

ZOLA!

By George Clayton Johnson and Mark David Gottlieb

PROLOGUE 1

The office of the General Staff.

The General Staff is seated around a table with candles in various places that light up the room and the generals' faces. The room is lined with mirrors.

They each have a folder in front of them that they finger as though they might have already read its contents.

All members of the General Staff are seated except for Colonel Picquart, who stands near an open door.

MERCIER

We have nothing! All we know is that it must have been someone high enough in the military to have such information to sell to the Germans, that it was a letter describing weapon procurements and that it was initialed "D." That's all we have!

GONSE

The public is demanding that we find the spy. Already they have taken to the streets protesting our inability to defend the nation.

BILLOT

How could the news spread so quickly? The newspapers are calling us inept. Colonel Picquart, what do *you* have for us?

PICQUART

We have some leads, sir. They seem to be pointing to the aristocracy.

BILLOT

Colonel Picquart, you will have to make an even greater effort to uncover the spy. Use every means possible, every means.

PICQUART

We're doing everything in our power, sir.

BILLOT

Then get back to it. You can leave now.

The General Staff mutter to themselves in consternation.

After Piquart leaves....

BOISDEFFRE

Where is Major de Clam? Wasn't it he who scheduled this meeting?

GONSE

Yes, shouldn't the Chief of Staff be present?

De Clam enters the room. Taken by surprise, the others hastily begin to stand.

GENERALS (*ad lib*)

(Almost stumbling over themselves)

Major de Clam, sir . . . !

Calmly, almost aloof, de Clam motions for them to remain seated.

DE CLAM

(friendly)

Please! Please! Remain seated, gentlemen.

(then suddenly, all business)

You have made no progress in finding the spy, have you?

The General Staff murmur and shake their heads 'no,' embarrassed.

DE CLAM

(Just as quickly, he is cheerful)

Then we must *create* one to calm the passions of the people before there's blood on our streets.

GENERALS

Create a spy?

DE CLAM

(smiling)

Of course. Don't look so alarmed, gentlemen. We must create a scapegoat to prevent even more civil unrest. I trust you've read the dossier on Captain Dreyfus, there--

(pointing)

--in front of you. Have you not?

The Generals murmur the affirmative.

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(Walking slowly around the table, forcing the General Staff to crane their necks, he extinguishes all the candles on the table except two that are on either side of an empty chair. Finally he calls out to an open doorway.)

DE CLAM

Sergent, would you bring Captain Dreyfus in now, please?

The General Staff mutter silent expressions of confusion, ad

lib. DREYFUS enters.

DE CLAM

(warmly)

Ah! Captain Alfred Dreyfus, thank you for joining us. Please be seated. Won't you?

He directs him to the empty chair where there is also paper and pen.

DE CLAM

(standing behind Dreyfus)

Captain, are you happy in the military service?

DREYFUS

Yes, sir. Very much so. It is my life.

DE CLAM

Captain, what is your background, your religion, if you will?

DREYFUS

I am a Jew, sir.

DE CLAM

Ah, a Jew. Then I imagine with France being a Catholic nation it must, at times, be very difficult for you and your family to feel a sense of belonging.

DREYFUS

I am grateful to be part of this great nation, sir . . . and the military. My wife, my children also consid--

DE CLAM

(cutting him off)

Yes, yes. Fine. Tell me, Captain, where is your family from?

DREYFUS

(confused)
My family, sir?

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DE CLAM

(irritated)
Yes, Captain. Your parents. Your place of origin!

DREYFUS

My family lived in Alsace- Lorraine, sir . . . until the Germans annexed--

DE CLAM

Ah! So! You're from a province that has been occupied by the Germans since the end of the war?

DREYFUS

(nervously)
Well, yes, sir . . . no sir . . .

DE CLAM

(cuts him off again)
And if I remember correctly, you are the commanding officer of an artillery unit, are you not?

DREYFUS

Yes, sir, I am.

DE CLAM

Then you certainly must be well informed about the new recoil mechanisms for the great artillery guns.

DREYFUS

Why yes, sir. I am.

DE CLAM

Thank you, Captain. That will be all.

Dreyfus gets up to leave, but before he is even out of his chair . . .

DE CLAM

Oh, Captain Dreyfus, one more moment, if you please. Would you mind taking a few notes for me as long as you're here. My hand seems to be bothering me.
(he rubs his hand)
Yes, there is some paper and a pen with ink. This should take just a moment.

Dreyfus takes the pen and paper. De Clam reads slowly from a page he is holding as he stands behind Dreyfus the entire time.

DE CLAM

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“The hydropneumatic brake for the gun called ‘One Hundred Twenty Count’ has recently been brought into use. This brake mechanism should overcome the powerful recoil of the gun.” Do you have that?

DREYFUS

(writing furiously)

Yes, sir.

DE CLAM

And please initial it D.

Dreyfus sets the pen down and turns to hand the paper to de Clam. Roughly de Clam takes the page and compares it with the page he’s been reading from. He crumples it up and tosses it to the floor in a gruff manner.

Dreyfus looks up, alarmed.

DE CLAM

(In a soft voice)

There, there, let’s try this again, shall we?

(Pausing after each word)

“The hydropneumatic brake for the gun called ‘One Hundred Twenty Count’ has recently been brought into use. This brake mechanism should overcome the powerful recoil of the gun!

(Then brusquely)

And don’t forget to initial it D.

Dreyfus sets the pen down, straining to turn his head around to look up at de Clam. DeClam grabs the page from Dreyfus’ hand, crumples it a bit.

DE CLAM

(studying the two pages yet again)

Hummmphhh.

(to himself)

One more time should do it.

He crumples up the second Dreyfus copy and tosses it to the floor.

DE CLAM

(to Dreyfus)

One more time if you please, Captain.

Dreyfus, now visibly shaken by this turn of events, strains to be calm.

DE CLAM

(Raising his voice and stressing every syllable, he continues)

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"The hy-dro-pneu-ma-tic brake for the gun called "One Hundred Twenty Count" has re-cent-ly been brought in-to use. This brake me-cha-nis-m should ov-er come the pow-er-ful re-co-il of the gun." And initial it D.

Gracefully, with a sarcastic bow, he takes the paper Dreyfus offers him and is satisfied with the third attempt.

DE CLAM

(softly)

Thank you, Captain. That will be all.

(calling out the door)

Sergent, you can escort Captain Dreyfus out now, please?

Dreyfus exits.

With Dreyfus gone de Clam relights the rest of the candles, silently compares Dreyfus' last copy with the page he had been reading from and finally hands the two sheets to the General Staff to peruse amongst themselves. As the pages are passed around the table:

DE CLAM

Gentlemen, please notice the similarities between the two handwriting examples. Are not the similarities beyond refute?

GENERAL GONSE

(hesitating)

Well yes, Major, there are some similarities. However--

DE CLAM

(hastily grabbing the pages)

No, no! That's fine.

He paces.

DE CLAM

Now let's see.

(raising a single finger)

One . Religion, Jew. Obviously completely cut off from proper French society.

Perhaps holding a grudge!
(raising two fingers)

Two. Place of origin, Alsace-Lorraine, annexed by the Germans after the war.
Where he obviously developed German sympathies.
(raising three fingers)

Three. What else could possibly explain the initial "D" at the bottom of the
page? *(raising four fingers)*

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Four. An artillery officer. Who else among the official staff would have such
information? And finally, five!

(tossing the 2 sheets onto the table with a flourish)

Are we not all in agreement that the two handwriting samples were written by the
same hand?

The General Staff mumble agreement.

DE CLAM

There, can you see now how simple this was, Gentlemen?

The Generals look perplexed.

DE CLAM

(irritated)

Can't you see? We've found our spy.

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PROLOGUE 2

Interior of a large banquet room. It is evening. The opulent room is ablaze with light. At the snow-white tables the GUESTS in formal dress take their ease with tobacco and wine.

The WAITERS in smart uniforms clear away the dishes. The SPEAKER approaches a small lectern set to one side. He clinks his spoon against a glass for attention. The hubbub subsides.

SPEAKER

Gentlemen, welcome and thank you for attending. As you know we are gathered to bestow the Academy's greatest honor on "The Father of Naturalism," the novelist Emile Zola.

ALEXANDRINE ZOLA *is seated at a prominent table with others – all men. Dressed in colors of black. She has a strong, intelligent face. Some might call her beautiful. She listens intently, twisting the ring on her finger nervously.*

SPEAKER

Here tonight, to accept in his place, we are fortunate to have Madame Zola, the late author's wife, who has generously donated all of her husband's manuscripts to the Zola wing of the Bibliotheque Nationale, ensuring that all of his writings will be preserved for the future. Monsieur Zola is, sadly, no longer with us, but his many great works live on. The author of Therese Raquin, L'Assommoir, and Les Rougon Macquart, Emile Zola is also renowned throughout the civilized world for his magnificent Les Trois Villes: Lourdes, Rome, and Paris; and, Les Quatre Evangelistes. Indeed, his many writings have lifted France to a preeminence in the World of Letters for which the nation will be forever in his debt. Tonight we have come to repay part of that debt by acknowledging his great contribution in literature, and to art. The poet, Mallarme has declared that Zola's linguistic innovation of writing in the language of the people was a unique literary feat. J. K. Huysmans has argued that Zola's extraordinary pages can be counted as among the most radiant in our literature. Others have acclaimed him to be the Victor Hugo of the Age of Realism. It is for us on this occasion to affirm this judgment by awarding to Emile Zola the highest honor in our power to bestow.

ALEXANDRINE *continues twisting her wedding ring. A simple gold band worn deeply into her flesh.*

SPEAKER

We are honored that Madame Zola has consented to speak a few words on behalf of her late husband as she accepts this tribute in his stead. Gentlemen, please welcome Madame Alexandrine Zola.

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As the room is filled with enthusiastic applause, he gestures to ALEXANDRINE to take his place at the lectern and moves away politely. As she rises to take the place indicated, applause continues as she crosses to the lectern. She is intimidated at the sudden attention of so many eyes. The SPEAKER smiles encouragingly.

She catches the eye of DE MAUPASSANT. His lips form the words: "Courage, Madame, courage."

ALEXANDRINE

(Nervously consulting her notes scribbled on bits of paper)

Monsieur Le President of the Academy, Distinguished Members, Honored Guests... *(she pauses)*

She raises her head to look out at them: they are waiting expectantly to see what she will say. She looks at the futile notes in her hand and crumples them up. She looks despairingly at the listeners.

ALEXANDRINE

Gentlemen, my heart is warmed by your tribute to my late husband.

(Applause)

Perhaps it is important to speak as I do, as a guest under your roof, but I am determined to speak my mind.

A smattering of applause, which quickly dies out to become a polite, waiting silence.

ALEXANDRINE

My husband, Emile Zola, used to flatter me by telling me I was intelligent. He said that I had a logical mind and could see through things. I must confess that I would have preferred at times he would have judged me pretty instead.

Ripples of laughter. She becomes emboldened.

If it is true what he said, then, perhaps it would not be too presumptuous of me to tell you some of the observations I have made as the wife of the “Heir to Victor Hugo,” and the “Greatest Novelist of France,” my late husband, Emile Zola.

She pauses and looks out at the assemblage. A face interested. Another intent. She has piqued his curiosity. Another gives an encouraging smile.

ALEXANDRINE is emboldened.

ALEXANDRINE

From my place at his elbow, I could see how he used his dignity to shield himself from the eye of others, yet how little he thought of dignity when he was aroused to indignation or anger in defense of the truth as he saw it. They asked me to say

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a few words on my husband’s behalf. I cannot. I dare say that no one could. HE was unique. You have read his books; if you would know Emile Zola, find him there. He believed in the power of the human will, and that man should dare to do anything. You saw it in his defense of the innocent. You know how he died. The doctor said it was from carbon monoxide poisoning – a colorless, odorless gas, caused, he said, because a “careless workman” had accidentally stuffed some paint rags into the flue, clogging it so that the gas could accumulate from the low-burning fire in the room below where Emile worked – careless workman – and this after a mob had besieged our home the night before, breaking a window so that I might survive the gas, though it made me very ill. And you know the cause. The Dreyfus Affaire. The Dreyfus Affaire!

With a flourish she picks up a faded and worn newspaper with the headline: The Dreyfus Affaire.

End Prologue

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ACT 1 SCENE 1

Interior of the Zola apartment. We can see a parlor and the large doors that will lead into Zola's workroom. The parlor is furnished elegantly with tasteful, but worn, furniture.

As the intro to "We'll Ask for a Thousand Francs" begins, ALEXANDRINE enters carrying various cleaning items and begins to clean the parlor in preparation for the PUBLISHER'S visit.)

ALEXANDRINE

HE WILL COME SMELLING DISTINCTLY OF INK
WITH HIS LOOK OF DISDAIN AND HIS ELEGANT AIR
HE'LL TAKE OUT HIS PIPE AND HE'LL STUFF IT WITH
HEMP AS HE PLOPS HIMSELF DOWN IN YOUR FAVORITE
CHAIR

I'LL SMILE SO SWEETLY AND OFFER HIM TEA
AND OPEN THE CURTAINS TO LET IN SOME LIGHT
IT'S IMPORTANT THAT HE WILL BE ABLE TO SEE
WHILE HE'S READING THE PAGES YOU TOLD HIM YOU'D WRITE

THE STORIES EXCITE HIM, YOU SEE IN HIS EYES
YOU'VE SUCCEEDED SUPREMEPLY AT PUTTING HIM THERE
HIS MIND FILLS WITH PICTURES, HE LIVES EVERY ONE
HE DOESN'T KNOW HE'S READING 'TILL THE STORYTELLING'S DONE

THE FLOORS HAVE BEEN SWEEPED AND THE GLASSES ARE SHINING
THE PLATES FILLED WITH COOKIES,
WHAT MORE COULD HE ASK?
I KNOW HE COMES ONLY TO READ THROUGH YOUR PAGES
LET'S MAKE HIM FEEL WELCOME SO HE'S IN A GOOD
MOOD

HE'LL OFFER THE USUAL PENNIES
AND POLITELY WE'LL SAY, "NO THANKS."
AND AGAIN HE WILL OFFER HIS PENNIES
THEN WE'LL ASK FOR A THOUSAND FRANCS

NO MORE HUNTING SPARROWS WITH YOUR PISTOL
NO MORE SOUP MADE WITH ONIONS AND STONES
AND THE BUTCHER WON'T HOUND US FOR PAYMENT
AND WE'LL EAT 'TILL OUR BELLIES ARE FULL
WHEN WE ASK FOR A THOUSAND FRANCS

WE CAN'T PAY THE RENT AND OUR COATS ARE THREADBARE
BUT WE WON'T LET HIM NOTICE WE HAVE TO BE BOLD
HE'LL LOVE YOUR NEW BOOK THOUGH IT'S LONG OVERDUE

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BUT YOUR STORIES RING TRUE AND THEY HAVE TO BE TOLD

AT FIRST HE WILL SPEAK OF THE FAVORS HE'S DONE FOR US
HOW HE'S RESPONSIBLE FOR OUR SUCCESS
AND THEN HE WILL OFFER US NOTHING BUT

PROMISES 'TILL WE REMIND HIM HOW HIS FORTUNE
WAS MADE

AND HE'LL OFFER THE USUAL PENNIES
AND POLITELY WE'LL SAY "NO THANKS."
AND AGAIN HE WILL OFFER HIS PENNIES
THEN WE'LL ASK FOR A THOUSAND FRANCS

WE'LL BECOME THE ENVY OF PARIS
WITH NEW COATS AND SHOES WITHOUT HOLES
AND THEY'LL SAY HERE COMES EMILE ZOLA
VICTOR HUGO'S HEIR TO THE THRONE

OH, HE'LL ARGUE
WHEN HE SHOUTS I'LL REFILL HIS GLASS WITH MORE
WINE YES, HE'LL SHOUT
HE'LL OFFER US PENNIES
HE'LL PROBABLY CRY
AND HE'LL PULL AT HIS HAIR
AND HE'LL CALL OUT TO GOD
BUT HE'LL GIVE US OUR THOUSAND FRANCS

ALEXANDRINE barges into ZOLA's workroom. It is the workroom of a prolific writer: books and papers piled high on his huge desk; cups with pens and ink bottles as well as empty wine bottles. There are papers strewn all over the floor as the rubbish can overflows with crumpled pages. ZOLA is asleep at his desk. He is still dressed in his clothes from yesterday. He is a wrinkled mess.

Alexandrine picks up a piece of paper off the floor and reads to herself.

ALEXANDRINE

"... and I accuse the government..."

She drops the page. Loudly, to ZOLA:

ALEXANDRINE

Emile! Clean up! Get dressed! Your publisher is coming today. You must be prepared to play the gentleman.

ZOLA

(realizing where he is)

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What time is it? My God! I'm late! Where's my coat? Cezanne and Maupassant will be waiting. Today is the sentencing... We have to see it through to the end.

ALEXANDRINE

There is nothing more you can do. The Court Martial found him guilty. It's out of your hands.

She brandishes a Newspaper Headlines before him.

ZOLA

(grabbing his coat)
I'm going.

ALEXANDRINE

What about me?

ZOLA

Make soup!

ALEXANDRINE

(grabbing her coat)
I'm going with you.

THEY EXIT.

End Act One Scene 1

PARADE GROUND – DAWN

The sun is rising slowly as ZOLA and ALEXANDRINE make their way to the parade ground where the sentencing will take place. The bleachers are slowly being filled as military guards are present to keep two opposing camps separate.

ZOLA

(pointing off stage, in a tense whisper)

Look! It's begun. The mob is beginning to assemble. The riff-raff of Paris! Wait! Do you see those few moving among the many stirring up the crowd with words and gestures, raising their tempers – Look! A man speaks out and is struck down. Oh! The brutes! Look at them managing the crowd like soldiers. Lieutenant-Colonel Paty de Clam, that superstitious madman is behind this. Remember I said so.

ALEXANDRINE

I remember you said you'd have these chapters done for your publisher, Monsieur Mangard. He is coming today to pick them up. If he doesn't get what he wants, do you think he'll pay you one centime? Don't you remember that smile of his? I've seen that smile before on the lips of Madame Boche, the butcher's wife, when she's weighing out the meat by the ounce. You should be at home, working, preparing for his visit. Come with me, there is still time.

ZOLA has been scribbling notes on his tablet. Now he is drawn to something he hears from afar. He pulls her to him.

ZOLA

Hush Alexandrine, listen! Do you hear it?

ALEXANDRINE

(listening)

What is it?

ZOLA

(awed)

It's the mob!

The "DEATH TO DREYFUS" chant can be heard growing louder as ZOLA and ALEXANDRINE are making their way to the bleachers. ZOLA begins furiously making notes talking to himself.

ZOLA

Hear it? It has a music all its own. It's like a chanting. Can you hear it? "Death to Dreyfus-Death to Dreyfus!"

ALEXANDRINE

Come away. I'm worried...

ZOLA

We must be here. Don't you understand?

ALEXANDRINE

I understand I'm married to an unbalanced man who will do anything for one of his novels – even if it gets us both killed.

ZOLA

This is not a book! It's a man's life – an innocent man who is a scapegoat for the sins of government. Oh, that devil deClam! I trace it all to his door!

ALEXANDRINE

And when Monsieur Mangard comes to our door and finds you empty handed, what of that, Monsieur Zola? Do you think he'll come back when you call him?
The ZOLAs run into PAUL CEZANNE and GUY DE MAUPASSANT, two of ZOLA's dearest friends.

DE MAUPASSANT

Emile! You should not be here after what you said at the Court Martial and your run-in with de Clam. If you are spotted there will be hell to pay.

ALEXANDRINE

I've been telling him that all morning.

DE MAUPASSANT

Madame is right, Emile. You risk too much.

ZOLA

For a man's life? Everyone should risk as much.

CEZANNE

But observe, Emile. They do not. Dreyfus is condemned falsely and only we few care.

Maupassant draws the group's attention to a lone man walking towards the small group of artists and writers.

DE MAUPASSANT

Look! Here comes Theodor Hertzl, the journalist from Geneva. Some say he is working to reclaim the Holy Land for the Jews of Europe. They call it Modern Zionism.

Hertzl walks directly up to DE MAUPASSANT. They know each other.

HERTZL

Good morning, Monsieur Maupassant, and a very somber morning it is.

DE MAUPASSANT

Monsieur Hertzl, may I introduce you to my dear friend, Paul Cezanne.

HERTZL

It is a pleasure, Monsieur Cezanne. I am familiar with your work. It has been exhibited in a number of galleries in Geneva.

CEZANNE

Thank you, M. Hertzl – and I am quite familiar with your articles as well.

DE MAUPASSANT

May I also introduce Emile Zola and his lovely wife, Alexandrine?

HERTZL

It is a great honor Monsieur, truly. A pleasure, Madame.

The swell of the Mob's chants rises loud enough to hear the words:

MOB

THEY'LL KILL YOUR WORLD;
THEY'VE KILLED OUR WORLD
JUST LIKE THEY KILLED JESUS...

ZOLA

(almost cheerfully as an energy ignites the small group of writers and artists...)

Ah, Monsieur Hertzl, have you come to write about how our government worms its way out of its difficulties? Or have you come to add fodder to your socialist experiment to bring Europe's Jews to a new Promised Land?

HERTZL

(with a knowing smile)

You ask good questions, Monsieur Zola. And you, are you here as a writer, a spectator, or merely as an agitator provocateur?

MOB

(quietly, but still loud enough to be heard)
LOOK AT THE ARTISTS..

THE INTELLECTUALS....

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THOSE BASTARDS...
THOSE DAMNED JEW LOVERS...

HERTZL *cringes.*

DE MAUPASSANT

(to Hertzl)
Just ignore them.

HERTZL

Like Dreyfus did? If he is hung this will surely spell the end of justice in France.

CEZANNE

When has it ever been different? When has justice prevailed?

HERTZL

The Jews of Europe have suffered much, but we continue to hope.

CEZANNE

(under his breath)
Hope if you must, M. Hertzl. But don't expect much unless you want to be disappointed.

Growing numbers of both camps continue to join their respective groups.

ALEXANDRINE

Emile, you know we shouldn't be here. It is not safe. Listen to them.

MOB

DEATH TO DREYFUS
THAT JEW DREYFUS
LET THE TRAITOR BURN

ZOLA

No Alexandrine! This is exactly where we should be. Listen to the humming of the mob. *(More to himself now as he writes furiously in his notebook).* Like a nest or enraged insects. Like a kind of music from hell.

MOB

(becoming louder and more threatening)
WE SAW THIS COMING...
HOW COULD IT NOT BE?
GIVE THEM RIGHTS
TREAT THEM WELL

THEY'LL SELL US OUT
SEND US STRAIGHT TO HELL

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A lone woman enters the area looking very bewildered. It is LUCY DREYFUS.

ALEXANDRINE

My God Emile! Is that Madame Dreyfus?

ZOLA

Yes! I believe it is.

Without another word Zola and Alexandrine rush to Madame Dreyfus and guide her with great sensitivity to the safety of their small group.

Almost at the same instant that the Zolas and Madame Dreyfus join their group we hear one lone member of the MOB scream;

MOB

DREYFUS SHOULD BE HUNG.
HE SHOULD BE BURNED.

A parade of officers, soldiers, and LT. ALFRED DREYFUS in full dress uniform enter the stage. The eyes of ZOLA and PATY DE CLAM catch one another and the action freezes around ZOLA and DE CLAM.

DE CLAM

You dare to show your face here? You have lost! You have accomplished nothing.

ZOLA

I have learned who is behind all of this.

DE CLAM

And what good will that do you?

ZOLA

It has given me a plan.

DE CLAM

You are a dreamer!

He walks back to join the Generals.

After de Clam's remark, movement on the stage resumes.

SERGEANT AT ARMS

There shall be no disturbances at this tribunal.

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Gradually the noise subsides.

JUDGE of the TRIBUNAL

Alfred Dreyfus, step forward and stand attention while the verdict is being announced.

DREYFUS steps forward. Always the good soldier.

JUDGE of the TRIBUNAL

Alfred Dreyfus, you have been condemned for an act of treason. You have been tried according to the articles of war.

DREYFUS

WHAT IS HAPPENING? I AM A SIMPLE SOLDIER.
I HAVE ALWAYS DONE MY DUTY.

JUDGE

You have disgraced the uniform you wear.

DREYFUS

I AM A LOYAL FRENCHMAN. I LOVE MY COUNTRY

JUDGE

It is the verdict of this court martial that you be brought forth before your fellow officers; that you be stripped of all rank and insignia and that you be sentenced to the penal colony on Devil's Island for the rest of your natural life.

DREYFUS

HOW CAN YOU CALL ME A SPY? A SPY?
I TOLD THE TRUTH; I AM INNOCENT.
I AM A SON OF THE SOIL OF FRANCE.

JUDGE

Let the judgment of the court martial be carried out.

DREYFUS

THE TEARS THAT GROW THE WHEAT.
THE BLOOD THAT FEEDS THE TREES.
WOULD I NOT GIVE MY VERY LIFE FOR FRANCE

An officer steps forward and rips Dreyfus's medals from his coat.

ZOLA

(to Alexandrine)
This is pathetic.

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ALEXANDRINE

(to Zola)
Shhh, Emile.

DREYFUS

WOULD I NOT GIVE MY VERY SOUL TO FRANCE.

The officer rips the epaulets off of Dreyfus's coat.

ZOLA

Even now he pleads his innocence.

DREYFUS

COLD YEARS SPENT FAR FROM HOME.
THE HEAT OF DESERT WARS.
HAVE I NOT GIVEN ALL MY DREAMS TO FRANCE.

ZOLA

And this man receives for devotion to a nation . . .

ALEXANDRINE

Shhhh, Emile.

DREYFUS

HAVE I NOT GIVEN ALL MY STRENGTH TO FRANCE.

The officer draws Dreyfus's sword from the scabbard, breaks it and throws it onto the ground in disgust.

ZOLA

That poor creature.

DREYFUS

ENDLESS BATTLES I'VE FOUGHT FOR FRANCE.
MY FAMILY LEFT ALONE.
FOR THE GLORY OF FRANCE I'LL GO WHERE I MUST
GO. HELP ME, OH TRUTH.
IF THIS IS MY REWARD
THE FIELDS RED WITH BLOOD....

Before Dreyfus can get the word out the officer slaps him in the face.

OFFICER

Enough!

He slaps Dreyfus.

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ZOLA

(standing abruptly, yelling)

This is outrageous!

MAY ALL BE REVEALED SO THAT ALL
CAN BE CURED!
MAY ALL THAT'S REVEALED BE NO
LONGER ENDURED!
TRUTH IS ON THE MARCH.
INDEFATIGABLE!
UNCONQUERABLE!
DREYFUS IS INNOCENT!

IT IS A CRIME TO POISON SMALL
AND SIMPLE MINDS.
AROUSE THE PASSIONS OF INTOLERANCE
OF THAT MISERABLE ANTISEMITISM.
OF WHICH GREAT AND LIBERAL FRANCE,
WITH ALL HER RIGHTS OF MAN,
WILL SOON PERISH IF SHE IS NOT SOON
CURED.

WHEN THE TRUTH IS BURIED UNDERGROUND,
IT GROWS, IT CHOKES, IT GATHERS SUCH
A FORCE THAT WHEN IT EXPLODES IT TAKES
EVERYTHING WITH IT.

OH JUSTICE, WHAT DESPAIR STRIKES THE HEART.
I MUST DO SOMETHING.

MOB

WHO IS THIS MADMAN?
HE IS A TRAITOR TO FRANCE.
WHO IS THIS MADMAN?
WHO DOES THIS JEW LOVER
THINK HE IS?

ZOLA

I WILL WRITE A BOOK.
I'LL COMPOSE A SONG.

IT SHALL ALL BE SEEN.
I'LL EXPOSE THE WRONG
DREYFUS IS INNOCENT.

I WILL WRITE A BOOK.
I'LL STOP THIS DANCE.

Zola! 21

I WILL SPOIL THIS JOKE
FOR THE SAKE OF FRANCE.
DREYFUS IS INNOCENT.

MOB
ENOUGH OF THIS!

ZOLA
I WILL WRITE A BOOK.
I WILL NAME THE NAMES
OF THE REAL TRAITORS.
I WILL END THIS GAME.
DREYFUS IS INNOCENT

I WILL TAKE MY PEN
TURNED INTO A SWORD.
I WILL CUT A TRAIL
I'LL CREATE A STORM
LET THE ARMY BE WARNED
LET THE GENERALS CRY.
THEY KNOW I WILL EXPOSE THE LIE.

I SWEAR IT, I PLEDGE MY LIFE
MY HONOR UPON IT.
AT THIS SOLUMN HOUR
BEFORE THIS TRIBUNAL
WHICH REPRESENTS HUMAN JUSTICE
BEFORE ALL OF FRANCE
BEFORE THE ENTIRE WORLD
I SWEAR THAT DREYFUS IS INNOCENT
AND BY MY FORTY YEARS OF LABOR
AND BY THE AUTHORITY THAT THIS
MAY HAVE GIVEN ME
I SWEAR THAT DREYFUS IS INNOCENT
AND BY ALL THAT I HAVE WON.
BY THE NAME I HAVE MADE FOR MYSELF
BY MY WORKS THAT HAVE AIDED THE
SPREAD OF FRENCH LETTERS

I SWEAR THAT DREYFUS IS INNOCENT.
MAY ALL THAT CRUMBLE
MAY ALL THAT PERISH
IF HE IS NOT INNOCENT.
DREYFUS IS INNOCENT!

The Dreyfusards, seeing the danger to Zola, Alexandrine and Dreyfus, gather around them to take them to safety before the mob can attack him.

Zola! 22

The soldiers can no longer hold the mob back as they rush the parade ground brandishing placards, clubs and common workmen's tools.

MOB

DEATH TO THE ARTISTS. DEATH TO THE WRITERS.
JEW LOVERS ALL. TREASONOUS ALL.
THESE TRAITORS TO FRANCE, DO YOU SEE WHAT THEY'VE DONE?
CHOP OFF THEIR HEADS. TEAR OUT THEIR TONGUES.

HOW THEY BLAB ALL OUR SECRETS. HOW THEY SNOOP AND THEY SPY.
WE SHOULD BREAK ALL THEIR BONES. WE SHOULD PUT OUT THEIR
EYES.

SEE THEM LAUGH AT OUR ARMY. YES! OUR ARMY IS WEAK.
NOW WHEN ALL OF OUR SECRETS ARE EXPOSED BY A
SNEAK.

THE ENEMY'S WAITING JUST OUTSIDE THE GATE.
THEY ARE POISED TO ATTACK AND DESTROY THE STATE.
THEY'RE READY TO FALL ON THE RICH AND THE POOR.
TO HELL WITH THE ARMY AND ALL OF ITS BLUNDERING....

NOW IT'S CLEAR WE'VE BEEN SO BLIND TO
FOLLOW STUPID LEADERS
THEIR TIME IS DONE. THEY'LL PAY THE PRICE.
HOW SWEET REVENGE WILL TASTE NOW.

IT'S TIME TO CUT THEIR THROATS. IT'S TIME TO END THEIR DAYS.
AND GOD HELP ALL THAT'S IN OUR WAY.

DOWN WITH THE RICH. DOWN WITH THE POOR.
DOWN WITH THE BUREAUCRATS DAMNED.
DOWN WITH OUR ENEMIES. TRAMPLE OUR ENEMIES
UNDER THE FEET OF THE MOB.

WE DO NOT NEED TO THINK. WE DO NOT NEED TO REASON.
WE LOVE THE SMELL OF BLOOD AND WE HAVE OUR EMOTIONS.

THAT AND OUR FISTS.

DEATH TO THE ARTISTS AND WRITERS AND THE JEWS AND TO ZOLA
AND TO MEN WHO CAN REASON AND THINK.

IF YOU DON'T FOLLOW US, DEATH TO ALL OF YOU.
FOR IT'S WE THE PEOPLE, WE THE PEOPLE RULE.

Zola! 23

*At the conclusion the MOB tramples the bleachers and wanders off stage as we
hear the retreating strains of:*

*"WE THE PEOPLE (FADING) WE THE PEOPLE (FADING) WE THE
PEOPLE RULE..."*

End Act One Scene 2

Zola! 24

ACT ONE SCENE 3

Late afternoon inside the ZOLA apartment. The sound of knocking on the door as ALEXANDRINE gets up to open it.

ALEXANDRINE

Monsieur Mangard....?

MANGARD *enters, brushing right past her.*

MANGARD

Is he here?

(Alexandrine is concerned, goes to talk with Lucy.)

Interior, Zola's Workroom

Walking into ZOLA'S workroom, Mangard notices ZOLA is holding a stack of papers.

MANGARD

Give me the pages!

Zola hands Mangard the pages. Reading the pages his expression noticeably changes from curiosity to disdain. Angrily he tosses the pages onto ZOLA's desk.

MANGARD

This? This is not what I've come for! No, Monsieur Zola, I cannot publish this!

ZOLA

(picking up the letter)

Am I not Emile Zola the novelist? You must publish my letter.

MANGARD

But Monsieur Zola, I cannot.

ZOLA

(not hearing him)

It is an open letter to the public. Look, I have signed my name, Emile Zola.

He turns to the page with his signature on it and throws it on the desk in front of the publisher.

MANGARD

(picking up the letter again)

Zola! 25

M. Zola, your letter is an accusation against the government for conspiracy, lies and a cover-up. You have accused the very men who were sworn to uphold the law, of violating it.

ZOLA

It is true.

MANGARD

What does that have to do with it?

ZOLA

How can you remain silent? A spy was stealing secrets and selling them Germany: That much they knew. They had to find the spy or they would appear incompetent. They created a spy, the Jew, Dreyfus. They try him in a rigged tribunal, producing that cursed bordereau, that list of secrets recovered from the trash of the German Embassy. Then the General Staff, swearing the writing on the bordereau is the Jew's, railroad him off to Devil's Island where he will suffer for the rest of his life. It is infamous; it stinks up all of France.

MANGARD

However, Monsieur, with all respect, your letter is libelous.

ZOLA

Let them take me to court then. I defy them.

MANGARD

And what of me?

ZOLA

You?

MANGARD

If the government withdraws their protection from my paper, how long do you think it would be before a brick comes through my window? No. No! I cannot take that chance.

ZOLA

You would let sweet liberty lie bleeding and dying before you, and not lift a finger to save her?

MANGARD

WHY SHOULD I RISK IT?
WHY TAKE A CHANCE?
WHY FLIRT WITH DANGER
DEFYING ALL OF FRANCE?
THEY ALL KNOW HE'S GUILTY

Zola! 26

THEY ALL WANT HIM DEAD
WHY SHOULD I OFFER THEM
MYSELF INSTEAD?

MONSIEUR ZOLA, MY SUPPORT
FOR YOU HAS SHAMED ME.
AND YES, IT'S TRUE THAT THE
MONEY HAS BEEN GOOD.
VERY GOOD, MONSIEUR ZOLA
OF THAT I CAN ASSURE YOU.
DID YOU THINK THAT THE PUBLIC
WOULD BLAME ONLY YOU, MONSIEUR ZOLA?
ARE YOU SO VAIN TO BELIEVE ONLY YOU
INCITE THEIR ANGER?
NO, MONSIEUR ZOLA
IT IS NOT YOUR WORDS ALONE THEY WILL COME FOR
ONCE I SOLD THE TRUTH MONSIEUR *WRITER*
NOW THE TRUTH WILL GET YOU KILLED

THIS IS MY PAPER!
MY MACHINE!
MY BLOOD!
AND SO I ASK YOU:

WHY SHOULD I RISK IT?
WHY BE RECKLESS?
WHY BUY A HANGING ROPE FOR A NECKLACE?
I ASK FOR NO TROUBLES.
I LOOK FOR NO FIGHTS.
I'M GLAD TO LET OTHERS
DEFEND HUMAN RIGHTS.

ZOLA

Then you, sir, are a coward. Worse, you are one of those who create the scapegoat, afraid to help shoulder and defend the very rights which allow you to be what you are, and that sickens me and you sicken me.

MANGARD

Goodbye, Monsieur Zola.

He sees himself out.

ALEXANDRINE

Do you realize what you have *done*?

Zola! 27

She enters ZOLA'S WORKROOM, having overheard the exchange. Sees

crumpled letter on desk and pauses to read it.

ZOLA

That pompous...

ALEXANDRINE

(Interrupting, quietly, and gesturing towards the door)

Lower your voice. We have a guest.

ZOLA

You take care of her. I must tell the others.

ZOLA exits as LUCY enters.

Alexandrine joins Lucy on the sofa. Two women who understand each other.

ALEXANDRINE and LUCY

(exasperated)

Husbands!

LUCY

MY HUSBAND LYING SLEEPING.
THE POUNDING GETTING LOUDER.
I COULD NOT BE CERTAIN WAS IT REAL
OR JUST A DREAM.
THEN ALFRED, WITH A SHUDDER
SHOUTING LOUDLY 'WHO IS POUNDING?'
THEN WHISPERING QUITE SOFTLY 'EVERYTHING
WILL BE ALL RIGHT'

ALEXANDRINE

MY HUSBAND, EMILE, NOTICED THAT A LIE WAS
GROWING QUICKLY.
THE ARMY KNOWING ALL ALONG YOUR HUSBAND'S
NOT THE SPY.
HE ALONE WILL FIX THIS, OR SO HIS SPIRIT TELLS HIM.
THIS HAS ALWAYS BEEN HIS NATURE WHEN INJUSTICE
SHOWS ITS FACE.

ALEX and LUCY

OH THE THINGS MEN WILL DO
OH THE THINGS MEN WILL DO
FIGHTING BATTLES, CLAIMING HONOR
WHEN THEY HAVEN'T GOT A CLUE.

LUCY

THEY PUT HIM IN A DARK ROOM FILLED WITH
CANDLES, LINED WITH MIRRORS.
AND ALL THE WHILE ALFRED'S THINKING
EVERYTHING IS FINE.
MY FOOLISH HUSBAND THINKING THAT THE
ARMY LIFE IS NOBLE.
AS THOUGH A JEW IS WELCOME TO ESPRIT DE CORP
IN FRANCE.

ALEX and LUCY

OH THE THINGS MEN WILL DO.
WHAT THEY'LL PUT THEIR WOMEN THROUGH
SHARE THEIR SORROWS YET TOMORROW WE WOULD
DO IT ALL AGAIN.
HERE WE ARE HOPING THE WORSE WILL BE OVER.
SHARING OUR STORIES OF SORROW AND HOPE.
(Wistfully, lost in their own thoughts)
THE WAITING, THE HOPING, OH GOD PLEASE BRING HIM
HOME. THE FURY, THE PASSION, HE CANNOT SEE IT.
HERE I AM WISHING THE WORSE COULD BE OVER.
NOW I CAN'T TELL HIM THAT I WANT HIM HERE
I MISS HIM SO.
OH THE THINGS MEN WILL DO.
OH THE THINGS MEN WILL DO.
THROUGH THE LONLINESS AND SORROW
WE WOULD DO IT ALL AGAIN.

They share an embrace of mutual compassion.

ALEXANDRINE

It is getting late. Come, I'll get you a carriage.

End Act 1 Scene 3

Interlude after Act One Scene 3

On the street on her way to the Cafe to Join ZOLA, ALEXANDRINE waves at the departing carriage with LUCY and steps to the sidewalk and walks along the street. A shop door opens and out walks PATY DE CLAM.

They are face to face. She blocks his path. He looks at her puzzled for a moment.

ALEXANDRINE

You don't remember me – we have met many times---

DE CLAM

(recognizing her)

Too many times to remember.

ALEXANDRINE

We tend to forget things that are unpleasant.

De CLAM

I won't forget this!

(mocking)

I see that things are going badly for your husband. He has found that the people are against him. He will back down.

ALEXANDRINE

Not Emile! He will stand fast.

DE CLAM

How do you know that?

ALEXANDRINE

Because I was given to him!

And they walk away in opposite directions.

End Act One Scene 3 Interlude

Zola! 30

ACT ONE SCENE 4

At the Cafe

Zola makes his entrance into the cafe with an almost angry flourish, the pages of the finished "Letter" in his hands fluttering as he enters. As he enters his friends gather around as others in the Cafe look on.

DE MAUPASSANT

(excitedly)

Emile, what has happened? Will the letter be published?

ZOLA

He is a coward and weak; he will not publish it. An open letter accusing the General Staff of this crime against Dreyfus and against all of France.

DE MAUPASSANT

What are you going to do then? You had wanted it out by morning.

ZOLA

And it must be. I cannot accept this charade nor should our republic. As for the letter; I don't know. How can I possibly present the truth more clearly for all to see?

CEZANNE

(quietly)

There must be some way...

Just then, a man whom we have seen standing nearby with a glass of wine, walks over to join Zola and his friends.

VAUGHN

Excuse me, Monsieur Zola, my name is Ernest Vaughn. I am the owner of a small newspaper the "Aurora." I could not help but overhear your conversation. I

can publish your letter.

ZOLA

Then you believe in the innocence of Dreyfus?

VAUGHN

The Jew? No, he's probably guilty enough. But I believe in a free press. And besides, your letter will sell papers. May I see the letter, Monsieur?

Together Zola and Vaughn walk to a quiet corner of the cafe as the rest of the "friends" (Dreyfusards) continue their conversations and drinking.

Zola! 31

After a few moments Alexandrine arrives through the entrance of the Cafe as determined as ever to confront her husband. Immediately Cezanne and Flaubert attempt to keep her from interrupting Vaughn and Zola as gently as possible.

ALEXANDRINE, CEZANNE and FLAUBERT

(sung as a trio)

ALEXANDRINE

PAUL, GUY, YOU HAVE BOTH KNOWN EMILE
SINCE HE WAS A BOY IN THE FIELDS OF MEDAN.
CAN'T YOU APPEAL TO HIM? HE WILL NOT HEAR ME.

DE MAUPASSANT

WE CANNOT. LOOK AT HIM, MADAME ZOLA!

ALEXANDRINE

PLEASE TRY. I KNOW WE WILL SOON BE IN
GREAT DANGER. SOMETHING THAT MY HUSBAND
NEVER REALLY UNDERSTOOD.
AND I CAN SEE WHERE THIS IS HEADED, SILLY,
FOOLISH MAN MY HUSBAND EMILE IS.

CEZANNE

MADAME ZOLA, HE CAN'T HEAR US WHEN HIS MIND IS MADE UP
TRY TO SEE IT AS HE SEES IT. THERE IS NO GIVING UP. LIKE A
GREAT STONE MOUNTAIN HE REMAINS UNMOVED. WITH HIS
ARMS OUT STRETCHED HE REACHES FOR THE MOON.

CEZANNE AND DE MAUPASSANT

. . . AND HE WON'T STOP 'TILL HE HAS IT
MADAME ZOLA, YES, WE LOVE HIM.
HE IS ONE OF OUR OWN. EVEN MORE SO,

HE'S A LEADER; ALL OF FRANCE IS HIS HOME.
AND HE SEES OUR GOVERNMENT LEADING US

ALEXANDRINE

(To herself)

I CAN'T BELIEVE THIS.

CEZANNE AND DE MAUPASSANT

(Attempting to sooth her)

MADAME ZOLA...

ALEXANDRINE

NOT ONLY IS HE RISKING ALL THAT WE'VE WORKED FOR. HE
COULD BE ATTACKED WHEN IT COMES OUT IN THE MORNING.

Zola! 32

OH WON'T YOU STOP HIM? THIS WILL SURELY GET HIM KILLED.

DE MAUPASSANT

WE CANNOT STOP HIM, IT'S THE NATURE OF THE MAN.
MADAME ZOLA, SURELY YOU CAN'T BE SURPRISED
NOW.

ALEXANDRINE

WELL, WITH THIS LETTER THEY MIGHT THINK HE'S GONE
INSANE. AND YES I ADORE HIM. BUT HE IS SUCH A STUBBORN
MAN

CEZANNE

THEN YOU WILL KNOW THERE IS NOTHING
WE CAN DO TO STOP HIM.

ALEXANDRINE

BUT WE HAVE TO. WE MUST STOP HIM.
HE IS TAKING THIS TOO FAR.

CEZANNE AND DE MAUPASSANT

HE CAN'T HEAR US. HE WON'T STOP.

ALEXANDRINE

HE CANNOT TAKE ON THE ARMY AND THE
GOVERNMENT AS WELL.

CEZANNE AND DE MAUPASSANT

BUT HE THINKS HE CAN, MADAME ZOLA.

ALEXANDRINE

YOU MUST HELP ME STOP HIM.
THIS WILL GET HIM KILLED.

CEZANNE AND DE MAUPASSANT

WE CAN'T STOP HIM, STOP HIM?
NO ONE CAN. MADAME ZOLA,
WHAT CAN WE DO?

ALEXANDRINE

DEAR GOD, WHAT MUST WE DO WHEN HE
SHOWS NO FEAR. WE CAN'T WIN.

CEZANNE AND DE MAUPASSANT

WE'LL STAND BY HIS SIDE.

ALEXANDRINE

Zola! 33

CAN YOU SEE THE BLOWS COME RAINING DOWN UPON MY
HUSBAND'S BACK?

CEZANNE AND DE MAUPASSANT

WE'LL TAKE THE BLOWS WITH HIM.

ALEXANDRINE

OH NO YOU WON'T.
HE'LL TAKE THEM ALL STANDING ALONE.

At this point ALEXANDRINE sees it is useless to try to confront her husband. ZOLA, up onto this point, has not even noticed his wife has entered the Cafe. ZOLA has remained focused on Monsieur VAUGHN reading the "Letter." He is aware of nothing else. As ALEXANDRINE notices this she leaves the cafe feeling all is lost and there is nothing more she can do.

Meanwhile, VAUGHN, who has just finished reading the letter, cries aloud to all.

VAUGHN

What you have written is a thunderbolt. It is supremely simple, so logical that only a genius could have conceived it. I will publish it. However, the "Aurora" is a small newspaper.

ZOLA

Small? We must have three hundred thousand copies. We must cover all of

Paris.

VAUGHN

But Monsieur Zola, at most we are only able to publish 100,000. The expense...

ZOLA

(cutting Vaughn off)

I will put up the money for the printing.

CEZANNE

As will I...

DE MAUPASSANT

...and I.

DREYFUSARDS

Count me in.

(another)

I can put up 500 francs.

(another)

So can I.

Zola! 34

(other voices offer to help)

VAUGHN

Then we shall do it. Three hundred thousand copies by morning. But we must have a headline... *(ponders the question to himself)*. "J'Accuse, J'Accuse, The Government Knowingly Imprisons an Innocent Man." That shall be the headline, "J'Accuse"... I must be off now. The presses will be running all night. All of France will awaken with this. You are not afraid of what will happen, Monsieur?

ZOLA

It must be out by morning.

VAUGHN

Then you will see what you have done. All the world will be watching.

ZOLA

I know.

VAUGHN

Then I must say good night Monsieur Zola. Good night, Madame, Monsieurs.

ZOLA

Good night, Monsieur Vaughn.

As soon as Vaughn leaves the cafe it is as though the entire room cannot contain its excitement. The cafe erupts into one big party celebrating Zola's success with drink and song.

DE MAUPASSANT

ZOLA, YOU HAVE DONE IT. YOU ARE TAKING ON THE GENERAL STAFF.

CEZANNE

WE ARE TAKING ON THE GENERAL STAFF.

ZOLA

NOW THE TRUTH SHALL BE FREE.

DE MAUPASSANT

A UNITED REPUBLIC.

CEZANNE

FREE FROM THE IGNORANCE THAT THE ARMY PREYS ON

CEZANNE, FLAUBERT AND FRIENDS (DREYFUSARDS)

ALL OF PARIS WILL AWAKEN WITH THE TRUTH
HONOR SHALL RETURN TO THE REPUBLIC.

Zola! 35

NOW THE TRUE CULPRITS WILL BE RUNNING.
FREEDOM FROM HATED PERSECUTION.

DE MAUPASSANT

MY GOD ZOLA, DO YOU KNOW WHAT YOU'VE DONE?

ZOLA

YES I DO. WE'LL HAVE FREEDOM FROM FEAR OF INJUSTICE.

CEZANNE

ZOLA, WE BOTH ARE CREATING WHAT WE FEEL IS TRUE AND
EXPRESSING IT. CLOSING OUR EYES WHILE WE'RE PAINTING THE SEA.

DE MAUPASSANT

WITH YOUR PEN AS A BAYONET YOU'LL CUT THEM DOWN.
CALLING THE NAMES OF THE CRIMINALS.
LET US SEE WHAT THE MORNING WILL BRING.

ZOLA

MY ONLY GOAL AS A WRITER WAS TO EXPOSE THE WORLD AS I SEE IT

CEZANNE

MY ONLY GOAL AS AN ARTIST WAS TO PAINT THE WORLD THAT I SEE.

DE MAUPASSANT
THE PUBLIC LED AS SHEEP TO SLAUGHTER

CEZANNE
BLINDLY AND COWARDLY.

DREYFUSARDS
"J'ACCUSE"!

CEZANNE
'I ACCUSE' IS THE BANNER WE'LL FIGHT FOR.

DREYFUSARDS
TOMORROW IN FRANCE.

CEZANNE
WITH THE TRUTH ON OUR SIDE WE WILL WIN.

DREYFUSARDS
IN THE STREETS.

CEZANNE

Zola! 36

WE WILL TAKE TO THE STREETS WITH A VENGEANCE.

DREYFUSARDS
WEARING THE TRUTH LIKE A SWORD.

ZOLA
OF THE YEARS I'M WRITING, MUCH OF THE TRUTH REVEALED. GLORY
TO ART UNENDING, NOT WHEN IT LIES ASLEEP. I DREAM OF A STRONG
REPUBLIC WHERE HONOR AND JUSTICE REIGN.

DREYFUSARDS
IN OUR LAND WE WITNESS THOSE OF THE POOR THAT
SUFFER. TOMORROW IN FRANCE WE SHALL FIND THE
ANSWER. WILL ALL MEN BE FREE?

CEZANNE
I PAINT A WORLD THAT HEALS. 'J'ACCUSE' WILL WIN THIS FIGHT.

ZOLA
I'LL STAND BEFORE THE TRUE CULPRITS, WATCHING THEM BUILDING
THEIR HOUSE OF CARDS. WITH ONE BLOW I WILL BRING THEIR HOUSE

DOWN

The wine is flowing freely. The music more uproarious. Everyone in the cafe is getting involved with the festivities.

DREYFUSARDS

(Holding their wine glasses high and toasting to...)

THE PEN. *(holding his pen into the air)*

THE BOOKS *(holding a book into the air)*

THE WINE *(laughing as someone holds up a glass of wine)*

GREAT IS THE LIFE OF THE WRITER. NOBLE THE PATH THAT HE
TRAVELS ON.

WITH OUR HEARTS WE WILL CARRY THE DAY--

TO TRUTH.

TO HOPE

TO DREAMS

AND TO ZOLA

TO THE GUITAR.

(holding up his guitar)

(the others laughing)

YES, THE GUITAR.

CEZANNE

Zola! 37

ZOLA, YOU HAVE DONE IT. YOU ARE TAKING ON THE GENERAL STAFF.

DE MAUPASSANT

WE ARE TAKING ON THE GENERAL STAFF.

DREYFUSARDS

NOW THE TRUTH WILL BE FREE.

ALL THE YEARS WE'RE WRITING MUCH OF THE TRUTH REVEALED.

GLORY TO ART UNENDING, NOT WHEN IT LIES ASLEEP. WE CREATE

A WORLD THAT HEALS. 'J'ACCUSE' WILL MAKE IT TRUE. TAKE THE

PEN, THE POWER AND GO,

GO AND WRITE A DREAM.

AND DREAM OF A STRONG REPUBLIC WHERE HONOR AND JUSTICE

REIGN.

The time is late and ZOLA knows he must get home soon to write. Before leaving the cafe alone he says:

ZOLA

My friends, I will say good evening. And tomorrow we shall see what the morning will bring.

End Act One Scene 4

Zola! 38

ACT TWO

The Office of the General Staff

The six members of the General Staff are seated around a table. Each is holding a newspaper.

One officer, General Mercier is holding a small puppy dog.

In a far corner there is a man in a white coat fiddling with a machine-like contraption with hoses that lead to a small box with windows.

MERCIER

(viciously, under his breath)

That son of a bitch Zola, accusing me of “mental weakness.” That son of a bitch...

GONSE

(poking his finger at a spot on the paper, crying out)

And right here, he dares call our service to *our* country “. . . a cover up of the silliest pulp fiction fantasies imaginable.” My God! My mother is reading this.

BOISDEFFRE

...and he goes on to accuse me of “. . . religious bigotry and misleading the general public”. My children, my wife . . . if they see this...

BILLOT

And here! How dare he accuse me of a “. . . crime against mankind and justice.”

BOISDEFFRE

What are we going to do about that traitor?

GONSE

Silence! Someone is coming. It is Colonel PICQUART of the Secret Service – a detestable man.

Colonel PICQUART enters and salutes. They return his salute.

PICQUART

Sirs: My investigation of the Dreyfus Affair has revealed that Lieutenant Dreyfus *is* innocent. We have discovered the identity of the real spy. He is Count Ferdinand Welsen Esterhazy, formally a major in the army. It was he who sold the bordereau, that list of military secrets, to the German Ambassador. Esterhazy plans to escape to England tonight. We must stop him.

HENRY

Zola! 39

Count Esterhazy? But it is too late. Dreyfus has been sentenced for the crime. Do you want us to all look like fools?

PICQUART

I have proof Dreyfus is innocent.

HENRY

Give it to me. I will safeguard it with the other evidence.

He takes the document from Picquart and puts it in attaché case.

PICQUART

And what of M. Zola? I have learned that a mob is gathering near his house. Surely you will send men to save him.

MERCIER

I order you to forget Monsieur Zola unless you wish to be assigned to duty in far off Africa.

PICQUART

If you will do nothing I will warn his friends. They will help him.

GONSE

Stop! If you try to leave, I will shoot.

He reaches for his gun. Picquart, a man of action, pushes the gun aside and escapes. There is consternation among the officers.

Gonse looks towards Mercier for direction.

MERCIER

(calmly)

Let him go. He is nothing.

He gestures for Gonse to rejoin the others.

BOISDEFFRE

And Zola?

The entire group looks to de Clam waiting for an answer. De Clam gestures towards Mercier, who stands:

MERCIER

We have a plan in the works. We have the means and the ability to put an end to Zola once and for all. As of this evening Zola will be of no more consequence.

Zola! 40

GONSE

(In horror)

Is not what you're suggesting murder?

De Clam stands up slowly and deliberately, revealing that he is larger than life. For an instant we can also see he has a devil's tail and horns. He exhales smoke and brimstone. But only for an instant.

DE CLAM

MURDER? THIS IS NOT MURDER.
THIS IS NOT POLITICAL. NOR IS IT RADICAL.
IT IS NOT ANTITHETICAL TO WHAT WE ARE AS
FRENCHMEN.
GOD ALONE GRANTS US THE RIGHT TO DO WHAT

WE WILL DO.
AND THROUGH YOUR FAITH IN JESUS CHRIST
HE'S GIVEN YOU THE JEW.
A THING THAT YOU CAN SACRIFICE WHEN THINGS
DON'T GO YOUR WAY.

(Looking off into the distance)

AND SO MY DEAR FRIEND ZOLA,
I'M AFRAID WE'RE HERE TO STAY.
(pointing now to the four now-shaking generals)
AND YOU! WHAT DO YOU OFFER ME?

THE FOUR GENERALS

WE ARE FRENCHMEN. WE'RE NOT CANNIBALS.
AND WE WORK FOR OUR LORD.
HEAVEN HELP US. NO ONE ELSE WILL.
THAT'S WHY WE STAND SIDE BY SIDE.

DE CLAM

TELL ME MORE.

THE FOUR GENERALS

WE ARE FRENCHMEN. WE'RE NOT ANIMALS.
SEE US STAND STRAIGHT AND TRUE

DE CLAM

(laughing, to himself)

I'VE TAUGHT THEM WELL.

THE OTHERS

WE ARE NOBLE. WE CAN DO NO WRONG.
THAT'S WHY WE SING ESPRIT DE CORP

Zola! 41

DE CLAM

NOW LISTEN!

SINCE THE DAYS OF ADAM I HAVE KEPT THEM
BLIND TO REASON.
IT WAS BROTHER KILLING BROTHER
AND YET A REMNANT WOULD
SURVIVE.

MURDER IS NOT SACRIFICE.
AND SACRIFICE IS SACRED.
NOW I WILL BE YOUR ABRAHAM.
AND ZOLA IS MY ISAAC

WHAT OF YOU? WELL?
YOU ARE FRENCHMEN

THE OTHERS
YES WE ARE.

DE CLAM
YOU'RE NOT CANNIBALS.

THE OTHERS
NO WE'RE NOT.

DE CLAM
AND YOU WORK FOR YOUR LORD.

THE OTHERS
AND WE KNOW THAT IT IS YOU.
LORD, PLEASE HELP US.

DE CLAM
THAT'S ME!

THE OTHERS
NO ONE ELSE WILL.

DE CLAM
BUT I WILL.

THE OTHERS
THAT'S WHY WE STAND SIDE BY SIDE

DE CLAM
OH SING, MY CHILDREN! SING!

Zola! 42

THE OTHERS
WE ARE FRENCHMEN

DE CLAM
YES YOU ARE!

THE OTHERS
WE'RE NOT ANIMALS

DE CLAM

NO YOU'RE NOT!

THE OTHERS
SEE US STAND STRAIGHT AND TRUE.

DE CLAM
AND I KNOW YOU WILL SUCCEED.

THE OTHERS
NOTHING CAN STOP US.

DE CLAM
NOTHING!

THE OTHERS
WE ARE INVINCIBLE

DE CLAM
YOU ARE STRONG

THE OTHERS
THAT'S WHY WE SING ESPRIT DE CORP

DE CLAM
YES! LIKE THAT ONLY LOUDER

THE OTHERS
ESPRIT DE CORP

DE CLAM
LOUDER I SAY. LOUDER!

THE OTHERS
ESPRIT DE CORP

DE CLAM

Zola! 43

YES! YOUR HEARTS, GIVE ME YOUR HEARTS!

THE OTHERS
ESPRIT DE CORP

DE CLAM
YOUR SOUL! I WANT YOUR SOUL!

THE OTHERS

ESPRIT DE CORP

DE CLAM

(orgasmically)
OH YES! OH YES!

THE OTHERS

(in a state of spiritual calm)
ALLELUIA
ALLELUIA

DE CLAM

(speaking to Mercier)
And just how will this gas be administered General Mercier?

THE FOUR GENERALS

ALLELUIA
ALLELUIA

SCIENTIST

(as if on cue, walks over to General Mercier)
General, may I have the puppy, please?

The technician takes the puppy from Mercier and places it into the glass tank and then turns on the motor.

The generals gasp in horror as de Clam smiles serenely.

End Act Two

Zola! 44

ACT THREE SCENE 1

Zola's Workroom

Zola is at his desk writing. The room is more orderly than we had witnessed in ACT 1 SCENE 1.

During the musical prelude we see Zola dressed in his writer's smock. He sharpens quills and writes. He pauses and rumples the paper and tosses it

aside. This happens two or three times more. Finally after writing for a moment he picks up what he has written and begins pacing as he reads aloud.

ZOLA

IN THE BEGINNING, IN A CRAMPED CAVE.
WITH A WOLF RAGING AT THE SLIT OF AN ENTRANCE.
THEY HAD SAID.

“HOW CAN WE SAVE OURSELVES?
THE GROUP MUST SURVIVE.”

AND ONE WHO LOOKED OUT OF CLEVER EYES SAID;
“BIND AND CAST OUT ONE OF OUR NUMBER TO FEED THE
WOLF. AND THEN WHEN HIS BELLY IS FULL WE CAN ESCAPE.”
SO THEY LOOKED AMONG THEMSELVES TO SEEK THE OLD,
THE SICK, THE STRANGE.

AND THEY BOUND UP THE CLEVER ONE.
FOR WAS HE NOT THE STRANGEST ONE OF ALL?

Zola sets the pages back onto his desk and begins to study them a bit. Finally Alexandrine enters: she too, looks tired and worn.

ALEXANDRINE

Emile, come to bed, please.

ZOLA

No, Alexandrine, it is important that I finish this.

ALEXANDRINE

But you're spending so many hours. Can't you . . .

ZOLA

(cutting her off)

Alexandrine, I must not be distracted.

ALEXANDRINE then goes off in a huff while ZOLA has turned his back on her and goes back to writing. She then goes into a bedroom and sits in front of a dresser and mirror. She brushes her hair and gazes at herself as one might who was once lovely but is now showing signs of age and fatigue.

Zola! 45

ALEXANDRINE

ONCE HE WOULD SING TO ME.
DO ANYTHING FOR ME.
THEN HE WOULD CLING TO ME.
ALL THROUGH THE NIGHTS WE WOULD WHISPER AS LOVERS DO.

I REMEMBER THE NIGHTS.
THERE WAS CANDLE LIGHT.
AND BY THE LIGHT OF THE MOON.
HE WOULD HOLD ME, SO WARM WAS I IN HIS EMBRACE.

I RECALL HIS GENTLE EYES.
AND HIS SWEET CARESS.
I RECALL HIS TENDER KISS
NOW IT'S A MEMORY.

OH GOD EMILE!
DEAR GOD EMILE!
WHY MUST I REMAIN ALONE?

IN MY DREAMS YOU'RE NEAR.
YET NOW YOU'RE FAR AWAY
AS YOU FIGHT FOR THE RIGHTS OF MAN.

I SAW THE LIGHT IN YOUR EYES,
HEARD THE SONG IN YOUR HEART
KNEW THE DREAMS YOU DREAM.
I SHARE YOUR STRUGGLES YET NOW IN OUR BED I'M ALONE.

ZOLA (Heard quietly from the other room)
IN THE BEGINNING, IN A CRAMPED CAVE.
WITH A WOLF RAGING AT THE SLIT OF AN ENTRANCE.
THEY HAD SAID.
"HOW CAN WE SAVE OURSELVES?
THE GROUP MUST SURVIVE."

ALEXANDRINE

HEAR HOW HE SINGS TO THE WALLS.
HE EMBRACES HIS PEN.
HE CARESSES HIS DESK
LIKE A LION HE PACES THE FLOOR AS HE
READS. I RECALL HIS GENTLE EYES.

Zola! 46

AND HIS SWEET CARESS.
I RECALL HIS TENDER KISS
NOW IT'S A MEMORY.

WHY EMILE? TELL ME WHY EMILE?
ONCE WE WERE NEVER APART.
IN MY DREAMS YOU WERE HOLDING ME.
ONCE YOU WERE HOLDING ME. NOW I AM ALL ALONE.

Alexandrine falls into the chair and weeps loudly: still Zola works, oblivious to her pain and need. Until finally...

ZOLA

Alexandrine, please, how can I concentrate? How can I think?

ALEXANDRINE

(continues to sob)

Well, how can I live like this? All alone?

ZOLA

Alexandrine, why are you doing this? Can't you see that I'm trying to work?

ALEXANDRINE

Yes, I see. Yes I see. Have I ever seen anything else from you, Emile?

ZOLA

Alexandrine, a man's life is at stake. And the future of the republic.

ALEXANDRINE

Our life, Emile, our future. Will there ever be a future for us? Look at us, broken and cold. Look at us, hungry now and poor. Emile, why, Emile?

ZOLA

Stop it, Alexandrine, stop it. Alexandrine, some men can just stand still while there's a lie in the middle of the room. I cannot...

ALEXANDRINE

Cannot or will not, Emile?

ZOLA

It is the same...

The faint sounds of a mob are heard outside.

Zola! 47

ALEXANDRINE

Listen to them outside, Emile. You've aroused a hornet's nest you could have

avoided by simply turning your head from them.

ZOLA

How could I avoid this? How could I turn my back? If I'm to blame for this drama, all the better. Let it boil over everywhere.

ALEXANDRINE

You accept guilt so proudly.

ZOLA

There is no guilt here.

He goes back to his writing.

ALEXANDRINE

(grabbing the pen out of his hand; angrily)

Don't you remember there are two of us? We are in this together, and yet you cast us both off the edge without thinking of me, all for your reputation. You don't care about that Jew Dreyfus, he's glad enough to go to Devil's Island. No, it's not for him that you do this: you do it for you and that image of yourself as the "Greatest Living Writer in All France."

ZOLA

No, Alexandrine, I do it for truth.

ALEXANDRINE

Nonsense, Emile, you did it for your self.

She looks around and grabs the J'Accuse letter from his desk, shaking it at him.

ALEXANDRINE

Do you see what you've written, for God's sake?

(Flipping through the pages)

"I accuse General Mercier of being an accomplice in one of the greatest crimes in the history of France, probably through weak mindedness . . . I accuse General Billot of hiding the proofs of Dreyfus's innocence; and I accuse . . . And I accuse. "I accuse General DePellieu and General Bavery of making a scoundrelly inquest of the most monstrous kind . . . and of the three handwriting experts who were bribed and intimidated . . . and I accuse . . . and I accuse . . . and I accuse . . . " Do you hear yourself Emile? Have you any idea? And at last you say that in making these statements: "I am aware that I render myself liable, and I expose

myself voluntarily.” You have openly accused the General Staff of the Army of France. Did you think your acts would go unpunished?

ZOLA

But I am for the Republic. I have given France the truth and they will end this injustice.

ALEXANDRINE

You could have done it without risking everything. You know this to be so!

ZOLA

I know it.

ALEXANDRINE

You don't know it. You believe it. And because it makes a good story, you are willing to sacrifice both of us and all that we have earned. Listen to the people right outside our home. All of France is against us.

ZOLA

What would you have done?

ALEXANDRINE

The point is you didn't ask me and you should have. You know you risk everything for your damned reputation.

ZOLA

But my reputation has earned us everything.

ALEXANDRINE

Oh, no, Emile, not everything. *We* earned everything.

ZOLA

I wrote the books.

ALEXANDRINE

And half of them for pennies. That contract with your publisher would have kept us poor forever. We were always borrowing, always going into debt, until I forced you to confront your publisher and demand fair payment for your work. Oh, no, Emile you didn't earn everything. *We* earned everything, and you risk it all on a series of hysterical accusations.

ZOLA

And even that is not enough.

ALEXANDRINE

I don't doubt it.

ZOLA

I accuse all France for allowing it. I should not have been left alone. Others should have gone before me and I accuse them of being cowards and weak. I accuse the mothers of not believing enough in their own children to have faith for the future. And the future is coming, and with it a thousand reforms, a greater justice, a deeper caring. I accuse the public for not condemning waste and indifference. Hospitals don't cure, the schools do not educate, prisons don't reform, the police do not serve. Money controls politics with small shallow men at the center of things, and I accuse them of being asleep.

ALEXANDRINE

And for this your risk our lives?

ZOLA

Yes.

ALEXANDRINE

How can you, Emile?

ZOLA

(quietly ponders the question)

How like a novel life is. And I am a novelist. Just like in a book life issues forth, filled with characters who encounter one another. When I look back at my own life in the fields of Medan, where Cezanne and I used to roam together, and through events the end is clearly seen. You can see there can only be one outcome. And my story has arrived at that point, where the reader simply follows my trail to see which wolf-cave I must enter.

ALEXANDRINE

And in the end lies imprisonment, disgrace and ruin. We have already received death threats, Emile. If they ever get you into that prison they'll kill you, the guards or the prisoners, because you will not bend your neck to them.

ZOLA

Dreyfus's only crime was that of being a Jew as are a million other Frenchmen.

ALEXANDRINE

Let them be the ones to save him then. It is not your concern.

ZOLA

It is every man's concern. Is France to fall through the weakness of the press: the ignorance of the mob and the Catholics? They have betrayed the revolution. If there is to be liberty, there must be justice. **ALEXANDRINE**
But what about me? You could have asked me; you could have looked into my

feelings. The truth is you do not care how I feel.

Zola! 50

ZOLA

Ah, so now it comes out.

ALEXANDRINE

What comes out?

ZOLA

The reason you are angry.

ALEXANDRINE

I have already told you the reason.

Footsteps are heard on the roof and we are made aware of a growing mob outside the Zola's home.

ZOLA

You are angry because I spend so much time writing.

The sounds become louder -- including a strange sound reminiscent of the sound of the machine at the office of the General Staff during their plot to kill Zola.

ALEXANDRINE

Shhh, Emile, there's someone on the roof.

They both become very still and quiet as they listen to the sounds upon the roof. The chorus/mob becomes louder and more menacing. The sounds of someone's striking something on the roof are heard.

ZOLA

Get down off the roof this instant.

(Suddenly a rock comes smashing through the window. Glass is shattered everywhere. Alexandrine rushes closer to Zola as he opens a desk drawer and pulls out a pistol.)

Get down from there this instant. I've got a gun and I'll shoot.

The sounds continue on the roof and the mob is screaming.

Finally Zola shoots through the ceiling as footsteps are heard retreating and slowly the mob activity quiets down. The couple clings to one another, the argument long forgotten. Still in their embrace:

ZOLA and ALEXANDRINE
(sung as a duet)

Zola! 51

ZOLA

ALEXANDRINE, ALEXANDRINE, ALL THE PAIN
AND THE FEARS OF THIS NIGHT, OF THIS NIGHT.

ALEXANDRINE

AND WITH YOU I REMAIN, AND WITH YOU I WILL
STAY, THROUGH THE PAIN AND THE FEARS OF
THIS NIGHT.

ZOLA

ALEXANDRINE, ALEXANDRINE, SO SAD, SO COLD, SO
DARK TONIGHT.

ALEXANDRINE

I AM BUT A VICTIM OF YOUR DREAMS AND
YOUR INSPIRATION. I CAN ONLY ASK OF YOUR
HEART THAT YOU LOVE ME.

ZOLA

I ADORE YOU.

ALEXANDRINE

THEN HOLD ME. THEN HOLD ME.

ZOLA

ALEXANDRINE, ALEXANDRINE, ALL THE SEASONS
WE'VE SHARED AND THE NIGHTS WE HAVE LOVED.
ALEXANDRINE, ALEXANDRINE WE'LL SURVIVE THIS.
AND THE STARS SURROUNDING OUR HEARTS ARE
AGLOW AND CALLING FOR ALL TO BE FREE.

ZOLA AND ALEXANDRINE

AND THE STARS SURROUNDING OUR HEARTS ARE
AGLOW AND CALLING FOR ALL TO BE FREE.

Alexandrine appears exhausted. Zola tenderly leads her to their bedroom where he gently helps her in into the bed. He cleans some of the debris from the area and caresses her gently as she falls asleep.

End Act Three Scene 1

ACT THREE SCENE 2

ALEXANDRINE is asleep at last. ZOLA goes to his desk, dons his writer's smock, his beret, begins to sharpen his quills, arranges his papers and prepares to write. He fills his large wine cup with wine. He is unaware of the gas that is slowly filling the room.

Still worried about ALEXANDRINE, he looks towards the bedroom, feeling great sympathy. With an effort, he puts this aside and turns back to his desk. He begins to write.

ZOLA

LOST AND ALONE, HE IS LEFT TO HIS
SUFFERING. LOST AND ALONE, HE'S A SCAPEGOAT
FOR HUMANKIND. LOST AND ALONE HE IS ABANDONED
TO MISERY. LOST AND ALONE, HE MUST STAY ALONE.
THAT IS THE FATE OF POOR DREYFUS. TO BE TAKEN AWAY
FROM HIS HOME.

BUT WHY MUST HE SUFFER ALONE?

BUT WHY MUST HE SUFFER ALONE?

HE'S LOCKED IN A PRISON CELL.

DOOMED TO AN ETERNAL HELL.

HE'S CURSED AND HE'S BEATEN AND TAKEN
FAR FROM HIS HOME.

BUT WHY MUST HE SUFFER ALONE?

BUT WHY MUST HE SUFFER ALONE?

ZOLA begins to react to the gas. He coughs. Almost shaking with passion he begins to write maniacally, reading aloud as he writes.

Unaware of the gas, he continues to drink copious amounts of wine.

ZOLA

Deep within the cave they trembled in fear, hearing the hungry howling of the wolf. The strange one was bound and helpless. They prepared to cast him from the shelter of the cave. "But what of justice?" cried one old man. "It grows dark. The wolf has become hungrier and more terrible. Soon he will enter the cave and devour us all," from yet another. "Look!" cried another. "The wolf draws near--hurry!" And they cast out the strange one...

No longer writing, dropping his pen, he begins to rant...

JUST AS YOU HAVE DONE WITH POOR DREYFUS,
FEARING THE HUNGRY PASSIONS OF THE MOB.
OH, LOST AND ALONE IN A FOREIGN LAND AND HE'S
BOUND IN CHAINS BY THE COURT'S COMMAND,

Zola! 53

POOR DREYFUS IS . . . (*cough, cough, cough . . .*)

As he is overcome by the gas, he makes an effort to continue writing. He cannot. He is lost in his anger over the Dreyfus affaire and becoming dizzy from the gas. As he is speaking, Zola is becoming increasingly delirious and incoherent.

ZOLA (*cont'd*)

"How many citizens tremble in fear, knowing to whom the security of our nation is trusted; what a nest of low intrigue, corruption, dissipation that sacred precinct has become, all for the sweet pleasure of a few uniformed men who throw back in the nation's throat its cry for truth and justice under the guise of reasons of state and national security." If I only had them before me -- I'd wring their necks! (*cough, cough*) What horrible measures have been resorted to in this affair of folly and stupidity.

Zola continues to cough; his pen falls out of his hand as he finally collapses onto his desk, apparently unconscious.

Zola does not see five figures that step into view from hidden niches in the wall and out of the clouds of implied gas. These "phantoms" of his growing delirium are Generals Mercier, Boisdeffre and Gonse, Colonel Henry, Colonel de Calm and the Judge of the Tribunal. All are in uniform.

DE CLAM

"...folly? ... stupidity?"

At the sound of the voice, Zola reacts with astonishment to see these men in his room.

ZOLA

GENERAL MERCIER!... AND GENERAL BOISDEFFRE,
THE CHIEF OF STAFF...!

MERCIER

YOU ARE RECKLESS WITH YOUR ACCUSATIONS!
MONSIEUR ZOLA. ONE DOES NOT BECOME MINISTER OF WAR

OF A GREAT NATION THROUGH "FOLLY" OR BY DISPLAYING
"STUPIDITY." OTHERS HAVE FOUND TO THEIR DISMAY THAT
THEY HAVE MADE A GREAT MISTAKE BY OPPOSING ME.
AND INTERFERING IN THE ARMY'S INTERNAL AFFAIRS,
AS YOU HAVE DONE IS THE HEIGHT OF "FOLLY." TO
ATTACK
ME PERSONALLY WHEN I BUT, DEFEND MY COUNTRY IS THE
DEPTH OF "STUPIDITY."

Zola! 54

*Zola looks at the others as they form a ring around him, glowing amidst the
illuminated fumes of "gas."*

ZOLA

THERE IS ONLY ONE REASON
DREYFUS WAS SELECTED TO PLAY THE
SPY IN THIS MELODRAMA . . .
LET US BE DONE WITH SUBTERFUGE.
HE WAS CHOSEN BECAUSE HE IS A JEW WHO
HAD THE TEMERITY TO ATTEMPT TO RISE IN THE MILITARY, A FIELD
FROM WHICH JEWS WERE FORMERLY EXCLUDED BY LAW. THERE IS
NO EQUAL JUSTICE FOR JEWS DESPITE THE TREATY OF NATIONAL
RIGHTS OF MAN. AS LONG AS THIS IS TRUE, THE HONOR OF FRANCE IS
SOILED WITH A GREAT STAIN.

BOISDEFFRE

NONSENSE! YOU REVEAL YOURSELF BY
WHOM YOU DEFEND MONSIEUR ZOLA; IF THAT
IS YOUR REAL NAME. I CAN SPOT ONE OF YOU BY
MEAN THAT A LESS OBSERVANT MAN WOULD MISS.
WHAT DOES THE HONOR OF FRANCE HAVE TO DO WITH
THE CONSTITUTIONAL INFERIORITY OF THE JEWS?

GONSE

AND WHAT IS WRONG WITH "ESPRIT DE CORPS"?
I AM PROUD OF MY LOYALTY TO THE ARMY AND I
DEPEND ON THE LOYALTY OF MY COMRADES IN ARMS. YOU
PLACE NO VALUE ON THE SOLIDARITY OF YOUR NATION'S
DEFENDERS --THE FEELINGS OF KINSHIP THAT I SHARE WITH
THE GENERAL STAFF, AND YET IN TIMES OF WAR YOU BENEFIT
BY IT WHEN WE STAND SHOULDER TO SHOULDER AGAINST
THE ENEMY. YOU SHAME YOURSELF BY
YOUR WORDS, MONSIEUR ZOLA.

ZOLA

(speaking)

That is not the question here. We are speaking of the innocence of Dreyfus.

HENRY

YOU SPEAK SO KNOWINGLY OF THE INNOCENCE OF
DREYFUS WHILE I HAVE EVIDENCE TO ESTABLISH
HIS GUILT BEYOND QUESTION. I HAVE PROOF OF HIS CRIMES.
He pats his attaché case.

ZOLA

Zola! 55

His crimes? Ha! I know of your investigation. Very thorough and painstaking.
Let me see the evidence you speak of.

ZOLA reaches for the attaché case.

HENRY

STAND BACK!

ZOLA

Open the case and show me the “proof” that condemns Dreyfus!

HENRY

It is not for your eyes.

ZOLA

Nor for anyone else’s, I’ll warrant. Here, let me see . . .

*There is a brief scuffle. The attaché case falls open. A paper falls to the floor.
Zola pushes Henry aside and picks it up. The Generals are shocked into inaction
for the moment.*

ZOLA

What? A report from the Secret Service...? It says the name of the spy is . . .
Esterhazy!

At this, the Judge of the Tribunal, steps forward.

JUDGE

Let me see that... *(as he takes the paper from Zola’s hand)*... Hmm. A report
signed by Colonel PICQUART and addressed to the General Staff . . .

(He reads to himself.

ZOLA

YOU, SIR, ARE THE JUDGE OF THE MILITARY TRIBUNAL
THAT FOUND DREYFUS GUILTY.

JUDGE

I AM.

ZOLA

AND NOW THAT YOU KNOW THAT DREYFUS IS
INNOCENT, YOU WILL GIVE HIM HIS FREEDOM?

JUDGE

NO MONSIEUR ZOLA, I CANNOT.

Zola! 56

ZOLA

YOU WOULD LET DREYFUS ROT? BUT
WHY IN THE NAME OF GOD?

JUDGE

“IN THE NAME OF GOD”?
“THE TEARS THAT GROW THE WHEAT.
THE BLOOD THAT FEEDS THE TREES.
WOULD I NOT GIVE MY VERY SOUL FOR FRANCE?”

ZOLA

BUT, SIR, A MAN’S LIFE...

JUDGE

(CUTTING ZOLA OFF)

ONE LIFE? THERE WAS PEACE UNTIL YOU
RE-INFLAMED THE MOB WITH YOUR
ACCUSATIONS. NOW THEY HAVE TAKEN TO THE
STREETS AGAIN. HOW MANY LIVES WILL BE
TRAMPLED OUT BEFORE THEY LOSE THEIR TASTE FOR BLOOD?

ZOLA

BUT DREYFUS WAS INNOCENT.

JUDGE

INNOCENT? GUILTY?
WHO IS EITHER ONE?
DO NOT TROUBLE ME WITH TRIFLES.
CAN’T YOU SEE, MONSIEUR ZOLA?
THE WOLF MUST BE KEPT OUT OF THE CAVE.

A SCAPEGOAT, I SAY. A SCAPEGOAT AND LET
US HAVE PEACE.
OH GOD, CAN YOU HEAR ME?
A SCAPEGOAT AND LET US HAVE PEACE.

ZOLA

AND IF ONE DAY THAT SCAPEGOAT SHOULD
CHANCE TO BE YOU?

JUDGE

“THE TEARS THAT GROW THE WHEAT.
THE BLOOD THAT FEEDS THE TREES . . .”

ZOLA

YOU HAVE RENDERED AN UNJUST VERDICT.

Zola! 57

ONE THAT WILL FOREVER WEIGH UPON OUR COURTS OF
JUSTICE. I SHALL TELL EVERYONE WHAT YOU HAVE DONE.

JUDGE

THE PEOPLE DO NOT CARE. TELL ANYONE YOU WANT.
THEY ARE NOT LIKE YOU. AS LONG AS IT DOES NOT
TOUCH THEM THEY SIMPLY DO NOT CARE.

(laughing)

My dear man.

*At this point, as a chorus, all five members of the General Staff, four generals
and the judge, begin to dance menacingly around Zola as they mock him
cruelly.*

GENERAL STAFF

(singing individually and as a group)

NO ONE WILL CARE WHAT YOU SAY, MONSIEUR ZOLA.
NO ONE WILL CARE WHAT YOU DO.
THEY'LL ALL TURN THEIR BACKS; THEY'LL ALL WALK AWAY.
WE ALL KNOW THE GAME OF EXPEDIENCE
WE'VE TAUGHT THEM THE RULES OF OBEDIENCE.

DO WHAT YOU MAY, MONSIEUR ZOLA.
NO ONE WILL CARE WHAT YOU SAY, MONSIEUR ZOLA.
THEY'LL CALL YOU A FOOL FOR DEFENDING THE JEW.
THIS IS A CATHOLIC NATION, MONSIEUR, AND DREYFUS
IS UNWORTHY OF SALVATION.

NO ONE WILL CARE WHAT YOU SAY, MONSIEUR ZOLA.
NOW ONE WILL CARE WHAT YOU DO.
THEY'LL SEND HIM TO HELL WITHOUT BATTING AN EYE.
EVEN AS WE SPEAK YOU ARE DYING MONSIEUR ZOLA
AS POISON SLOWLY SEEPS INTO YOUR ROOM.

NO ONE WILL CARE WHAT YOU SAY, MONSIEUR ZOLA.
NO ONE WILL CARE WHAT YOU DO.
THEY'LL ALL WALK AWAY. THEY'LL ALL TURN THEIR BACKS.
WE ALL KNOW THE GAME OF EXPEDIENCE.
WE'VE TAUGHT THEM THE RULES OF OBEDIENCE.

DREYFUS IS ONLY A JEW, MONSIEUR ZOLA.
DREYFUS IS ONLY A JEW.
DREYFUS IS ONLY A JEW, MONSIEUR ZOLA.
DREYFUS IS ONLY A JEW.

ZOLA

Zola! 58

(screaming)
Get out of here this instant!

GENERAL STAFF

Emile Zola, what a joke. The son of a bitch will be dead by morning. What a hoax this Zola is.

ZOLA

Goddamn it, get out!

The General Staff continue to laugh and mock Zola as they drift back into the dark and hidden niches of the "gas" filled room. Zola is cast into deep despair. He is silent, alone. Abruptly TWO GUARDS shove Dreyfus, dressed in convict's strips, chained to a heavy iron ball, into the center of the room. They kick and curse him.

The last word he hears before they depart is the word "Jew!"

Zola apprehends the vision. He holds Dreyfus by both shoulders as they face one another.

ZOLA

Dear Alfred – do not despair — you suffer for the future of your country. As do many others. You are an outcast now, a scapegoat, but the future is coming when you will be celebrated, because mankind will demand it. Hatred is a

meager meal; love is a feast. We must trust in the conscious of the people. It is they who can set things right.

ZOLA and DREYFUS

ZOLA

THERE SHALL BE A HOME FOR THE HOMELESS.
A SHELTER FROM THE STORM.
A BED, A PILLOW FOR THE WEARY HEAD.
AND EACH SHALL HAVE A FIRE TO KEEP WARM.

DREYFUS

(encouraged)

THERE SHALL BE A HOME FOR THE HOMELESS.
FOR ARE NOT ALL MEN ONE?
ONE SOUL, AN INGOT FROM THE HOLY EARTH.
A PHANTOM FASHIONED FROM THE SUN.

DREYFUS AND ZOLA

AND NONE SHALL THIRST OR HUNGER.
AND NONE WILL HURT OR CRY.

Zola! 59

AND NONE SHALL EVER SORROW.
PRAY GOD LET NO ONE DIE.

THERE SHALL BE A HOME FOR THE
HOMELESS. LET NO ONE BE DENIED.
ENTRANCE TO THE CITY'S SHINING GATES.
AND SEARCH TO SEE THAT NONE ARE LEFT OUTSIDE.

THERE SHALL BE A HOME FOR THE
HOMELESS. WHEN MAN SHALL FIND HIS WAY.
WHEN SPRING'S WARMTH OVERCOMES THE KILLING FROST.
AND NIGHT SHALL TURN ITSELF TO DAY.

AND THERE WILL BE A SUNRISE.
SUCH AS WE HAVE NEVER SEEN.
AND WE WILL SHARE OUR HARVEST.
FROM EACH WITHIN HIS MEANS.

ZOLA

I HAVE SEEN THE RIVER FLOW.
I HAVE TASTED RAIN AND SNOW TOO.

DREYFUS

I HAVE SEEN THE BUTTERFLY
AS I'VE WATCHED THE CHRYSALIS BLOOM.

DREYFUS AND ZOLA

I HAVE SEEN THE GARDEN OF EDEN.
DEEP IN THE MEADOW GREEN.
FRAGRANT WITH WONDER.

ZOLA

I HAVE SEEN THE HAWK TAKE FLIGHT.
AND I'LL SEE THE CHILDREN RUN FREE.

DREYFUS

AND AT NIGHT THE STARS WILL SHINE.
AND I KNOW THEY'RE SHINING FOR ME.

DREYFUS AND ZOLA

I HAVE SEEN THE GARDEN OF EDEN.
DEEP IN THE MEADOW GREEN.

ZOLA

AS WE WALK THIS ROAD TO FREEDOM
PAVED WITH BLOOD AND HEARTFELT REASON.

Zola! 60

DREYFUS

I WILL FOLLOW YOU.

ZOLA

I WILL LEAD YOU ON.

DREYFUS

I WILL HEAR THE CHILDREN SINGING

DREYFUS AND ZOLA

AND WE'LL SEE OUR CHILDREN DANCING.
IN MY HEART I SEE HOME, I SEE HOME.
A HOME FOR THE HOMELESS.
FOR ARE NOT ALL MEN ONE?
ONE SOUL AN INGOT FROM THE HOLY EARTH.
ONE SOUL A PHANTOM FROM THE HOLY SUN.
ONE SOUL AND INGOT FROM THE HOLY
EARTH. WE ARE THE HOLY EARTH, HOLY
EARTH.

DREYFUS

AND I'LL SEE THE CHILDREN RUN FREE.

DREYFUS AND ZOLA

I WILL FEEL THE WARMTH OF SPRING.
AND I KNOW THE FLOWERS WILL BLOOM.
I HAVE SEEN THE GARDEN OF EDEN.
NO ONE WILL TRAVEL ALONE.

ZOLA

FLOWERS FRAGRANT
LIFE WILL BLOSSOM
ANGELS DANCING
EVER CLOSER
ALL THE WHILE YOU THOUGHT YOU WERE ALONE.

DREYFUS AND ZOLA

COMES THE MORNING
DAWN WILL FIND US
SLEEPING SOUNDLY
ON OUR BEDS
WHERE DREAMS COME TRUE WHEN YOU ARE FINALLY
HOME. FINALLY HOME.
FINALLY HOME . . .

Zola! 61

Zola and Dreyfus use what blankets and pillows may have appeared on the floor to create a bed-like pallet to sleep on. As the men lie down to sleep, Zola reaches over to turn off a small oil lamp. The room is then in total darkness. As the last moment of music fades we realize that dawn has arrived with the rising of the sun.

The growing light is still too dim to see the stage clearly.

The room is silent. After less than a moment there is a pounding on the door, silence, then pounding on the door with more urgency.

DE MAUPASSANT

(from outside)

Emile, Madam! Please, open the door. Dreyfus has been pardoned. Colonel Henry has shot himself and the entire General Staff is to be replaced. It was your letter, Zola. "J'Accuse."

CEZANNE

(more pounding on the door)

We've waited all morning for you, open the door.

(pounding)

Dreyfus has been pardoned. Open the door.

(through pounding and force the door suddenly opens)

Dreyfus has been pardoned, J'Accuse has won. You have won.

Once inside the entry way then men rush to open the window blinds to let in the light. There is a stunned silence. Looking about their gaze captures Alexandrine on the sofa bed moaning and attempting to get up. The men help her. In an instant they spot Zola lying on the floor amidst his pages strewn about.

DE MAUPASSANT

What has happened to Emile?

They quickly rush to Zola and kneel beside him on the floor.

DE MAUPASSANT

My God, Emile is dead.

CEZANNE

Oh Alexandrine...

The two men stand as Alexandrine continues to remain kneeling at her dead husband's side. Everyone is in silent shock. Alexandrine still has the strength and where-with-all to say:

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ALEXANDRINE

Please. Please leave now. Please leave me alone with my husband.

Murmuring sadly, the two friends quietly withdraw from the Zolas' home to leave Alexandrine alone with her martyred husband. Still on her knees, she looks about the room and sees the pages strewn on the floor. She discovers a page in Zola's clutched hand. She carefully takes it from his death grasp and sings what she reads softly.

ALEXANDRINE (cont'd)

“THERE SHALL BE A HOME FOR THE HOMELESS.
FOR ARE NOT ALL MEN ONE?
ONE SOUL, AN INGOT FROM THE HOLY EARTH.
A PHANTOM FASHIONED FROM THE SUN . . .”

It is too much for her. She is overcome with sadness. Unable to control her sorrow, she collapses next to Zola, weeping passionately.

End Act Three, Scene 2

Zola! 63

EPILOGUE

Interior Banquet Room.

The audience is focused on ALEXANDRINE concluding her remarks at the podium.

ALEXANDRINE

I accept this tribute to my late husband and appreciate the sentiment involved. You may ask why Emile did what he did? He had never met Alfred Dreyfus in his life and knew nothing of him until the man was falsely accused. I tell you why! Emile saw injustice and knew that no nation could survive for long where injustice was tolerated... And now I ask you -- where were all of you? You saw what Emile saw -- you knew what he knew -- and yet you did nothing. A great nation depends on a great people. In a democracy the people can choose to live comfortable lies or difficult truths. Like my husband before me, I believe "Truth is

on the march, unstoppable.”

The Academy applauds as she leaves the dias. For an instant we see the flurry of her angel’s wings and the audience is stunned.

Outside she glances at a crumpled figure of a man, filthy and dressed in a ragged general’s uniform, sitting with his back against a trashcan mumbling incoherently. It is Paty de Clam.

Back in the auditorium of the Academy in the silence the members of the academy one by one raise their glasses and, with what begins as a toast for EMILE ZOLA, finally becomes the reprieve for the ARTIST’S ANTHEM, only now it is sung in ZOLA’S name.

ALL

GLORY TO ART UNENDING! NOT WHEN IT LIES ASLEEP.

THE END

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Zola! 64

Zola! 65