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Luther

By Camille Thomasson

Help me! Don't let me die
like a dog on this road!
Don't let me die!
I'll become a monk!
I'll become a monk!
I'll give myself to God!
I'll give myself to God!
I'll give myself to You!
I'll give myself to You!
Just spare me! Spare me!
Just help me!
Your father's here.
He's brought
the whole family.
He's leaving.
Father, please stay for supper!
Father!
Your first Mass,
and you crap yourself!
I hoped we could talk.
We scraped to send you
to the law,
to elevate you
to a noble profession.
I sweat in the mines for 20 years
to give you the chance
I never had!
Is that how you
interpret the commandment
to honor your father and mother?
God brought me here.
God?
A shaft of lightning
burns your arse,
and you call that God?
The devil, more like!
Father!
Shut up! Shut up!
Leave me alone!
Satan, stifle your lying tongue!
I never claimed to be good!
Never!
They know my faults here...
my pride, my cursed lust!

I confess them all!
I confess them all!
Just leave me!
Just leave me!
Just leave me!
Please leave me!
You're too hard on yourself,
Brother Martin.
Arguing with the devil
never does any of us any good.
He has had 5,000 years
of practice.
He knows all the weak spots.
I'm sorry about today.
I'm not here to scold you, Martin.
I'm too full of sin
to be a priest.
You know, in two years
I've never heard you confess
anything remotely interesting.
I live in terror of judgment.
And you think
self-hatred will save you?
Have you ever dared to think
that God is not just?
He has us born tainted by sin,
then He's angry with us
all our lives for our faults,
this righteous Judge...
who damns us...
threatening us
with the fires of hell!
I know! I know
I'm evil to think it!
You're not evil.
You're just not honest.
God isn't angry with you.
You are angry with God.
I wish there were no God.
Martin, what is it you seek?
A merciful God!
A God whom I can love.
A God who loves me.
Then look to Christ.

Bind yourself to Christ
and you will know God's love.
Say to Him,
"I'm yours. Save me."
"I am yours. Save me."
I am yours. Save me.
I am yours. Save me.
The brothers
are not happy with your decision.
They think there are
others in our cloister
better suited to deliver
your letters to Rome.
Martin has two degrees
and an aptitude for law.
It will be
a legal brief he carries.
Besides, it will do him good
to be out in the world.
We need your teaching, brother!
Try some wine.
Let go of me!
Let me go!
You listen, you little thief!
Keep going.
It's none of your business.
Keep going, for your good.
Hey, you look lonely, brother.
Alms for a blind man!
Come on, come inside.
No.
Statues of all
your favorite saints.
Saint Cecilia for sore throats,
Saint Paul for bad backs
and swollen feet, brother.
Saint Joe for chapped hands,
the Virgin...
Pope Julius is coming!
Get down!
Down!
The Pope is here!
It's the Holy Father!
Clear the streets!

Make way for the Pope!
Make way for the Pope!
This way
for Saint John the Baptist's head!
Move along.
Move along, there.
Move along from the Baptist's head.
Give generously!
Good enough, brother.
Fast or slow,
you'll get your 500 years.
Enough!
Name of the deceased
and relation?
Hendrick Luther.
Grandfather.
An Our Father
on every step.
When you reach the top of the stairs,
Hendrick will be released from Purgatory
and into the gates of Heaven.
Name of the deceased
and relation?
Wolfram Eschen, uncle.
An Our Father on every step.
When you reach the top of the stairs,
Wolfram will be released from Purgatory
and into the gates of Heaven.
You are back from Rome
almost two weeks.
Two weeks, and scarcely alert,
even in the confessional.
As your father in Christ,
I order you to speak.
Rome is a circus...
a running sewer.
You can buy anything...
sex, salvation.
They have brothels
just for clerics.
As they probably do
in Leipzig.
One church had the coins
for which Judas sold our Lord.

100 years off Purgatory
for kissing each one.
And you think Rome unique
in such relics?
There are even rumors
about the Holy Father himself,
that he has a lust for power!
Let's go outside.
What's wrong with here?
Well, this floor... the color.
I like color, but you give
your brothers a hard choice...
they either learn
to scrub like you,
or find a way to make your patch
a little less sparkling.
Gently,
like milking a cow.
The ancients
reverenced their bees.
They valued them
more than slaves.
Have you ever read
the New Testament, Martin?
No, Father.
Not many have,
but in Wittenberg you will.
Wittenberg?
A doctorate in theology.
You're sending me away
to study?
I'm sending you to the source...
the Scriptures.
Christ Himself.
Here I'm losing my faith,
feeling like a fool even to pray,
and you're sending me away?
You'll preach.
I'd be a fraud as a preacher!
We preach best
what we need to learn most.
Do not send me away from you.
God gave you gifts for a purpose.
In Wittenberg, you will be

able to change minds, open eyes.
That's what you want,
isn't it?
To change things?
Welcome to Wittenberg,
Father Martin.
I am Ulrick Wender.
I'll be helping you in the parish.
Gunter and I have caught some fish
for your first meal among us.
Wender. That's a Dutch name.
I was born in Utrecht.
We have to stop for Hanna.
She's a little... well, she keeps
a child hidden in the forest.
A child living in the forest?
A crippled child.
If we don't buy the wood,
the little thing doesn't get fed.
Wood, brother?
Half or full bundle?
As much as this will buy.
This is our new priest,
Father Martin.
Hello, Hanna.
Thank you, Hanna.
Otto!
Good morning, Otto!
This is our new preacher,
Father Martin.
Father.
I look forward
to seeing you at Mass.
Good luck, there.
Get back to your work, Thomas!
You'd think I was a leper.
They thought you were
coming for a collection.
They thought I wanted their money?
No, they thought the Pope
wanted their money.
Every time
a new priest comes,
they have to pay Rome

for the privilege of sacraments.
Nulla salus Extra ecclesiam.
This debate has raged
for over 1,400 years,
from the earliest days
of the church,
but now
the Fifth Lateran Council
has reaffirmed
Saint Cyprian's famous dictum,
"Nulla salus Extra ecclesiam...
outside the Holy Roman church,
there is no salvation."
Professor Carlstadt.
What of the Greek Christians?
The Greek Christians?
Well, an early church document
clearly states
that a Roman bishop,
not a Greek,
was Saint Peter's successor.
And, of course,
it was Peter whom our Lord Christ
made His representative on earth.
So we must consider the saints
of the Greek church to be damned?
You miss the point.
But that is the inevitable
consequence of Cyprian's claim...
Greek Christians
are outside salvation.
Or is this claim based on
an over-literal reading

of Matthew 16:

"Thou art Peter, and upon this rock,
I will build my church."
Yet two lines earlier,
in verse 16,
we find the very foundation
of our faith...
"You are the Christ,
the Son of the living God."
Surely the more universal

we make these great words,
the nearer we come
to the mind of Christ.
You question the authority
of the church council, sir?
Not at all.
Though in 1215,
the Fourth Lateran Council
allowed that Cyprian
could be wrong
and salvation
could exist outside the church...
though not outside Christ.
Thomas! Thomas!
Why would he do such a thing?
If only we knew
what was in his head.
What does God say, Father,
for suicide?
I never... Never said
I had the answers.
I defy you, devil! You...
I know your handiwork!
You and your stinking lies!
Shaming... shaming...
shaming a mother,
telling her
to hide her broken child,
telling her boy to kill himself!
Brother Martin, the boy's damned!
I'm not allowed to do this!
The others won't rest
with him in here!
This is holy ground!
He's a suicide!
Tell Otto to bring his son!
Tell him!
Some people say that
according to God's justice,
this boy is damned
because he took his life.
I say it was overcome
by the devil.
Is this child

any more to blame
for the despair that overtook him
than an innocent man who is
murdered by a robber in the woods?
God must be mercy.
God is mercy.
He is yours. Save him.
Terrible. Unforgiving.
That's how I saw God.
Punishing us in this life,
committing us to Purgatory
after death,
sentencing sinners to burn in hell
for all eternity.
But I was wrong.
Those who see God as angry...
do not see Him rightly...
but look upon a curtain
as if a dark storm cloud
has been drawn across His face.
If we truly believe
that Christ is our Savior...
then we have a God of love,
and to see God in faith
is to look upon
His friendly heart.
So when the devil throws
your sins in your face
and declares that you deserve
death and hell, tell him this...
"I admit that I deserve
death and hell. What of it?
"For I know One who suffered
and made satisfaction in my behalf.
"His name is Jesus Christ,
Son of God.
Where He is,
there I shall be also."
Prince Frederick wants him silenced.
You should have stopped him,
Carlstadt. Forbidden him.
Forbidden him, Spalatin?
To teach theology?
He undermines the prince.

Come on, there is no
clear teaching on relics.
When I became a monk,
I believed the monk's cowl
would make me holy.
Was I an arrogant fool?
Now they have made me
a doctor of divinity,
and I'm tempted to believe
that this scholar's robe
will make me wise.
Well, God once spoke
through the mouth of an ass.
Perhaps he's about to
do so again.
But I'll tell you straight
what I think.
Who here has been to Rome?
Did you buy an indulgence?
No.
I did.
For a silver florin, I freed
my grandfather from Purgatory.
For twice that, I could have sprung
grandma and Uncle Marcus too,
but I didn't have the funds,
so they had to stay in the hot place.
As for myself,
the priests assured me
that by gazing at sacred relics,
I could cut down
my time in Purgatory.
Luckily for me, Rome had
enough nails from the Holy Cross
to shoe every horse in Saxony.
But there are relics
elsewhere in Christendom.
Eighteen out of twelve apostles
are buried in Spain.
And yet here in Wittenberg,
we have the pick of the crop...
bread from the Last Supper,
milk from the Virgin's breast,
a thorn that pierced

Christ's brow on Calvary,
and 19,000 other bits
of sacred bone,
all authenticated sacred relics.
Even John Tetzel himself...
Inquisitor of Poland and Saxony,
seller of indulgences
extraordinary,
connoisseur of relics,
envies our collection!
To possess them
for a single night,
he would willingly surrender
five years of his earthly life!
Or 500 years in Purgatory.
And now, good citizens
of Wittenberg,
Prince Frederick of Saxony
invites you here to his courtyard
to witness a mystery play
on that ever most popular
of subjects...
the Day of Judgment.
Just like old times, Martin.
Excellency.
Secretary.
Prince's secretary.
Such secretaries have a habit
of becoming Excellencies.
Even when we were law students,
I had you marked for great things.
I was hoping you may be
of some help in that regard.
Prince Frederick is
exceedingly proud of his relics.
Then I'm sorry
he didn't hear my lecture.
Perhaps I could have swayed him.
He spent 20 years
and a large fortune
building his collection,
that in a week's time,
on All Saints' Day,
thousands of faithful Christians

are coming to see.
Paying to see.
Contributions are
customary for indulgences,
along with confession
and true penitence.
Ah, yes.
The right prayers,
the right coins,
and 1,900,202 years
and 27 days less in Purgatory.
Do not bite the hand
that feeds you, Martin.
Our prince pays
for your chair in this university.
His relics pay for your chair.
And he who pays the piper...
calls the tune.
Do not embarrass him.
No one is more delighted
with your popularity here.
He'd prefer you stay.
Master Kranauer,
is Luther open to persuasion?
Not likely, my prince.
He's as bitable as...
As a donkey,
you were going to say?
Indeed, indeed.
I am conscious of the great honor
you do me, Cardinal Cajetan,
in recommending me
to His Holiness.
I doubt you'll think it an honor
20 years from now, Aleander.
My first master
was Pope Alexander MI.
Three mistresses,
five children,
and a most fervent devotion
to bullfighting.
Pope Julius 11...
a month ago, he was
spiritual leader of the whole world.

Quite dignified-looking, isn't he?
But it's not
what Julius wanted.
He wanted to be
remembered as a warrior,
sitting on his horse,
sword in hand,
besieging the Venetians.
What is it you seek, Aleander?
To serve God.
To serve him with all my heart.
And that is
how you will be tempted.
Pope Leo X,
sovereign bishop of Rome,
successor to Saint Peter
and holy head
of the Roman Catholic church.
I've been longing for
someone to save Christendom.
Let us pray he's come.
Your reputation
precedes you, Aleander.
Then I am fearful.
Cardinal Cajetan says
you're a brilliant scholar,
yet possess
a fervent desire to serve.
I have need of such gifts.
Excellency.
Albert of Brandenburg wants
to be Archbishop of Mainz.
He's already archbishop
of two German territories.
Correct.
Then canon law disqualifies him
from holding a third.
Moreover, wasn't he underage
when granted his first post?
Just so.
Even as I myself was.
Doubtless Cajetan has informed you
that I was made cardinal
at the age of 13.

Albert's ambition
could still serve God's glory.
The Turks at the gates of Vienna.
The French are
yapping at my heels,
and Rome itself has
become an open sewer
filled with wild dogs
and cats by day
and brigands
and fornicators by night.
And this new
Basilica of Saint Peter's,
it's not just a building,
Aleander,
it's a symbol of my intent
to restore Christ's church.
And Albert could be
a minor blessing in that.
He offers 10,000 ducats
for Mainz.
But Albert is bankrupt.
You're well-informed.
The Fuggers will
lend him the money.
The imperial bankers?
An eight-year loan.
And how
would he repay them?
John Tetzel.
There, that's him!
Father John Tetzel!
Don't unfurl the banners
until the fire ignites.
Everything has been prepared
exactly as you instructed.
Welcome, Father Tetzel!
Come on, people!
Gather round!
Good people of Juterbog...
have you ever burned
your hand in the fire?
Even one finger
made raw by the flame

will torment you
throughout the night.
Is it not so?
Yes!
Imagine, then,
your entire body burning.
Not for one sleepless night...
not for a week,
but for all eternity!
Are we to be spared
the fires of damnation
on the Judgment Day?
Tonight, your Pope,
the vicar of Christ, sends you a gift,
a gift to save you
from such fires,
a special indulgence granted
for the building
of Saint Peter's Church in Rome...
where the bones
of the apostles lie moldering,
exposed to wind and rain,
desecrated by wild animals.
Take heed the words
of your Holy Father who says,
"Lay a stone for Saint Peter's,
"and you lay the foundation
for your own salvation
and happiness in heaven."
How? With this indulgence.
When? Tonight,
and only tonight.
Seek the Lord while he is near.
Here is your raft.
Take hold!
In Heaven, there is
a treasure chest filled with merit.
Merit from Christ Jesus,
the Virgin Mary, and the saints,
who, through their holy lives,
have merit to spare
for us poor sinners in need.
Tonight, that treasury
is open to you.

Do you not hear their voices,
the screaming voices?
Your deceased parents.
Grandparents.
Uncles, aunts screaming.
Beloved child.
Beloved child.
Because, for a few coins,
you can rescue them
from their punishments and pain.
Listen.
Open your ears.
Father calling to son,
mother to daughter.
When a coin
in the coffer rings,
the soul
from Purgatory springs.
God-fearing man,
do you have a coin for Christ?
Yes.
Gentle mother...
when the time comes,
make certain your crippled child
can run to Jesus.
These learned monks
are standing by
to write down your name
or the name of a loved one,
dead or alive, on this...
your passport to
the celestial joys of Paradise.
Name?
We can preach
until we're hoarse,
but if we cannot bring the Christ
of the Gospels to our people...
...what do we offer them?
Dr. Martin!
I did this for Grete.
Issued by
the Archbishop of Mainz.
Where did you get this?
Juterbog.

I bought it in the church.
It's just paper, Hanna.
These words mean...
nothing.
It's no good?
You must put your trust
in God's love.
Save your money
to feed Grete.
"To Albert of Mainz.
"father in Christ
and most illustrious prince.
"forgive me that I should
dare to write to you.
"I make bold
because it is my duty to serve you
"and to warn you
of the crooked practices
of those who claim
to represent Your Grace."
"Christ did not command
the preaching of indulgences.
but of the Gospel."
Forward this to Rome.
"Christians are to be taught
"that he who gives to the poor
"or lends to the needy
does a better deed than he
who buys indulgences."
"If the Pope
can empty Purgatory,
why would he not do so
out of love rather than for money?"
My God, who is this Martin Luther?
Fritz!
What?
Dr. Luther wanted
everyone to see that!
And everyone will.
Good people of Magdeburg,
take hold of the raft
while you still can.
So much grace
for so little coin!

German money
for the German church.
Does Saint Peter lie
in a German church?
Or Saint Paul?
We don't need your saints.
Or any of the holy apostles?
With this indulgence,
I can absolve any sin.
I can even save the soul of the man
who violates
the mother of God herself.
One-fifth of the usual take.
How will you
explain this to Rome?
Damn that heretic!
He will burn in hell.
This drunken little German monk
is intoxicated with himself.
Sober him.
Why was Prince Frederick
not apprised
of your letter
to Albert of Mainz?
Why?
I did not want him compromised.
Now our prince
can swear before God
he had no knowledge
of my writings
or my criticism
of the Archbishop.
Criticism of the Archbishop?
What of your criticism of Rome?
Do you have any idea
how embarrassing this is
to Prince Frederick,
his prize professor of theology
drawing condemnation
from the Pope?
My criticism was not
of the Holy Father himself,
but of those rogues
who claim to represent him.

You have been summoned
to appear by Rome.
You are threatened
with excommunication.
But I'm a loyal son
of the church!
I don't believe the Pope
would issue such a summons.
Welcome to the world
of politics, Doctor.
Martin...
Lay low.
Do not write
a single word to anyone
until I have a chance
to sort this out.
They've already published
my explanations of the 95 Theses.
I dedicated it to Pope Leo.
Clearly, clearly
you've heard the rumors...
that the Pope has
summoned me to Augsburg.
Well, it's true.
It's true, and I pray fervently
he will find no fault with me.
But think on this
while I am gone.
We obsess...
over relics.
Indulgences.
Pilgrimages to holy places.
Yet all the time,
all the time, there is Christ.
Christ. Christ, here...
in every corner,
in every hour of the day.
He isn't found
in the bones of saints...
but here,
in your love for each other,
in your love for one another...
in His sacraments,
and in God's holy word.

If we, if we live the word,
by faith...
in love
and service to one another,
we need fear
no man's judgment.
Good to see you.
Thank you.
Martin, the faculty
stands behind you.
I have written a letter of protest,
and I'll be the first to sign
should they arrest you in Augsburg.
Thank you, Carlstadt.
Thank you.
Bless you. Bless you.
Father.
Are you in trouble?
What happens now?
I honestly don't know.
Well...
Father, thank you.
Thank you, Father.
Just try to keep
your big mouth shut.
Father.
She wants you to know
that she prays for you every night.
Father.
Have I.?
Have I caused you trouble too?
I'm here
to get you through this.
They've stopped
Tetzel from preaching.
He's in Leipzig
under house arrest.
That's a good sign, isn't it?
That means that Rome must understand.
It just means he went too far.
Martin.
Martin, listen to me.
Cardinal Cajetan
didn't bring you here

to teach him the Scriptures.
I beg you in God's name
to have a care.
Be temperate.
Don't talk, just listen.
Your life
could depend on it.
He's waiting for you.
I am Girolamo Aleander,
representing Cardinal Cajetan.
Your meeting won't take long.
I'm here to prepare you for tonight.
Please.
Sit.
It was never my intention
to say anything against
the honor and the dignity
of our Holy Father.
Of course not, Brother Martin.
And that being the case,
that we all desire peace,
you only have to follow a few
simple rules of protocol.
When you meet the Cardinal,
you will throw yourself on the floor,
face to the ground.
The Cardinal will tell you to stand,
at which time you will kneel
and remain kneeling
throughout your hearing.
Do you understand?
Yes.
If the church takes exception
to a single point,
I will submit to her immediately.
But I'm sure when the Cardinal
and Pope Leo
understand my position...
they'll find no fault with me.
We have a misunderstanding.
There will be no discussion.
No debate.
You have one word to say
and one word only.

Revoco...
I recant...
and the matter is over.
I think we do have
a misunderstanding.
I came to Augsburg
to warn the Pope
about the abuses
against the faithful
by the indulgence preachers.
Have a care, Brother Martin.
It is the Pope who shall decide
what is or is not
beneficial to Christendom.
This evening, one word.
Revoco.
Thank you, Excellency.
Brother Martin...
with your permission,
I'm going to arrange a bath for you.
Thank you, Excellency.
My son, I know you desire
to be a faithful servant
of Christ and His church.
I am here to help you.
Stand on your feet, my son.
What do you have to say?
Have I erred?
Yes, you have erred.
How?
That I may avoid such error again.
You have erred
by teaching new doctrines.
Which of my teachings
is offensive to Rome?
For one, indulgences.
Pope Clement's decree,
Unigenitus.
clearly states that
the merits of Christ
are a treasure of indulgences.
Acquire.
I'm sorry, Your Grace.
I think you'll find it says...

"The merits of Christ acquire
the treasure of indulgences."
I am not here
to wrangle with you.
No, Your Grace.
But Unigenitus was issued
175 years ago,
and were this decree
not so embarrassing to our church,
perhaps it would not be
commonly called Extravagante
and left out of
most collections of canon law.
It contradicts Anommitanos.
Our present Pope Leo is
in harmony with Clement's decree...
and there ends the matter.
The honor of the Papacy
is not preserved
by the naked assertion
of Papal authority,
but by safeguarding
the Pope's credibility
and the clear testimonies
of divine Scripture.
The Pope interprets Scripture.
He may interpret it...
but he is not above it.
He was to say one word.
We both know
the selling of indulgences
have no Scriptural support.
If common people could
read the Bible for themselves,
they would understand
just how broad
the church's interpretations are.
That is outrageous!
The Scriptures are too complex
for even the average priest
to understand,
much less the common man!
Indulgences are
an established tradition

which give comfort to
millions of simple Christians.
Comfort? Your Grace,
I'm not interested in comfort.
Comfort is not the issue!
So you consider your discomfort
more important than
the survival of Christianity?
I'm interested in the truth!
The truth?
The Turks are building armies
on our eastern borders.
We are on the brink of war.
To the west, lies a world of souls
who have never heard the name of Christ.
That is the truth!
Christianity is tearing apart,
and just when we need
unity most,
you create confusion!
My goal is not to quarrel
with the Pope or the church,
but to defend them
with more than mere opinion.
The Gospel cannot be denied
for the word of man.
I refuse to argue
with that monk.
You said he was a simpleton.
He questioned
the Pope's authority.
Anommitanos.
Unigenitus.
Or shall we call it Extravagante
like the rest of the world?
He's a heretic.
Our orders were clear.
Either he recant...
Do not presume
to lecture me, Aleander.
I know perfectly well
what our orders were.
I kept my temper and merely asked
to be shown the error of my ways.

If you do not recant, you will be delivered to the Inquisition.

Will you recant?

What?

Then there is only one way to save your life.

Kneel.

Kneel!

Martin Luther,

in the name of Christ,

I release you from your vows

to the Augustinian order

and commend you to God's mercy.

I'm no longer your father,

do you understand?

Were I your father,

then under canon law,

I would be obligated to

deliver you to the authorities!

But I'll be

your spiritual father...

until the day I die.

Now go.

Go quickly!

There is a horse at the back gate.

Don't leave me alone,

Father. Please.

Father!

My prince.

how shall I answer?

The Cardinal demands

that Luther be delivered to Rome

or banished from Saxony.

Have you read Luther's work?

Yes, all of it.

Yes. He's a brilliant

little monk, isn't he,

with an independent mind.

Yes, he is.

Oh, Spalatin, you were

at law school with him, weren't you?

Did he show any inclination then

of surrender to influence?

No.

After all, all he has done
is to debate, eloquently,
on a most interesting subject.
And, after all,
that is all one can ask
a good university professor to do.
So what shall we say
to the Cardinal?
Nothing.
My lord, we have to respond.
Spalatin, there are
two ways of saying no
to someone you believe to be
stronger than yourself.
The first is to say nothing
and go on merely doing
what you were doing before,
and pretend
that you never heard,
allow time and inertia
to be your allies.
And the second?
And the second is to say no
in such a kind and thoughtful way
it befuddles them.
Naturally, if both
these strategies fail,
there is nothing but to relent.
Or to fight!
And of course,
if you decide to fight,
you also have to decide to win.
No, I'm not going to
send my monk to Rome.
They'll only kill him.
It's so irritating.
Who are they
to deprive my university
of such a fine mind?
Your little German monk
is still spewing filth at us.
He has a new cartoon circulating.
He calls you an ass
playing a harp, Cajetan.

The point, Your Holiness,
is that he does not write in Latin.
Luther writes in German.
That is his sword.
So he does not
play like a gentleman?
Ordinary Germans
can quote his work.
If we wait,
we might be too late.
You exaggerate his importance.
Besides, you told me yourself
you agree with his list of abuses.
Some of his concerns
have long been held
by those who love the church, yes.
I don't suppose your little monk
would be interested
in a cardinal's hat?
I think he would be
ashamed to wear it, Your Holiness.
We must put pressure
on Prince Frederick, Excellency.
Aleander is right.
Frederick is our key to Luther.
Germany is on the brink of chaos,
and we don't want
to divide the church.
I grow tired of you
missing the big picture, Cajetan.
That's why I've sent Karl von Miltitz
to Germany in your stead.
My lord, greetings
from our most Holy Father.
As for me, I am
especially honored to meet you,
as all of Christendom knows of
your steadfast devotion to the faith.
I have brought you a gift
from our Holy Father...
to express his highest esteem
for your lordship,
for, as you know, my lord,
this most sacred rose

is consecrated annually
by Pope Leo himself,
and sent to just one
favored prince
in recognition
of heroic loyalty and devotion
to Christ's holy church.
Spalatin, I'm sorry
for keeping you so late,
but this is a matter
of some urgency.
First of all,
give Miltitz 600 ducats
as an expression of our gratitude.
My lord, the rose
is hardly worth so much.
Oh, I know that.
And then tell them that
we will not deliver Luther to Rome.
And get that...
that rose...
Put it among the relics,
and while you're about it,
move all the relics out.
Move them to someplace
I don't even know where they are.
I don't want to know
where they are. I want...
Go on.
When I was a child,
I thought like a child,
I was a child,
I played like a child.
And now, thanks to the adults,
I've had to join
the world of adults.
And I am appalled...
by how easy they thought it was
to bribe me!
Armed horsemen!
Over there!
What is so important
that you interrupt us?
Prince Frederick of Saxony.

He refuses to surrender Luther
to you, Your Holiness.
Go! Go, go!
Arise, O Lord.
and judge thy cause.
A wild boar
has invaded thy vineyard.
We can no longer
suffer the serpent
to creep through
the field of the Lord.
The books of Martin Luther
are to be examined and burned.
Anyone who presumes to infringe
our excommunication
and anathema
will stand under the wrath
of Almighty God
and the Apostles Peter
and Paul.
Amen.
You can burn his books,
but you can't burn his ideas!
Go back to Rome, you butchers!
Go burn your own books!
Go burn the Pope's books!
Papist devils!
Papist devils, leave us!
By order of His Holiness,
Pope Leo X...
the works of Martin Luther
shall be erased
from the memory of man!
Martin Luther speaks the truth!
Devils.
Here, Father!
Find someone else to do it!
He belongs to us!
This... is what Rome calls
a Papal Bull,
an edict from the Pope himself.
There's only one thing to do
with this blast of wind.
Yes! Feed the fire!

Feed the fire with canon law!
Feed the fire with every lie
ever written in Rome!
Come on, feed it!
Feed the flames!
Feed it!
That's right, feed the flames!
Feed the flames!
Feed them!
My Emperor.
My good uncle.
Allow me to extend
my congratulations on your elevation.
I've come to speak to you
about Martin Luther.
Our Holy Father has sent
his new cardinal to advise us.
Oh! You mean you've
traveled all the way from Rome
just in order to advise us
about this small matter?
Heresy is never
a small matter, my lord.
Your Highness, if I might
for a moment have your ear.
If your business is Martin Luther...
My business is Saxony, sir...
...and I wish a brief audience
with my Emperor.
Deliver Luther to Rome.
I cannot.
He's my subject. It's my duty to see
that he gets a fair hearing.
Aleander has given me his word
that the Inquisition will
give Luther a proper hearing.
The Rome Inquisition
does not give hearings, my lord.
It gives death sentences.
And the whole of Germany
prays that you will defend her.
The heretic must be tried.
Your blessed grandfather
Maximilian

told us that no German subject
would ever be condemned
without a fair trial
in his own country.
Then we shall hear him
in Germany.
In Worms.
Worms is still a very long way
from Wittenberg, my lord,
and the Pope himself has
put a bounty on Luther's head.
His spies are everywhere,
in defiance of my humble rule,
and therefore, sir,
in defiance of your greater rule.
Then I will ensure
Martin Luther's safe conduct
to a fair hearing.
I myself shall send you
an imperial guard to escort him.
On that you have my word.
Oh, yes.
Martin Luther is coming!
Bless us, Father!
Please bless us!
Help my family, please, Doctor!
Give us your blessing!
Don't kneel to me.
I'm no saint.
Bless me, Father!
Bless me, Father!
Father! Bless me, Father!
I thought
you had abandoned me.
I thought I was
alone again in this world.
Be still, Martin.
One slip, and you'll
save the Emperor a trial.
I'm here to serve you.
I jest because I'm so afraid.
Martin, I hoped
you'd help reform the church,
not destroy it.

With all its sins,
the church is still the church.
What is a child
without its family?
How would people fare
left to themselves,
helpless and frightened?
All my life, I have seen
a world that hates evil
more than it loves good.
I beg you
to look to the good, Martin.
You are tearing the world apart.
That day when you
sent me out so boldly
to change the world...
Did you really think
there wouldn't be a cost?
It is simply a matter
of individual conscience.
They'll burn him for sure.
Do you, Martin Luther,
recognize these books?
The 95 Theses. A Sermon
on Indulgence and Grace.
The Babylonian Captivity.
Freedom of a Christian.
Address to the Christian Nobility
of the German Nation?
Are you the author?
All are mine.
These books contain heresies
against our holy church.
Do you recant
what you've written?
I...
Please, God,
let him say the right thing.
I was...
Speak up.
May I have time to consider?
You have had the time,
and you should have been
prepared to answer.

I would like to answer
satisfactorily,
without injury
to the divine word
or danger to my soul.
Any one of us might be
expected to bear witness,
unequivocally and fearlessly
at any time.
All the more in your case,
a famous, experienced
professor of theology.
We grant you one day.
Tomorrow you shall answer.
Damn you, go back to hell!
Damn you,
damn you, damn you!
Damn you, go back to hell!
Shut up, shut up,
shut up!
Shut up! I feel
your foul breath on my neck!
Happy devil you are,
to see me mute!
Shaking... shaking
like an animal at the slaughter!
Oh, my, yes.
Well, where is his faith now?
Where's his faith now?
Where's his boasting now?
Where's his boasting.?
I am yours. Save me.
I am yours.
Save me.
I am yours.
Save me.
Speak well, Doctor.
Good luck, Martin.
Good luck.
Good luck, Martin.
God be with you.
I pray Thee do Thy will.
Order in the hall.
Order!

Order!

Martin Luther, are you
the author of these writings?

I am.

Do you recant
what you have written here?

I cannot renounce all of my works
because they are not all the same.

First are those books in which
I have described Christian faith
and life so simply that
even my opponents have admitted
that these works are useful.

To renounce these writings
would be unthinkable,
for that would be to renounce
accepted Christian truths.

He is not here
to make speeches,
only to answer.

The second group of my work
is directed against the foul doctrine
and evil living of the Popes,
past and present.

No!

Yes!

Through the laws of the Pope
and the doctrines of men,
the consciences of the faithful have
been miserably vexed and flayed.

If I recant these books...

I will do nothing
but add strength to tyranny
and open not just the windows
but also the doors
to this great ungodliness.

He has condemned himself.

In the third group,
I have written against
private persons and individuals
who uphold Roman tyranny
and have attacked my own efforts
to encourage piety to Christ.

I confess...

that I have
written too harshly.
I am but a man and I can err.
Only let my errors
be proven by Scripture...
and I will revoke my work
and throw my books into the fire.
You have not
answered the question.
You, Martin Luther,
will not draw into doubt
those things
which the Catholic church
has judged already,
things that have passed into usage,
rite, and observance...
the faith that Christ,
the most perfect Lawgiver,
ordained,
the faith the martyrs
strengthened with their blood.
You wait in vain
for a disputation
over things that
you are obligated to believe.
Now give your answer.
Yes or no?
Will you recant or will you not?
Since Your Majesty
and Your Lordships
desire a simple reply...
I will answer.
Unless I am convinced
by Scripture
and by plain reason...
and not by Popes and councils
who have so often
contradicted themselves...
my conscience is captive
to the word of God.
To go against conscience
is neither right nor safe.
I cannot...
and I will not recant.

Here I stand.
I can do no other.
God help me.
Yes, Martin!
The man's a heretic!
He's a prophet of God!
Order!
Young Martin walks out!
You have your answer!
Order!
Order!
Order!
Luther!
No, it's not that simple.
Luther!
...the word of God!
Luther! Luther!
God bless you, Martin!
Luther!
Luther! Luther! Luther!
Make way!
I am descended
from a line of Christian emperors.
You will not make a heretic of me.
He has condemned himself,
Excellency.
He must be stopped before
he infects all of Germany.
My lord, you gave Luther
the promise of a safe conduct.
Luther's not a man but a demon,
clothed in his religious habit,
the better to deceive us.
Martin Luther's your subject.
What do you say?
He is too daring for me,
my lord.
Although not, it seems,
for the people.
If anything should happen
to him on the way back...
so be it.
Thank you!
God bless your journey home,

Brother Martin!
You'll always be
in our hearts, Martin!
Truth will out, Brother Martin!
God be with you!
Why are they leaving us?
Wait.
Martin.
Martin Luther, step down
and your comrade will be spared.
I'm Luther.
Ulrick, no!
I am Luther.
Spalatin!
Sorry about the rough ride.
Prince Frederick was keen
to nab you before someone else did.
They may have murdered Luther.
but they will not stop
what we have started.
The holy war has just begun!
Any man who holds himself up
as the master of others,
whether he be prince,
Pope, priest, even professor,
must repent...
must repent or be cut down!
You call me Professor Carlstadt.
No more!
From this day forward,
I am Brother Andreas.
Yes.
And all of you, likewise,
prepare yourselves
for the great leveling!
Yes!
"Thou shalt not make unto thee
any graven image."
Learn to despise
props and pretensions.
Stand with the righteous,
or be cut down with the others.
There is no middle ground!
Teach us!

Martin would never have shamed
a student for wearing a crucifix!
I know Martin Luther.
I discovered him.
He said reform.
You want revolt!
If you haven't got the stomach to finish
what he started, Melanchthon, step aside.
Why are you babbling in riddles?
Beware, or you too
shall be cut down.
What?
I asked for a Greek New Testament.
I need proper books,
not this rubbish.
And a Greek-German dictionary.
Leave us.
And a Greek-Latin dictionary.
This is not the time, Martin.
Well, the Emperor's
going to burn me, anyway.
He'll burn us all.
This is treason.
To have a New Testament
in German,
in words ordinary people
can understand?
Yes!
It's the thing Rome fears most.
Well, you must blame
the Author for that.
The wall...
break it down!
Make breaches!
No popes! No witches!
No priests!
This cursed house...
pull her down!
Come out, you...
How do you expect to do this?
Just give us our rights!
Blasphemers!
We must send in soldiers.
And cause more bloodshed?

If Wittenberg cannot settle
its religious problems without that,
then the rest of the world
will not be impressed.
Send for Luther.
How's the work?
Tricky.
Words are like children...
the more care you lavish on them,
the more they demand.
Rather like women.
I wouldn't know.
Take this verse in Saint Luke...
"It is the father's will
that nothing be lost."
In our language, the word "will"
denotes strength, willpower,
bending someone to your will.
But in the original Greek,
this three-letter word
denotes passion, fire,
inner organs.
It can mean beloved,
desire, even sexual desire.
Eat your porridge.
You're not even listening.
Besides, porridge does
nothing for my bowels.
No, it's not the word
that's important,
but what it's saying about God.
You are too much alone here.
"You are too much alone here."
Oh, very good, Spalatin.
Two weeks since you last came.
Of course I'm too much alone!
How can I write for our people
when I don't live among them?
The language of the Bible should be
like a mother talking to her children.
Well, it's decided,
Martin Luther
must not leave this room.
But Knight George...

may.
It's time you saw
for yourself, Martin.
Why? Why were they killed?
No reason.
Just happened to be
in the wrong place,
got in the way of a mob of peasants
looting a monastery.
The whole world's
been turned upside-down
by that madman Luther.
And him saying that
every Christian has the right
to take what they need by force.
Well, Luther's gone,
but his damned ideas have
set the whole earth on fire.
Soon this country will be blazing.
Please! Let me go
in the name of God!
Help me!
Please stop!
Take off your Roman dresses
or have them burnt off!
Cowards! Cowards!
Cowards!
How dare you?
You call yourselves Christians?
Christians?!
You, why are you standing there?
Put out this fire!
Run! Buckets! Shovels! Run!
When a limb is rotten,
you must cut it off.
You know that as well as I.
Get out!
Martin, this is for you!
Let it burn!
Get out of Wittenberg
before I beat you out!
Beat me out?
I defended you.
I supported you.

I'm carrying on
just as you would have.
You think this is my work?
This is never my work!
No, it's the people's work!
The people's work!
It's the people's work.
The people's work!
Spalatin.
Are you there?
Now, how is he?
Luther's depressed, my lord.
Confused.
He feels the peasants
have twisted his language.
But he will join them?
Luther abhors violence.
But he's in sympathy
with their grievances?
It's hard to argue against
freeing people from crippling taxes
or the purgatory of being
born slaves all their lives.
You know, if Luther
were to lift one finger,
every peasant in Germany
would rise up behind him.
Maybe.
Luther's a theologian, my lord.
He fights,
but with his tongue or his pen.
He will not draw the sword.
I have finally
torn the world apart.
I urged the princes to action.
and how they have
answered my call!
I said these rebels
were outside God's law.
that nothing on earth is more
poisonous, hurtful, or devilish
than a nebel.
that they must be stopped
by every means possible.

And yet the blood they sled
is as nothing
compared to this slaughter
I have unleashed.
You don't want to
go in there, sir.
It's over.
Yes. It's over.
How many?
No one knows yet.
How many?
Some say 50,000.
Some 100.
100,000...
dead peasants.
There were knights among them.
That's a plague, Spalatin.
That's butchery.
Have a care, Martin.
You may need these butchers.
Grete.
We are seeking Dr. Luther.
Please. My sisters and I
escaped three days ago
from the convent at Nimbschen.
And... you still came here?
Because this is
where Dr. Luther lives.
Sir, we were smuggled out
in these herring barrels.
We've been two nights
on an open wagon,
have had no rest,
no food, no sleep.
So if you could just tell me...
I...
I'm Luther.
Katharina von Bora.
Martin Luther.
But you know that already.
I'll take you to a shelter.
Who's there?
No.
Martin Luther?

My lord.
Well. We meet at last.
I dedicated this work
to you, my lord.
The translation
of the New Testament...
into our own language.
Into German?
But this will
separate us from Rome...
forever.
I have always
sought Christian unity,
but not at the price of servitude.
I answer to God's law,
not Roman.
Roman law is the reality.
I believe in the reality of Christ.
With no compromises?
None.
You realize, of course,
they'll take this to be
an act of sheer provocation.
Yes.
And they will not hesitate
to strike back.
Yes, I know.
Well, so long as you know.
Do you think I could have
my present now?
Yes, of course.
Take my heart
And never worry
Evil tongues will mock
We'll mock in turn
For my heart
is my gift to thee
Have not a care
Never worry
Stay, Ulrick, stay.
Please.
Marry one of
these lovely young women.
I know there's at least one left.

I'll bring God's word
to my homeland.
No, this is not a good time.
No prince can protect you there.
I want the Dutch people to know
what I experienced when I
read His word for the first time.
Then God be with you.
And with you, Martin.
You left so quickly,
I feared it was my singing.
If only it were.
Look at him.
He goes to his fate,
hurrying like a bridegroom.
Not all bridegrooms
are so fleet.
I would not say the bachelors
of Wittenberg have been tardy.
True.
The other nuns are all spoken for.
And you've made it so clear
that marriage
is an honorable estate...
for everyone else, at least.
I see why you scare them.
My grief is that I scare you.
I know you like me, Doctor.
I feel your heart
when we make music together.
But when the music ends,
you flee.
I'm a man of blood, Katie.
I divide people.
Thousands have died
because of me.
Most days I'm so depressed
I can't even get out of bed.
People try to make me
a fixed star.
But I'm not.
I'm a wandering planet.
No one should
look to me for guidance.

Two things I promise you...
we will make
joyous music together,
and to get to you,
your enemies will have to
step across my dead body.
In return,
I ask only one thing...
that you bring none of them
to our marriage bed,
not peasants or princes or Popes,
unless He be a God of love.
For God's sake,
at least get new candles!
There's nothing left except these.
Now!
So much for Leo
who would rebuild Rome...
Bankrupt.
800.000 ducats in debt.
Had he lived. He would have
sold the Vatican itself.
But as a Pope,
he could have changed the world.
He could have reformed the church
instead of just rebuilding it.
Leo was a spiritual dwarf
when we needed a giant like Luther.
Well, Luther's getting married.
To a runaway nun.
He wouldn't dare.
If I were to tell you that
Albert of Mainz sent us
a wedding present.
what would you say?
Send it back.
Then it's as well
he did no such thing,
or we'd be having
our first quarrel.
Martin.
They are going to burn Ulrick!
They caught him at the border.
What is it?

What has happened?
The Emperor summons
our princes to Augsburg.
Why?
To finish
what he began at Worms.
You mustn't go.
They'll fry you like a suckling pig.
If you die, everything
you stand for dies with you.
All right, what will you say? How will you
make them change their minds?
I don't know.
Well, I need to know!
Katie, first they
wanted me to recant.
Now they want half of Europe
to bow the knee.
We must fight!
Let somebody else fight.
Let somebody else be
roasted like a pig!
All I want is Luther.
Break the princes,
and you break Luther.
Their tactics will be to delay,
to bog the process down in detail.
Luther's hymns.
They are.
You must keep the issues
simple, Excellency.
They must accept
there is only one church.
This plague
just goes on spreading.
I should have burned him!
My princes. Brothers in Christ.
this isn't a time for caution.
but for boldness.
Charles is not the frightened youth
you saw at Worms, Dr. Luther.
He has humbled France
and sacked Rome itself.
Only the Turk

remains a threat to him.
In a word, he has all the time
and resource in the world
to reduce us to a powder
piece by piece,
state by state.
And I think he means to do it.
My lords...
silence will not save us.
If we challenge Charles,
will there be war...
the awful shedding
of yet more blood?
I honestly don't know. I've mislaid
all my former certainties.
But think.
The Emperor invites us
to present our creeds,
to present what we believe in.
Satan invites us to preach in hell.
Is that a trap?
Or our greatest opportunity so far?
And remember, since I may not
come with you to Augsburg,
you'll face Charles' wrath alone.
Your choice is simple.
If you give in, my lords,
the bright comet that is our faith
will shatter and be reduced
to a few isolated torches,
sputtering in a dark universe.
This way!
And why does the father run
to meet his prodigal son?
Landowners don't run.
Noblemen don't run.
Princes don't run.
So why does this rich,
landowning father run?
Because he's afraid.
He's so afraid that his son
will run back to the filthy pig farm.
He runs
because he loves his son.

And there's
a special word for this love.
Compassion.
Compassion.
And you know
what this word means?
It's just a church bell, Martin,
ringing the Angelus.
Continue the story.
Beloved princes of the Empire,
I will be brief
and to the point.
Your ministers
shall not preach,
and you will outlaw these Bibles
in the common language
and declare anyone who possesses one
an enemy of the state.
We will not stop our ministers
from preaching the word,
here or anywhere else.
Do not concede, my lord.
We will not outlaw
the new Bible, my lord.
As a sign
of your loyalty to me,
tomorrow you shall all march
in the Corpus Christi procession
to the cathedral
and worship, all of you,
in the Roman manner.
We will not, my lord.
You will!
Or you shall know my sword.
Before I let anyone
take from me the word of God
and ask me to deny my belief,
I will kneel
and let him strike off my head.
Your Highness, we have drawn up
a confession of our faith
which I believe
you will find blameless.
I am so very happy

to have been loved by you...

Katharina von Bora.

Martin! Martin

We did it, Martin

We did it

The Emperor allowed us to read

our confession of faith

The princes stood up to him

He had to listen

They can't stop us now,

Martin!

What happened in Augsburg opened the door
to religious freedom and changed the world.

Martin Luther lived, preached
and taught God's word another 16 years.

He and Katharina von Bora were
happily married and had six children.

His Bible translation laid the
foundations for a common German language.

Today about 540 million people celebrate
the Mass according to the form developed by Luther.