

THE CABALA

A drama in two acts

By
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BASED ON THE NOVEL BY THORNTON WILDER

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Act 1

SCENE 1 TRAIN FROM NAPLES TO ROME

Sam and Blair, two American students descend from train.

SAM

Let's rush.

BLAIR

Realize we're in Italy.

MAN IN BLUE

Ti posso aiutare

SAM

Gaziare, non.

Man in Blue exits

BLAIR

Haven't we seen this man many times before.

SAM

This train is so overcrowded!

BLAIR

Have you ever been in an Italian train that is not overcrowded.

SAM

It was also cold.

BLAIR

Stop complaining. We had some delights. A Jesuit speaking in Latin And that Russian sculptor reading the bony structure of our heads.

SAM

And that Italian woman and her hen. And those Oxford students dressed for tramping.

BLAIR

Not very interesting compared to some of the goings on in Sicily.

SAM

You know what I think. These Italians all look alike. They are actually reincarnations of Olympian Gods

BLAIR

Some people think that all humans are re-incarnations of Olympian Gods

Ottima walks by with a suitcase

BLAIR

Oh my God. (Shouting out) Ciao, Giovanna. Is that you!

Ottima

I am not Giovanna!

BLAIR

But you are! Certo!

OTTIMA

Have you been in Sicily?

BLAIR

Just returning.

OTTIMA

I thought so.

BLAIR

Why?

OTTIMA

My sister Septima was the cook for a motion picture company We are twins.

BLAIR

Ah yes. I just finished filming The Gods of Sicily. A great motion picture. She's the best cook in Italy.

OTTIMA

SECOND best.

BLAIR

Who's the best?

OTTIMA

I AM!

SAM

I like this woman!

OTTIMA

I now go back to Sicily.

SAM

Why?

OTTIMA

I need work. I was just fired.

SAM

Why?

OTTIMA

By a scoundrel. A long story. Do you need a chef, a house cleaner, a..... ,

SAM

(interrupting)

Yes we do. But we need an apartment first.

OTTIMA

I have one for you

SAM

You own it?

OTTIMA

No, but I know the man who does. Five bedrooms, a balcony, high ceilings, and in good condition. Four hundred year old.

BLAIR

Must be in a crummy part of town.

OTTIMA

Across from the Spanish Steps.

SAM

Then we can't afford it!

OTTIMA

He wants ten thousand lira a month

SAM

No way can we afford it.

OTTIMA

Offer him five hundred..

SAM

What! You mean five THOUSAND!

OTTIMA

You heard me right!

SAM

But..

OTTIMA

He'll take it.

SAM

Why!

OTTIMA

None of your business. Wise Neapolitan saying: Don't look a gift donkey in the mouth.

BLAIR

But he may be a member of the Mafia

OTTIMA

No way. I'll tell you right You're Americans. You'll pay, and he needs money

SAM

Surely there must be some problems with the apartment

OTTIMA

Three inches of dirt, smelly toilets, and mice. All three will be gone.

SAM

Great!

OTTIMA
I know a lady who can clean'

SAM
WHO?

OTTIMA
A lady with a cat named Geranium. Do you like cats?

BLAIR
Yes we do.

Sam
And so do I.

BLAIR
Where is this cleaning woman?

Ottima
You are looking at her now. You will have a clean house in two days. I am also the best cook in Rome.

BLAIR
Is your cuisine Southern or Northern Italian.

OTTIMA
You want the truth?

BLAIR
Yes.

OTTIMA
The whole world loves my northern Italian cooking.

BLAIR
Now nice. But I prefer Sicilian cuisine.

OTTIMA
Good, because my cooking is Sicilian. I tell them its NORTHERN Italian and they are too dumb to know any better Now I must clean the apartment. It will be ready for you when you move in.

SAM

Wait! We have not even signed a lease.

OTTIMA

Knoc on his door. 2337 Somilia Piazza.

SAM

But we have no furniture.

OTTIMA

The place has more furniture than you need. Needs to be cleaned and polished.

SAM

I should tell you I have a German shepherd named Kurt.

OTTIMA

Geranium loves dogs. Especially German Shepherds. And I was named after a German Shepherd. Arriverdici.

SAM

Arriverdici

OTTIMA

And you and Sam will be the Greek Gods of Rome

BLAIR

One question before you leave.

OTTIMA

What?

BLAIR

Have you ever heard of the Cabala?

OTTIMA
Arriverdici. See you in two days

Sam
What's the Cabala?

Blair
Never mind.

SCENE 2 APARTMENT

Blair and Sam walk into a
beautiful furnished 17th century
salon.

BLAIR
Gorgeous apartment!

SAM
Only a stones throw from the Basilica of Santa Maria
a Trastavere.

BLAIR
This has to be the cleanest apartment in all Italy

SAM
Not a speck of dust The floors are immaculately waxed

BLAIR
The place smells heavenly. The windows lustre.

We hear Kurt barking'

SAM
That must be Kurt's barking at his happiest.

OTTIMA (O.S.)
And Geranium is in love with Kurt and Kurt is in
love with Geranium.

Ottima enters

SAM
That smell from the kitchen?

OTTIMA
Come and see!

They walk into the kitchen

SAM
These smells are delicious!

OTTIMA
Wait till you begin eating!

SAM
Wow! But we don't eat that much A lot of food
foro two people.

OTTIMA
This is food for twelve

SAM
What!.

OTTIMA
Blair told me to prepare for twelve.

SAM
Twelve!

BLAIR
Yes, Twelve. That is how many we are having for
dinner.

SAM
What! Twelve!

BLAIR
I thought I would surprise you.

SAM
Surprise me!

BLAIR

Yes.

SAM

Who are they?

BLAIR

You will see.

SAM

This is no time for games!

BLAIR

Games. You should feel honored.

SAM

Why?

BLAIR

Because you will meet some very nice people.

SAM

Who!

BLAIR

The Cabala?

SAM

That thing!

Phone rings

The phone rings again.

Sam

Pronto. No! I am not looking a chef this week.
What is all this nonsense about.

He continues to unpack. The phone rings again.

BLAIR

I must go. I don't have a minute to waste!

Sam

What!

BLAIR

I just got a gig in Venice! John Crock Studios from London is filming a motion picture on the Medici family and their cameraman just got fired for over drinking. They need someone and are paying me handsomely. This will be one of the greatest pictures of all time.

SAM

Can't you go tomorrow?

BLAIR

I either go tonight or.....

SAM

But you set up this dinner! NOT I!

BLAIR

BUT I DID IT FOR YOU!

SAM

For me!

BLAIR

Yes.

SAM

How so!

BLAIR

This is the Cabala!

SAM

THE Cabala

BLAIR

Yes

SAM

Who are they!

BLAIR

I'll give you a hint.

SAM

Yes?

BLAIR

The most uniquely powerful group in the world!

SAM

Really!

BLAIR

You are in for a treat.

SAM

But....

BLAIR

I must go. I will miss my train.

SAM

You haven't even packed.

BLAIR

So why are you holding me up.

SAM

When are you coming back?

BLAIR

I will pay my rent and be back when I can.

SAM

Blair. I DON'T KNOW ANY OF THESE PEOPLE

BLAIR

You'll manage. And I should be back in a month.

SAM

Do not straddle me with these people.

BLAIR

Ottima. Can you send my things to Florence. I have to leave now.

OTTIMA

Leave your address.

Blair exits. A knock at the door.

OTTIMA

Not yet. Too early.

SAM

Oh my God! They've arrived. Come in.

Princess Alix enters.

OTTIMA

Princess Alix.

ALIX

Blair!

OTTIMA
He's leaving

ALIX
Blair!

BLAIR
Yes, Alix

ALIX
You have ignored my letters.

BLAIR
What letters!

ALIX
I sent you eight of them.

BLAIR
I never got any.

ALIX
I don't believe you!

BLAIR
Please, Alex. I must go

ALIX
Go where?

BLAIR
Sam can explain. Will send you a note in a week.

ALIX
Blair. Please.

BLAIR

I must go I will miss my train. And yes I will write to you. Tell Sam about the Cabala.

He exits

ALIX

Again. Why doesn't he like me.

SAM

You have to know him!

ALIX

A thought I did.

Blair runs back in..

BLAIR

Ottima!

OTTIMA

Here's your sandwich.

SAM

How did you know the type of sandwich I like!

OTTIMA

My Sister told me.

ALIX

And am I no more worth than sandwich.

OTTIMA

Be quiet and let him eat his sandwich. A growing boys must eat. And the movie company serves slurp. .

BLAIR

I will write you like I said.

He exits.

ALIX

God never had any intention of making me happy. Did he ever mention

OTTIMA

Tell him about the Cabala. (She exits)

ALIX

They all love you, Samuele.

OTTIMA

Ha. They do not know me.

SAM

They haven't even met me.

ALIX

But we already love you.

SAM

What do you know about me?

ALIX

Blair told us all we had to know.

SAM

So why do you all like me?

ALIX

Because you're an American. You went to Yale. And you are a writer. .

SAM

And you love me for that! Tell me about the Cabala.

ALIX

What about them?

SAM

Who are they?

ALIX

Well let me give you a rundown.

SAM

Begin!

ALIX

First there is the Cardinal.

SAM

A real one?

ALIX

Yes. Cardinal Vaini.

SAM

A member of the Curia?

ALIX

Of course.

SAM

You said Vaini?

ALIX

Yes.

SAM

The name strikes me. I recall his name from somewhere. Newspapers perhaps.

ALIX

He has managed to never get his name in the newspapers.

SAM

Should he?

ALIX

You will find that out. Does China strike a bell

SAM

My parents were a missionaries there .

ALIX

Ah that might explain it.

SAM

As a child I was fascinated by that man.

ALIX

Might not be the same person.

SAM

Perhaps.

ALIX

His China experience has instilled fear throughout the Curia

SAM

And the others?

ALIX

There is Antonio. He's only sixteen and a twin We never see his sister. But his mother, the Countess Giovanna, has the finest pedigree in all of Europe . A very fine woman.

SAM

And her son.

ALIX

He is the handsomest person you will ever see. I think you will like this confused young man.

SAM

And the others?

ALIX

There is Princess Lucia? She comes from French and Italian nobility. But she is a strong willed Roman, and she supports Catholic charities too.

SAM

Who else?

ALIX

Forgot to mention her most ardent cause.

SAM

Yes?

ALIX

She believes in the Divine Right of Kings.

SAM

I know of a quite a few people who feel the same way. Some are even Americans.

ALIX

Hers is different.

SAM

How is that.

ALIX

She wants the Divine Right of Kings to become Church Dogma.

SAM

Ha. And who else?

ALIX

The Duchess Bernstein

SAM

Might she be from the family?

ALIX

You bet.

SAM

You even know Americanisms. I thought she was dead.

ALIX

No. She's the Cardinal's favorite

SAM

Why?

ALIX

He calls her the most charitable woman in the world. And she has saved orphanages and so on and so on.

SAM

How nice. And I presume she's Jewish.

ALIX

Nobody knows for sure. Someday's she wakes up and she's Jewish and the next day she's reciting rosaries.

SAM

Any others.

ALIX

There are actually twenty six members. Some only come occasionally. And then there's Miss Grier- the American.

SAM

Ah, Indeed.

ALIX

Elizabeth Grier believes that the members of the Cabala are actually reincarnations of Olympian Gods. All are rich powerful bored lonely and intellectually snobbish. All hate what is new.

SAM

Seems like a group of people losing sleep over a host of notions that the rest of the world has outgrown several centuries.

ALIX

Almost sounds like a joke to an outsider

OTTIMA

Some people say a big joke.

SAM

There is no Cabala, really now!

OTTIMA

Make up your own mind

SAM

Are they rich.

Alix

Some are some are not. The Cardinal is not. The Duchess comes from the oldest family in Italy but she doesn't have a pot to piss in.

SAM

Well are they intellectually inclined?

Alix

Maybe. But some are really dumb!

SAM

Do you think they can cause a lot of trouble?

OTTIMA

Mostly to themselves.

SAM

Any advice for me?

OTTIMA

Act stupid so they can feel intelligent.

SAM

Ha! Not malevolent I hope. Or are they?

ALIX

Only when they are together.

SAM

Welcome all of them for me.. I am taking a shower.

Bell rings. Cardinal Vaini enters.

ALIX

Your eminence.

CARDINAL

Ah, the Americans have arrived.

ALIX

Both have arrived One left. This is Sam.

CARDINAL

Shall I call you Samuele.

SAM

If you wish. I feel honored, Your Eminence.

CARDINAL

No formalities tonight.

SAM

Yes your Emiencne.

CARDINAL

Carlo or Carlwill do.

CARDINAL

(Shouts out)Welcome to Rome. Ottima!

ALIX

How do you know she's here?

CARDINAL

I can smell her cuisine.

ALIX

I would avoid her. She's on the warpath.

CARDINAL

Ottima!

OTTIMA

Get out!

CARDINAL

You don't say that to me!

OTTIMA

I will say what I want!

CARDINAL

Come Ottima. I have some news for you

OTTIMA

I don't want to hear it.

CARDINAL

As lovely as ever.

OTTIMA

I do not speak to skunks.

CARDINAL

Gloria has been fired.

OTTIMA

You are no longer a skunk.

CARDINAL

Fired.

OTTIMA

Why.

CARDINAL

You were right about her.

OTTIMA

Ah! Your Eminence!

She rushes in, kneels before him
and kisses his finger

CARDINAL

A little theft.

OTTIMA

What theft.

CARDINAL

All of the kitchen funds.

OTTIMA

Has she been arrested?

OTTIMA

I told you so. Now I must go back into the kitchen.

CARDINAL

You can come back when the boys go back to America.

SAM
What! That may be sooner than later.

CARDINAL
What!

SAM
I have been abandoned by my roommae.

Duchess and Marcantonio walk in.

SCENE 3 LATER

Dixieland music plays in the
background

Sam
Their house looks great,

OTTIMA
I am the best

SAM
And the food! The smells.

OTTIMA
I want you to do me a favor.

SAM
Yes

OTTIMA
Do not tell these people I work for you

SAM
Why not.

OTTIMA
Don't ask, don't tell.

SAM

But they will surely know..

OTTIMA

I will have someone else serve.

SAM?

Who

OTTIMA

My assistant.

SAM?

He quit.

OTTIMA

Then you must serve

SAM?

I that is why I hired you

OTTIMA

Then fire me

SAM

Your fired.

OTTIMA

I am leaving

SAM?

Wait. Tell me why

OTTIMA

Because the skunk who fired me will be here

CARDINAL
I left him at the office

SAM
And who are you.

CARDINAL
Carl Vaini. No titles tonight. I am a happy servant
of God when not in my costume of the day.

SAM
Welcome.

CARDINAL
That smell off the food. It is peculiar.

SAM
We have an excellent cook.

CARDINAL
Only one person can cook like that

SAM
Oh!

CARDINAL
Is it Ottima?

SAM
Do not know her name

CARDINAL
Remember the 16th commandment.

SAM
What is that

CARDINAL
Thou shalt not tell little white fibs.

SAM
(Smiling) Yes, Sir.

CARDINAL
Ottima! Is that your cooking

A loaf of bread hits the Cardinal
in the head.

SAM
Ottima!

CARDINAL
That's Ottima all right

SAM
So she worked for you

OTTIMA
None of your dam business.

SAM
Ottima

OTTIMA
I was hoping never to see you again

CARDINAL
Well now you have

SAM
Can someone please explain

CARDINAL
Ottima overreacted

Ottima
Overreacted. You chose that pig over me.

CARDINAL
She's been fired.

OTTIMA
What!

Fired
 CARDINAL

Carl, I love you.
 OTTIMA

She quickly runs into the kitchen.
 Door opens. Princess LUCIA enters

Samuele
 LUCIA

Welcome.
 SAM

Don't be embarrassed. You do not know her. This is
 Princess LUCIA.
 CARDINAL

Well Welcome.
 SAM

Just like Blair to leave you stranded with these
 strangers.. But we know all about you. And now we
 want to know more.
 LUCIA

I shall oblige.
 SAM

And I shall want o bring you into many worthwhile
 causes.
 LUCIA

Such as.
 SAM

One which will benefit all humanity.
 LUCIA

What is that
 SAM

LUCIA
The divine right of kings.

SAM
The divine right of kings

LUCIA
Yes Samuele

SAM
I am sure you are entitled to that belief

LUCIA
Yes but now we must go one step further. This irrefutable belief but become one of the dogmas of the Roman Catholic Church.

SAM
Well..

CARDINAL
Our dear princess is strong in this belief. We will discuss at another time

Door opens and Princess Giovanna enters

Princess
I am so sorry to arrive so late, but my son Marcantonio was to have picked me up.

SAM
We still have plenty of time. And I things are going fine

PRINCESS
You are such a kind young man. I have heard so much about you.

SAM
From Blair I suppose.

PRINCESS

Your reputation goes far beyond Connecticut and Wisconsin. We all know about you

SAM

Well

Marcantonio, 23, enters.
Inordinately handsome and dressed
in 1923 running suit.

PRINCESS

My son. You're not dressed properly.

MARCANTONIO

I had to meet the new arrival.

PRINCESS

But...

MARCANTONIO

Dodo, you want me to leave. I know ..

SAM

Please stay.

MARCANTONIO

Buon Giorno

PRINCESS GIOVANNA

But..

SAM

You must remain.

MARCANTONIO

I have wanted to meet you for the longest time

SAM

Yes, we must chat.

CARDINAL

Will you have time to stay.

SAM

Why of course he does

CARDINAL

You do not know him as well as I do. My son

SAM

Let us all go into the dining room

CARDINAL

Countess Bernstein has not arrived.

SAM

Explain religion

CARDINAL

Who can understand religion unless he has sinned. Who can understand literature unless he has suffered. Who can understand love unless he has loved without response.

Sam

I do not understand.

CARDINAL

You will after your ride with Marcantonio.

SCENE 4 RIDE WITH MARCANTONIO

Marcantonio and Sam are in
Marcantonio/s Car

SAM

So nice of you to ask me to come with you

MARCANTONIO

The pleasure is mine

SAM

Why do you like me so much

MARCANTONIO

An abrupt question for an American to ask

SAM

Oh what do you say.

MARCANTONIO

Who says I like you.

SAM

I thought you did Tell me about Marcantonio.

MARCANTONIO

I love to talk about Marcantonio. I am in love with him. Are you?

SAM

Proceed.

MARCANTONIO

I am son of the Duchess of Aquilerra, descended from a lineage of Rome' oldest and noblest families. My looks down on the Colonna family and the House of Savoy, Italy's Royal Family. I unique. At 23, I am simply the world's handsomest man, and lead a life of promiscuity. I can not escape my good looks or my passions. Nor do I want to.

SAM

Exciting indeed. I love this.

MARCANTONIO

I have experimented with sex all of my life beginning at age 12. That is when I was approached by an older woman (known throughout the world). I rejected her. I have experimented with both homosexual and heterosexual relationships, but concluded I really prefers heterosexual relationships. The plumbing works better.

SAM

Ha. Ha Ha

MARCANTONIO

I like what I see when I look into the mirror. Tonight is another conquest-if only I can escape the Duchess' dinner for some wealthy Americans and dull Roman nobles. Some of them don't even clean up. They smell in fact. Life is made for enjoyment. I am happy indeed. That is why I must escape tonight, and conquer my victim-all in fun. I can become melancholy when I stay at home

SAM

I am fascinated.

MARCANTONIO

I love new experiments. The wealthy American heiress wants to be dominated. That may take me out of my mood. And of course mother continues to pester me about going to church to take me out of my melancholy. I have no idea how she knows.

SAM

Mother knows best.

MARCANTONIO

And now do you want to come to the hunt with me

SAM

Not tonight

MARCANTONIO

Why

SAM

I am tired. A hectic day. Hosted a party for 12 at midnight

MARCANTONIO

You have been spending too much time with these old ladies.

SAM

Well perhaps you can change that

MARCANTONIO

That is why I say come with me tonight

SAM

I can't.

MARCANTONIO

Chicken.

SAM

So be it.

SCENE 5 CEMETERY SCENE

All eight are together. They Are crying Samuele enters dressed in black. They are weeping.

SAM

Why did they not allow a church funeral

LUCIA

The Cardinal will change that.

Cardinal arrives on stage with
shovel

PRINCESS GIOVANNA

No that is why he believe he loves us. Just simply
loves us in a disinterested new world way. Once I had
a most beautiful setter, named Samuels. Samuels
spent all his life sitting around on the pavement
watching us with a look of most intense excitement

SAM

Did he bite

ALIX

You didn't have to give Samuel a sandwich to win his
devotion. He likes to be liked.

Act 2

SCENE 6 GARDEN

LUCIA and Samuele are seated in
the Garden.

LUCIA

You are trying to spare me, Samuele. But I know.
There are other stories about him.

SAM

Just gossip!

LUCIA

His enemies have been at work systematically
poisoning his prestige. We know that there is no one
in Rome who is kinder, more humble, higher-minded;
but among the common people he has almost the
reputation of a monster.

SAM

I have never heard anything

LUCIA

You are so Some people have been at work spreading such rumors deliberately. And the Cardinal has heard of them: through the whispering of servants or by cries in the road, or by anonymous letters, in all sorts of ways.

SAM

But the Cardinal does not even know it.

LUCIA

He exaggerates this attitude. He feels that he is in a hostile world. It has made his old age tragic. And that is why he will not write. Yet it is within our power to save him still.

SAM

The cardinal can save himself.

LUCIA

Rumors are unalterable, the result of a clever campaign. A counter campaign can save his reputation. In the first place our enemies have taken advantage of the Italians' prejudice against the Orient. An Italian enjoys the same delicious shudder at the sight of a Chinese that Americans have the mention of a trapdoor over a river.

SAM

What a silly metaphor.

LUCIA

The Cardinal has returned from the East yellow, unwrinkled. His walk troubles me

SAM

He is perfectly fine.

LUCIA

It is easy to build upon this, to pass the whisper along the underworld that he kept strange images, that animals, his garden of rabbits and ducks and guinea fowl) could be heard shrieking late at night, that his faithful Chinese servant had been seen in all sorts of terrifying places.

SAM

A little gossip never hurt anyone.

LUCIA

There is more. Next, his frugal life stirred their imaginations. Everyone knew he was fabulously wealthy. Rubies as big as your fist and sapphires like doorknobs, where were they?

SAM

Ha!

LUCIA

Did you ever go up to the gate of the Villino Wei Ho?

SAM

I believe so.

LUCIA

Come with me Sunday. If you sniff hard enough you can get the strangest odor, one that will leave you drowsy for days and give you dreams. W

SAM

His eightieth birthday is approaching. So Sad. There should be presentations.

LUCIA

Exactly.

SAM

Mlle. de Morfontaine is donating a Raphael altar piece to his titular church.

LUCIA

She is such a dear Sameuele. Most of all we would send out agents among the people, telling them of his goodness, his simplicity, his donations to their hospitals, and ever so faintly his sympathy with socialistic ideas.

SAM

I remember anecdotes of his snubbing the arrogant members of the College, of his defending a poor man who had stolen a chalice from his church.

LUCIA

That is what hurts him now I weep.

SAM

I know China. China must be re-created here.

LUCIA

We are to prop up the Cardinal so that help could prop up Europe.

SAM

Oh Brother.

LUCIA

The Cardinal was not to know that we were putting up a scaffolding about his good name but we were to persuade him to do some of the things that particularly antagonized the public.

SAM

Good for you. AND YOU SAID YOU SAW HIM.

LUCIA

I found him as one could find him every sunny al the year round, seated in the garden, a book on his knee, a reading glass in his left hand, a pen ,in his right, a head of cabbage and a Belgian hare at his feet. A pile of volumes lay on the table be-side him: "Appearance and Reality," Spengler, "The Golden Bough," "Ulysses," Proust, Freud.. Already their margins had begun to exhibit the spidery notations in green ink that indicated a closeness of attention that would embarrass all but the greatest authors. He laid aside his magnifying glass as I came up, the path of shells.

SAM

Then we shall have to see him.

SCENE 7 CARDINAL RESIDENCE

Cardinal and Sam are alone

CARDINAL

Lucia wants you to come to dinner Friday night, just the three of us.

SAM

Very good. Very nice. What do you want, Father, for your birthday? Lucia wants me to sound you tactfully.

CARDINAL

Samuelino, walk to the back of the house and tell my sister you will stay to lunch. I am to have a little Chinese vegetable dish. Will you have that or a little risotto and chestnut-paste?

SAM

Yes, thank you.

CARDINAL
How is Lucia?

SAM
Very well.

CARDINAL
I don't believe you.

SAM
What!

CARDINAL
A little illness would be good for her. I am uncomfortable when I am with her. There are certain doctors, Samuele, who are not happy when they are talking to people in good health. They are so used to the supplicating eyes of patients that say: Shall I live? In the same way I am ill at ease in the company of persons who have never suffered.

SAM
What do you mean?

CARDINAL
Lucia has always illustrated the futility of goodness without intelligence.

SAM
How damning!

CARDINAL
She has eyes of blue porcelain.

SAM
I consider her truly beautiful.

CARDINAL
She has a fair pure heart. It is sweet to be in the company of a fair pure heart, but what can one say to it? There was St. Francis, Father Sental? But he had been libertine in his youth, or thought he had. Who can understand religion unless he has sinned?

Who can understand literature unless he has suffered?
Who can understand love unless he has loved without
response?

SAM

What do you mean?

CARDINAL

Lucia is in trouble. The first sign of trouble was
last month. There is a certain Monsignor who wants
her millions for his churches in Bavaria. Every few
days he climbs the hill to Tivoli and breathes into
her ear. "And the rich He hath sent empty away".

SAM

Is she that gullible!

CARDINAL

The poor child trembles and pretty soon Bavaria will
have some enormous churches, too ugly for words. Oh,
you know, there is for every human being one text in
the Bible that can shake him, just as every building
has a musical note that can overthrow it.

SAM

I learn so much from you

CARDINAL

Material for you to use in your books and plays

SAM

Of course.

CARDINAL

But We all have weaknesses.

SAM

Right!

CARDINAL

I will not tell you mine.

SAM

I already know them.

CARDINAL

But, do you want to know the Duchess? She is a great hater, and they say that during the Pater Noster she doses her teeth tight upon:

SAM

But was not Lucia devoted to her mother?

CARDINAL

No, she has had no losses. That was when she was ten. She has poetized her, that is all. Still hates the woman.

SAM

Father, why did not that literal faith of hers carry her to a convent?

CARDINAL

She promised her dying mother she would stay alive to put a Bourbon on the throne of France. (Laughs hilariously)

SAM

How can you laugh, Father, at her devotion to YOU?

CARDINAL

We old men are allowed to laugh at things that you little students may not even smile about. Oh, ,oh, the house of Bourbon. Would you be surprised if I gave up my life to reviving the royal brother and-sister marriages of Egypt? Well! It is not more impossible.

SAM

Dear Father, won't you write one more book?

CARDINAL

I am a man of the cloth.

SAM

And so much more Look, you have about you all the greatest books of the first quarter of my century. And many are very stupid they are, too. Won't you make us one.

CARDINAL

What should I write about?

SAM

A great book, Father Vaini. About yourself, essays like Montaigne- about China and about your animals and Augustine.

CARDINAL

Stop! No! Stop at once. You frighten me.

SAM

Why!

CARDINAL

Do you see that the first sign of childhood in me will be the crazy notion that I should write a book?

SAM

You can handle it.

CARDINAL

Samuele, Samuelino, how bad of you to come here this morning, and awaken all the vulgar prides in an old peasant. No, don't pick them up. Let the animals soil them.

What is the matter with this Twentieth Century of yours? You want me to compliment you because you have broken the atom and bent light?

SAM

Now, now!

CARDINAL

Well, I do, I do.-You may tell our rich friends, tactfully, that I want for my birthday a small Chinese rug now reposing in the window of a shop on the Corso. It would be unbecoming for me to say more than that it is on the left as you approach the Popolo. The floor of my bedroom is getting colder every morning, and I always promised myself that when I became eighty I might have a rug in my bedroom.

SAM

Thy will be done!

CARDINAL

Amen

SAM

Will you write that book

CARDINAL

No!

SAM

Please!

CARDINAL

Let us dance.

The Cardinal turns on the phonograph and he and Samuel tap dance to the Old Soft Shoe.

SAM

You should be in show business.

CARDINAL

I have thought about it.

SAM

You know American music?

CARDINAL

I love it.

SAM

You dance beautifully.

CARDINAL

You too, young man.

SCENE 1 SHORTLY AFTERWARD

They are eating

LUCIA

This soup is so good. It was recommended to me by Father.

CARDINAL

Strange, because he has never been invited to eat here.

LUCIA

That is a surprise. You should get to..

CARDINAL

Would you like more risotto? I do not entertain dreary bureaucrats And now I have an announcement,. I am going to China.

LUCIA

What! That can not be.

CARDINAL

I am certain you can make decisions.

LUCIA

I need your assistance. You are out of sympathy with any plans I might have of helping the Church .

CARDINAL

That can wait.

LUCIA

I want to talk over with you about the problem of my wealth and its disposition.

CARDINAL

I have no opinion on the matter.

LUCIA

Please!

CARDINAL

I wish to exercise no influence on this aspect of your life. You have an enormous instrument for progress. You must not allow it to drift down the wind of ecclesiastical administration.

SAM

We must remember that it is the eve of his eightieth birthday.

LUCIA

But you are leaving, your Eminence.

CARDINAL

I should have died at the moment of leaving my work in China. The eight years that have elapsed since then had been a dream of increasing confusion.

LUCIA

Oh, My poor Cardinal

SAM

But you are loved by both God and the Romans.

CARDINAL

The people of Rome hate me. I would leave in dying a memory without affection and without dignity.

SAM

Stop

LUCIA

Please, your eminence

CARDINAL

Gossip says that even in Naples, children are kept in good behavior with threats that the Yellow Cardinal will skin them. If I were young I would laugh at such a rumor, but being old I grew cold. I am leaving a world where I am shuddered.

LUCIA

I always long to hear you discourse upon prayer. Every word of his was sacred. But sometimes I do not understand? . Truth, new truth.

CARDINAL

But we discussed communion and on the invocation of the saints.

LUCIA

You are so much like Paul. I pray for you often.

CARDINAL

In prayer one should never ask for anything. We are judge only by our works.

LUCIA

You have been sounding very strange lately. Are you well? You sound Socratic. I don't understand. I don't understand. You are joking, Father. Aren't you ashamed of saying such things to bewilder me, when you know how I value everything you say.

CARDINAL

I shall ask Samuele about this. As he is only a Protestant it will be very easy to entangle him. Samuele, may I assume that God may have intended Donna Matilda to die before long anyway?

LUCIA

Father, I can't stay and hear you talk this way. W

CARDINAL

You are a slave to the idea of bargain. The money changers are still in the temple!

LUCIA

But, Father, you know God answers the requests of a good Catholic. But you were there, dear Father. If you had deeply wished it you could have altered the...

CARDINAL

Insane child! What are you saying? Have I no losses?

LUCIA

Why. There is authority for our hoping that our prayer may do good things. I prayed for a friend, but she died. Then we were not sincere enough! Or persevering enough!

CARDINAL

Sometimes He grants and sometimes He doesn't, and Christians are expected to pray hard on the chance that this is one of the times He might relent. What a notion! Lucia, what a thought!

LUCIA

What is the answer? I will not let you go until you tell me. Dear Father, you know that prayer is answered. But your clever questions have upset me. What is the answer?

CARDINAL

My daughter, tell me yourself.

LUCIA

Look Father, Madam Fonatine died that very night. But we thought that if we prayed very sincerely we might change His mind.

CARDINAL

It is incredible that He should change His mind. Because we frightened mortals are on the carpet?

LUCIA

Why are you are saying these things to me.

CARDINAL

Think! You are questioning the idea of the benignant power behind the world.

LUCIA

This is an exercise in rhetoric.

CARDINAL

I thought you were a woman with reason.

LUCIA

I think of myself as a deep thinker.

CARDINAL

Not tonight. More wine?

LUCIA

Yes. You are speaking nonsense!

CARDINAL

My dear, remember that prayers spring from fear or the greed for comfort.

Sam pleads with the Cardinal by gesture.

LUCIA

Stop tormenting me.

SAM

Do you realize how devoted she is to you.

CARDINAL

That too is a sin.

LUCIA

But I know now what you mean me to answer. We may not ask for things, or people, or relief from sickness, but we may ask for spiritual qualities; for instance for the advancement of the Church.

CARDINAL

Vanity! Vanity! How many years have we been praying for a certain good thing? What have statistics shown us? I refer to the conversion of France.

With a cry Lucia rises and leaves the room. I

SAM

I protest!

CARDINAL

She is foolish, Samuelino. You cannot call those convictions deep that were overturned with straws. No, trust me. This is for her good.

SAM

But..

CARDINAL

I have been a confessor too long to go astray here. She has the spiritual notions of a school-girl. She must be fed on some harsher bread. Understand that she has never suffered. She is good. She is devout.

But as I told you the other day, just by accident she has never known trouble.

SAM

Just the same, Your Eminence, I know her well enough to know that this very moment she thinks of her chapel, clinging to the altar-rails. She will be depressed for weeks.

But just at that moment Lucia returned. Her manner is agitated and artificially gracious.

LUCIA

Will you excuse me if I go to bed now?

CARDINAL

Please stay and talk with Samuele.

LUCIA

No, no. I must be going. But before I go let me tell you one thing. The real truths are difficult. At first they are forbidding. But they are worth all the others. I shall be thinking over what we have said. I . . . I . . . Excuse me, if I ask you something? Yes, my child, what is it? Promise me you weren't joking.

CARDINAL

I wasn't joking at all.

LUCIA

Did I really hear you say that the prayers of good men are of no avail?

CARDINAL

Good night. You will forgive my slipping away now?

LUCIA

Good night, your eminence.

CARDINAL

And have a good night's rest. (Motions to Samuel to remain) You seem so concerned, Samuele.

SAM

Is she going to lose her faith?

CARDINAL

I almost thought you might almost find it comic.

SAM

The loss of one's faith can be comic to outsiders, especially when the loser is in fine health, wealth, and a fairly sound mind. But..

CARDINAL

The loss of anyone or all of these has a sort of grandeur. Lucia should not have the loss of her faith depend on one of the others.

SAM

I am still worried, Sir.

CARDINAL

Faith is not a thing one loses in fine or bad weather. Are you familiar with the works of St. Augustine?

SAM

I am not.

CARDINAL

The Ivy League heathens miss the mark again. Please go to my library and take out a copy of "The Confessions." Be sure to return it. A seventeenth century copy given to me by Countess Bernstein. Good night, young man. Oh.

And do remain for the night. At this hour it may be difficult to find a coach. You do not have a personal driver like Lucia.

SAM

Thank you. , Sir. I Shall . Good night. (Exits)

Act 2

SCENE 1

Samuele is asleep with a copy of "the Confessions" by his side. Heavy knocking begins at the door. The clock reads four o'clock.

SAM

Who is it?

LUCIA

LUCIA.

SAM

Come in.

LUCIA enters, tired, white and hair dishevelled. She goes to Sam with both hands extended:

LUCIA

Will you forgive me. I did not go home. I have spent the night praying in the chapel. I want you to help me.

SAM

I shall.

LUCIA

Tell me: Were you made unhappy by the strange things Cardinal Vaini said after dinner.

SAM

Yes.

LUCIA

Have you Protestants ideas on these things?

SAM

Oh, yes.

LUCIA

Were his ideas new? Is that what everyone is thinking?

Sam

No.

LUCIA

Oh, Samuele, what has happened to me! I have sinned. I have sinned the sin of doubt. Shall I ever have peace again.

SAM

Go Easy on yourself

LUCIA

Can the Lord take me back after I have had such thoughts? Of course, of course, I believe that my prayers are answered, but I have lost. The reason why I believe it. Surely, there is a key here. Perhaps it's just one word. All you have to do is find the one little argument that makes the whole thing natural Isn't it strange!

SAM

Slow down!

LUCIA

I've been looking here (and she pointed at the table which was covered with open books, the Bible, Pascal, the Imitation) but I don't seem to be able to put my finger on the right place. Sit down and try and tell me, my dear friend, what arguments there are that God hears us speak and will answer us.

SAM

I am sure that you still believe. The very fact that you are distressed proves that it.

LUCIA

I shall go into my chapel and pray for faith.

SCENE 2 THE NEXT DAY

Cardinal's Room. LUCIA enters.
The cardinal is asleep at his
chair, but is awakened

CARDINAL

My dear child.

LUCIA

My beloved cardinal.

CARDINAL

I thought you had gone home. You need some rest.

LUCIA

Dear Cardinal Vaini, I will always honor you above all my friends. I think you love me and wish me well. But in your great learning and multiple interests you have forgotten that we who are not brilliant must cling to our childhood beliefs as best we may.

CARDINAL

I understand, my dear.

LUCIA

I have been this evening. I want to ask a favor of you: that you indulge my weakness to the extent of not touching upon matters of belief when I am with you. It gives me great pain to have to ask you this. I beg of you to understand it as apart from any personal feelings of unfriendliness.

I hope that I may grow strong enough to talk of these matters with you again.

SCENE 3 LUCIAS RESIDENCE

Lucia and Samuele are seated.

LUCIA

Samuele, you have been with me during the saddest days of my life. I cannot deny that all interest has gone out of living for me.

SAM

But you will recover.

LUCIA

I still believe, but I don't believe as I used to. Perhaps it was not right that I went through life as I did. Now I know that I rose up every morning full of unspeakable happiness. It seldom left me. I had never thought before that my beliefs in themselves were unbelievable. I used to boast that they were, but I did not know what I was saying.

SAM

But surely your God will not abandon you.

LUCIA

Now hours come to me when I hear a voice saying: There is no prayer. There is no God. There are people and trees, millions of them both, every moment dying.

SAM

You must go away. You need some rest.

LUCIA

You will come and see me again, won't you, Samuele?

SAM

Why of course not.

SCENE 4 SHOOTING SCENE

Countess Bernstein, Lucia, Miss Grier Duchess D'Acquierra , and Samuele are seated.

COUNTESS BERNSTEIN

Please have something to eat, Lucia.

LUCIA

I have no appetite.

COUNTESS BERNSTEIN

You seem so upset lately.

LUCIA

I am not upset.

COUNTESS BERNSTEIN

You must spend more time with me in the country.

LUCIA

Father I can't stand to listen this anymore. I must go. (She exits.)

SAM

She is not well.

COUNTESS BERNSTEIN

She is in great trouble.

CARDINAL

I am administering medicine to her.

SAM

But do you mean it.

CARDINAL

I want to say to both of you that I have sinned

SAM

How

COUNTESS BERNSTEIN

How

CARDINAL

I can not rest until I have repaired the harm I have done.

Cardinals study. Sam and Cardinal are seated.

CARDINAL

How is she? Is she well?

SAM

No, Father, she is in great trouble. Come inside, my son. I must speak to you.

CARDINAL

I want to say to you that I have sinned, greatly sinned. I cannot rest until I have tried to repair the harm I have done. Look, look at this letter she has written me. Is there no way I can reassure her?

SAM

There is only one way now. You must regain all her confidence before you touch on such matters again. You must come and go about her house as though nothing had happened.

CARDINAL

Oh, but she will never ask me again!

SAM

Yes, she is having you all to dinner quite soon. May I speak quite boldly, Eminence?

CARDINAL

Yes. I am a poor old man, all mistakes. Speak to me as you like.

SAM

If you go, take great care not to let slip any remark to reinstate yourself with some orthodox comments. She might misunderstand one little word and think you were attacking her.

CARDINAL

You're right.

SAM

It is very serious. Your ideas are not orthodox, Father, and if you said an orthodox thing it would not sound sincere and that would be worst of all. But if you come and go simply and affectionately, she will lose her horror of you.

CARDINAL

Horror of me!

SAM

Yes, and very gradually, perhaps after a year, you may be able.....

CARDINAL

But I may not live a year! God has chosen to take away my reason. I am an idiot, falling into every ditch. Oh, that I had died long and yet I cannot die until I have righted myself. Hand me that red book behind you.

SAM

(Handing him book) Here, Sir. But surely you must not speak of death..

CARDINAL

There are two plays about old men, Samuelino, that-grow dearer every day to an old man. There is your Lear, and opening Oedipus at Colonus he translated slowly: Generous son of Aegeus, to the gods alone old age and death come never. But all else is confounded by all-mastering time. The strength of earth decays and the strength of the body. Faith dies. Distrust is born. Among friends the same spirit does not last true.

SAM

Let us turn back to the subject. I see two people in distress. Don't you see that the whole thing rests, not on the abstract question as to whether her prayers may be answered, but on the question as to whether ONE prayer may be answered? Her prayer for France. Don't you believe such things real to other people?

CARDINAL

Again, she has never suffered.

SAM

What can you do

CARDINAL

I want to say to you that I have sinned greatly sinned. I cannot rest until I have tried to repair the harm I have done. Look at this letter she written me.

SAM

Yes I have seen it

CARDINAL

Her letter forbids explaining. There no way I can I
can assure her.

SAM

There is only one way now. You must gain all her
confidence before you touch on such matters again.
You must come and go about her as if nothing has
happened.

CARDINAL

But she will never ask me again

SAM

But she is us all over for dinner

CARDINAL

Thanks be to God. I thank thee I thank Thee I hank
Tee

SAM

May I speak boldly your Eminence

CARDINAL

Yes I am a poor old all man all mistakes Speak to me
as you like mistakes.

SAM

If you go take great care not to let slip any remark
n religious matters. I beg of you do not try to
reinstate yourself with some orthodox comments. She
might understand one little word and think you were
her faith again.

CARDINAL

You are right.

SAM

It is very serious. Your ideas are not orthodox ,
and if you said an orthodox thing it would sound
sincere and that would be worst of all.

But if you come and simply and affectionately she
will lose her forever

CARDINAL

Horror of me

SAM

Yes and very gradually perhaps after a year, you may
be able

CARDINAL

But I may not live a year. I should have stayed in
China. God has chosen to take away my reason.

SAM

Stop

CARDINAL

I am an idiot, falling into every ditch. Oh that I
had died long ago, and yet I cannot die until I have
righted myself. Hand me that red book behind you.
There are two plays about old men Samuelino that grow
dearer every day to an old man.

SAM

I don't understand Father.

CARDINAL

We must revert back to the Greek and Roman Gods.

SAM

I am shocked.

CARDINAL

Generous son of Aegeus to the gods alone old age and
death come never. But all else is confounded by all
mastering time .The strength of earth decays and the
strength of the body. Faith dies. Distrust is born
Among friend the same spirit does not last true.

SAM

What are you saying

It must be. CARDINAL

What must be. SAM

You sill see. CARDINAL

Lucia enters the room. She seems distraught

Lucia SAM

You have come back. We have been awaiting you. COUNTESS BERNSTEIN

Are you all right SAM

Yes. LUCIA

Thank God. SAM

My Daughter. CARDINAL

Your eminence. LUCIA

I believe you need some rest. CARDINAL

My world has fallen apart. LUCIA

Why do you say that. CARDINAL

I have no worth. LUCIA

SAM

You have worth Oh Lucia.

LUCIA

My faith is my world

SAM

You can regain your faith.

LUCIA

Give me some wine.

ALIX

Here my dear. Our best wine.

CARDINAL

Drink, my daughter.

ALIX

We all love you.

COUNTESS BERNSTEIN

You must rest at my home on the Amalfi coast.

ALIX

Or at my home in London.

COUNTESS BERNSTEIN

We love you

LUCIA

I will be fine. But is there a heaven and earth .

CARDINAL

Of course there. .

LUCIA

Cardinal

CARDINAL
Yes my daughter.

She pulls out gun and shoots
twice.

LUCIA
I have killed him

SAM
Quick the cardinal is dying.

COUNTESS BERNSTEIN
Call the doctor

ALIX
Immediately.

LUCIA
I have sinned.

CARDINAL
I am fine!

SAM
Get a knife immediately.

CARDINAL
I am fine.

COUNTESS BERNSTEIN
Blood is streaming from your chest.

CARDINAL
I am fine.

SAM

You need a doctor!

CARDINAL

I will be fine.

Ottima rushes into the room

Ottima, get a doctor.

OTTIMA

I found one

SAM

Who

OTTIMA

Me

SAM

Your a cook not a doctor

OTTIMA

This wont be the first bullets I have pulled

SAM

But

CARDINAL

Ottima can handle it. We must keep this silent.

LUCIA

I have sinned and I am damned forever

CARDINAL

No my dear. You are not a sinner and you have not sinned

LUCIA

I have tried to kill.

CARDINAL

But

OTTIMA

Shut up both of you.

She pulls out a towel some hot
want and a small knife.

SAM

Are you operating

OTTIMA

Yes. We can not loose time. And get me some
scotch.

SAM

But

Ottima pulls out the knife.

COUNTESS BERNSTEIN

I can have my own doctors here in no time.

OTTIMA

I am better

COUNTESS BERNSTEIN

But

CARDINAL

Proceed my Ottima

LUCIA

O I have sinned.

CARDINAL

You have not . You are a child of God.

LUCIA

I will be damned forever.

OTTIMA

Good for you . It's what you deserve. Now hand me a cloth with hot water, and shut up.

LUCIA

Part of my penance.

COUNTESS BERNSTEIN

Where did you learn to operate.

OTTIMA

In Sicily, you learn to remove bullets at an early age. NOW SHUT UP ALL OF YOU. Now Carlo, not a word out of you. This will be painful.

CARDINAL

Proceed, my daughter.

She begins operating. She takes out one bullet and then the other.

OTTIMA

No pain!

CARDINAL

I felt t nothing.

OTTIMA

Now drink this whiskey. All of it.. And here. These bullets are for you

CARDINAL

I am so tired.

LUCIA

We must call a real doctor.

OTTIMA

Shut up. I AM A REAL DOCTOR.

CARDINAL

No. Never. And not a word outside of these rooms.

ALIX

Yes

CARDINAL

Do you hear that Samuele

SAM

I do.

OTTIMA

Now rest and shut up

COUNTESS BERNSTEIN

Shall I drive him back to his home

OTTIMA

Yes and give him some whiskey.

CARDINAL

No, Samuele will drive me home.

COUNTESS BERNSTEIN

What?

CARDINAL

No one must know about this. The butler will talk. I know butlers.

COUNTESS BERNSTEIN

Yes.

LUCIA

I have sinned and will burn in hell

OTTIMA

Shut up and ask your damn divine kings to help you

CARDINAL

Let us go Samuel.

OTTIMA

Let him help you walk.

CARDINAL

I can walk alone.

They walk out. The Cardinal
struggling

LUCIA

I am the most worthless woman of all time

OTTIMA

Yes you are.

SCENE5 CARDINALS RESIDENCE

The cardinal is seated. A small
suitcase beside him. Knock at
door...

CARDINAL

Come in.

Samuel enters

SAM

Is it true.

CARDINAL

You see the suitcase.

SAM

Why

CARDINAL

How did you know I was leaving?

SAM

A little Italian Blackbird told me..

CARDINAL

Ah yes. The man in blue and the bird in blue.

SAM

What?

CARDINAL

Oh nothing.

SAM

You intended to leave without seeing me.?

CARDINAL

I did not.

SAM

Well

CARDINAL

Look behind the desk

Sam goes and retrieves two boxes
nicely wrapped.

SAM

Two gifts.

Yes
CARDINAL

Who are they for.
SAM

An American
CARDINAL

Who?
SAM

You.
CARDINAL

Let me open
SAM

Lucia enters

He falls asleep. Samuel exits.

SCENE 6 MISS GREIR'S HOME

Samuel and Miss Grier drink are
driving on the road

Where are we.
SAM

Sam. Listen to me.
MISS GRIER

All right.
SAM

MISS GRIER
The cardinal thinks that a little pain will be good
for her. He describes her as the woman who has never
suffered. He is in his dotage. I am so angry I am ill.

SAM
You must let that car pass us.

A car passes them.

MISS GRIER

There he is now.. They must have broken up early.

SAM

Something's happened.

MISS GRIER

Yes, something has very likely happened, God forgive.
Lucia has quarrelled with the Cardinal.

They come outside. Duchess Alix
Countess Bernstein supporting a
sobbing Lucia

LUCIA

I have done wrong.

COUNTESS BERNSTEIN

The servants must keep quite. Go to the The stairs
to her tower. Miss Grier without questioning the Not
a soul must hear of this. Oh, this must be kept so
quiet. What a thing to happen! Anything is possible
after this. What a blessing that no servants were in
the room when.

MISS GRIER

I know nothing. I can hardly believe my own senses,
she cried. Lucia must have gone mad.

COUNTESS BERNSTEIN

Elizabeth, will you believe me when I tell you that
we were sitting here quietly over our coffee- look! I
didn't see that hole in the ceiling before\

MISS GRIER

Isn't it all frightful? Please, Countess, please tell
us what happened! I am.- There we were sitting over
our coffee, talking.

COUNTESS BERNSTEIN

Suddenly Lucia went over to the piano, picked up a revolver from among the flowers and shot at the good Is he hurt?

MISS GRIER

No. It didn't even come near him. But what a thing to happen I What on earth could have made her do such a thing! We were friends—we were all such good friends. I do not understand anything. Try and think, Anna: did she say anything when she fired at him, or before she fired?

COUNTESS BERNSTEIN

That's the strangest of all. You won't believe me. She called out: The Devil is here. The Devil has come into this room. At the Cardinal! What had he been saying? Nothing Merely everyday things. We had been telling stories about the peasants. He had been telling us about some peasants he had come across on his walks outside S. Pancrazio. Suddenly Alix appeared: Elizabeth, go to her quickly. She wants to see you. She is alone. Miss Grier hurried out. Alix turned to me:

SCENE 7 MISS GRIERS HOUSE A WEEK LATER

Knock on the door. Miss Grier answers

MISS GRIER

I have been waiting for you ,

SAM

You don't think I'd leave without seeing you first.

MISS GRIER

No. And I have so much to share with you. So much.

SAM

Please.

MISS GRIER

We will miss you terribly. What do you want to know

SAM

Miss Grier did you know that you and your friends were called the cabal

MISS GRIER

Yes of course.

SAM

I shall never know such a company again. And yes there sees to be some last secret about you that I have never been able to seize. Haven't you anything to tell me that will show me what you all meant, how you found one another and what made you so different.

.

MISS GRIER

I don't know how to answer that. Let me think You know this is something I have never thought about.

SAM

I beg of you.

MISS GRIER

Well once I begin, it will only make you angry, and besides it's very long.

SAM

Miss Grier. I await you.

MISS GRIER

Let me keep it short.

SAM

Please, Miss Grier.

MISS GRIER

Well, first you must know that the gods of antiquity did not die with the arrival of Christianity

SAM

M-m-m

MISS GRIER

Why are you smiling.

SAM

You're adorable.

MISS GRIER

Thank you Sam so are you.

SAM

I asked about the Cardinal and you have gone back to Jupiter.

MISS GRIER

Sam your being mart

SAM

What happened to the Gods of antiquity

MISS GRIER

Samuele, let me share with you. Because of Christianity, when they began to lose worshippers they began to lose some of their divine attributes. They even found themselves able to die if they wanted to.

SAM

I never thought of that.

MISS GRIER

Oh yes. But when one of them dies his godhead was passed on to someone else.

SAM

How fascinating.

MISS GRIER

No sooner is Saturn dead than some man somewhere feels a new personality designing upon him like a straight jacket,

SAM

Oh my.

MISS GRIER

Do you see.

SAM

Now, Miss Greer

MISS GRIER

I told you it would make you angry.

SAM

But you don't pretend this is true.

MISS GRIER

You don't even pretend that is true. I wont tell you whether this si sam or an allegory or just nonsense,

SAM

But...

MISS GRIER

Next I am trying to read document that came into my hands. It was written by a certain Hollander who became the god Mercury in 1912. Will you listen?

SAM

Has this anything to do with the cabala?.

MISS GRIER

Yes

SAM

Well..

MISS GRIER

And with you!

SAM

OK

MISS GRIER

Actually sometimes I think you are the new Mercury

SAM

Oh my God

MISS GRIER

Take some to read that claret and listen quietly

SAM

I await breathlessly

MISS GRIER

(reading)

I was born in a dutch parsonage.

In 1885 I was the despair of my home and the terror of the village, a little liar and thief in the full enjoyment of my heath and wit. My real life began one morning of my twenty seventh year when I experienced the first of a series of violent pains in the center of my head. This was my deification. Some hand was emptying the cup of my skull of its silly gray brains and filling it with the divine gas of instinct. My body too had it part in this: each microscopic cell had to be transformed. I was not to fall sick or grow or die, save when I chose. As a historian of the gods, I have to keep record of an accident whereby through some monstrosity in spiritual law, and Apollo of the Seventeenth Century failed to completely deify: one arm remained corruptible. Scientists will tell you that they have never seen the sequence of cause and effect interrupted at the instance of prayer. Do they think the fools that their powers of observation clearer than the deices of a god? The poor laws of cause and effect are so often set aside that thy may be the merest approximation. I am not merely a god but a planet and I speak of things I know. So I stole my mothers savings from under her pillow and went to Paris

SAM

May I have some more claret

MISS GRIER

Of course, Sam. Help yourself.

SAM

Thank you.

MISS GRIER

I am not merely a god but a planet and I speak of thins I know. So I stole my mothers savings from under her pillow and went to Paris.

SAM

A Thief!

MISS GRIER

Let me continue. But it s at Rome

SAM

Fascinating

MISS GRIER

Drink your claret, Samuele.

SAM

Please continue

MISS GRIER

It was that I discovered the first great attribute of our nature , namely to wish for a thing is to command it. It certainly does not suddenly fall into your hand or descend in a rosy mist upon your carpet. But circumstances start a discreet ballet about you and the desired thing comes your way through the neatest possible imitation of natural law and probability scientists will tell you that they have never seen the sequence of cause and effect interrupted at the instance of prayer of divine regard or retribution. Do you think, the fool, that their powers of observation are clearer than the devices of a god?

SAM

Really

MISS GRIER

But it was at rome that were we last worshipped under our own name, and it is thither that we are irresistible called During the Journey, I gradually discovered further traits of my new being. I woke mornings to discover the bits of information had been deposited in my mind overnight, the enviable knowledge for instant that I had the power os sinning without remorse I entered the Porta del Popolo one midnight in June 1912. I ran the length of the Corso, leapt the fence that surrounds the Forum, and flung myself upon the ruins of my temple.

All night in the fine rain I tore my clothes in joy and anguish, while up the valley came as an interminable and ghostly procession singing my hymns and high in a tower of incense. With the coming of dawn my worshippers vanished and wings no longer fluttered at my heels. I climbed out of the sunken ruins and went out into the misty streets in search of some coffee.

SAM

Ob Brother!

MISS GRIER

Godlike I never reflect: all my actions arrive of themselves I pause to think I fall into errors. During the next year I made a great deal of money on the races at Parioli. I speculated in motion pictures and African wheat. I went into journalism and the misrepresentations I sowed will have deferred Europe's recovery from the war many scores of years. I love discord among gods and men. I have always been happy. I am the happiest of the Gods

I had been called to Rome to serve as the gods' messenger and secretary, but more than a year had passed before I recognized her. The Church of Santa Maria sopra Minerva is built over an ancient temple of the gods and there one day I found her. So impatient was I to discover the others that I disobeyed the laws of my nature and went hunting for them. I spent hours hanging about the station in search of newly arrived divinities. One night strode the platform waiting for the Paris Express. I was trembling with premonition. I had donned a silk hat and its complements, a coral camellia, and a little blond moustache. Plumed with the blue smoke and uttering splendid cries the train rushed into the station. The travelers descended from their compartments into a sea of relatives. I bowed to a Scandinavian diplomat and a Wagnerian prima donna. They returned my greeting hesitatingly; a glance into their eyes showed me that they were brilliant but not supernatural. There was Bacchus among the Oxford students on vacation; the Belgian nuns on pilgrimage discovered me.

I scanned faces for half an hour until the length of pavement was deserted and a long line of old women appeared. I stopped by the engine to ask a guard if another section of the train was as to follow I turned to see a strange face looking at me from the small window of the locomotive -misshapen, black with coal dust, gleaming with perspiration and content grinning from ear e-to ear, was Vulcan.

SAM

Fascinating. But is it bull.

MISS GRIER

I don't think so.

SAM

How does it all end.

MISS GRIER

Let me summarize

SAM

What am I to understand. You've made it twice as confuses . Explain some more

MISS GRIER

Your the last person I would expect to say what you have just said.
There follow fifty pages describing his encounters with other . Have you anything to say.

SAM

Please

MISS GRIER

And he goes on to say that the gods were afraid o f being laughed at for what they had lost.

Flight, for instance and invisibility, and omniscience and freedom from care. People would forget that had a few enviable powers: their strange their command over matter; their ability to In* o when they chose and to live beyond good..

SAM

What became of him?

MISS GRIER

Finally he decided to die, as they all do. Al f and heroes are by nature the enemies of Christianity -a faith trailing its aspirations and remorse ad whose presence every man is a failure. Only a will can enter the Kingdom of Heaven. Final out with the cult of themselves they give in. . They renounce themselves.

SAM

Miss grier I will never forget you.

MISS GRIER

Certainly you will keep in touch, Samuel. If you do not you will be as dreadful as most of our fellow Americans.

SAM

You will hear from me. Trust me.

MISS GRIER

Thank you. Now you must be off

SAM

Off I go.

SCENE 8 THE SHIP

Man in blue

SAM

We go beck

BLAIR

I can't wait to return to Italy.

SAM

How can I ever forget this experience.

BLAIR

Ah Italia.

SAM

Look there. That man in blue

BLAIR

What creep! Why is he following us.

SAM

Shall we contact the police?

BLAIR

Why spoil things. Besides he harms no one.

SAM

Eerie

BLAIR

I think I'll have some lunch

SAM

I think I'll just sit here

BLAIR

No lunch.

SAM

I just want to think about Rome and the Cabala and honor the dusk to the gods

BLAIR

A glutton for punishment. See you at the pool later.

He exits. Same stares at the
ocean .

SAM

Virgil, Virgil. Where are you.

VIRGIL

Death's brother, Sleep.

SAM

What is the Cabala

VIRGIL

They are able because they think they are able.

SAM

Where will they go

VIRGIL

The gates of hell are open night and day;

SAM

Really

VIRGIL

Fortune favors the brave.

SAM

What about my poems

VIRGIL

Do not commit your poems to pages alone, sing them I
pray you.

SAM

Why should I trust you?

VIRGIL

Trust one who has gone through it.

SAM

Tell me about the cabala

VIRGIL

In quarrels such as these not ours to intervene.

SAM

What shall I do

VIRGIL

Practice and thought might gradually forge many an art.

SAM

What have I learned

VIRGIL

Look with favour upon a bold beginning.

SAM

What have I gained.

VIRGIL

Your descendants shall gather your fruits.

SAM

What are your last words?

VIRGIL

O tyrant love, to what do you not drive the hearts of men.

SAM

What can you tell me about my writing

VIRGIL

Happy is he who gets to know the reasons for things.

SAM

And how can I succeed

VIRGIL

Fortune favors the bold.

SAM

And whom should I consult.

VIRGIL

Believe one who has proved it. Believe an expert

SAM

Will I suffer in life

VIRGIL

Each of us bears his own Hell.

SAM

And in eternity.

VIRGIL

It is easy to go down into Hell; night and day, the gates of dark Death stand wide; but to climb back again, to retrace one's steps to the upper air - there's the rub, the task.

SAM

And what do I do here on earth?

VIRGIL

Yield not to evils, but attack all the more boldly.

SAM

Shall I forget about the cabala.

VIRGIL

Whatever it is, I fear Greeks even when they bring gifts.

SAM

Will she help me?

VIRGIL

I have known sorrow and learned to aid the wretched.

SAM

And my Christian faith

VIRGIL

Love conquers all things; let us too surrender to Love.

SAM

I must take leave of you.

VIRGIL

Let us go singing as far as we go: the road will be less tedious.

SAM

Any caution

VIRGIL

A snake lurks in the grass.

SAM

But what must I do?

VIRGIL

As a twig is bent the tree inclines.

SAM

I shall always remember you.

VIRGIL

Perhaps one day this too will be pleasant to remember.

SAM

I am still confused by the Cabala.

VIRGIL

They can because they think they can. They can do all because they think they can. They can conquer who believe they can. But they are foolish.

SAM

Her comes the Cardinal. He too died.

VIRGIL

He did not. But I must leave and you will never see me again.

SAM

Please stay.

VIRGIL

Goodbye. I must go.

SAM

Please stay.

VIRGIL

You Americans are so persistent. Specially you young ones. In the heavens we are still apprehensive about you people

SAM

Prince of poets, Virgil, one of your guests and the last of the barbarians invokes you.

VIRGIL

I must go.

SAM

O Greatest of all Romans, out of the eternity of that limbo to which the Florentine, perhaps wrongly, consigned you, grant me a crumb of time.

VIRGIL

Silly boy.

SAM

Now indeed the shade in midair stands just above the rail. O gracious spirit of the ancient word and prophet of the ne, by that unfortunate guess wherein you foretold the coming of him who will admit to you His mountain, thou first Christian in Europe, speak to me.

VIRGIL

Except for this last salutation wherein you have touched my only pride, I would not delay here.

SAM

Thank you Sir.

VIRGIL

Detain me not from the absorbing games of my peers. Erasmus in debate with Plato, and Augustine, has descended from the hill and sits among us,

SAM

Be brief unfortunate barbarian. Was I right then in assuming that Dante was not completely in God's confidence

VIRGIL

Someday you may. Learn.

SAM

Goodbye, sweet soul.

VIRGIL

I must advise on one thing

SAM

Yes, sir!

VIRGIL

Go back to America

I am SAM

I mean go back to America VIRGIL

I am SAM

And only write about America. VIRGIL

I intend to write a play about a place called willow
corners SAM
'Good

I will. SAM

I must be off. VIRGIL

I will follow you into the sunset. SAM

We see a large sunset in the
background. And the whole cast of
characters arrives on stage.

END OF PLAY

