'm Nino Gramsci your brother-in-law.

Sure enough, she will be Tatiana Schucht.

But I must tell you about my dream.

I dreamt Delio was born prematurely and Tatiana said to me, how terrible to make love wondering whether you've conceived or not, suffer the weeks and weeks of pregnancy, and then to bear a posthumous child!

It was born alive, I said. I know, Tatiana said. I meant, it was born after the parents' death. I am alive, I said. Yes, Tatiana said, but the father isn't.

**Eugenie** What happened then?

**Julka** In the dream? Nothing. I woke up. Delio kicked me in the bladder.

**Eugenie** Or Lev?

**Julka** Lev? Yes, or Lev. *resentfully* Yes, Lev.

You are indeed his proxy, little sister.

I only hope the soon-to-be-found Tatiana can stand up to him.

### BLACKOUT

**Scene nine:** *lights up to Gramsci in Rome. A street in Rome. Enter separately, Tatiana Schucht.*

**Tatiana** *thinks: "I am being followed", takes evasive action*

**Gramsci** *knocks at door*

**Woman** *opening door*  
What do you want?

**Gramsci** I am looking for...

**Woman** Are you the police?

**Gramsci** *turns towards Tatiana, but doesn't see her*

**Woman** *sees Gramsci's hunchback*  
Who are you looking for?

**Tatiana** *but Gramsci doesn't hear; aside, to audience*  
I am Tatiana Schucht.

**Gramsci** *turning back to woman*  
Excuse me.

I thought I heard my name.

I am looking for Tatiana Schucht.

**Woman** Tatiana who?

**Tatiana** *aside, as before*  
I am Tatiana Schucht.

**Gramsci** Tatiana Schucht.



**Woman** Tatiana Schucht? There's no Tatiana Schucht lives here or anywhere near here I know of.  
 Sorry.

*closes door*

**Gramsci** Thank you.  
*turns towards Tatiana; she takes evasive action*

**Tatiana** *aside, as before*  
 This man has a hunchback.

A hunchback looking for Tatiana Schucht must be Nino Gramsci.

*shudders with the excitement*

If this man isn't Nino Gramsci, I'm not Tatiana Schucht.

**Gramsci** *knocks on second door*

**Woman** What do you want?

**Gramsci** I'm looking for my sister-in-law, Tatiana Schucht.

**Woman** Sorry, no one by that name lives here.

*slams door shut*

**Gramsci** *turns in direction of Tatiana; who takes evasive action*

**Tatiana** *smiling; aside*

I am Tatiana Schucht.

*moves forward to him, as he turns to third door*

**Gramsci** *knocks on third door*

**Tatiana** *moves very close to Gramsci, but out of sight*

**Gramsci** *knocks again*

**Tatiana** *moves still closer*

**Woman** *opening third door*

What do you want?

**Gramsci** Tatiana Schucht.

**Woman** Who's Tatiana Schucht?

**Gramsci** My sister-in-law.

**Woman** She don't live here.

Try looking for her on the next street.

There are dozens of Tatianas live there.

Take your pick.

**Gramsci** Thank you.

**Woman** *shuts door*

**Tatiana** *but Gramsci pays no attention*

I am Tatiana Schucht.

**Woman** *re-opening door, and staring at Tatiana*  
 But I've never heard of one called Schucht.

*closes door*

**Gramsci** *turns back on Tatiana and is about to leave*

**Tatiana** *accosting Gramsci, and, when he swerves aside from her, heading him off*  
 I am Tatiana Schucht, I am Tatiana Schucht...

**Gramsci** *as if brushing aside an attractive but unwanted street-walker*  
 I beg your pardon...

**Tatiana** I am Tatiana Schucht!

**Gramsci** You must be Tatiana Schucht!

*cry of surprise*

**Tatiana** You must be Nino Gramsci!

**Gramsci** Tatiana!

**Tatiana** Yes, I am Tatiana Schucht.

**Gramsci** I am Nino Gramsci.

**Tatiana** *flings her arms around Gramsci*

**Gramsci** *when she releases him*  
 I've found you.

**Tatiana** *embracing him again*  
 Oh no, I found you, I found you.

**Gramsci** My sister-in-law!

**Tatiana** More than a sister-in-law!

*embracing him warmly*

Orestes!

**Gramsci** *takes half-a-second to think back to the meeting at Agamemnon's tomb*  
 Electra!

**Tatiana** More than a sister and a brother?

**Gramsci** But incest alienates the love conceiving them.

**Tatiana** I wasn't thinking of incest.

**Gramsci** Can there be more than sister's and brother's love?

**Tatiana** If he is the Nino Gramsci she has heard of, yes there can, Orestes.

**Gramsci** What Electra says fascinates Orestes, Electra.

**Tatiana** What fascinates her isn't the love of blood for blood, Orestes.

**Gramsci** Electra, Orestes is no woman's morsel as she sees.

**Tatiana** Yet what she sees electrifies my womanly parts with quite

unwomanly electricities, Orestes.

*She embraces him.*

**Gramsci** Electra.  
*refusing to let her disengage herself*

I am glad I have found you, Tatiana.

**Tatiana** *detaching herself*

I thought I found you.

**Gramsci** I have to be able to say I've found you, so that I can persuade Julka to bring Eugenie and the baby here to Rome.

**Tatiana** There is already a baby?

**Gramsci** Or there will be very soon.

**Tatiana** That's nice.

I'd not expected to find you so warm and human.

**Gramsci** *excited*

I find you even more beautiful than Eugenie, who's really beautiful.

**Tatiana** And is Julka Schucht the plain one, the ugliest of the Schucht sisters?

**Gramsci** Yes, she is.

**Tatiana** Shame on you for saying that, Nino Gramsci.

**Gramsci** Because I've lost my heart to Julka doesn't mean I've lost my mind or my reason.

**Tatiana** Then you don't love her.

**Gramsci** Oh yes I do.

**Tatiana** Tell me the truth, Nino Gramsci.

**Gramsci** It is the truth.

**Tatiana** Don't ever lie to me.

**Gramsci** I do love her.

**Tatiana** Perhaps you only think you do.

**Gramsci** Electra!

What are you saying?

**Tatiana** I am saying, Orestes, that you don't know what you've found.

Not Electra.

Not your sister.

Not your sister-in-law.

**Gramsci** Then tell me what I've found.

**Tatiana** You didn't really find me.

Yet right away you're saying you must tell Julka you did in order to trap her into coming here.

**Gramsci** It was a species of entrapment.

Like marriage.

Or rescuing a prisoner from his captors. You use a show of force, to enable the captive to set himself free.

**Tatiana** You sound like Orestes. This is an Orestes-argument.

**Gramsci** The state is murdered, Tatiana.

I have to wear a mask. The lamb has to eat straw with the lion.

**Tatiana** OK, I'm not what I seem to be.

I've read your arguments, Nino Gramsci in such articles as I could lay my hands on.

They are completely incomprehensible, but I don't stress incomprehension or comprehension, only that they are not yet completely understood.

**Gramsci** Yes, go on.

**Tatiana** You must read me in the same way.

I don't know myself any better than you do.

I had a strange dream.

Do you believe in dreams?

**Gramsci** Do you mean the dream we dream or the dream we tell.

**Tatiana** Both.

On the night when Giacomo Matteotti disappeared.

He was murdered in broad daylight.

**Gramsci** That night I dreamt he came to me, and stood at the foot of my bed.

What do you want with me, I asked.

Tell Nino Gramsci, he said... then I woke up.

That was all. It didn't seem like a dream.

I hardly knew who he was, I read everything I could about him, and his book exposing Mussolini's frauds. When his body was found, I went to his funeral service.

That night I again dreamt of him. He was all covered with blood.

He held out his hand to me. It was a beautiful white scholar's hand. It didn't have any blood on it.

*silence*

**Gramsci** No, I don't believe in dreams.

**Tatiana** No?

**Gramsci** Tell Nino Gramsci *WHAT?*

**Tatiana** I haven't told you all of my dream.

Then he dipped the hand which didn't have any blood on it, he dipped his finger in his own blood, and made the sign of the cross on my brow, and said, in nomine patris, I baptize you "Giacomo Matteotti."

**Gramsci** Why?

**Tatiana** Then he said, go and find Nino Gramsci and tell him what I've done.

**Gramsci** Then you woke up.

**Tatiana** You don't believe in my dreams?

**Gramsci** What did he mean?

**Tatiana** Then you do believe in them?

**Gramsci** No, frankly I don't.

**Tatiana** But you want to know what they meant.

You take them seriously enough for that.

**Gramsci** Part of the process of disbelief, merely.

**Tatiana** I think he meant I want you to carry on my work of exposing Mussolini.

**Gramsci** Mussolini is already exposed.

**Tatiana** He is a colossal fraud.

But that doesn't make my task any easier.

The greater the fraud, the harder it is to convict the world of being taken in by it.

**Gramsci** The world?

**Tatiana** Yes the world, and first of all the good people of Rome.

And the not so good people of Turin.

It is a many-headed monster, not just Mussolini we have to deal with. There is a German head, an American head, a Japanese head, a Russian head.

**Gramsci** Russian head?

**Tatiana** That is why Matteotti sent me to find you.

I am blown up with ambition, but have neither *theoria* nor *praxis*.

You don't seem pleased with what Matteotti said.

**Gramsci** To you?

I don't believe in supernatural dreams or in dreams of the supernatural.

**Tatiana** Neither do I.

I don't believe in God.

But I do believe in the supernatural.

**Gramsci** Since your re-birth?

**Tatiana** Since my baptism in the blood of Matteotti.

**Gramsci** Electra?

**Tatiana** Orestes?

**Gramsci** What I have found, exclamation mark, when I found you.

**Tatiana** But you didn't find me.

Matteotti led me to you.

*There is a street disturbance and they hurry away.*

#### Scene ten: ode in praise of Mussolini

**Scene eleven: living quarters in Rome. But before the scene is established, enter Gramsci with Tatiana, with food and wine.**

**Tatiana** It seems so short a time you and Julka have had together, Nino.

**Gramsci** Try to persuade her that she must leave, Tatiana.

**Tatiana** At least, she has had a few weeks with you.

**Gramsci** Very precious weeks, Tatiana.

Try and persuade her, Tatiana.

She is so stubborn. She's fighting it every inch of the way. She didn't want to come here. I can understand that. Now she doesn't want to leave. That I can't understand. There's the baby, and Eugenie, and another baby on the way.

**Tatiana** She will see that she must.

**Gramsci** Now that Mussolini is starting to fight back again, the deputy's immunity will mean nothing.

**Tatiana** But that would be my argument, if I were her.

*They go in.*



**Julka** *coming forward with Eugenie*

Tatiana, you are the only person in the whole world I'm beginning to think who can change Nino's mind.

**Tatiana** I never try to, I only try to find out what's in it, and help him get it done.

**Julka** I never found any obscurity there as to what he wanted to do.

**Tatiana** Let's not argue now about what we can't help must be done. Let's have our party tonight to celebrate the wonderful few weeks these have been when we've been together, you, Eugenie, Delio and Nino.

**Julka** I thought it was a party to celebrate the loss of my baby, but never expected to hear that, having been stripped of my violin, I was to be deprived of my husband.

I surrendered my violin to be with my husband, but then I had to hand my baby over to Eugenie to work at the embassy.

I won't give up my husband.

**Gramsci** Please Julka let's listen to what Tatiana has to say.

**Julka** Well: what have you to say, Tatiana?

**Tatiana** Nothing much.

**Julka** Well, I have.

It's not myself, nor my babies, nor Eugenie I'm thinking of. It's my husband.

Nino is really very ill. He must leave, resign if need be the deputyship.

You must persuade him Tatiana that he can't help matters by simply throwing himself as a sacrifice at fate.

He must get away somewhere where he can recover his health, and write. Make him see that he's really a writer.

I've persuaded Eugenie of this.

What possible arguments can you cook up against this, Tatiana?

**Tatiana** I have none. It's eminently sensible.

But screwdriver arguments which screw one's feet down into positions don't help.

Nino's sense of what he is obligated to do isn't subject to arguments.

You should know this, Julka.

**Julka** Yes Tatiana I do.

**Tatiana** There's the whole of Greek tragedy in that reply: Aeschylus, Sophocles and Euripides squeezed into a fistful.

*Gramsci seems to pay no attention.*

Nino Gramsci, didn't you notice what your wife said?

**Gramsci** No, what did she say?

**Tatiana** *to Julka*

Fate, female resentment, the wastage of destiny vs. destiny.

**Julka** *pleased, and since interested, somewhat mollified*  
And what is your destiny, Tatiana?

**Tatiana** I've nothing to sacrifice.

**Gramsci** Don't believe her.

**Tatiana** *to Gramsci*

As Giacomo Matteotti?

**Julka** *sarcastically*

Who's that?

**Tatiana** *picking up again what she was saying*

Thus: it seems to me that our best course as his women is to let you and Eugenie and the baby go into safety. I will stay with Nino, and when the time is opportune, when...

**Julka** *interrupting*

...when he's at death's door?

**Tatiana** Yes, it may be so, when he's at death's door, or sooner, if I can, I will bring him to you.

**Julka** Death isn't the worst I fear for him.

**Eugenie** I've always thought of death as man's best friend.

**Tatiana** But why the gloom? The news is very good. The government of Mussolini is about to fall.

**Julka** You mean, Mussolini is about to strike back. And when he does, the immunity the deputies enjoy against harassment will mean nothing to him.

Nino will be shut up in a prison.

This is what I fear most of all.

I want to be here with him while he is free.

**Eugenie** An imprisoned husband means a carefree wife...

**Julka** Shut up, Eugenie.

**Gramsci** *with call to supper*

Food is ready. The feast fattens. Talking starves...

*They lead Julka away.*



**Scene twelve:** *St. Peter's Square, in Rome, but the columns are twisted not straight shafts, like those enclosing Bernini's St. Peter's throne... enter chorus of heraldic animal shapes, the lion, the cock, the eagle, etc., corporate masks of international impotency, circa 1925/6. They seem tawdry and trivial, until they start to roar, crow and scream.*

**Ch/Lion** *roars, what could be translated into these words, abstracted from the press accounts of what is happening in Italy: "It is time for Mussolini to strike."*

**Ch/Cock** *crow's approval of the French press*

**Ch/Lion** *roaring*  
It can't be too strongly emphasized, now is the time for Mussolini to strike back at his critics.

**Ch/Eagle** *screams approval of U.S. press*

**Ch/Cock** *crowing*  
If he doesn't all that is valuable in Fascism will be lost.

**Ch/Eagle** *screaming*  
The entire world will be the loser.

*Chorus should work the above material up until it is clear to the audience what is meant by the roaring, crowing and screaming, and that what is meant is political roaring, crowing and screaming.*

*Enter Gramsci, with Julka and Tatiana. They are talking of the speech Gramsci is about to make to the Chamber of Deputies.*

**Tatiana** *but her words are drowned out by the chorus*  
You couldn't have chosen a more appropriate time for your speech.

*She waits for the chorus to abate, then repeats herself.*  
The foreign press is clamouring for Mussolini to assert himself.

*The roaring, crowing, screaming intensifies.*

**Gramsci** *excited*  
Wish me luck, Julka.

**Julka** *Of course.*

**Tatiana** *crying out above the chorus background*  
Raise your arms above your head, Julka.  
It is the archetypal woman's gesture of supplication  
which from primitive times has drawn down  
inspiration from above to aid the male in  
action.

*They raise their arms with open hands, and Gramsci turns his face to them.*  
May his words be winged with fire!

**Gramsci** *laughing*  
Proserpina drinks herself into my feet.

**Tatiana** *We have charged our bodies with primordial force.*

*Now let us convey it to him from our lips.*  
*They kiss him, and he hurries away.*

**Chorus** *Screaming, crowing, roaring: "Now is the time for Mussolini to strike," etc.*

**Julka** *I have lost him for ever.*

**Gramsci** *rising to speak to the House of Deputies*  
You know what I have to say.

*He comes forward to address the audience.*

So you are really wasting my time by not insisting on what everyone already knows ought to be done.

Honourable deputies, Giacomo Matteotti was murdered by this government and its fascists because he exposed the criminal acts and extensive frauds of this government and its fascists.

**Chorus** *reaction*

**Gramsci** *You all know there is only one way for Mussolini to correct the wrong done to Matteotti and settle for good the Matteotti affair, and that is for him and his government to resign and render back to the people of Italy the power he has illegally wrested from them, and fraudulently maintained.*

**Chorus** *reaction*  
*focus on Julka and Tatiana, about to exit*

**Julka** *about to leave*  
I will never see him again.

I am taking Eugenie and the baby into safety.

**Tatiana** *You are leaving?*

**Julka** *Against my will.*

Why does everything I do after I met Nino Gramsci have to be done against my will?

My marriage, my having Delio, my coming here, my going away?

**Tatiana** *And finding me?*

**Julka** *No. — Yes, Tatiana, and finding you.*

You have made things much more difficult.

**Tatiana** *How would things have been easier without me?*

**Julka** *You have made him totally selfish by concentrating his attention upon himself.*

**Tatiana** It is you who are selfish.  
What he does is done according to his destiny.

**Julka** What about my destiny?  
It was as unmistakable as his.  
I never wanted to take away his destiny.  
But he insisted on my giving up mine to serve his, and you have aided and abetted him in this.

**Tatiana** Everyone's destiny is in his own hands.

**Julka** In his own hands. Of course.

**Tatiana** Or her own hands.

**Julka** It may be true for men, but it's not for women.  
Tatiana, I hate you for making me angry and full of resentment against my husband.  
You have turned me into a Medea.  
I am going away to raise my children to hate their father.  
The shirt of Nessus I will prepare for him  
*leaving* I'm preparing for you both Tatiana.

**Tatiana** *drawing her back*  
How can you say this to me?

**Julka** I'm only joking.  
But I hate you for making me have to joke in this way.

**Tatiana** How do I?

**Julka** By being always at his side, while I have to be always going away.

*Exit Julka*

**Chorus** *reaction*

**Gramsci** *rambling on with his speech, about the effect of which he has become doubtful*  
We all want justice for Matteotti.  
None of us wants to deny him justice. Then why do we not at once rise up and deliver to the culprit the reprobation we want him to have and the exclusion from office we have power to effect?  
For this reason, we know in our hearts and souls that justice is the city in which we live, the city of crimes where one crime pursues another, without end, where the judge wrongs the thief, and the thief judges the judge, so that it is only by overthrowing justice, that justice can be achieved.  
And we are properly afraid to do this.

We say of this government, though it betrays justice, nevertheless it maintains the state, and prevents anarchy. Therefore we are slow to act.

But let us consider what Marx has taught with regard to this matter.

**Chorus** *reaction*

**Gramsci** The farmer sees the world in terms of his farm.  
The fisherman sees the world in terms of his boat and his fishnet.  
The gravedigger sees the world in terms of his pick-axe, shovel and bucket.  
The blacksmith sees the world in terms of his forge and anvil.  
The hunter sees the world in terms of his gun and quarry.  
The newspaperman sees the world...

**Chorus** *reaction*

**Gramsci** The newspaperman sees the world in terms of his newspaper editorials and advertising copy, his advertisements.

**Chorus** *reaction*

**Gramsci** Mussolini the editorial writer condemns everything that doesn't please him.

Writing from the advertising copy desk he attempts to entrap his readers, first to buy what he prints, then next to buy what he prints advertises, and finally into a general entrapment by which they become the slaves building, maintaining and extending the trap which entraps them. He baits it with their own malice, which he has skillfully fostered in his editorial function.

Matteotti exposed the world of Mussolini the newspaper editor as a colossal fraud.

One by one he examined the Fascist claims to efficiency, discipline, order, economic good sense and stable government, and showed how false these claims are.

What he had not expected to discover was that Mussolini in his propaganda created a nation of dupes, and, since not only Italians were deceived by him, a world of dupes, too.

Our problem is to admit as his dupes that such a cheat was possible.

As soon as we admit it was possible for Mussolini to cheat us because he has cheated us, we will be able to dismiss this government of journalists which has inflicted such a terrible imposition upon us.

Thank you.

**Chorus** *ironic applause, hostile reaction*

## **BLACKOUT**

**Scene thirteen:** *enter Gramsci with various deputies congratulating him on his speech*

**Mussolini** *coming forward*

A very good speech, Comrade Gramsci.

**Gramsci** Thank you, signor.

**Mussolini** Will you drink a coffee with me?

**Gramsci** If you wish me to.

**Mussolini** *leading Gramsci to a table*  
Let's go to a table.

**Gramsci** *taking seat offered*  
Thank you.

**Mussolini** *as they drink coffee*  
Your wife and your baby, how are they?

**Gramsci** I have sent them out of the country, Signor Mussolini.

**Mussolini** A fair speech, Deputy Gramsci.

**Gramsci** I am sorry that you deserted us, Signor Mussolini.

**Mussolini** I am closer to you in thought than you may think.

The church and anarchy are two points of tangency.

On much else, I'm convinced it is a matter of how we word the same ideas.

**Gramsci** But when we talk of rebuilding Rome, your reconstruction is hardly ours?

**Mussolini** I am reminded of a jest told of the architect Bernini. He was asked to submit a plan to rebuild Rome. How long have I got to comply, Bernini asked. Will a day be enough, the Pope asked. More than enough, said Bernini. But perhaps, said the pontiff, a week would be more realistic? A week would be plenty, said Bernini. But perhaps, said the Pope, you'll need much more time, say a year? I couldn't begin to create a plan to rebuild Rome in a year, said Bernini.

**Gramsci** But it isn't so much a question of restoring Rome to its ancient glories, as of giving it back to the Italian people?

**Mussolini** *rising*

A fine speech, Deputy Gramsci, but closer to Socrates or to St. Augustine or Pascal than to Demosthenes or Cicero.

*leaving*

And you will be following your wife and family out of the country?

**Gramsci** The immunity conferred upon me by my deputyship obligates me to remain in attendance at the house.

**Mussolini** *turns*

All through your speech I found myself worrying about your health.

If I can recommend a physician, I'll be glad to do so. Or mine is at your service.

**Gramsci** You are kind.

But I didn't return here for my health.

**Mussolini** *leaving*  
You are a witty man, Deputy Gramsci.

We must exchange words and ideas again, soon.

*leaves*

Very soon.

## **BLACKOUT**

**Scene fourteen:** *music (at first it seems a child is practising on a violin, but then the repetitions become more and more like those of a virtuoso improvising a cadenza). Lights up to dim: Tatiana's apartment. Tatiana is stretched out in a sling-chair, asleep. Enter, cautiously, Nino Gramsci. He lays aside outer clothing, cautiously explores Tatiana's sleeping torso. As he does so, Tatiana awakes.*

**Tatiana** Who is it?

**Gramsci** Electra?

**Tatiana** Orestes?

**Gramsci** Electra, I had to wake you up.

**Tatiana** Nino, what is it?

**Gramsci** Tatiana.

**Tatiana** I was sleeping — I fell asleep.

**Gramsci** Things are starting to happen.

**Tatiana** Have they got Julka?



**Gramsci** No, I've word she's safe, and out of their reach.

**Tatiana** Out of the country?

**Gramsci** Yes, thank god, out of the country.

**Tatiana** What a strange expression to drop out of your mouth, Nino Gramsci!

**Gramsci** The optimism of the will speaking?

**Tatiana** Oh Nino, I thank god for it too.

**Gramsci** They're rounding up the deputies and the party leaders.

**Tatiana** They've cancelled your immunity?

**Gramsci** I've destroyed all incriminating papers; the party is to carry on underground under its own direction, with its leaders gone, all the better for the sacrifice of personalities. It can outlast generations of leaders; and will probably have to.

**Tatiana** You're still at large?

**Gramsci** But they'll be here after the medicine chest any moment now, as if I had anything hidden in it.

**Tatiana** Perhaps Mussolini will respect your health.

**Gramsci** Perhaps but not likely.

**Tatiana** I'm beginning to wake up now.

You say they're coming for you?

Here?

**Gramsci** Yes, are you afraid?

**Tatiana** No, but I find your courage appalling.

It's broken my dream.

I dreamt I was in a small sea-coast village, on the Adriatic, but not any place I recognized. I was drinking tea there, in a café. I heard a violin playing. At first I thought it was a bird. There were large trees growing up into the rafters. The café was ridiculously vast. I went out on to the beach, but then realized what I heard was a violin. It seemed to be a child practising. But then it became more and more difficult. As I walked down the beach, trying to locate the source of the music, I realized I was being followed. I decided to get back to the safety of the café, but it was gone, I couldn't find it. Then I ran head on into three muggers.

And of course I woke up.

**Gramsci** Julka never played for you?

**Tatiana** Never. I wanted to ask her to, but didn't care to press my luck.

**Gramsci** I think I hear someone outside now.  
*There's a rattle on the door.*

**Tatiana** *at door*  
Yes?

**Woman** *Exit* There are men on the street searching for someone here.

**Tatiana** *to Gramsci*  
Fascist efficiency.

**Woman** *returns, rattles door*  
They've gone the other way.

*to Gramsci* Let me kiss him good-bye.

*She kisses Gramsci.*

**Tatiana** *embraces woman and pushes her to the door*  
He must get some sleep.

**Woman** *leaving* Not here, he mustn't sleep here.

He looks as if he was about to burst into flame.  
Just like my Giuseppe before he died.

**Tatiana** *trying to get woman to leave*  
Thank you, thank you, but you must go.

**Woman** *goes* His face lit up the room like a lantern.

**BLACKOUT**

I see that Tatiana has been making up fairy tales again, all about how imprisonment could be changed to house arrest for health reasons — all quite normal and possible and according to the book, naturally.... Tatiana.... her absolute ingenuousness terrifies me sometimes, because I have no intention of getting down on my knees for anyone or anything, or changing my conduct in any respect.... Tatiana must be told that it's wrong even to mention such fairy tales....

*Gramsci to his brother*

The long calvary of Antonio Gramsci was beginning.

*Giuseppe Fiori*

# GRAMSCI 3

The doing-to-death-of Antonio Gramsci

### The caricatures

Antonio Gramsci

Tatiana Schucht

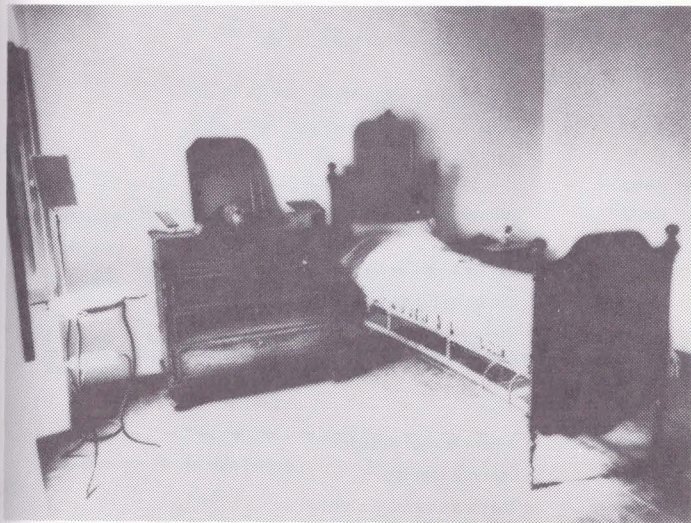
Benito Mussolini

Chorus of prison guards and military officers

1 giugno 1931

Racismia Epila.

Benito mi ha trasmesso l'epistola di Bello (adesso la parlo più  
letteraria) con la dichiarazione del suo amore per i racconti di Fed'kin o per  
quelli che si riferiscono alla vita giovanile. Mi è piaciuta molto e sarai capace  
in questa epistola l'ha finito Bello spontaneamente o se si tratta di una  
romanticizzazione letteraria. Vedo anche con una certa sorpresa che adotti tu non  
lo spavento delle tendenze letterarie di Bello: mi pare che una volta eri perduto  
in che le sue tendenze fossero piuttosto da... ingegnere che da poeta, mentre  
ora prevedi che egli leggerà Bant addiventata con amore. Io spero che ciò non  
avverrà mai, pur essendo molto contento che a Bello piaccia Putkin o tutti i  
che si riferisce alla vita creativa che Beggola le sue prime forme. D'altronde, chi  
legge Bant con amore? I profetici romanzieri che si fanno delle religioni  
di un qualche tipo o mettere o se abbiano degli stili in filigrana. Io penso  
che una persona intelligente e moderna deve leggere i classici in generale con un  
certo « distacco », cioè solo per i loro valori estetici, mentre l'amore è implicito adatti  
e al contenuto stilistico della poesia; si ama il proprio poeta, si « ammira » Bello  
che « in generale ». L'ammirazione estetica può essere accompagnata da un certo disprezzo  
« a parte », come nel caso di Mura per Goethe. Dunque non contate che Bello ami le opere  
di fantasia e fantastici anche per conto proprio; mi pare che per lui gli non  
possa diventare le stesse « ingenuità » estetiche di Gumbrecht o di  
quanti altri, anzi. Posso domandare a Bello, dai fatti miei, quali dei



**Scene one:** *a bare room, white-washed walls, with an altar and a crucifix wrapped in black gauze.*

*Enter chorus/1*

**Ch/1** At the first station of the cross  
we go back  
counter-clockwise  
to the fourteenth station,  
the burial of the body of...

*Enter chorus/2*

**Ch/2** Here we reflect, with Guiseppe Fiori,  
on the long calvary of Nino Gramsci...

**Ch/1** If it helps.

**Ch/2** Very well.

At the fourteenth station we start with the arrest of Gramsci  
on 8 november 1926

*Enter Tatiana*

**Tatiana** I recall how it happened.

*a banging at the door*

**Ch/1** *about to exit*

a rich man...  
took possession of the body of...

**Ch/2** *following chorus/1*

Joseph of Arimathea?

**Ch/1** wrapped it in a clean sheet...

buried it in a new grave...

*leaving*

**Ch/2** rolling a great stone against the grave door...?

**Ch/1** Yes.

*Exit, followed by chorus/2. The banging on the door continues and grows louder.*

**Tatiana** The banging on the door.

There was a knocking at the door.

*Enter chorus as Roman soldiers. They are self-conscious about their armour, adjust it, it doesn't fit. They accost Tatiana.*

**Tatiana** Yes?

**Soldiers** Where is your husband?

**Tatiana** I am not married.

**Soldiers** That's a shame, isn't it?  
We're not interested in you.

But in your husband.

She's Gramsci's wife.

You are the wife of Nino Gramsci, are you not?

**Tatiana** You've made a bad mistake.

You've come to the wrong house.

Benito Mussolini is my friend.

**Soldiers** He is everyone's friend.

He is his friend.

He is my friend, after a fashion.

He's all of us's friend.

**Tatiana** He won't be, if I bother to report this incident.

**Soldiers** She is his mistress?

Or his sister?

**Tatiana** Mussolini's sister?

No.

**Soldiers** We meant, Gramsci's wife?

Gramsci's woman, wife, mistress, sister, mother, perhaps?

She's lying.

Probably his whore.

**Tatiana** No.

No, to all your questions and ill-informed speculations.

Now leave.

At once.

You've come to the wrong address.

**Soldiers** Who are you then?

**Tatiana** I am Tatiana Schucht.

**Soldiers** *writing the name down*  
How do you spell the surname?

**Tatiana** *spells name*

**Soldiers** Who is she?

She's lying.

Where was she born?

**Tatiana** In this house.

Here.

You want my baptismal certificate?



**Soldiers** Yes.  
If you're not telling the truth, you're asking for it.  
She's trying to confuse us.

**Tatiana** How could I make you more confused than you are?  
Breaking into the wrong house.

**Soldiers** Show us that certificate.

**Tatiana** I was baptized Giacomo Matteotti.

**Soldiers** *strike her, knock her down*  
I knew as much.  
Smooth-mouthed lying bitch.  
Don't you come the old soldier with us.  
Now.  
Straight answers.  
Tell her not to crooked mouth us.

**Tatiana** I am Deputy Gramsci's wife's sister.

**Soldiers** Where is she?  
Gone?  
Gone out?  
Where?  
Gone out of the country?  
She's lying.  
*raise their hand, threaten*  
She's lying.  
She's his wife.  
*shaking her*  
Why did you say you were Matteotti?

**Tatiana** To frighten you.

**Soldiers** Nothing can frighten us.  
We're soldiers.  
She said: Mussolini is my close friend.  
You're lying.

**Tatiana** *recovering her composure*  
You're afraid I'm not.  
And if you're afraid I'm not, how much more afraid would you be if you knew I was?

**Soldier** *strikes her*  
Bitch.

**Tatiana** *crying out with pain but taunting*  
If you weren't afraid, you'd hit me hard enough to kill me.  
*recovered*  
Why don't you.  
That would be the end of Mussolini.

*Enter Gramsci*  
**Gramsci** I am Deputy Gramsci.

**Soldiers** Raise your hands above your head.

**Gramsci** My hands are perfectly comfortable at my side.

**Soldiers** You are under arrest.

**Gramsci** I am a deputy and immune from arrest.

**Soldiers** That's all been changed.  
The king has commanded the prime minister to suspend the immunities of the deputies.  
Do as you are told.  
Put your hands above your head.

*They frisk him.*  
Now put your hands out in front of you.  
As if you were praying.

**Gramsci** I am not in a state of grace.

**Soldiers** Keep your mouth shut.  
That's his problem.  
Do as told.

**Gramsci** *putting his hands forward*  
I said nothing.

**Soldiers** Now take off his boots.  
*They start to remove his boots.*

**Tatiana** How stupid can you be?  
Deputy Gramsci is very sick.  
To make him walk outside in this biting November rain will kill him.  
Isn't it enough to handcuff him.

**Soldiers** Shut up you.  
Yes leave his boots on.  
Come peacefully.

**Gramsci** How can I?  
I am dragged violently away.  
I am arrested like a common felon.

**Soldiers** Handcuff the woman.

**Tatiana** You are repeating the Matteotti affair.  
With this exception, to a crime against humanity you are adding a crime against the laws of the land.  
To break the law, is an offence against man.  
To corrupt the law, is an offence against the holy ghost.

**Soldiers** Handcuff and gag her.  
She's asked for it.

*They push Tatiana about.*

**Gramsci** I will go quietly.  
Take me away.  
Let the woman stay.

**Soldiers** You have no choice.

*They leave with Gramsci and Tatiana following*

*They push her back into the room.*

**Tatiana** Not afraid.  
They were afraid of me.

*calls out after them*

You were afraid to kill me.

*Chorus shrinks back on to the stage, paying no attention to Tatiana.*

**Tatiana** Well?

*Enter Mussolini, his soft heavy face mixed with rage and the pleasure the powerful enjoy in catching out and rebuking their menial instruments.*

**Tatiana** *more in shock than pain*  
Signor Mussolini?

*aside* Call the devil a friend and there he is with his bill whatever the day of the month.

**Mussolini** *pays no attention to Tatiana*  
You have completely disregarded my explicit instructions to your superiors. You don't fish for trout with an anchor.  
Take the irons off this man.  
I said, he was at all times to be treated as a deputy.

*soldiers remove Gramsci's handcuffs*

I made an especial point of this: **AS A DEPUTY.**

**Soldiers** The woman taunted us.  
It was all the woman's fault.  
She insulted you, il duce.  
Yes, claimed to be your mistress.

*Exit soldiers with Gramsci*

**Mussolini** *aside*  
I thought at first the woman might be Gramsci's wife.

**Tatiana** *aside*  
At the sight of him, I was all goose pimples with fear.

**Mussolini** You say you are my mistress?

**Tatiana** I said you were my friend.  
You claim to be the friend of Italy.  
Of all Italy.

**Mussolini** Do you want to be my mistress?

**Tatiana** No.

**Mussolini** A blunt answer.  
I can also be blunt.  
I want you to be my mistress.

**Tatiana** Now?

**Mussolini** Whenever.

**Tatiana** They say you have read Sorel.

**Mussolini** I **AM** Sorel.

**Tatiana** And Marx?

**Mussolini** So much of Marx as Sorel identifies with.

**Tatiana** And Proudhon?

**Mussolini** *as if he enjoyed talking to someone about himself*  
Likewise Proudhon.

**Tatiana** Well: which Sorel?  
He is so many minds in one: Proudhon, Marx, Lenin.

**Mussolini** What does Sorel say?

**Tatiana** His Sorel may not be the same as her Sorel.  
He says that money produces the pervasive despair which consists of a disrelation between property and service.

**Mussolini** Go on. What else does Sorel say?

**Tatiana** Well...

**Mussolini** He says that revolution is a myth.

**Tatiana** And what does Signor Mussolini say... about that?

**Mussolini** I create a myth for Italy.

**Tatiana** The myth of Fascism.

The unbreakable bundle of sticks, surrounding an axe.

**Mussolini** That is their emblem, not mine.

The historians say talking to themselves in the nightmare of history.

THE FASCES ARE THE EMBLEM WHICH FOUNDED THE POWER, AUTHORITY, AND UNITY OF ROME. THE BUNDLE OF STICKS SYMBOLIZES ANCIENT ROME. DIVIDED, THEY MAY BE BROKEN. THE AXE SYMBOLIZES THE SUPREME AUTHORITY OF THE STATE.

But I say that the fascist myth is of the future.

I am a futurist.

In this, I am exceedingly Sorelian.

I call on the people of Italy to create this myth.

The bankers, the industrialists, the engineers, the workers, yes, and the squadristi.

**Tatiana** *ironically*

Especially the squadristi.

**Mussolini** And the catholics, the social democrats, and the socialists...

**Tatiana** But not the communists?

**Mussolini** Especially the communists.

That is why I need Nino Gramsci.

And the others, Umberto Terracini, Mauro Scoccimarro, Giovanni Roveda, Luigi Alfoni, Igino Borin, Enrico Ferrari, Ezio Riboldi.

**Tatiana** Need them in prison?

**Mussolini** Which I'm willing to relax to house arrest

until I can get them to cooperate with me in redefining the fascist myth into Sorelian dimensions.

With especial reference to the bankruptcy on which liberal capitalism is founded and to money

which is the primordial cause of that disrelationship...

**Tatiana** But if I am to be your mistress...

**Mussolini** I see my soul dancing in your eyes...

**Tatiana** Shouldn't I expect favours in return for favours given?

**Mussolini** I assure you, the liberation of women is part of the fascist myth...

**Tatiana** I want Deputy Gramsci to be given his freedom.

**Mussolini** Nothing would please me more.

When he gives me the slightest indication that he will assist me in the myth I project.

**Tatiana** I want his safe conduct out of the country.

**Mussolini** Would he consent to exile?

**Tatiana** I am asking you to enforce it, if necessary, on grounds of health.

**Mussolini** Could I undertake to use the penal power of the state to compel someone to leave the country for his health, when we have the finest medical practitioners in the world here in Italy?

**Tatiana** It is already in use against him.

**Mussolini** *mock jealousy*

And I must expect to have you accompany him, into destitution?

**Tatiana** He has a wife outside the country to look after him.

**Mussolini** It is his health I am concerned with.

**Tatiana** It provides us with no room to manoeuvre in.

**Mussolini** Then it shall be the bond between us.

I will ask for a medical report at once.

**Tatiana** I'm afraid it will be a recital of evils for which only total rest and nothing short of a miracle will prove helpful.

**Mussolini** I hope you are wrong.

Restoring him to health will be a bond between us.

*He kisses her hand.*

**Tatiana** I will tell you what I had planned for him.

*heavy irony*

To begin with his arrest?

**Mussolini** You begin to read my intentions?

I had hoped that (under some constraint of liberty to

guarantee his safety and give him time to think and reflect and make notes and set down his conclusions in writing) he would come to recognize how the communist myth has failed

and what could be gleaned from that failure by this government's attempts to devise a new myth to rescue the world from the moral, intellectual, philosophical, artistic and cultural bankruptcy which the invention of money extended over the centuries has led to.

*warming up to the confession of intellectual superiority*

What is needed, I saw, was an analysis of money and how it produces a disrelation between man and himself, which is both productive and destructive.

Technology is essentially a transformation: tools into weapons, agriculture into cities, clothing into sex and pornography, cooking by fire into the smelting of iron and the manufacture of swords, counting becomes language, and language transforms into money, the rhetoric of values. Fascism, I saw, must investigate money as a technical problem.

I propose to ask communists like Nino Gramsci to help me in terms of such analysis construct a fascist myth which could succeed where the marxist myth has failed.

That is why I have given the order to send them to house arrest on the island of Ustica, to help me debate propositions like, "capitalism uses money to buy and sell labour; communism rejects this use of money as a curse; but fascism uses money to determine the extent to which each citizen invests himself in the state".

*shift of lighting to focus upon Tatiana*

**Tatiana** *aside*

And so he raged on and on, promising to release Deputy Gramsci immediately, then insisting he must be confined against his will if only for his health's sake, and then asserting that the fascist state claimed the right to impound its best minds and require that they be devoted, and if necessary sacrificed, to working out a plenary theory of the state; which if it proved to be successful, would be an accessory to the safety and defence of the state more absolute than the army, navy or airforce, weapons or fortifications.

And now I became truly frightened.

I saw at first hand what his political opponents had claimed, that Mussolini was mentally ill, corrupted with power, and all the frustrations of the exercise of power.

But what particularly frightened me were the flashes of penetratingly acute insight which pierced like bolts of lightning through the compulsive hallucinations of his mind.

This man who had supreme power in Italy wasn't a Robespierre who would send Gramsci to the guillotine in the twinkling of an eye.

Gramsci was to be kept alive to feed the enormously grotesque pride of a man who was, I shuddered to think, really an incarnation of the Italian people.

Gramsci wasn't to be silenced.

Gramsci was to be tortured into bending his mind to elaborating the Sorelian myth Mussolini saw himself as the promoter of.

Gramsci was to be shut up in prison not to enforce his silence.

The penal power of the state was going to be used with an insane remorseless subtlety to make him write a critique of the fascist ideas that Mussolini was outlining to me.

*music, baroque, sub pontio pilato theme*

What terrified me was that, at the time, I thought of Mussolini not as the vain windbag he seemed to the rest of the world.

His recognition of the need to analyse the function money played in the global bankruptcy stripping man of every shred of dignity seemed to me penetrating beyond the paralyzed ideas of any of his predecessors.

How could I say this to Nino Gramsci?

Suppose Gramsci agreed with me?

Could we enter into collaboration with one so tainted with lust for power?

**BLACKOUT**



**Scene two:** *enter chorus of medical men*

**Chorus**

From	I
the	am
fourteenth	Doctor
station	Arlechino
of	Castor-oil
the cross	
we	I
turn	am
back	Doctor
to	Pantalone
the	Scalpel
thirteenth	
station,	
the	
taking	
down	
of the	
body	
of...	

*The chorus crosses itself.*

I
am
Doctor
Urine
Bottle

*Enter Gramsci with other prisoners, carrying bedding, etc.*

This suggests  
the  
removal  
of  
Deputy  
Gramsci  
to  
the  
island  
of  
Ustica

We  
are  
Christian  
gentlemen

academics  
with  
a  
medical  
emphasis

we  
are  
not  
fascists

*Card-tables are set up, and the medical men take their places at them, and start examining the prisoners.*

**Dr Scalpel** *calling out to prisoners*  
Next.

As medical men and Christians we have no option but to consult the health of our patients first and foremost...

**Dr Castor-oil** ...with due regard to the security of the prison establishment as a penal institution...

**Dr Urine-bottle**

...and in any conflicts which may arise between what is due to the prisoner as patient, and the patient as prisoner, our medical consciences, and our honour as surgeons and physicians must be the sole arbiter...

Next.

*Gramsci struggles forward.*

Name?

**Gramsci** Deputy Gramsci.

**Dr Urine-bottle** *to other medical men*

What is Deputy Gramsci charged with?

Making himself into a corpse for the kingdom of heaven's sake?

*to Gramsci*

You can set down your gear.

*Gramsci has difficulty in disburdening himself of gear.*

What are you charged with?

**Gramsci** Being a communist.

**Dr Urine-bottle**

Is that all?

**Gramsci** No formal charges have been laid.

**Dr Urine-bottle**

Deputy Gramsci, in a totalitarian state like Soviet Russia, the citizen becomes cash in the pocket of the dictator, who can spend it as he wishes.

Such a state is not unlike a democracy as the elected government takes on the character of a dictatorship.

**Gramsci** *shrugs his shoulders, smiles, opens out his hands to the interrogator*

**Dr Urine-bottle**

How people, how members of the medical profession like myself, become accomplices in their own subjugation, is that the question?

**Gramsci** Yes.

**Dr Urine-bottle**

How domination is anchored in the hearts of the dominated?

**Gramsci** *agreeing to a central theme of his thought*

That is the question.

**Dr Urine-bottle**

Deputy Gramsci. In a fascist state like ours, the people are not cash in the pockets of the dictator, but the dictator becomes cash in the pockets of the institutions of that state, like the church, the hospitals, the schools, the law courts, the house of deputies, the prisons,

which can spend him as they wish, up to a point; that is to say, the church becomes a dictatorship the police force becomes a dictatorship the hospitals become a dictatorship the prisons become a dictatorship the profession of medicine becomes a dictatorship up to a point.

Have I answered your question?

**Gramsci** I would like to think about what you say.

**Dr Urine-bottle**

Mussolini is only a puppet dictator.

He is the cash in our pockets.

Deputy Gramsci,

you will be far better off here with us in the prison colony of Ustica,

under house arrest,

where authority has a medical conscience,

than sitting in the house of deputies under the eye of the fascist party which, because it has no real power, ferments with malice.

We will take care of all your needs, shelter, food, books, paper, ink, pens, pencils.

and nurse you to health,

and give you the time and stimulus

to compose the critique of the fascist myth that Mussolini wants you to make a part of that myth.

*waves paper for signing*

**Gramsci** I am to **SIGN** this?

**Dr Urine-bottle**

A mere formality.

**Gramsci** To promise to co-operate in the creation of fascist myth isn't mere formality.

**Dr Urine-bottle**

All that's required is an honest critique of the party's ideology.

**Gramsci** That's not a formality.

**Dr Urine-bottle**

You've missed my point, Deputy.

Think of yourself, Deputy Gramsci, as one of us.

And of the dictator as cash in our pockets.

**Gramsci** *smiles, shrugs, hands back the paper unsigned*

**Dr Urine-bottle**

All this signifies is, you are one of us.

You are **IRREGARDLESS** of whether you sign it or not.

*waves paper, smiles*

Think of Mussolini as cash in your pocket.

Eh, Deputy Gramsci.

**Gramsci** Cash.

I think of money under three heads.

Fact, myth, and truth.

As an extension of language.

As a myth about wealth.

As a lie about freedom.



**Dr Urine-bottle**

Splendid.

That is just the insight we want developed into a critical manifesto vis-à-vis fascism.

Mussolini will want to hug you, when it's set down in purest Sardinian Italian black and white Gramscian periods.

*pats his pocket as he refers to Mussolini*

And how does money lie about freedom?

**Gramsci** *shrugs his shoulders and opens out his hands professorially, smiles*  
How?

**Dr Urine-bottle**

Of course.

Of course.

Of course.

The paradox of the Cretan liar.

We all use money to lie with.

Every financial transaction is a lie.

Money turns us all into liars.

And I am a Cretan!

*laughs*

Take this chit to the next table.

*gives Gramsci chit of paper*

**Gramsci** *moves to go*

**Dr Urine-bottle**

Take your gear with you.

*as Gramsci moves towards Dr Castor-oil*

All Cretans are liars.

**Dr Castor-oil** *to Gramsci as he starts to unload his gear*

Take this chit to the next table.

*gives Gramsci another chit*

**Dr Scalpel** Go into the dispensary, where you'll find a scale, take off your clothes and wait there for me.

*to Gramsci*

**Gramsci** *starts to exit, without gear*

**Dr Scalpel** Take your gear with you.

*exit Gramsci with gear*

That man ought not to be in prison.

**Dr Urine-bottle**

I too wash my hands of the diseases of this just man.

We all do.

**Dr Castor-oil**

Yet you knew that if he signed the submission you presented him with, he would be signing his death certificate.

**Dr Scalpel**

I'm not so sure that Mussolini isn't sincere when he says he wants us to keep him alive.

You don't know Mussolini as well as I do.

**Dr Castor-oil**

Why do we have to submit to doing his dirty work?

**Dr Urine-bottle**

We don't.

He has to do our dirty work for us.

Haven't you noticed, gentlemen, that medicine is a very dirty job?

**BLACKOUT**

**Scene three:** *as in preceding scene; the prison colony on the island of Ustica. Gramsci appears naked and shivering in the doorway he used for exit in last scene. The medicos drift away from their card-tables. Dr Scalpel waves Gramsci to go back and wait; Gramsci exits. The card-tables are removed. Scalpel exits to Gramsci off-stage. BLACKOUT. Re-enter chorus. LIGHTS up to*

**Gramsci** *stretched out on the stage floor, where a taped outline of cruciform shape the size of his body has been prepared*

**Chorus** *removing Gramsci to leave the taped shape of his body exposed; chanting*

From  
the  
thirteenth  
station

of  
the  
cross  
we  
go  
back  
to  
the  
twelfth  
station

we  
go  
back  
to  
the  
twelfth  
station,  
the  
death  
of

the  
putting  
up  
with  
the  
death  
of

Enter Tatiana

This  
suggests  
the  
illness  
of  
Tatiana

Tatiana *coming forward*

I was sick unto death and Mussolini sent word to me in hospital

"I forbid you to die

our friend the deputy Gramsci

needs us both, his wife refuses

to come out of hiding to him

or even to write to him

and the penitentiary doctors

are behaving like dictators

and try to wring a submission from him"

*drifts away*

a message which saved my life...

*Exit*

**Scene four:** *lights up to chorus of prison officials, exclusive of the medical men*

**Chorus/prison detail**

at the twelfth station

we

turn

back

to

station

eleven

the

getting

used

to

the

nailing

up

of

This  
suggests  
the  
removal  
of

Deputy  
Gramsci

from  
the  
prison-colony

on

the

island

of

Ustica

to

the

prison

at

San

Vittore

crucifixus

crucifixus

crucifixus

crucifixus

crucifixus

crucifixus

crucifixus

crucifixus

*Enter chorus of medical men, joined by Mussolini, dragging Gramsci in by ropes, in such a way that he is yanked from side to side, as each rope is pulled in a different way by a different member of the rope party.*

crucifixus

crucifixus

crucifixus

crucifixus

**Chorus/ prison detail plus medical detail** *as they yank at the ropes*

Crucifixus, crucifixus, crucifixus, etc.

*Enter Tatiana*

**Tatiana** *attacks Mussolini, beating him with her fists until restrained by attendant guards*  
Whatever do you think you are doing?

Stop, stop.

**Chorus**

crucifixus

crucifixus

crucifixus

crucifixus, etc.

**Mussolini** *detaching himself from the rope detail*

Where in god's hell do you suppose you are taking him to?

**Chorus** *outraged, severally*

To the prison at San Vittore.

To await trial for sedition against the people of Italy.

According to your instructions.

He's asked for it.

He claims that the fascists have bankrupted the country.

It's time we cleaned up this communist shit.

Papa mio, don't rot your heart away for this sort of pasta crap.

Papa mio, he wants to turn Italy into a prison, let's stick him in prison where he wants to put us.

**Tatiana** The people of Italy are on Gramsci's side.

**Chorus** Then thank god Mussolini's on our side.

Viva il duce, viva il duce!

**Mussolini** I didn't give any orders to have him dragged like this.

**Chorus** Of course you didn't, papa mio.

We knew how you'd want us to act.

**Mussolini** You're treating him worse than a rat.

**Chorus** That's what this rat shit is.

He's worse than shit.

Gentlemen!

He's the worst sort of filth, the filth that makes filth.

And then we have to wipe it up.

Let's show Papa Mussolini that we are good fascists, but also, gentlemen.

He mustn't be allowed to escape.

**THIS** (*drags on rope*) is prison orders.

All prisoners during transfer from the prison of origin to the prison of destination must be secured by shackling them in irons.

*Exit chorus, dragging Gramsci as before*

Crucifixus, crucifixus, etc.

**BLACKOUT**

**Scene five:** music, the theme from Bach's Goldberg Variations, transcribed for solo violin.  
LIGHTS up to chorus.

<b>Chorus</b>	At	
	station	
	eleven	
	we	
	turn	
	back	
	to	the
	station	stripping
	ten	off
		of
		the
		clothes
		of
	they	
	parted	
	his	
	garments	the
	among	four
	themselves	soldiers
		who
		did
		the
		nailing
	the	up
	four	of
	Roman	
	soldiers	
	the	
	crucifixion	who
	detail	did
		the
		actual
		nailing
	consisted	up
	of	of
	four	
	Roman	
	soldiers	one
		was
		from
		Jesoli
		near
		Venice
	the	
	second	
	was	
	from	
	Padova	the
		third,

the  
fourth  
was  
from  
Cagliari  
in  
Sardinia

but  
the  
vesture  
was  
without  
seam

It  
was  
the  
Venetian  
from  
Jesoli  
who  
was  
the  
lucky  
one

neither  
did  
the  
other  
garments  
fit  
any  
of  
us

from  
Milan

We  
parted  
his  
garments  
among  
ourselves

for  
the  
vesture  
we  
cast  
lots

but  
it  
didn't  
fit  
him

so  
we  
sold  
them  
for

a  
song  
to  
one  
of  
the  
Jewish  
friends

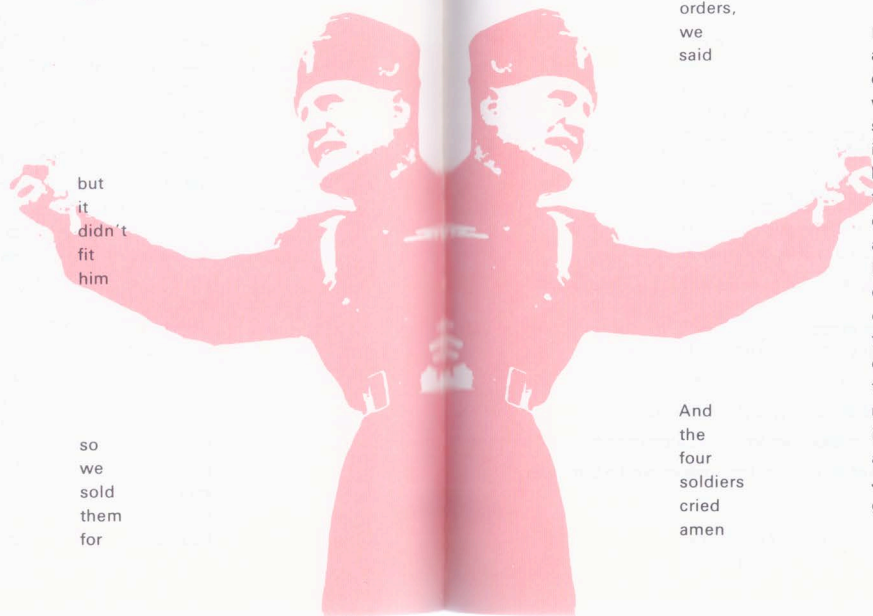
God  
forgive  
you  
for  
what  
you  
have  
done,  
he  
said

We  
were  
merely  
obeying  
orders,  
we  
said

God  
forgive  
you  
for  
what  
you've  
done

In  
any  
case,  
we  
said,  
it's  
better  
to  
die  
a  
Roman  
death  
on  
the  
cross  
than  
rot  
in  
a  
Jewish  
gaol

And  
the  
four  
soldiers  
cried  
amen



amen  
amen  
and  
the  
four  
Roman  
soldiers  
cried,  
amen!

**Tatiana**

This suggests what happened at San Vittore, Milan.

**Scene six:** LIGHTS up to Tatiana and Mussolini. Mussolini is compulsively pacing out the taped-out cross on the stage floor.

**Tatiana**

From  
the tenth station  
we  
go back to  
the ninth  
station,  
the third  
falling  
down,  
this suggests  
the incarceration of,  
here,  
at San Vittore prison, Milan  
He arrived  
February 7th, 1927  
the journey had been  
a painful one,  
with innumerable stops  
in different nondescript  
prisons

**Mussolini**

My patience isn't always equal to my exasperation.  
I can play the cat with a mouse better than the next.  
But I'm no good at all playing the woman with a bird with  
a broken wing.

**Tatiana**

Your patience?

What do you expect after those terrible nineteen days of his  
being literally dragged here?

Was this necessary?

**Mussolini**

Since he has been here at San Vittore there have been  
letters to:

his mother  
his sister Teresina  
his young niece Teresina, his brother's daughter,  
**you**, while you were at hospital.

These were all wonderful letters.

But they are a betrayal of my many kindnesses.

**Tatiana**

The nineteen days of removal from Ustica to the San Vittore  
were not characterized by kindness.

**Mussolini**

For Christ's sake Tatiana don't keep harping on what I  
couldn't do to help Gramsci.

Pay some attention to what I could do, and did.

**Tatiana**

If you want to know why Gramsci is behaving like Christ  
crucified, consider what those nineteen days did.

"I would like to give you," he wrote, "an overall impression  
of the journey..."

"One arrives tired out, dirty, unshaven, hair uncombed,  
wrists sore after wearing manacles all day, eyes sunken and  
bright with the feverish effort of trying to stay awake. One  
collapses on palliasses of unimaginable age, keeping on all  
one's clothes to avoid contact with the filth, covering face  
and hands with towels... to avoid being frozen. Then one is  
moved on again, still filthy and tired, until the next  
stopping-place, where one's wrists will be still more livid  
from the cold, chafing iron and heavy chains, and the strain  
of carrying all one's own luggage at the same time."

**Mussolini**

I've been in prison myself.

I suffered yes.

But I learned to write in prison.

And I learned to think there.

Nothing begets thought like suffering.

But you are a woman.

You can think only of his suffering.

I see inside him waiting to be born a corpus

which will kill him if it cannot detach itself from his brain and  
placenta.



Which is, I am sure of it, the critique of fascism I've dreamed  
nightmare after nightmare he is destined to write.

**Tatiana** Your sickness is worse than mine and his added together.

**Mussolini** He has to write his way to health.

His sickness would be its own physician,

Tatiana, if you would

apply yourself to keeping your promise to me

to persuade him to free himself of the chain of truth which is  
in his soul, and entraps himself, you, and me.

**Tatiana** Why are you mocking me?

We are nothing to you.

Why don't you give him his freedom and let me take him out  
of Italy?

**Mussolini** Oh, it is I who want to keep him alive.

You seem to want him to die.

Otherwise, why do you want to remove him from the best  
medical care in Europe?

## BLACKOUT

**Scene seven:** LIGHTS up to Gramsci in his cell at the San Vittore jail in Milan

**Tatiana** *entering*

from  
the  
ninth station of the cross  
we  
come to  
the eighth  
station  
  
the telling off  
of the  
city  
women

**Chorus/ guards** *entering to release Gramsci*

...which  
suggests the rejection  
of Gramsci  
by Julka...

## Tatiana & Chorus

And there followed  
him a  
great company  
of  
women

which  
bewailed  
and  
lamented  
him

but  
Jesus  
turning  
unto  
them,  
said

Daughters  
of  
Jerusalem,  
weep  
not  
for  
me,  
but  
weep  
for  
yourselves

and for your  
children

## Chorus/ guards

For behold the days are coming  
in the which they shall say  
blessed are the wombs that are barren  
and the wombs that never bare,  
and the paps which never gave suck...

**Tatiana** Then shall they begin to say to the mountains,  
fall on us;

and to the hills, cover us.

**Chorus** For if they do these things in a green tree  
What shall be done in a dry?

*about to exit, but turns and continues with*

There were also with him two others,



malefactors, led with him to be put to death  
 And when they had come to the place, which is called  
 Calvary,  
 there they crucified him, and the malefactors,  
 one on the right hand, and the other on the left...

*Exit chorus*

**Tatiana** *pivoting*

I tried to tell him that Julka his wife felt he had betrayed her  
 and her children by letting himself be arrested.

**Gramsci** Oh come on, come on, Tatiana, it is I that have been  
 betrayed.

**Tatiana** I've told her how you feel.

**Gramsci** I can't understand how she could respond in this way.

**Tatiana** I've told you before this is just what she accuses you of.

**Gramsci** But when she married me, she knew who I was, and what  
 I was

she knew what to expect.

**Tatiana** But that's unfair.

She insists it was you who made her marry you against  
 her deepest misgivings

she was blackmailed into marriage, as much by her concern  
 for your health

as by your insisting on your loving her despite her  
 misgivings about marriage and a career.

**Gramsci** Well: she did marry me.

**Tatiana** She gave up a great deal for you.

**Gramsci** But she has the children.

**Tatiana** She gave up her career for you.

**Gramsci** She needn't have done.

**Tatiana** She needn't have done?

**Gramsci** No, she needn't have done.

That's just what she keeps saying about your refusal to leave  
 Italy.

**Gramsci** Even you at the time said I had to stay.

I couldn't not have stayed and retained a shred of self  
 respect, to say nothing of my honour as a deputy or my  
 credibility as a party member.

In any case, it's done, I did it, I got myself arrested even if it  
 was wrong to do so.

**Tatiana**

Even if you were right, it's done.

**Gramsci**

And irreversible.

Therefore not debatable.

**Tatiana**

She says it's not irreversible.

She says your state of health, which even the prison medical  
 authorities say is appalling, fully justifies your handing the  
 hat and hairshirt of non-cooperation and adversary  
 submission over to stronger accomplices...

**Gramsci**

Namely?

**Tatiana**

She didn't mention names, but...

Umberto Terracini? Mauro Scoccimarro? Giovanni Roveda?  
 Alfoni, Igino Borin, Enrico Ferrari, Ezio Riboldi?

**Gramsci**

I consulted everyone, and they begged me not to abandon  
 them.

**Tatiana**

She says that you could have your freedom any day on the  
 grounds of health, if you would ask for it.

**Gramsci**

How does she know all this, she's out of the country?

**Tatiana**

She's made enquiries, through me, and through other  
 friends.

You fail to grasp the true state of your health.

I've seen the medical reports. I could hardly bear to look at  
 them.

**Gramsci**

Who told her I could have my freedom simply by asking for it?

**Tatiana** *timing*

The one person who could enforce it.

*timing*

Benito Mussolini, the one fascist who understands your  
 importance both politically and historically.

**Gramsci**

Has she asked Mussolini...

**Tatiana**

...to let you go into exile and the domestic bondage of a  
 loving wife?

No, she hasn't; but I have.

**Gramsci**

you have, Tatiana?

*timing*

you have made contact with Mussolini himself.

**Tatiana**

He has got in touch with me.

**Gramsci** You're talking nonsense, Tatiana.

**Tatiana** A cat may rub her shoulders against the legs of a king.  
A dictator may stroke a cat.

**Gramsci** I don't understand.

**Tatiana** There is nothing to understand.  
I told Julka you could have your freedom for the asking for it.

**Gramsci** Why?

**Tatiana** Mussolini told me you could.

**Gramsci** *disbelief*  
When?

**Tatiana** When he asked me to be his mistress.

**Gramsci** *surprise*  
What!

**Tatiana** When, what, why, how, where?  
In my confusion is my salvation.  
In my precision, my damnation.  
I can remember very precisely when we discovered that we were Agamemnon's orphan children, Electra and Orestes.  
Perhaps the angels neither of us believed in, sent him to save me from the sin of incest.  
I am clearer about **WHY**.  
But very confused about **WHEN** and **WHAT**.  
**Gramsci** you have become Mussolini's mistress?

**Tatiana** When?

From the moment I decided he could save me from the sickness unto death, the Kierkegaardian desperation, of your senseless sacrifice;  
compounding your physical and my spiritual death.

**Gramsci** *not really believing*  
I don't still think you are putting me on, or are you?

*grasping at a straw*

**Tatiana** You became his mistress in a stupid attempt to help me?  
If it helps any to think so, yes.  
The consummatum est of the intercourse these preliminaries point at still has certain conditions to be met.

**Gramsci** *bitterly*  
Tell me that you are making all this up; fantasizing, to excuse Julka.

**Tatiana** Julka doesn't need any excuses.  
She can have you back with her again, and you your freedom, by your asking for it.

**Gramsci** By my asking for it; oh, very simple.

**Tatiana** Or you can have surrounding you all the amenities or all the tortures of medieval comfort you want, to produce the classic critique of the fascist myth that Mussolini believes you are destined to make.

**Gramsci** And you and he will edit it together, eye to eye, and cheek to cheek, to bring it into line with fascist/populist propaganda?

**Tatiana** He says you can write anything you want, and I can send it out of the country.  
To be published as you wrote it.

**Gramsci** But why, Tatiana, is this offer credible?

**Tatiana** My dearest brother Orestes, neither lust nor Electra's beauty explains why.  
The explanation lies in an equatorial region between the south pole of his madness and the north pole of his genius.

**Gramsci** I don't know what to say.

**Tatiana** Spiritual success for you has always meant bodily sacrifice.  
Now you have to decide to sacrifice the sacrifice.  
Or you could go back to Julka.  
Poor Julka.

### BLACKOUT

**Scene eight:** *the last word of the preceding scene is picked up by an unaccompanied violin; lights up to Gramsci waiting in defenestrated condition; enter chorus of guards who attach irons to Gramsci.*

**Chorus/guards** *contrapuntally*  
From  
the  
eighth station of the cross  
we  
go  
back  
to

the	
seventh	
station	the
	second
	fall
this	of
suggests	
the	
removal	crucifixus
from	
Milan	crucifixus
to	
Rome	crucifixus
to	
await	crucifixus
trial	
	crucifixus
sub	
	crucifixus
pontio	sub
	pontio
pilato	
	pilato

*Gramsci is dragged off stage; exit guards with Gramsci.  
Enter Mussolini with chorus of medical men.*

**Mussolini** I wouldn't dream of directing you how to fulfill your professional responsibilities to this prisoner, or to the state, or to myself.

**Chorus** *As always, Mussolini treats his auditors as a cat playing with mice; these medical rodents treat his claws with respect.*

We are not concerned about the prisoner's...

**Mussolini** **DEPUTY** Gramsci's?

**Chorus** Yes, Gramsci's  
Deputy Gramsci's  
Gramsci's

we are not concerned about his being any danger to the prison in its punitive function or to the state or to the person of the dictator.

He is medically speaking incapable of...

of anything more than adversary submission to prison discipline.

His physiological incompetence is obvious even to a non-clinical eye.

Our advice is that he not be permitted, as he has been requesting, the use of, or at least the indiscriminate use of, books and writing materials for the making of notes on his political beliefs and philosophy.

Since these being in conflict with accepted fascist ideology impose too great a strain on his vital bodily functions and retard his recovery from a less certain to a more certain favorable prognosis.

**Mussolini**

I said it is for the professionals of medicine to determine matters strictly professional;

and even (since there is inevitable overlap)

matters which are partly medical, partly political and partly moral.

Since I am required to enforce your authority, I expect you in the exercise of that authority to be at least cognizant of my wishes with respect to Deputy Gramsci and the body politic, to which the body, mind and soul of Deputy Gramsci is not irrelevant.

I observe that the stress which may jeopardize Deputy Gramsci's health may actually facilitate certain penitential tasks involving reading, reflection upon what has been read, taking notes, writing, correction of what has been written, etc. etc.

and these tasks I see as the essence of the punitive exactions the state should inflict.

**Dr Scalpel**

Since they put the life of a human being in our care at jeopardy

the said activities (except for possibly a little light reading) would seem to me to be contra-indicated.

**Mussolini**

*unsheathing some degree of authoritarian claw*

Dr Castor-oil, I hope...

**Dr Scalpel**

I am Dr Scalpel...

**Mussolini**

Dr Scalpel, I **HOPE** I have made myself perfectly clear?  
*turning to Dr Urine-bottle*

Dr Castor-oil, have I made myself clear?

**Dr Urine-bottle**

I am Dr Urine-bottle...

**CEUX QUI MEURENT DANS  
LES PRISONS DE MUSSOLINI**



**Mussolini** *turning to Dr Scalpel*

Have I made myself perfectly clear, Dr Urine-bottle?

**Dr Urine-bottle**

I am Dr Urine-bottle...

## **BLACKOUT**

**Scene nine:** *lights up to chorus of squadristi with signs, "Viva il duce", "Death to Gramsci", "Death to Traitors", etc. etc.*

**Chorus** *contrapuntally*

From the  
seventh station of the cross  
we turn back  
to the  
sixth station,  
the wiping  
off of the  
face of...

this  
suggests  
the  
trial  
and  
sentencing  
of  
Deputy  
Gramsci  
to  
twenty years  
four months  
and  
five days  
imprisonment

we  
had  
hoped  
he  
would  
be  
sent  
to  
Portolongone

but  
after  
a  
thorough  
medical  
examination  
he  
was

sent to  
the  
Special  
Penal  
Establishment  
at  
Turi,  
thirty  
kilometres  
south of  
Bari

*Chorus shouts over and over again "Death, death, death to Gramsci" until Mussolini enters and stands before them.*

**Mussolini** Friends, Romans, citizens, fascists.

**Chorus** Death to Gramsci.

*but they throw down their signs and give the fascist salute*

**Mussolini** My friends, it would be far easier to put Gramsci to death, and end his punishment

than to keep him alive, and prolong it. Which I propose to do.

I promise you that life for Deputy Gramsci in the special Penal Establishment at Turi will be worse than death. The medical staff there will enable the prison authorities in their correctional function to desist in severities so that these may be prolonged indefinitely until his sentence runs out or his spirit is broken and his friends long for him to die.

**Chorus** *leaving, shout*

Portolongone

Portolongone

Send  
Gramsci  
back to

Portolongone.  
(etc.)

*Exit chorus*

**Mussolini** It was the last thing I wanted.

But not exactly for the reasons given.

I knew that the medical authorities as corporate masks of of absolute power would do their best to prove that they

were humanely keeping Deputy Gramsci alive by refusing him the access to books and writing materials which I swore to myself and Tatiana he must have.

She kept her word to me.

I wanted for the time being to keep mine to her.

Consequently, I intervened at Turi.

Tatiana was given free access to him and saw him every day.

It makes me sicken with anger to think of the lies and subterfuges and machiavellian tricks I had to subscribe to in order to get the **NOTEBOOKS** written.

I was right in one thing.

It was he himself who by sheer will power kept himself living on.

The doctors despaired of him,

but as he began to write, his health even improved, if only marginally.

And the doctors despaired of him a second time.

At first the notebooks were a mess.

I thought my ambition for Deputy Gramsci had flowered in vain.

But he and Tatiana began to revise them, and I took heart.

Even so, they weren't quite what I, in the exuberance of my genius, had wanted.

But I had to make what I could of the material at hand.

How could I by myself write up the Sorelian myth I wanted for fascism, if by definition Sorelian myth generates itself autochthonously?

At last, Tatiana lost her nerve.

I have done what I promised, kept my word?

Haven't I kept mine?

Can you name me a ruler in history who has kept more and broken fewer promises than me?

To keep most promises you have to go beyond what is promised.

I have.

Haven't I?

*Enter Tatiana*

**Tatiana**

**Mussolini**

**Tatiana**

**Mussolini**

**Tatiana**

**Mussolini**

I want you to give Gramsci his freedom.

I have brought the fascisti to heel.

Put an end to democratic anarchy.

Opposed anti-semitism.

Resisted marxist totalitarianism.

Recognized the problem of capitalist bourgeois bankruptcy as the Kierkegaardian despair consisting of a disrelation between property and service—i.e. the state as property and the state as service.

And I have recognized the genius of Gramsci as a brother-sorelian and converted it into the brightest jewel in the crown of my own genius.

What more do you want?

**Tatiana**

**Mussolini**

**Tatiana**

What Gramsci wants is to be set free to go home to his birthplace in Ghilarza, Sardinia.

He could have had that, years ago.

We have found him a nice room in Santulussurgiu, where he went to school.

A very nice room.

On the ground floor, since he is no longer capable of climbing the stairs.

**Mussolini**

**Tatiana**

**Mussolini**

**Tatiana**

And you?

Oh, me, where will I go?

Not to Santulussurgiu.

He hates you.

He hates you for keeping him alive to endure the exponential by which I multiplied him by himself into not himself, more than himself, and most himself.

What of me?

I dreamt that we lost the war

I don't know what war

and the soldiers came to arrest you

I don't know what soldiers, certainly not Italians

possibly dead ones, since it's the dead who come to us in dreams

when they led you away I wanted to go with you



timing

but some other woman not Rachele your wife rushed to your side.

And they took you with her and shot you both, stripped off your clothes, and hanged you naked by your feet for all to see.

**Mussolini**

I never think of myself as dying.

I think of myself as a son of Proserpina, an Etruscan immortal, living on forever in a world where everyone else is intent on dying for the wrong reasons, quite unnecessarily.

**BLACKOUT**

**Scene ten:** LIGHTS up to chorus/medical officers. They are making a tour of the Turi cells.

**Chorus**

From the sixth station  
of the cross  
we turn back  
to the  
fifth station:  
the beautiful Simon's  
taking up the  
weight of

	which suggests the
crucifixus	removal of
crucifixus	Deputy
	Gramsci
crucifixus	from the
	special services
crucifixus	prison
	at Turi
crucifixus	to the
	clinic
crucifixus	at Formia,
	a small town
crucifixus	near Gaeta,
	halfway between
crucifixus	Naples and
	Rome

crucifixus	sub
	pontio
	pilato

(etc.)

*Exit chorus INTONING the Agnus dei, beating their breasts three times, then SHOUTING "crucifixus," until they are just about to exit, when they drop their voices to a tight-lipped, intensely scornful, "sub pontio pilato".*

*Enter chorus/guard one, as Marco Paulilatino*

**Guard** *waits, listening to the Chorus/Medical Officers' off-stage repetitions of "sub pontio pilato", then steps forward and begins*

I am Marco of Paulilatino, in Sardinia,  
but a prison guard in the special services jail at Turi.  
It makes me sick with anger to think of these bastards using  
their medical skill to maximize the sufferings which Nino  
Gramsci's poor sick body imposed upon him.

*spits in the direction of exiting Medical Officers*

**Gramsci** *comes to the cell door*

**Guard** Have you heard from your wife, Julia, I would ask him?

**Gramsci** *shakes head sadly*

**Guard** I believed then  
but not now

that Nino Gramsci was a danger to the corporate health of  
the state of Italy, of which il duce Benito Mussolini was the  
saviour.

**Gramsci** *smiles*

**Guard** But though the cruelest of all punishments imposed on the  
unfrocked deputato was to be deserted by his wife and cut  
off from news of his two sons

it wasn't in order to penance him that I asked about his wife,  
but in order to relieve him of his physical pains.

**Gramsci** *bows, I know, Marco.*

**Guard** To talk of grief is to assuage it.

**Gramsci** *shakes head, not much, Marco*

**Guard** *turns away from Gramsci*

Julia still hasn't written, he told me, after all this time. I'm  
very hurt, he said: she hasn't written to me for nearly four  
months. I have written to her twice, without any answer.

Well, keep on writing to her, I said.

During the war, I told him, I never wrote home.

I just couldn't.

But they kept on writing to me just the same.

Their letters kept me from going to pieces.

**Gramsci** *coming painfully through the door to the guard*

Misfortune, I've read, has two effects.

It deadens the feelings of those who endure it; and it leaves the feelings of those who do not endure it, deadened to it.

I fear above all this second deadening of feeling in myself for the misfortunes I have burdened Julka with.

**Guard** *shakes, head, exit*

**Gramsci** There is no one on earth more beautiful than a beautiful Italian, except a beautiful Sardinian.

they're half Spanish; Marco was a beautiful Sardinian.

It was medicine to hear him speak a dialect replete with Spanish-Italian Sardinianisms.

Especially during those fits of migraine as I started the notebooks Marco would come and talk to me about Julka when I knew that Tatiana for all her cherishing of me was unable to bring herself to tell me the truth about her sister.

In fact, I was hurting so much in so many ways through the fate of my physical body that the psychological pain of Julka's resentment of what I had to endure, was an anaesthetic.

A medical examination before I came here to Turi noted I was suffering from gingivitis, with abscess formations, caused by uricemic disturbances and accompanied by nervous exhaustion.

I thought the pain I'd felt in Rome before and during the trial was a liver upset, but it turned out to be the beginning of a very bad fever.

I was incredibly ill.

I spent two hellish days and nights at Benevenuto, writhing about like a worm, unable to stay still, standing up, sitting down or lying on my back.

The Medical Officer said it was only St Anthony's fire, nothing need or could be done about it.

When I got here to Turi I was helpless, suffering from skin eruptions caused by a urinary disorder, and a digestive system completely upset. I breathed with great difficulty and couldn't walk more than a step at a time without leaning on someone.

Dr Cisternino, chief MO, left me alone, except when he came to inform me, that as a good fascist he would like nothing better than to see me dead.

I got some relief by naming him Dr Castor-oil.

Tatiana called him Dr Cesspool.

He always referred to her as my wife, and because he knew how much she loved me and how much I loved and depended on her, kept asking me if I knew that she was Mussolini's mistress. He hated Mussolini as much as he hated me. I happen to know that Mussolini held him in great contempt.

I asked Tatiana about what Dr Cesspool alleged. All she would say was, if it was necessary, and she could become someone's mistress, to get some relief for me, she would.

Even Dr Cisternino's mistress, I asked.

Tatiana said, no. But thought, and said, yes. Even Dr Cisternino's.

I believe her.

I knew that I was being left to die by the prison medical staff.

*Enter chorus of guards, exercising.*

**Ch/guards** left, left, left, left-right, left

**Gramsci** *aside*  
I had lost all my teeth...

**Ch/guards** *marching song*  
Cock, cock, cock, cockadoo for the farmer's wife...

**Gramsci** I was suffering from Pott's disease, which is a tubercular infection of the spine in which the vertebrae were eaten away and abscesses formed in the muscles of my back...

**Ch/guards** When the farmer went off to Rome...

**Gramsci** I had developed arterio-sclerosis...

**Ch/guards** She got into bed with the mayor of Milan...

**Gramsci** I had several collapses with loss of consciousness and aphasia which lasted several days...

**Ch/guards** When she got into bed...

**Gramsci** They transferred me from one cell to another, and at last to one which was much quieter, but it was damp, and half underground, and next door to the punishment block...

**Ch/guards** ...the mayor of Milan said...

**Gramsci** I lost seven kilos in weight since I first checked in at Turi...

**Ch/guards** Cock, cock, cock cockadoo for the farmer's wife...

**Gramsci** I developed a lesion at the top of my right lung, and coughed up a great deal of blood...

**Ch/guards** Left, left, left, left-right, left...

**Gramsci** When Tatiana came to tell me that I was eventually to be transferred to a medical clinic run by Dr Cusumato at Formia, a small town near Gaeta half-way between Naples and Rome, she found my face all swollen up by infection of the gums...

**Ch/guards** Cock, cock, cock, cockatoo for the farmer's wife...

*exiting*

*Exit*

**Gramsci** I had leaned against the optimism of the will  
when I started the notebooks  
and persuaded myself now was the time  
and here the place in Turi  
to do something, as Goethe said in a curious phrase,  
*für ewig*, for ever and ever.  
I fought with death in every bodily detail.  
But when I saw that my illnesses might turn me into a person  
not myself, the optimism of the will was no longer a resource  
to me.  
The pessimism of the intellect nagged at me, saying  
how can I demand or expect loyalty of Julka and Tatiana who  
in fact loved another person quite different from what I had  
become?  
Or respect from friends or from comrades in the party?  
And why should the state want to pursue me further  
since even if I surrendered to them, there was no victory in it,  
since they had turned me into someone not Deputy  
Gramsci, communist and meta-communist  
a changeling begotten by disease?

And then I realized I had indeed triumphed.  
The changeling disease had replaced me with had set me  
free, and out of range of malice.

**BLACKOUT**

**Scene eleven:** *as in last scene; enter prison guards to fix shackles on Gramsci, before his removal to the Cusumano clinic at Formia*

**Ch/guards**

From	
the	
fifth	
station	
of	
the cross	
we	
turn	
back	
desolate	
to	
the	
fourth	the
station,	meeting
	with
	the
	miserable
	mother
	of...
This	
suggests	
the	
removal	
of	
Deputy Gramsci	crucifixus
from	
Turi	crucifixus
prison	
to the	crucifixus
clinic	
at	crucifixus
Formia	
	crucifixus



*Enter Tatiana and chorus of Medical Officers, with Mussolini*

**Tatiana** I recall Gramsci talking to the prison guard to distract his attention while I concealed his eighteen notebooks in his prison trunk.

**Ch/guards** Crucifixus...

**Mussolini** *to Medical Officers*  
As always my patience though great isn't equal to my exasperation.

**Ch/guards** Crucifixus.

**Ch/MO's** *to Mussolini*  
We warned you that the regimen you insisted on for Deputy Gramsci could only exasperate a hopeless prognosis.

**Ch/guards** Crucifixus.

**Ch/MO's** From the beginning, he was too sick to be sent to prison.

**Mussolini** *to Tatiana*  
I have seen what he has written.

**Ch/guards** Crucifixus.

**Mussolini** No need to hide it from me.  
Every page of it I've seen.

**Ch/guards** Crucifixus.

**Mussolini** But only now have I found time to read it.

**Ch/guards** Crucifixus.

**Tatiana** You look bloody angry. Why?

**Mussolini** You will find (*chorus "crucifixus"*) I am unlike the Chinese gentlemen who (*chorus "crucifixus"*) is hard to please, easy (*chorus "crucifixus"*) to serve.

I am both hard to please and hard to serve.

*Guards affix ropes to the prisoner Gramsci and hand them over to the Medical Officers.*

**Tatiana** *to Mussolini*  
There is no need for these excessive precautions.

**Mussolini** In a well-regulated state the head of state upholds the regulations of its institutions.

Whether he likes them or not.

*smiles*

**Tatiana** They are crucifying him.

**Ch/MO's** *pulling this way, that way on the ropes dragging Gramsci*  
Crucifixus

crucifixus

crucifixus

sub  
pontio  
pilato

sub  
pontio  
pilato

pilato

pilato, (etc.)

**Tatiana** *above the shouting, to Mussolini*

Though there is no death penalty in Italy, you are having him put to death.

**Ch/MO's** ...crucifixus, (etc.)

**Mussolini** He'll live until he gets to the clinic at Formia.

**Chorus/MO's** ... crucifixus, (etc.)

**Ch/guards** *speaking fragments, one at a time; each guard taking one line, with the other guards silent while he delivers it*

At station four

we are almost there

and turn back

to station three,

the first falling down of...

**Ch/MO's** *as before*  
...crucifixus, (etc.)

**Ch/guards** *as before*  
At station three  
we turn back to  
station two  
the acceptance of  
the full expense of...

**Ch/MO's** *as before, jerking on the ropes dragging Gramsci*  
Crucifixus

sub  
pontio  
pilato, (etc.)

**Mussolini** Here comes the crisis of expected defeat.  
*assists Ch/MO's at ropes*

**Ch/guards** At station two  
we turn back  
to the first station...

**Ch/MO's** Crucifixus, (etc.)

**Ch/guards** ...the washing of the hands of,  
and the condemnation of  
by Pontius Pilate...

**Tatiana** It is here we must begin.

**Ch/MO's** *as before, with rope work*  
Crucifixus

sub  
pontio  
pilato

sub  
pontio  
pilato, (etc.)

**Mussolini** *to Tatiana*  
He has written his epitaph in the notebooks.

I expected as much, and said so.

But I wanted it to be, Deputy Gramsci, meta-Fascist, not  
Comrade Gramsci, meta-Communist.

**Ch/MO's** *as before*  
Crucifixus

sub  
pontio  
pilato

pilato

**Tatiana** How long is this to go on for?

**Mussolini** How should I know? They are not my appointments.  
I don't even know their names.

**Ch/MO's** My name is  
Scalpel

My name is  
Urine-bottle  
My name is  
Castor-oil...

**Gramsci** Their achievement has one flaw.

They have totally de-humanized me, except for this one  
adversary truth: I know I have been de-humanized.

**Ch/MO's** *as before; throwing Gramsci off his feet*  
Crucifixus

sub  
pontio  
pilato, etc.

**Mussolini** And I believe him.

Tatiana, take comfort. This crumb of illumination is for you,  
not me.

I wash my hands of the blood of this mistaken man.

**Ch/MO's** *drag Gramsci away*

**BLACKOUT**





GRAMSCI

ALES 1891 ROMA 1937

**Wilfred Watson** has long been one of Canada's most innovative and vital playwrights. Excited audiences have received his *Cockrow and the Gulls* (1962), *Trial of Corporal Adam* (1963), *Wait for Two Pedestals* (1964), *O holy ghost, dip your finger in the blood of Canada, and write, I love you* (1967), *Let's murder clytemnestra according to the principles of marshall mcluhan* (1969).

Poet as well as playwright, Wilfred Watson won the Governor General's Award for Poetry for his *Friday's Child* and went on to explore the possibilities of presenting multiple consciousness in poetry with his *The Sorrowful Canadians* (White Pelican), *I Begin with Counting* (NeWest Press) and *Mass on Cowback* (Longspoon Press).

**Director Thomas Peacocke** writes of Watson's verse and drama:

*Number Grid Poetry stimulates the imaginations of performers and directors. Each poem is arranged on the page in a clearly delineated visual pattern which, because of its numero-metrical organization, offers the potential for auditory patterns. When the poems are arranged in stacked grids for two or more voices, a director is invited to explore the opportunities for repetition, contrapuntal effect, orchestration, even for more abstract sound variations such as elongation of syllables, staccato.... In the natural creative flow of the transformation from the "visual space to the auditory space", movement patterns and physical arrangements of actors suggest themselves. Ultimately, as performers begin to move about, a ritualization based upon form, content, sound and imagination becomes manifest. Number Grid arrangements thus stimulate the discovery of dramatic tension (often of a non-literal nature), which enhances the performance quality of the pure verse and reinforces the dramatic potential of the plays. The transformation from written verse to performance demands imaginative participation from the performer as well as director, and encourages highly original and individual interpretation. At a rehearsal, Wilfred once remarked, as we marvelled at the procreative manner in which his words were coming off the page, "Number Grid arrangement is like an air strip from which the performers can take off."*

**Gramsci x 3** focuses all Watson's many talents as poet and playwright. In it he gives us the long martyrdom of Antonio Gramsci, leader of the Italian Communist Party. Combining docu-drama with surreal fiction, poetry with theatre of violence, lyricism with political passion, these are plays of explosive theatricality.

ISBN 0-919285-16-3

\$10.00



Longspoon Press