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# Hilde

By Maria von Heland

Luck should behave gently  
and treat my destiny with loving care.  
Ladies and gentlemen, we are starting  
our descend on Berlin.  
Please refrain from smoking  
and fasten your seatbelts.  
There they are. Hello, Hilde.  
Nice to have you back.  
Can we ask some questions?  
- One at a time.  
I'm doing fine. I'm always happy  
to feel the ground under my feet.  
Miss Knef, how do you explain...  
...all the ups and downs in your life?  
Success and failure are both overrated.  
But failure makes for better headlines.  
Tonight you'll make history  
as the first...  
...popular singer in the Philharmonie.  
Why Knef, of all people?  
If it's sold out, I don't ask.  
How would you answer?  
I never ran after the crowd.  
That's why I've ended up in places...  
...where the crowd never was. Fortunately.  
Or unfortunately.  
- Miss Knef,  
what is your next film project  
- Young man,  
I won't make another film.  
Unless poverty forces me to.  
You left Berlin when the Wall was built.  
How do you feel about it today?  
I just climb over walls, that's all.  
Can I have your autograph?  
- With pleasure.  
What's your name?  
Monika. Very good.  
Is that alright?  
- Thank you.  
Nice to have you back.  
I can't shake off this damn feeling  
that they'll hate me tonight.  
Too high, too sharp.

Roll sound.

- Rolling.

**Screen test:**

- Ready!

I'm sorry, I forgot my lines.

No, I was just kidding.

My name is Hildegard Knef, and...

I'd like to study acting  
at the Babelsberg film school.

My peace is gone,  
my heart is sore,  
I'll find it, ah, never,  
no, nevermore!

His noble form,  
his bearing so high,  
and his lips so smiling,  
and the power of his eye.

My bosom yearns  
toward him to go.

Ah! Might I clasp him  
and hold him so.

And kiss his lips  
as fain would I  
upon his kisses  
to swoon and die!

Why do you want to be an actress?

Because I have talent.

How do you know?

- I just do.

Turn your head to the side.

I want to see your profile.

Where were you?

- Hello, Mother.

Frieda, get inside.

Where is Grandfather?

- Waiting till the last minute,  
to sit near the door.

Hilde, come on!

Grandfather!

Hildegard!

I got accepted!

Hurry.

The boy's going downhill.

Thank God we're being evacuated.

I'm not coming, Mother.

- What?

I'm staying in Berlin.

- Quiet over there!

The girl's talking nonsense!

She certainly can't sing.

She has a boy's voice, it's unmelodic!

She has a boy's body.

She's not pretty or elegant, nothing!

Please take a seat.

You see, Ms Bongers,

we're going to be evacuated.

I can't stay, my son has a weak heart.

I have to take my daughter with me.

She mustn't steer a wrong course.

She has no talent for acting.

With respect, we decide that.

Or are you implying that

Minister Goebbels is no judge?

No.

No, I didn't mean...

Read it out, Hilde.

"Hildegard Knief perfectly represents  
the archetypal German girl.

She has an appealing charm,

a pretty smile, and a clear gaze.

On top of that, she is well-built  
and moves graciously.

She is nice, but her nose needs  
to be fixed.

Minister Goebbels."

Her nose has already been fixed once.

She broke her nose as a child.

But you think that a second operation  
would help?

I didn't break my nose, you broke it.

At 16 I used to softly say

I want to be great, be a winner,  
to be happy, to never lie.

At 16 I used to softly say

I want it all, or nothing.

A lady should not grovel.

Ewald von Demandowsky.

I saw your screen test, Miss Knef.

I think you have great talent.

Thank you.

Please, just one dress!

Just for a night.

- No.

I don't have time to go home.

Ewald von Demandowsky has asked me  
to see the new Hans Albers film.

Hildegard?

- Bongi.

I'll bring it back tomorrow. I promise.

I want you to stay here this evening.

- What?

But I've been invited...

By the Reich Film Supervisor, I know.

And that's precisely  
why I'd like you to stay here.

For screen tests.

- What screen tests?

You will be discovered many times yet.

It's too soon for you.

What a delightful surprise.

Ms Bongers told me  
you weren't coming.

The screen tests have been postponed.

I'm still rehearsing.

Your beauty is overwhelming,  
especially in this very special dress.

Come along, this way.

Shall we go?

Yes.

You dance well!

- It depends on who's leading.

Blimey!

When I hold you in my arm,  
you're just the right size.

Do you have to?

- Yes, of course.

Come back to sea!

Thanks, Duwe, that's enough.

We've seen enough.

There is no value  
in making excellent films

if all they depict is wretched lives,  
immorality,  
promiscuity and hopelessness.  
The film I approved was supposed...  
...to honour the merchant navy.  
This will be the film's last showing.  
There's not enough room in the car.  
Miss Knef,  
the others are waiting in the car.  
Thanks, Duwe. The car can leave.  
My family has been evacuated  
to Austria.  
There's something here...  
You're really still a child.  
...our armies push forward,  
so that we shall beat back the enemy!  
And I believe  
that one day, the victory...  
I'll be off.  
... never have I believed  
so strongly in anything.  
Have you heard?  
The telephone is called "selb" now.  
The Fuhrer has announced  
that foreign words must be eradicated.  
Erased, just like the enemy cities.  
We know no pardon...  
...we shall grant no pardon.  
"Pardon" is French, isn't it?  
Every division  
that is making small offensives...  
Oh, how nice! You're at home!  
We were filming all night.  
Mostly waiting, between the power cuts  
and the air raids.  
Why aren't you at Tobis Studios?  
Tobis has been bombed.  
The entire building was destroyed.  
I just met with Goebbels.  
The film has been cancelled.  
My film?  
I'm sorry.  
- But why didn't anyone tell me?  
I'm telling you now!

Heil Hitler!

I have to speak to Mr Demandowsky.

One moment, please.

Mr Demandowsky!

Leave! The Russians will rape you!

They'll beat you to death!

Go, before it's too late.

Heil Hitler!

- What do you want?

You know the task ahead of you.

And I know that you

will carry it out as expected.

The hour of your glory is here.

I've been called up.

The Fuhrer is calling up reserves.

I have to report

to Schmargendorf HQ today.

I'm coming with you.

That's out of the question.

Then shoot me.

I won't wait to be beaten or raped.

It's impossible. Please!

It's impossible.

Age?

Nineteen.

- A girl.

I don't believe it!

- She's my fiancée.

What if the Russians get hold of her?

Look around you, soldier.

Look at your troops

and tell me I can't fight!

Can you shoot?

Those cans outside.

Wait.

Here, the safety catch.

Fire.

Stop.

Leave your helmet on,

head down, mouth shut.

Heil Hitler!

Move it!

Close ranks.

It's your watch.

They're coming.  
Heads down!  
Stay calm.  
Take cover!  
Pull back! Move it!  
Move it! Run!  
We have to move.  
Marry me.  
Be my wife before we die.  
We have to move! We have to!  
Everyone stop.  
First group, take a leak.  
The others, sit down.  
And no talking!  
I made it out of Stalingrad  
just so some Pole  
lets me piss with kids and women!  
No talking.  
Everyone out!  
Stop.  
One, two, three,  
four,  
five. Move.  
Go.  
Let's go.  
Out of the way! Out of the way!  
First group, sit down.  
Hurry up! Now!  
Second group, take a leak.  
Third group, sit down.  
Strip to the waist!  
Name? Rank?  
Come on, I want to go home.  
Strip to the waist!  
I didn't have time to cut it.  
God help you when they find out.  
I don't think God is here.  
But you are here.  
The world should re-shape itself  
and keep its worries to itself.  
Hilde!  
Heinz! Oh, God!  
Are you okay?  
Come on!



Mother! Grandpa! Hilde is back!  
Mother! Come on!  
You made it!  
Thank God! Thank God!  
Don't tell me what you went through.  
I don't want to know.  
I'm so sorry.  
You're alive.  
You can't stay here.  
The Russians come every night.  
They're looking for you  
because of Demandowsky.  
Is he here?  
No.  
He must still be with them  
in military prison.  
I'll manage, Grandpa.  
I promise you, I'll manage.  
Hey, Miss!  
I've got top brand cigarettes.  
American quality. Freshly rolled.  
- No, sorry.  
Or a stub for a deutschmark!  
It's okay.  
Be careful, and good luck.  
Helga, hurry. We have to leave.  
What are you doing here?  
Were you here all night?  
Got anything to eat?  
Come along.  
Get up.  
We play here every night.  
No Krauts.  
Just for the Americans.  
I just got my license.  
Can you sing?  
Only out of tune. Everyone told me so.  
Really?  
Come on, you're an actress.  
You know this one?  
Give it a try.  
Come on.  
Intriguing.  
But I could get used to it.

Get a licence, then we can play here.

Soup, every evening.

- Soup? What kind of soup?

Meat soup.

Meat soup?

- I never found any meat,  
but I'll keep on looking.

Here, my health card.

I'm an actress,

and I hope to get work

when the theatres open.

You think you're superior  
to the others, don't you?

No.

No, I...

I'm hungry, homeless,  
and desperate, We'll all be the same.

We're all walking around  
looking for a new start.

Would chewing gum help?

No, thanks.

All I want is a stage licence.

And I'll keep coming till I get one.

Were you in the Party?

- No.

But your husband was.

- What husband?

We have reports that you...

married Ewald von Demandowsky.

I don't know who told you that,  
but it's not true.

Then tell us the truth.

The truth?

I believe we get what we deserve.

I was 7 when Hitler came to power.

I was too young to start a revolution.

That fur coat is going to catch  
one hell of a cold.

Do you want a ride?

You're American.

I don't talk to Americans.

Am I American? Really?

I guess you're right.

Funny, I didn't notice.

Are you hungry?  
How about an American hamburger?  
Come on! Get in.  
I'll drop you off wherever you want.  
My God, get in.  
You'll freeze in this weather.  
How come your German is so good?  
Get in, or I'll never tell you.  
You're an actress, right?  
- Yes.  
I'm a film officer.  
Can I pick you up tonight?  
No.  
- Tomorrow?  
No.  
- Next week?  
No.  
- Okay.  
I can see you're itching to know  
how I learned German.  
Ta-ta! It's my mother tongue.  
I grew up in Czechoslovakia  
and I'm a Jew.  
Apparently Hitler didn't like us much,  
so we left for America.  
Fascinating, huh?  
You want to get out here?  
Go on then, get out.  
Do you think I'm funny?  
You have a lot of spirit. Don't lose it.  
Don't worry, I was born that way.  
I'll bring some food next time.  
That fur coat weighs more than you do.  
You're making me nervous!  
Play something else.  
Afternoon.  
Afternoon.  
- Hello.  
What are you doing here?  
I am too early.  
- Yes.  
The prologue is cancelled.  
But...  
that's the only text I have!

Not anymore.  
Anna has double pneumonia.  
You'll take over the lead role. Ricci!  
Are you serious?  
I'm dead serious. Here.  
I'm sorry, Anna.  
- Go learn your lines!  
Thank you.  
Everyone off!  
Close the curtain!  
What do you say now?  
Pommer is in town!  
I've never met Pommer.  
- What?  
Don't call him Pommer or Erich!  
He was the boss at UFA.  
Off you go!  
Go out there on your own.  
Look, that's the guy I told you about.  
You've been coming to every show.  
Ricci saw you.  
He says you come to see me.  
Is that true?  
The accused pleads guilty.  
I'm in love.  
Didn't you read the sign?  
You know what they say:  
Love is blind.  
So why are you staring at me?  
Would you love me  
if I looked like this?  
You see what I mean?  
Love is not blind.  
And I'm 100% Kraut.  
You'll get into trouble with me.  
As long as I'm with you,  
I don't care.  
Hocus,  
pocus, fidibus!  
I thought you'd like this.  
Anything else you want to bring up?  
Breakfast or lunch?  
It was the meat.  
I'm not used to it anymore.

Will you come to see me again?  
The Russians are showing a film  
in Pankow tomorrow.  
It's allied officers only,  
but I know the Russian film officer.  
He said I can bring you along.  
What do you say?  
- What do I say?  
I say, "yes"!  
Cigarette?  
- Yes, please.  
Thank you.  
Sixteen of my relatives died like that.  
They say I should hate you...  
because you're German.  
But I won't do that.  
I refuse.  
It's all just chance.  
I could've been you,  
and vice-versa.  
They don't want us to think that way.  
But they're wrong.  
I know they're wrong.  
I was at Dachau concentration camp.  
The day they opened the gates...  
I've seen enough.  
Enough.  
We are the survivors.  
That is a gift.  
We mustn't throw it away.  
I won't throw anything away.  
Hold me tight.  
As if we hadn't suffered enough!  
What he did is a disgrace.  
You mustn't talk about it.  
He knew we'd all be out.  
He must've collected sleeping pills.  
Why couldn't he die of old age  
like a normal person?  
We'll just say he died in his sleep.  
Well, he did...  
so to speak.  
Here.  
It's for you.

He only wrote YOUR name on it.  
"My dear child,  
I am too old  
to forget all the atrocities.  
And too old to be any use to you.  
Perhaps you'll understand one day,  
and forgive me."  
What does it say?  
Nothing!  
Nice of you to visit.  
Thank you.  
Why did you ask me to come?  
- Curiosity.  
I produced many German films  
before Hitler took power.  
I produced films in France,  
England, and Hollywood.  
You know where I last worked?  
As a labourer  
in a New York china factory.  
Yes, and now I'm here.  
My job, with American supervision,  
is to revive the German film industry.  
Or to prevent its revival.  
We don't know which yet.  
Tell me about yourself.  
I was at school during the war.  
I'm not a Nazi, I wasn't in the Party.  
Excuse me, Miss Knef,  
this isn't an interrogation.  
I read your records. I had to.  
You're an actress,  
and a good one, it seems.  
You'd make a good impression  
at any interrogation.  
No matter how I answer,  
you can use it against me.  
That's true.  
So, you were an acting student  
who was in Nazi films  
that fortunately were never completed.  
But you didn't turn down the roles,  
did you?  
No.

- Why not?

They weren't propaganda films.

Back then, I...

didn't realize it was wrong.

Of course you didn't.

I'm just an actress, Mr Pommer.

I work hard, and if you give me a role

I won't disappoint you.

I've been informed that your lover  
was a high-ranking Nazi.

I didn't know he was a Nazi.

I found out during the interrogations.

You always have a ready answer, eh?

I'm used to these questions.

And what if I don't believe you?

We never discussed politics.

We talked about art... or he did.

He was much older than me.

He knew much more...

- Yes,

I met Demandowsky as a young man.

He began his career

as a mediocre actor...

A handsome, likeable fellow.

But he was a Nazi disciple...

right from the start.

He joined the Nazi Party in 1930.

Did you know he is in Berlin?

I heard he's currently

in the American military hospital.

Do you still love him?

You're a good interrogator, Mr Pommer.

I can't answer that question.

I'm not really being fair.

Please forgive me.

You should know that I like you.

You've done some very stupid things.

But you are without question

the best budding actress in Germany.

I want to advise you.

Until I can produce films again.

Excuse me...

I'm so nervous...

I just want to make it.

I don't know why,  
but I just have to make it.  
You will.

- Yes.

You'll make it.

OCTOBER, 1946

Hey, Kurt! - Mr Schulze,  
the gentlemen of the DEFA.  
... Hilde!

Boleslav!

Hilde, my little wild one!

Just look at you!

Letting you go off to make a film  
was a big mistake!

Your mistake, our good fortune!

Ah, Mr Pommer.

Good luck.

- Miss Knef.

What could I do, Mr Pommer?

How can I run a theatre

when my best people go into film?

You're the best you have!

- Ah, Hilde.

Good luck, okay?

Do I have to stay in the auditorium?

I mean,

if they don't like the film

there's nothing I can do.

Of course you have to stay.

It's the premiere!

You might become a star tonight.

Do you want to disappoint your fans?

Of course not.

Selznick is interested in you.

Dieterle saw "Murderers Among Us"

and told Selznick.

The article in "Life" did the rest.

Who are Selznick and Dieterle?

Selznick brought Ingrid Bergman

to America.

He produced 'Gone with the Wind'.

Is he nice?

Hollywood can wait. It's too soon.

How old was Dietrich when she went?



You can't compare yourself to her.  
She left Germany in 1930.  
She was always on the other side.  
You weren't. You have something to hide.  
And don't let Kurt Hirsch  
talk you into anything.  
Concentrate on your career here  
and forget Hollywood.  
And drop the make up,  
it doesn't suit you.  
What's Hollywood like?  
- Oh, you'd love it.  
Sunshine, palm trees, the ocean,  
interesting people...  
with an international career.  
And later, I said, I want to understand  
see and experience things, cherish them,  
and later, I said, I don't want  
to be alone, but yet be free.  
Here they come!  
No, no, I didn't get married, you did.  
California, 1948  
Hello.  
Hi, we have an appointment  
with Mr. Selznick.  
Ms. Knief has an appointment,  
she can enter.  
You have to wait for her here, Sir.  
I'm sorry, I'm her husband,  
I really need to come with her.  
Sir, there is no exception...  
I know you're doing your job,  
but I really...  
Sir, you have to wait here.  
Off you go.  
- I don't want to go alone.  
You'll be fine.  
My English isn't good enough.  
Good luck.  
I hear you are a great actress. Du -  
Thank you.  
Whoever told you that,  
tell them I'm flattered.  
Ja, ja Sure thing. Selznick wants you.

Sign up with me, and you are on payroll.  
What do you mean, "pay roll"?  
Selznick will make minimum 3 films with you.  
Sign it.  
Down here.  
You start getting the paychecks tomorrow.  
When will I start?  
Is there a script?  
Slow down, girl. Selznick will think of  
a good name for you  
We need a new name.  
What's wrong with my name?  
Keneff? Forget it.  
Roll camera - screen test - Keneff  
take one  
SLATE! - ACTION!  
You still love me, Harry, don't you?  
Say you still love me.  
I gotta go.  
Harry, I love you.  
Sorry. Irene, but Mary is waiting for me.  
Mary..?!  
Sorry, Irene. Mary needs me.  
But, Harry - why Mary?  
Why me?  
That's what I'd like to know.  
It's more idiotic than the Russian films  
I dubbed  
to pay my rent in Berlin!  
If you want to see,  
whether I'm a good actress,  
give me a proper part.  
You're an actress, girl -  
if we wanted a critic,  
we would have hired one.  
That's it, I'm outta here. It's a wrap!  
SIX MONTHS LATER  
Connect me with Mexico-City, Donna.  
RESHOOT. I don't care!  
Clark! We are all set on the details.  
You start next week.  
It's going to be brilliant.  
You call me, if there is anything.  
'- Hildeee, Hildeee, Hildeee

what are we gonna do with you,  
Should we call ya Gilda Christian?  
You like that.  
You got your teeth done yet?  
Re-cast and re-shoot.  
I don't care what the consequences  
for Howard are.  
I am the one with the consequences.  
We say you are from Austria.  
You can't be German.  
Everyone hates the Germans.  
Am I getting through here?  
AM I GETTING THROUGH?  
Hitler was Austrian.  
I believe you, sweetheart,  
but no one knows that around here.  
Selznick. Frankie.  
Yeah, can you hold on, Frankie.  
Do you like me? Just a little bit?  
I don't know you.  
Well, we can change that, honey.  
Don't worry sweetheart.  
Everythings gonna be great.  
I'm gonna make you the new Garbo.  
What happened to Mexico-City?  
I need MEXICO CITY NOW!  
I don't care! Frankie?  
Mr. Selznick. Do you have a part for me?  
A part?  
I did not come here  
to pick up a paycheck every week.  
I came here to be an actress.  
As long as she does not leave us  
hanging on.  
We need to wrap this one up on time.  
Selznick.  
Honey, how are you?  
Aha, it's...no l was...to slow...I...  
Aha...  
It's not that l...aha...  
no, I'm listening to you  
...aha

**ONE YEAR LATER:**

I've had enough of this sun!  
I want some rain!  
Rain? We're almost in the desert.  
That's why Hollywood's here.  
They need light for the films.  
But they don't need me.  
Selznick's divorce  
might have cost him his studio,  
but he still has you under contract.  
I'll try to get him  
to loan you to Paramount.  
Oh, Kurt!  
Stop pretending  
you have things under control.  
You never did.  
Hollywood is just...  
out of your league.  
Selznick won't let you go.  
He needs to earn money.  
Why do you stay with me, Kurt?  
Because I love you.  
You're the exception.  
Every producer  
has to ask himself one question:  
What will the audience accept?  
That's what you tried to tell me.  
That the public here  
won't accept a German star.  
You should've stayed at home.  
You don't know it's good till it's over.  
But if it's bad,  
you know straight away.  
Mr. Selznick?  
Who is it?  
Pommer. Erich Pommer.  
Mr. Pommer!  
You are one of the few men on this earth  
whom I truly admire.  
Excuse the mess, I am closing down.  
Sorry to hear that.  
You have made a series of...  
excellent pictures. Gone With The Wind,  
maybe the greatest american film ever made.  
Aha... my problem ain't the films.

It's the ladies.  
Are you married, Mr. Pommer?  
Oh yes. I am. Since 1913.  
Mr. Selznick.  
Hildee? Come in, sit down.  
I have come here to get out of my contract.  
Are you here together?  
Yes, I have brought Mr. Pommer along,  
not because I cannot speak for myself,  
but because you, Mr. Selznick,  
never listen.  
See what I mean?  
I have a problem with the ladies.  
Mr. Selznick, I have survived  
the bombraids in Berlin,  
I have survived the Russian prisoncamps.  
I got out of all this, to find myself  
your prisoner here in Hollywood.  
A prisoner on salary, honey.  
I'm an actress that no one sees.  
I cannot work. I cannot sleep.  
I cannot think.  
I went through so much,  
to now be nothing at all and you know why?  
Because you, Mr. Selzsnick, made me  
into nothing at all!  
Business is business, Hildee...!  
Just let me go home.  
I have been offered a film,  
and I just want to go home.  
What do you think, Mr. Pommer?  
You should respect a woman  
who knows what she wants.  
That's exactly what my wife said to me  
and look where that got me!  
Hello, Hilde! Show us a leg,  
just like in Hollywood.  
Can you still speak German?  
- I never could!  
Tell us about your films.  
Why did you come back?  
The rain. Sunshine is like chocolate:  
Too much makes you sick.  
Thank you!

Come in.

Here you are.

- Thank you.

Mother!

I thought you'd come to the airport.

I thought you'd come home.

It must be expensive to live here.

I don't know...

I don't pay the bills.

I see.

The papers are writing  
all sorts of things about you.

What can I say, Mother?

If you marry the arts,  
you get the critics as a mother-in-law.

Everything's changed at home.

The walls, the doors, the roof...

Every apartment has a water closet!

That's good, right?

Are you managing okay?

Is Heinz taking care of you?

No, not your brother.

He's always on the go.

It's strange since his father died.

I never thought I'd miss him.

When we married, I hardly liked him.

But we grew really close at the end.

Strange how things turn out.

How is Kurt? What's he up to?

He's gone for a walk.

To be honest,

it's not easy for us right now.

He...

He had great hopes for Hollywood.

For both of us.

But we felt lost over there.

Everyone plays games,  
and Kurt and I never really  
figured out how to play.

But I hope it'll get better  
when I start shooting again.

What kind of film is it?

With Willi Forst! What's the title...

"The Story of a Sinner".

Nothing indecent, I hope.  
Let's start with the close up.  
- Get ready to shoot.  
Close up of Hilde.  
You're so beautiful, it's a crime.  
Are you ready?  
- Yes.  
Get ready.  
Good evening.  
- Mr Forst!  
How are you this evening?  
Fantastic, of course, in this company.  
Forgive me, now I see who you are with.  
Welcome home, Miss Knef.  
Thank you.  
Here's to you, your beauty,  
and your future.  
And to our film.  
Are you there, Kurt?  
Welcome to the flower shop.  
They just arrived.  
Guess who sent them.  
Your director  
has a generous expense account.  
I'm sorry.  
I think Willi Forst has fallen for me.  
I can smell it.  
Kurt! What's wrong?  
Did you shoot a nude scene yesterday?  
I know it.  
Your chauffeur told me.  
You shot a nude scene yesterday!  
She's a nude model.  
And since she's a nude model,  
we decided she should be naked.  
And she's a prostitute.  
- She's a cheap whore!  
Anatole, you're a persuasive devil!  
Yes, I'll finish on time.  
Then you can have her.  
- Good.  
Hilde!  
I think you know Anatole Litvak.  
Good evening.

- Take a seat, darling.  
What can I say except 'yes'? Yes,  
yes, yes, to a divine woman!  
I'm jealous, of course,  
but I'll take it like a gentleman.  
When do you start?  
I'll take her  
as soon as you can let her go.  
The way you two talk,  
you'd think I was a race horse.  
Mr Litvak, I don't recall  
you asking me if I want the role.  
Oh, what a faux pas.  
I should make a formal proposal.  
- Go ahead.  
I'm waiting.  
I'm deciding what location  
would be best suited to ask you.  
The Kempinski isn't classy enough.  
We'll have to book a flight  
and climb the Eiffel Tower.  
Have you ever been up there?  
No.  
It's a big world.  
I still have a lot to see.  
Well, here's to the future.  
- To the future.  
Are you here, Kurt?  
You scared me!  
Enjoy your evening  
with your new friends?  
Or should I say 'lovers'?  
- Stop it!  
This is about my work.  
I see.  
It's no longer about us.  
You're making things very hard for me.  
It's just a game.  
Can't you see that?  
I have to play along.  
Anatole Litvak wants to work with me.  
When?  
- Straight away.  
You don't want to come home?



Where is 'home', Kurt?  
Isn't it where the heart is?  
The director or me, Hilde.  
It's your choice.  
You have to decide.  
I can't do it.  
The Moor has done his duty,  
the Moor may go.  
Hildegard Knef!  
You will burn in Hell!  
She is the sinner!  
"The Story of a Sinner" is a scandal,  
and an affront to every decent German.  
Exposed, debauched scenes,  
its superficial treatment  
of prostitution,  
its bad portrayal and glorification  
of a couple living in sin,  
the sexual devotion  
that is offered as sacrifice...  
Are you in there, Hilde?  
It's me, Bongi.  
Open the door, child.  
- Bongi?  
I don't like standing outside!  
Bongi?  
- Yes.  
My God, you look awful.  
You should always make big mistakes.  
And avoid  
the small boring ones at all cost.  
At a certain age, they criticize you  
for your decisions,  
not your talent.  
Pommer called.  
You know what he said?  
Only Hitler had worse reviews.  
Excuse me, Miss Knef.  
- Hello.  
We don't have a table for you.  
They're all reserved today.  
That's not true.  
We can't afford the scandal.  
I must ask you to leave.

- That's absurd!  
She's not the director or writer,  
she's an actress.  
And actresses just do as they're told.  
No, Bongi, I could've refused.  
I'm sorry, but Miss Knef's presence  
is upsetting.  
You will give us our table.  
I insist. Hilde.  
I told you it was her.  
A disgrace to the German people!  
A disgrace to the German people?  
Have you all lost your memory?  
Or just your minds?  
You see the hatred, Bongi?  
I hate it! I hate hatred!  
Miss Knef...  
Good day, gentlemen.  
Before you ask your questions,  
I'd like to ask YOU one.  
Is it not strange that a country  
that kept quiet as six million Jews  
were gassed,  
starts a revolution  
because of two naked breasts?  
The first question, please.  
SLINNER SEEKS FORTUNE ABROAD  
KNEF GETS LEAD ROLE IN LITVAK FILM  
FIRST SUCCESS IN HOLLYWOOD  
HILDEGARD IN GARBO ROLE  
HILDE CONQUERS BROADWAY  
HILDE KNEF HAS MADE IT!  
Congratulations.  
You made it.  
Thank you.  
Would you like a drink?  
No, thanks.  
I met Kurt Hirsch, by the way.  
- Oh.  
Well?  
His father took his life 2 weeks ago.  
His mother died yesterday.  
Poor old Kurt.  
It was insane to marry him.

Because you did it for the  
wrong reasons.  
We discussed that.  
I remember.  
Memory is a distorting lens  
that exposes very precisely.  
You've changed.  
we're all worn out. Horrible.  
You used to know  
how to pick yourself up.  
And I will do.  
The world is my oyster right now.  
Fine, if you know what you want.  
I struggled my whole life  
to make deep, meaningful films.  
Apparently, it was a mistake.  
But it wasn't a mistake.  
It's what makes you Erich Pommer.  
I regret nothing. Even if it's cost me  
a Hollywood career.

**But tell me:**

What makes you Hildegard Knef?  
To be reborn far from my old life,  
and hold on to most of what awaits me.  
Wasn't Hildegard Neff  
supposed to be coming along?  
Sure... here she is.  
Oh, you're Hildegard Neff?  
At least I used to be.  
Well, that's fascinating...  
I'm David Cameron.  
We are supposed to fall in love.  
Fascinating.  
I'm glad we get a chance  
to do this research, actually.  
I don't know very much about  
how blind people interact.  
And since we both play blind...  
I'm shutting down. No talking, please.  
Ms. Neff, Mr. Cameron,  
welcome to St. Dunstan,  
Home of the Blind.  
We're all so excited

to have you coming...  
And, Ms. Neff,  
in case you worry about it,  
you won't find anyone in this house  
who holds your nationality against you.  
How do you mean that?  
Well, didn't your producer tell you?  
All of our patients were blinded  
in the war...  
most of them on German territory.  
Just follow me through here.  
This is our workshop.  
That's Ben, hello Ben.  
Hello.  
And...Ah yes, over here we have Richard.  
Hello Richard.  
- Hi.  
Just let them pass.  
Let me introduce you to Taffy.  
Taffy is our star.  
He was a star pianist.  
Then he was a star pilot.  
Unfortunately both of his eardrums were  
injured as well, when he was shot down.  
He can't hear us?  
Not a sound.  
He looks so happy.  
I'm afraid that's a false impression.  
We found him breaking our piano into  
little pieces in the middle of the night.  
It was good for me to come here today.  
It put my life back into perspective.  
I sometimes felt I...  
I lost everything...  
I know. I understand.  
I am a big step down from Gregory Peck...  
but you prefer making this film with me  
to being deaf, dumb and blind.  
That is exactly what I meant.  
I'm throwing a party tonight.  
Lots of important people are coming.  
Directors, producers,  
Carol Reed will be there,  
perhaps it would be useful for you -

You must be Hildegard Knef?  
The famous actress  
from that hot German nude film.  
Knef.  
Knef.  
- I didn't know you spoke German.  
There's a lot you don't know about me.  
Where are the other guests?  
I disinvited them.  
Vodka, or whiskey?  
I'd prefer wine.  
You're married, right?  
Yes.  
Do you have children?  
No.  
I don't want to have an affair.  
Affairs get taken much too seriously.  
And the pain lasts longer  
than the fun did.  
And believe me, I'm experienced.  
I know what I'm talking about.  
But you do realize  
this is not just an affair?  
Are you experienced  
in this kind of thing too?  
Me neither.  
BERLIN, SIX WEEKS LATER  
Thank you.  
What does the German Film Prize  
mean to you?  
It gives me hope that a difficult time  
is coming to an end.  
And there will be a happy new start  
for Hildegard Knef in Germany.  
What is happiness to you?  
I don't know.  
I've never known it long enough  
to be able to talk about it.  
What about love?  
I've asked myself that for years.  
What about love?  
So, gentlemen... excuse me.  
What on earth are you doing here?  
I am looking at you.

I don't mean to be nosey,  
but didn't you mention a wife?  
Did I?  
How careless of me.  
It's clearly something  
I can't take care of  
right this moment.  
But at the next opportunity...  
I'll keep you up to date  
with the developments.  
You're hitting the gas AND the brakes!  
Come on.  
Up here.  
That's an impressive house.  
It must cost a fortune!  
- Probably.  
I'm hopeless when it comes to money.  
Yes, mother.  
Excuse me.  
- David Cameron.  
Nice to meet you, Mrs Knef.  
You must be hungry. I'll fix breakfast.  
Yes, I'm really starving.  
The phone's been ringing constantly.  
- What happened?  
A woman from TV...  
they're sending a script.  
A producer called Brauner...  
sending a script.  
Cinema, he said.  
Ms Bongers called.  
Fritz Lang called about a lead role.  
A producer called Wendlandt: lead role.  
A Belgian producer called.  
I didn't understand his name.  
And Pommer. He sounded ill.  
He sends his congratulations.  
And did Fritz Lang really say  
he wants me for a lead role?  
That must be the courier.  
How do you like your eggs, Mr Cameron?  
David, please.  
Over easy. Just fried.  
Fine.

Do you like sausages?

- Yes.

Don't move.

That's it...

This is pure happiness.

Everyone stop!

This is an historic moment!

Hildegard Knef is happy!

You know what I'm thinking?

- No.

Do you know what you're thinking?

I'm thinking

I've fallen in love with Berlin.

Berlin? Good. That's my home.

But she's known to change her mind.

You should write your memoirs.

It sounds like you've lived 9 lives.

No, impossible.

You couldn't get her to sit still  
long enough.

She was always fidgety.

According to her, I have no talent  
and I sing like a boy.

That was a long time ago.

I'm sure you know

that she was a Broadway star.

I know.

How come I've never heard you sing?

I don't know.

Are you afraid I wouldn't like it?

What's cooking in there?

Unpaid bills.

And it'll soon boil over.

THE SINNER IS A MARRIAGE-WRECKER

Shit.

I didn't want my wife to find out  
like this.

Your wife? This is about me!

Those assholes

have withdrawn all the offers.

I've been blacklisted.

I know the game, I've played it before.

Frieda, please take the bills  
into your room

and sort them chronologically.  
And take your time.  
It will all work out.  
Let go of me!  
- I want you to calm down.  
Out!  
Go back to your wife  
and tell her it was a mistake,  
that you've never heard of me.  
I won't do that.  
This is my house.  
Yes, until the bailiffs come.  
But that's not the point.  
I never let a man boss me around.  
And I'm too old to change.  
So, let me go!  
- Damn it, woman!  
Believe me, darling.  
I want to go to bed with you...  
to wake up with you,  
and go back to bed with you.  
To get old with you...  
and die with you.  
And then?  
You want to go to hell with me?  
Shit.  
Won't we go to heaven?  
And today I softly say, I should  
give in, be content, but I can't  
give in, can't be content, still want  
to win, I want it all, or nothing.  
That looks totally absurd.  
What is going on?  
They are building a wall.  
In the middle of the road?  
To mark the western  
and the eastern sector.  
You're kidding!  
I mean, that wall would have to  
go through the entire city.  
Yes, Sir, it will.  
That's absolutely ridiculous!  
Come on, let's just go home.  
Everything okay?



Why aren't you sleeping?

I...

Today I realized how German I am.

We obey all the rules,  
accept every system.

**First the Nazis:**

Raise your arm and say "Heil Hitler!"

Absurd.

Clever, wonderful people  
were herded away like cattle  
and we watched without asking  
any questions.

We just let it happen.

People were being gassed,  
and we stood back and did nothing at all  
to try and stop it.

And now... this Wall.

We just let it happen.

And I'm the same.

I'm letting my life pass me by  
without doing what I should be doing.

Because there's a wall  
going right through me.

And it's stopping me  
from becoming what I should be.

And why?

Because I'm afraid.

Afraid of failure.

And one day my life will be over,  
and I'll be no more than just an actress  
who didn't get enough good roles.

What do you plan to do?

Something political?

Don't be silly.

I know nothing about politics.

I want to rent a recording studio.

What?

A recording studio.

Sorry, I don't follow you.

I know. I can't tell you anymore,  
but I need to know:

Can we afford it?

- Of course not.

But if it's what you want...  
I can arrange something.  
Illa Fitzgerald once called me  
the greatest singer without a voice.  
Is that good, or bad?  
No idea.  
I've never heard you sing. Remember?  
The crown prince is here.  
She's afraid of what you'll think.  
- Don't worry.  
I've decided to tell her it's great  
no matter what.  
What's the song you're recording?  
Shall we try again?  
David?  
Well? What do you think?  
David?  
You were fantastic. Wait a moment.  
Now tell her she's great.  
You said you'd say it anyway.  
How can you be such an asshole?  
Hay fever. I'm sorry.  
I must be allergic to something.  
I wanted to tell you it was great,  
even if it wasn't true.  
But I can't do it.  
It wasn't great.  
That's merely a word, darling.  
Fitzgerald was right.  
But not only that. The song,  
the words...  
you.  
You're going to be the biggest star  
this country has ever seen.  
Where's the song from?  
Hilde wrote it herself.  
Didn't she tell you?  
Just keep writing.  
We'll see what we can use later.  
Don't stop.  
Whatever you do, don't stop writing.  
- Bastard!  
We only just got married!  
It's raining red roses...

It's the memoirs I'm meant to write...  
No, it's not.  
I'll get you to write them too.  
This here is for your next concert.  
You are such a monster!  
Can't you ever relax?  
It's our honeymoon, and I have to work!  
I am what I have to be for you.  
Really?  
I hate you.  
Else! Come in.  
Ah, you're here, Bongi.  
Yes, my child. I'm here.  
How are you?  
What's wrong?  
Nothing. Nothing at all.  
I just wanted to say  
"break a leg". Come here.  
Something has happened. Tell me.  
Is it my mother?  
No, she's fine. She's...  
She's quite excited.  
I've never seen her like that.  
Good luck.  
- Now tell me what it is!  
Erich Pommer died today.  
In Los Angeles.  
I just heard it on the news.  
I'm so sorry.  
I'd hoped you didn't know  
and now I've told you.  
- It's okay.  
I just need a moment. Just a moment.  
I'll go out there soon.  
Forgive me. Ah, of course.  
The concert will start in 5 minutes.  
In 5 minutes. Thank you.  
to see you on stage tonight.  
What can I do for you?  
Tell them  
to come and fix my make-up.  
Next time they ask me how I stay fit,  
I'll say I have a simple regime:  
I run amok every day.

- Brilliant idea.

You should do that.

One of the most important people  
in my life died today.

Mr Erich Pommer.

He once asked me a question  
that I couldn't answer.

The question was:

Who is Hildegard Knef?

Mr Pommer, wherever you are,

I have found the answer.

This here is Hildegard Knef.

At 16

I used to softly say

I want to be great, be a winner,  
to be happy, to never lie.

At 16 I used to softly say

I want

I want it all,

or nothing.

For me it should be raining red roses.

I should meet with all of the wonders.

The world should re-shape itself

and keep its worries to itself.

And later, I said,

I want to understand

see and experience things,

cherish them,

and later, I said,

I don't want to be alone,

but yet be free.

For me it should be raining red roses.

I should meet with all of the wonders.

Luck should behave gently,

and treat my destiny with loving care.

And today I softly say,

I should give in,

be content, but I can't

give in, can't be content,

still want to win, I want it all,

or nothing.

For me it should be raining red roses.

I should meet with

completely new wonders.

To be reborn far from my old life,  
and hold on to most of what awaits me.

I want.

Gave birth to a daughter

Was married to David Cameron

for another 10 years

and another 24 years

to her new husband, Paul von Schell.

She wrote 7 books in this time.

She recorded 50 LPs,

made 27 films,

and gave 100 concerts.