

**Lesson 10: Readers Theater. *The White Rose.***  
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**The White Rose: A True Story of Freedom in Nazi Germany**  
By Josephine Cripps

CAST

|                      |                           |
|----------------------|---------------------------|
| Sophie Scholl        | Gestapo Agent #1          |
| Inge Scholl          | Gestapo Agent #2          |
| Elisabeth Scholl     | Alex Schmorell            |
| Hans Scholl          | Christoph Probst          |
| Werner Scholl        | Willi Graff               |
| Robert Scholl/Father | Jakob Schmid              |
| Maria Scholl/Mother  | Gestapo Agent Robert Mohr |
| Narrators (13 total) | Gestapo Agent Mullen      |
| Frau Kruger          | Gestapo Agent #3          |
| Luise Nathan         | Judge Reisler             |

## THE WHITE ROSE:

## A TRUE STORY OF FREEDOM IN NAZI GERMANY

PART ONE

SOPHIE SCHOLL (age 12), INGE SCHOLL (age 15), ELISABETH SCHOLL (age 9), HANS SCHOLL (age 16), WERNER SCHOLL (age 7), FATHER, MOTHER, and NARRATOR 1 *enter as Curtain rises.*

NARRATOR 1:

The year is 1934. The place, Ulm, Germany. Ulm is a bustling town on the Danube River. Sophie Scholl lives there, in a fine old house with her parents and her four brothers and sisters—Hans, Inge, Elisabeth, and Werner.

*They step forward as their names are called.*

SOPHIE

My life is mostly school. But every afternoon, as soon as the bell rings, I hop on my bike and ride through the narrow streets down to the Danube. It's beautiful in the spring. Irises line the river bank, and I cycle so fast along the mossy path, I feel absolutely free!

On weekends, when I really *am* free, I bicycle with my brother Hans up into the mountains.

HANS

We pack cheese sandwiches, and for two whole days we hike through the alpine forest. Sometimes we camp beside the lake.

SOPHIE

At night, the moon rises and the lake turns silver. The stars come out, and we're both grateful just to be alive.

HANS

Yes, it's a good life we have.

SOPHIE

And it's gotten even better since we joined the Hitler Youth. I'm in the Girls' League. We meet in the afternoons, on the playing field.

There are twenty of us, and though we've only been together for a few weeks, we've gotten awfully good at our marching steps. We practice in lines of four girls each. The front line carries our banner, and we all wear our uniforms, even for practice. You should see us in our white blouses with grown-up ties, and pleated skirts that swing when we walk.

I have special gold braids on my shoulders because I carry the flag. I love to raise it high above my head and watch it fly proudly on the evening breeze.

I can honestly say this would be happiest time of my life--if not for my parents. Papa's always pacing back and forth in his study. Mama frowns all the time. I don't understand why.

MOTHER (to Sophie)

Of course you don't. You're so young—not yet thirteen—and you don't see what evil approaches.

FATHER (nodding)

That scoundrel Hitler has lied and conned his way to power. He is Chancellor now, and calls himself *Der Fuhrer*—our leader. But where is he leading us? To our graves!

We're in deep trouble here in Germany. It's been more than 15 years since we lost the Great War, but even after all that time, still our hearts are bitter. We're full of hatred and resentment, and they run so deep, it's easy for Hitler to goad us to act in terrible ways.

MOTHER

“Take revenge on our enemies!” he orders us. “Our betrayers must pay!” Every night on the radio, and even on outdoor speakers in the city square, he’s always yelling, “We must make Germany proud once more. We must take back what is ours!”

FATHER

Any fool can see what he’s got in mind. And yet, we Germans listen, and heed him. Even my own children.

*He looks sadly at Hans.*

HANS (ignoring his father)

Already the Hitler Youth have accomplished so much! All of us feel it—a great surge of pride as we fill the streets. Marching, singing, flying our banners. We’re like a single body, unified and strong.

SOPHIE (nodding)

If only our parents could grasp how thrilling it is to be part of something important. But they don’t understand. I don’t think they even try. All I have to do is mention the Hitler Youth and Papa’s face turns to stone.

*(beat)*

*Enter NARRATOR 2 and NARRATOR 3.*

NARRATOR 2

Shortly after Sophie’s thirteenth birthday, she was promoted to squad leader. With three shiny new stars on her uniform, she led a group of 100 girls, drilling them all summer through the streets of Ulm.

NARRATOR 3

By September, her squad was as disciplined as an army of robots. Throughout the fall, as the nights turned cold and clear, Sophie’s girls marched shoulder to shoulder, their torches ablaze in the night.

NARRATOR 2

Finally, Herr Scholl couldn't take any more.

FATHER (to Sophie)

How can you parade through the streets for that fraud? He points his finger at his enemies and calls that leadership. He says he will guide us to a glorious future, but that future is *war*. He's lying, Sophie. Lying!

SOPHIE

Lying? No. When all of Germany was out of work, he promised jobs. And he came through. Everyone has a job now!

FATHER

Yes, a job building barracks to house the army. A job building roads to move the soldiers about! Don't you see? He's preparing us for war.

SOPHIE

That's not what our teachers say. They are grateful for our *Fuhrer's* interest in our schools. They say he will soon be giving us new books, and new courses, all because he cares so much for the young.

FATHER

Hitler's only interest in the young is in turning them into soldiers. He's the Pied Piper, playing hypnotic melodies that lure and entice—and lead the young to their graves.

SOPHIE

Papa, if you feel so strongly, why don't you put your foot down? Why don't you order me, "Sophie, quit your squad!" When other fathers disapprove of what their children do, they *forbid* it.

FATHER

Sophie, I'm not like other fathers. We Scholls are different. We are *free*, Sophie. Free.

*Go to black.*

Enter NARRATOR 4.

NARRATOR 4

The year is 1935.

SOPHIE (walking quickly with her friend LUISE NATHAN)

Hurry, Luise. We mustn't be late.

*(She waves to a WOMAN standing in the distance, downstage).*

Frau Kruger! I've brought a new girl. I'd like you to meet Luise Nathan—

FRAU KRUGER (frowning)

Sophie, I'm afraid Fraulein Nathan won't be able to stay.

SOPHIE

What?

FRAU KRUGER

Sophie, Fraulein Nathan isn't Aryan.

SOPHIE

What do you mean? We learned in school what Aryan is. Blonde. Blue-eyed. Well, Luise is certainly that—

FRAU KRUGER (to Luise)

Nathan is a Jewish name, isn't it?

*Luise nods.*

SOPHIE

What has that got to do with it?

FRAU KRUGER (ignoring Sophie)

Luise, there's a Jewish club that would be pleased to have you. It's on the other side of town, past the train station. Wouldn't you like that?

*Luise shrugs.*

LUISE

I suppose.

*As she turns and leaves, Sophie follows her.*

SOPHIE

That Aryan business is ridiculous. There's no logic to it at all. If Aryan means blonde and blue-eyed, then you're far more Aryan than I am! The whole thing makes no sense.

LUISE

It makes sense to Frau Kruger. So—I'm off to the club that would be pleased to have me. (*She turns, kisses Sophie's cheek*). Bye, Sophie. I'll see you in school.

SOPHIE (looking on as Luise exits. Then turns to audience)

Luise and I still studied together after school, and she often stayed for supper, but it wasn't the same. She had her group, and I had mine. Then one day, she told me her group had been disbanded. "We all received a letter," she said. "Jewish clubs are no longer permitted." I couldn't believe it. How stupid, I thought. Stupid and unfair. And that was just the beginning.

The next week, I was in the library, searching for my favorite book of poems. I knew exactly where it was kept--I'd checked it out often enough! But I couldn't find it. When I asked the librarian if it was checked out, she told me, "We got rid of it. That poet--Heinrich Heine--he's a *Jew*."

Later I told my parents, "It's so unfair." Papa nodded and handed me the newspaper he was reading. He pointed to an article.

FATHER (to Sophie)

"The Nuremburg Laws are Passed...Jews are no longer German citizens."

SOPHIE

But that can't be! Luise *is* a citizen, just like you and me!

FATHER (shaking his head)

Not any more. And I'm afraid things will only get worse for her. She won't be returning to school next term: Jewish children can only go to Jewish schools. And it won't be long before they close her father's grocery store. The new laws forbid Jews from owning businesses, or flying the German flag, or marrying non-Jews. Even streets named for Jews must be re-named!

SOPHIE

But *why*?

FATHER

Hitler's orders.

SOPHIE

This is too much! How is Luise supposed to live? What will her family do?

FATHER

God willing, they'll get out of Germany--find a place where they're safe.

*Enter* NARRATOR 5

NARRATOR 5

Not long after the Nuremberg Laws passed, Luise Nathan and her family vanished. Without a word, without a trace, they were gone. Sophie never had a chance to tell her friend good-bye. All she could do was to pray, *Be safe, Luise. Be safe.*

SOPHIE

Around the time of Luise's disappearance, life got crazier with each passing day. In Girls' League, we were ordered to replace our beautiful German flag with the Nazi flag. We couldn't fly *both*, Frau Kruger said, because "Hitler is our Lord, our one and only savior."

Yesterday I got so sick of it all, I quit the squad. You're not supposed to—the law says we *must* belong—but I'm sure the police don't come after *children*. Anyway, I've thrown out my uniform with its silly gold braids, and I say--Good riddance to Herr Hitler!

HANS

But there's no getting rid of him. He's bellowing away on the radio night and day. His photo fills the newspapers, his portrait hangs on every classroom wall, and in the evenings loudspeakers blast his endless speeches across the town square.

SOPHIE

Our parents were right all along.

HANS

Yes. Hitler is in love with power and war, and for everything else, he is filled with hatred.

SOPHIE

He tells us he loves us, that we are all precious cells in the body of Germany. But he doesn't tell us the body is *diseased*.

*What's happened to our homeland*, we ask ourselves. Life used to be simple. Now, nothing makes sense. A new law makes it a crime to listen to foreign broadcasts! Our teachers tell us to report our own *parents* to the police if we catch them if listening to the BBC!

HANS

*Our father tunes in every night. He hangs on every illegal word! Just think, Sophie—he's a criminal!*

SOPHIE

We ought to be criminals too.

*(Beat)*

Inge! Come break the law with us!

*Enter Inge. As MUSIC swells, Sophie and Inge mime the following: they draw shades, close shutters and pull down blinds. Meanwhile Hans mimes locking a door.*

HANS

Hitler says we mustn't listen to jazz. He says the saxophone is "an instrument of the savage Negro races." If you're caught with smuggled records, you'll be arrested. Well, I'll go a step further. I'll *play* that despised, degenerate music!

*Hans sits down at a piano and begins to play a Fats Waller tune. Sophie and Inge dance the Lindy Hop and the Swing.*

*Fade to Black. Curtain. End of Part One.*

## PART TWO

*Enter NARRATOR 6 and NARRATOR 7.*

NARRATOR 6

Over the following months, Hitler’s government—the Third Reich—tightened its grip on Germany. The secret police—the Gestapo—seemed to be everywhere, but despite this, Sophie and Hans tried, in small ways, to defy Hitler’s unjust laws.

NARRATOR 7

Hans, who had been drafted into the army, joined an illegal group of young who met in secret, whenever they could, to “stay strong against the Reich, no matter what.”

Throughout these dark times, Sophie and Hans both kept diaries, and although it was a crime to criticize the authorities, they wrote page after page describing the *real* crimes they witnessed.

NARRATOR 6

Sophie described the day her favorite teacher was dragged out of class, because he wouldn’t salute the Nazi flag. Hans described his new life as a soldier: boys sent off in troop trains, to kill or be killed in Austria, then Poland, then Russia.

*Sophie and Hans mime writing, closing their diaries, hiding them.*

Sophie and her older sister Inge organized an underground book club. Meeting in secret, the girls read forbidden authors, mostly Jews. They also read books by the American writer Helen Keller. Keller was banned because of her pacifism—her belief in nonviolence.

*Sophie mimes hiding books.*

Through Inge, Sophie learned about a prison the Nazis built nearby. It was called Dachau, and most people in Ulm said it was nothing—“just a labor camp, to get work done.”

NARRATOR 7

But by this time Sophie had stopped listening to most people.

She knew what the Nazis were capable of, and she knew that people like her friend Luise could be inside those walls, starving. So, every morning she bought a loaf of bread from the bakery near her school, and when no one was looking, she handed it to Inge. Inge

passed the bread to her friend--whose sister smuggled it into Dachau when she brought fresh linens to the prison guards.

SOPHIE

A loaf of bread. It's nothing. But what else can I do?

*A sudden, loud KNOCKING.*

OFF-STAGE VOICE (male, sharp)

Open up! Hurry!

*TWO GESTAPO AGENTS enter from stage left.*

GESTAPO #1 (to Sophie)

Gestapo! This is the Scholl house, correct? We need to have a look around.

*As he speaks, Sophie's mother sneaks in from stage right. Upstage, out of the view of the downstage Gestapo agents, Mother mimes (with or without props): she hastily gathers up the diaries and books Sophie's hidden. She stashes them in her shopping basket and tucks a towel over them.*

MOTHER (crossing to the Gestapo agents)

Gentlemen, I'm Frau Scholl! But I'm afraid you've caught me at a bad time. You'll have to excuse me. I'm late to do the shopping. The bakery will be closed if I don't hurry.

*She exits—taking the illegal diaries and books in her basket.*

GESTAPO #2 (to Sophie and Inge)

You two! What is your relationship to Hans Scholl?

INGE

He's our brother.

SOPHIE

What about him? Oh my God, has something happened? Is he all right?—

GESTAPO #1

You're coming with us.

SOPHIE

But why? We've done nothing! Stop—

*The Gestapo agents roughly grab Inge and Sophie. As they push the sisters across the stage, Mother enters, this time without her basket.*

MOTHER (shouting)

Stop! Let them go!

*The girls are hauled off-stage. Mother collapses.*

SOPHIE and INGE (off-stage)

Mama, it's all right--

*Enter Herr Scholl. He cradles his wife as she sobs.*

*Enter NARRATOR 8 and NARRATOR 9.*

NARRATOR 8

Sophie and Inge were taken to jail, but before they were questioned, the officer in charge saw how young Sophie was, and he laughed out loud. "You're too young to make trouble," he said, and he let her go.

Inge, who was three years older than Sophie, was not so lucky. She was jailed for a week, but after seven days and nights of proclaiming her innocence, the Gestapo let her go. They had too many other prisoners to interrogate.

Fifty miles away, Hans was taken from his army unit and thrown in jail. After two weeks of investigations, the Gestapo still could not prove that Hans was a traitor, so the army demanded his release.

*Enter HANS.*

HANS

They need me--for cannon fodder! So, here I am, but in body only. I may be their soldier, but I will never kill for them.

*SFX: bombs falling, gunshots*

SOPHIE (reading a letter)

“My dearest Sophie, I send you love from the Russian front. This country would be beautiful if it weren’t awash in blood. I’m working as a medic, doing what little I can for the wounded—and hauling away the dead.

*(beat)*

Sophie, through all the smoke and fire, there’s one thing I see so clearly. The war must stop. But it won’t, not as long as Hitler is winning.

*(beat)*

Listen, Sophie. Listen to me. We *must* lose this war. Hitler must go down in defeat. We must stop this monster!”

*(she folds the letter and puts it in her pocket. She moves downstage, close to audience)*

But how exactly? How can we stop Hitler? There are so few of us who see the truth. What can those few of us possibly *do*?

*Curtain. Black-out, then lights up.*

Enter NARRATOR 10 and NARRATOR 11.

NARRATOR 10

In 1941, Hans managed to win an exemption from the military because he was accepted at medical school. He moved to Munich—about an hour away from Ulm--and enrolled at the University of Munich.

NARRATOR 11

Several months later, Sophie applied to the University of Munich. It was considered impossible for a girl to get in, but Sophie had worked so hard for so long, and her grades were so excellent that, despite her sex, she was accepted.

When her train pulled into the station in Munich, Hans was waiting.

HANS

Sophie! Here we are!

*They embrace, and he gestures toward the YOUNG MEN with him.*

Sophie, meet ALEX...WILLI...CRISTOPH.

*Sophie shakes hands with all three.*

ALEX

Welcome, Sophie.

CHRISTOPH

We've been dying to meet you.

WILLI

Yes. Hans says you're the hardest working of the family.

HANS

She's got the biggest heart, too. Come on, Sophie, let's go home.

NARRATOR 10

Sophie and her new friends took off through the city, heading for the apartment she would share with Hans. Along the way, wherever she looked, Sophie saw swastika flags flying and soldiers in uniform standing on every corner.

NARRATOR 11

She saw too the price of war. Cafes and shops were boarded up because they had nothing to sell. The country's food and clothing were all going to the army, feeding the soldiers and keeping them warm. In the meantime, everyone else suffered from hunger and cold.

ALEX (to the others)

Disgusting, isn't it? Every honest German should be ashamed.

WILLI

Shhh, Alex...

CHRISTOPH

The wrong ears will hear you.

ALEX

Sorry, you're right. But it's so absurd! Here we are in medical school, training to *save* people--while our own army is *murdering* them.

*(Alex shakes his head)*

HANS

Yes. Every honest German must stand up!

*Black out.*

NARRATOR 10

Sophie threw herself into student life. She worked hard, attending classes all day and studying late into the night. Most evenings, she fell asleep at her desk.

NARRATOR 11

One evening, very late, she was awakened...

OFFSTAGE VOICE OF ALEX

Damn.

OFFSTAGE VOICE OF CHRISTOPH

Broken again!

OFFSTAGE VOICE OF ALEX

We *must* find a new duplicating machine!

OFFSTAGE VOICE OF WILLI

Yes, but if we buy one around here, we'll arouse suspicion--

SOPHIE (awakening confused, rubbing her eyes)

What? What are you talking about?

OFFSTAGE VOICE OF HANS (sharply)

Sophie, you're dreaming. Go back to sleep. You have exams coming up.

NARRATOR 10

It was during one of those exams that Sophie made a shocking discovery. As she came into the classroom and took a seat, she noticed a sheet of paper on the floor beneath her feet. Picking it up, she saw there were other similar papers—duplicates—lying under other chairs.

SOPHIE (reading quietly, glancing around)

*The Leaflet of the White Rose...*  
*Today every honest German is shamed by the Reich...*

OFFSTAGE HANS joins SOPHIE

*We must stop it—stop the war machine--before the last city lies in ruin...*

OFFSTAGE WILLI and HANS, plus SOPHIE

*Before the last young man has died for a monster...*

OFFSTAGE CHRISTOPH, WILLI, AND HANS, plus SOPHIE

*And though that monster has risen from hell*  
*Yet to hell will he return*  
*And all who stand with him perish in his fall.*  
*Every honest German must stand up now. Resist!*

NARRATOR 11

Sophie had heard such talk before. Hands trembling, mind racing, she wrote her exam then rushed home.

SOPHIE

Hans! Come here. Now.

*He enters, followed by Willi, Christoph, and Alex.*

Don't bother to deny it. You wrote this. You are the White Rose.

HANS (as the other young men nod in assent)

Yes. We are.

SOPHIE

How could you? Dear God, how could you be so reckless? Hans, you've been arrested once already—

HANS (nodding)

So I know I can handle it.

ALEX

We know the risks, Sophie, and we take every precaution. I swear we act with utmost secrecy.

WILLI

Sophie, believe me, we have no choice in this. We've *got* to act, regardless of the risks.

HANS

It's not enough to quit the Hitler Youth, or read forbidden books, or smuggle bread into Dachau. We have to do more. So, the White Rose.

WILLI

And the pamphlet you saw is only the first. We'll write more.

SOPHIE

And what about when you're *caught*?

ALEX

We would rather be caught doing what's right than be safe doing nothing.

SOPHIE

You're crazy! All of you! Absolutely crazy!

ALEX (shaking his head)

We would be crazy if we stood by, silent. Sophie, we *must* act.

CHRISTOPH

And it's not just us saying so. You can read it for yourself, in the Bible. "Be ye doers of the word, and not listeners only!"

HANS

Remember your favorite poet—Heinrich Heine? The Jew whose books have been burned? Think about it. What does *he* say?

SOPHIE

"Be strong, be the cannon for righteousness. Take your stand."

(*pause*)

But...

(*she looks at each of them in turn*)

You could *die* for this.

ALEX

So many are dying for the Reich, Sophie. It's only right that some should die *against* it.

HANS

Enough with this talk! To hell with what *could* happen. Look at what *is* happening! Hitler is a killing machine, destroying all that's decent in this world, and if we don't raise our voices against him, then we are his accomplices.

SOPHIE (letting it sink in, taking a deep breath)

All right then. I'm with you.

*(smiles)*

Hans says I'm the hardest working of the Scholls, so let me prove it. Give me a job.

*Lights fade. Curtain. End of Part 2.*

### PART THREE

*Enter NARRATOR 12 and NARRATOR 13.*

In the basement of a friend's house, Sophie began working with the others. Night after night, the students took turns inside and outside the house. Outside, they stood guard, watching for police cars nosing through the dark. Inside, they worked in whispers, composing their next leaflet on an ancient typewriter. Duplicating was always a problem. The machine kept breaking down.

NARRATOR 12

Parts were impossible to come by, and even if you found them, you couldn't buy them without raising suspicion. All of Munich was on the alert—trying to catch the White Rose.

NARRATOR 13

So Alex made a trip to Vienna, Austria. Supposedly he was visiting his sick grandmother. But in a pawn shop, he bought a second-hand duplicating machine. Somehow he smuggled it back into Germany, in various parts, in his suitcases.

NARRATOR 12

The "new" machine was a dinosaur, but slowly the White Rose began cranking out their second leaflet. They planned to print a thousand, and then mail some of them—to doctors, café owners, and others who dealt with the public. Maybe those people would spread the word.

NARRATOR 13

Sophie was in charge of supplies. She would bicycle all over Munich, buying a few sheets of paper at every stationery shop. She couldn't buy a lot paper at once; that would

arouse suspicion. So she visited every shop in the city and bought just a few sheets. She did the same at the post office. She bought just a few stamps at a time.

NARRATOR 12

Some leaflets were distributed late at night—on park benches, windowsills, door steps. The students wore black and worked alone, ducking in and out of the shadows. Sophie was never as scared as when she crouched in the park, fumbling in her knapsack for a handful of leaflets to leave beside the drinking fountain.

But it was worth it, in the morning. The city awoke, and hundreds read what the White Rose had written.

ALEX

*Since the conquest of Poland, three hundred thousand Jews have been murdered by the Reich... This is a crime unparalleled in human history, and now that we recognize the Nazis for what they are, it is our first and only duty to destroy them.*

WILLI (to the others)

All over Munich, people are talking, and thinking. Everywhere I turned today, I heard people asking each other, “Have you read the White Rose?” For the first time since Hitler took over, the truth is in the air.

HANS

The Gestapo’s going mad, trying to ferret out the “criminals” behind this “treason.” Today’s newspaper ordered everyone to turn in anyone who looks suspicious.

SOPHIE

That’s certainly not us. Why, to the rest of the world, we’re just a circle of carefree students, going to classes, meeting for tea, strolling together in the evenings.

HANS

Even our families don't know.

SOPHIE

And they never will! The less they know, the safer they'll be.

HANS

Yes. But one day they *will* know, and they'll be proud—especially of *you*, Sophie! Last week you were more daring than ever, stuffing your knapsack with leaflets then riding trains all over Germany, leaving stacks in every station.

WILLI

The whole time you were gone, we wondered if we'd lost our minds, letting you go. The trains are crawling with Gestapo—

SOPHIE

Fortunately the Gestapo aren't looking for some little mouse like me!

ALEX (quietly)

You're no mouse, Sophie.

SOPHIE (shyly)

Thank you, Alex. Thank you.

(*hastily*)

Now then, back to work.

NARRATOR 12

During the spring and summer of 1942, thousands of new White Rose pamphlets leaflets blew in like firestorms. The White Rose published Pamphlets 3 and 4.

WILLI

*“We must oppose the Reich in every possible way. If you work in a weapons factory, commit sabotage! Cause the machines to break or slow down.”*

CHRISTOPH

*“If you’re an ordinary citizen, stop buying Hitler’s newspapers. And stop aiding the war effort. When there are drives for scrap metal to build more weapons, give nothing.”*

NARRATOR 13

As the words of the White Rose fell upon the city like a clear, refreshing rain, the Gestapo added more men, and soon the city streets were plastered with posters: “Be alert!” they ordered. “Help catch the criminals who slander our Fuhrer!”

SOPHIE (to Hans)

Do you ever get scared, Hans? Really scared? Whenever I pass one of those posters, I look away. And every time a Gestapo appears on the street, I feel weak and my knees turn to rubber. Even after the agent strides past me and I know I’m safe, I have to slow down my heart and remember to breathe.

HANS

Me too. I’m jumpy every second of the day. The only time I’m calm is when I sleep, but it’s hard to sleep. I lie in bed wondering who’s suspicious. My professor? Our landlady? The newspaper boy on the corner? One of the countless crimes Hitler has committed is turning us against each other.

WILLI

Yes. Every morning I wonder, *Will my neighbor turn me in today?*

ALEX

And every morning I ask myself, *Will I ever see my friends again?*

SOPHIE

We *have* to push those thoughts aside, or we'll cripple ourselves—and Hitler will have won.

WILLI

It often seems he *is* winning. The bodies pile up in the camps, and on the Russian front. And what do we do but write a few words and pray people will heed them. What is that—a few words against the power of the Reich?!

CHRISTOPH

We can't look at it that way. I know with every fiber of my being that what we write gives others courage and strength. All over Germany, there must be isolated individuals—decent people--who resist the Reich in their hearts. And now, they know we stand with them.

WILLI

Against a tyrant unlike any who's come before! My God, what if we fail?

HANS

Let's say we fail. Is that any reason not to try? Of course not. We *must* try!

SOPHIE

Hans is right. It is our *duty* to demonstrate that freedom still exists. Besides, Hitler isn't as strong as he was. He's gotten nowhere fighting Russia, he's lost his foothold in North Africa, and it seems the Allies have unlimited fuel, and planes. Just think. Right at this moment England and the United States could be planning an invasion of Europe!

NARRATOR 12

Encouraged by signs that Hitler was weakening, the students worked feverishly throughout the autumn, and in January of 1943, nearly ten thousand copies of Leaflet #5 fluttered across Germany.

WILLI

*"The war is coming to an end, and Hitler cannot win it; he can only prolong it. Retribution comes closer and closer!"*

CHRISTOPH

*"Now is the time for freedom of speech, freedom of religion, and freedom for all from evil regimes. Support the resistance! Distribute our leaflets!"*

*Lights dim to black.*

*Black-clad GRAFFITI ARTISTS come creeping onstage and with spray paint they scrawl "Freiheit!" and "Freedom!" and "Down with Mass Murder!" across black flats.*

NARRATOR 13

Wherever they looked, Gestapo agents saw the unrest that was brewing, and they were getting frustrated—and embarrassed--that they'd failed to root out the culprit. They began a door-to-door campaign, ordering citizens to stay alert and report even the slightest irregularity. When they came to Sophie and Hans's apartment, Sophie assured them she was on the look-out for traitors.

SOPHIE (to Hans)

As soon as the Gestapo left, I gripped a bookcase and breathed for the first time since they'd appeared.

*(pause)*

I'm scared all the time now--and the only way to combat it is to keep working.

HANS (nodding)

Our latest leaflet is our biggest run ever—8,000 copies! And we're going to distribute it at high schools and universities all over. Its message is perfect for young people: build a new country. Build a whole new world of the spirit!

SOPHIE (turning to Willi, Christoph, and Alex)

Hans and I have a plan. We packed 1,700 leaflets into my suitcase. When we carry it down the street, we'll look like any old couple of students heading to the train station. But instead we're going to the University, to the biggest building on campus.

HANS

Between bells, when classes are in session, we'll take advantage of the empty hallways. With no one around, we'll scatter leaflets in windowsills, next to classroom doors, and on every staircase. When the bell rings and students pour out of the classrooms, they'll find 1,700 leaflets waiting. They'll see that we're strong, and they can be strong too.

*Lights dim to black.*

NARRATOR 13

On February 18, 1943, Sophie and Hans carried out their plan. It went perfectly. Leaflets dotted the stairwells, the hallways, the window sill, and Hans and Sophie—with their empty suitcase—were strolling toward the door...

NARRATOR 12

...When a voice rang out.

*Enter* JAKOB SCHMID

JAKOB SCHMID

Stop! You're under arrest!

*(pause)*

I'm Jakob Schmid, custodian—and faithful servant to our *Fuhrer*. I've ordered the building locked, and help is on the way.

*Enter* GESTAPO OFFICER ROBERT MOHR.

MOHR

Thank you, Mr. Schmid. Now then, you two. May I see your papers?

SOPHIE and HANS (producing their papers)

Yes, of course.

MOHR (reviewing their papers)

They seem to be in order, and you two appear to be fine young people. You certainly don't appear to be enemies of the state. Surely there's some mistake.

HANS

Yes, this is all a misunderstanding. My sister and I were on our way to the station.

SOPHIE

We were going home, to Ulm. We go there once a week, and our mother gives us groceries—items that are hard to come by in Munich, like jam and fruit. Mama does all the canning herself, and she gives us more than we can eat. A whole suitcase full!

MOHR

Lucky you! I know how hard it is to find decent food in the city. All right then, you may go--

*Enter* GESTAPO AGENT MULLEN

Wait! Herr Mohr! We've collected these stacks of leaflets from all over the building. And look. When they're repacked in the suitcase, they're a perfect fit. That cannot be a coincidence.

MOHR

You're right.

*(pause)*

Herr Mullen, hand-cuff the pair, and take them to Headquarters. Then send a team to their apartment. I want a house-to-house search of the neighborhood as well.

*(to Jakob Schmid)*

Herr Schmid, you have our thanks. You are a fine and upstanding citizen. *Heil Hitler!*

SCHMID

*Heil Hitler!*

NARRATOR 13

In the maze-like Gestapo Headquarters, Sophie and Hans were locked in separate cells, and separate questioning began. Over and over both Hans and Sophie proclaimed their innocence. Both were so cool and confident, they might have gotten away with it.

NARRATOR 12

But then the agents returned from their search of the Scholls' apartment.

MOHR (to Sophie)

Fraulein, before you say another word, let me tell you what we've found. Hidden in a Bible we found stamps—the kind used by the White Rose. Mind you, we found *hundreds* of stamps--far more than any one person would ever use. We also found envelopes identical to those used by the White Rose. And paper exactly like that used for the leaflets.

AGENT MULLEN (breathless)

Herr Mohr, we've found their office, and I've got three men at the University, rounding up their acquaintances—

SOPHIE

No!

HANS

My friends know nothing! It's me, my work alone. I did it.

SOPHIE

*We* did it. Hans and I.

HANS

That's not true. I worked alone, and I alone am guilty.

SOPHIE

Hans, please! Herr Mohr, the White Rose is the two of us. No one else is involved.

MOHR

Surely you can't expect me to believe that. All those thousands of leaflets? All over Germany? Come now, who are your accomplices?

SOPHIE and HANS

No one!

MOHR

Listen carefully, both of you. Surely you realize this leafleting business is no ordinary crime. It amounts to treason, for which the penalty is death. However, if you cooperate, I can guarantee your sentences will be far less severe than that.

SOPHIE

It doesn't matter. There is no one else involved. You must believe us.

NARRATOR 12

Over the next three days and nights, Sophie and Hans stuck to their story—that they alone were guilty. Finally, Hans was sent to the men's prison, and Sophie remained with Officer Mohr. He was determined to break her down.

MOHR

Sophie. You can save yourself. Of course you're going to go to prison—you know that—but you will avoid execution if you simply tell me what really happened.

*(pause)*

The truth is, I don't want you to die. You have an iron will, and you could become as asset to the Reich if only you would see the truth.

SOPHIE

I *am* telling the truth!

MOHR

Sophie, I admire your strength of will, and I only wish you would use it on behalf of the Reich. You are a brave young woman. You would be an asset to our *Fuhrer*—

SOPHIE

Never! Hitler is a beast, and everything I've done against the Reich, I would do all over again.

MOHR

Sophie...Sophie. Don't you understand? I want to save neck. I don't want you to die.

SOPHIE

Why? What difference does my death make as long as the leaflets stirred people up and made them think?

*(pause)*

The students will rise up, believe me. They will.

MOHR

While *you* rot in the ground! Sophie, don't let it happen. Tell me who helped you—

SOPHIE

No one, I swear. No one.

*Enter* GESTAPO AGENT #3.

GESTAPO AGENT #3

Quiet!

*(pause)*

Herr Mohr, we've uncovered handwritten drafts of one of the leaflets, and we've traced the handwriting. It matches that of one Christoph Probst--

SOPHIE

No! That can't be--

GESTAPO AGENT #3

Don't bother. He's confessed.

SOPHIE (softly)

Dear God, no. No--

GESTAPO AGENT #3

We've been advised by the Deputy Minister to act swiftly. Judge Freisler has been notified the trial is set for tomorrow morning.

MOHR

All right. Take the prisoner away.

NARRATOR 13

Sophie spent the night in a small, dank cell, praying for Hans and Christoph. It was almost dawn before she finally slept. She dreamt, and when she awoke, she recorded her dream on the back of the indictment against her.

SOPHIE

“It was a sunny day, and I was carrying a child in a long, white dress to her baptism. The path to the church led up a steep mountain, and as I made my way upward with the child in my arms, the earth suddenly tore apart into a deep, gaping wound. I had just enough time to put the child safely on the other side before I tumbled down into the abyss.

*(pause)*

I died, but the child will live.”

NARRATOR 12

At ten sharp the following morning, Sophie, along with Hans and Christoph, was led into courtroom of the Palace of Justice. The courtroom was filled with invited guests: Gestapo and Reich officials. Sophie, Hans, and Christoph were pushed roughly up to the dock, where they sat side by side, in chains.

Enter JUDGE REISLER.

JUDGE REISLER

In the name of our *Fuhrer*, I order the accused to rise. You three are charged with high treason against the Reich, and since you have already admitted your guilt, we will waste no time. I find each of you guilty, and I sentence each of you to death.

*(pause)*

Have you anything to say to the Court?

HANS

I must re-state that Christoph Probst is not involved in any way--

JUDGE REISLER

Silence! If you have nothing to say on your own behalf, say nothing at all!

*(pause)*

Sophia Magdalena Scholl, what have you to say?

(*waiting*)

All right then, I have a question for you. You stand before me looking like a decent girl, properly raised. One can't imagine your parents taught you to be a criminal. Why, then? Why did you do it?

SOPHIE

Someone had to. Someone had to make a start. What we wrote, many are already thinking--but they don't dare say it aloud.

JUDGE REISLER

Please do not presume to speak for the masses. The masses revere our *Fuhrer* and uphold the law--

HANS

The law is *wrong*, and one day soon you will stand where we stand now!

*Enter Sophie's mother and father* MARIA and ROBERT SCHOLL.

NARRATOR 13

Suddenly the courtroom was filled with commotion as Robert Scholl flung open the doors and pushed his way inside. Guards wrestled him to the ground but he would not be silent.

ROBERT SCHOLL (addressing the Court)

There is a higher justice than this farce of a court, and one day--when justice prevails--these young people will go down in history!

JUDGE REISLER

Get that lunatic out of here, and prepare the condemned!

NARRATOR 12

At five o'clock in the afternoon on February 22, 1943, Sophie, Hans, and Christoph were led into the Munich Stadium. Nazi officials filled the stands. Sophie was the first to face the executioner. She crossed the courtyard with a steady gait, her head high. Whatever fear gripped her, she did not reveal. Calm, dignified, she knelt before the guillotine. The blade fell, and without flinching Sophie met her death.

*(pause)*

Christoph followed. Hans was last. When it was his turn to die, he gazed up at the onlookers and spoke his last words.

HANS (shouting)

What we have done will cause waves. *Freiheit!* Long live freedom!

NARRATOR 13

Hours later, the guard who cleared out Sophie's prison cell found just one item. Her arrest warrant, folded neatly, lay on her cot. Across the warrant, in large letters, Sophie had written a single word: *Freedom*.

NARRATOR 12

In the days following Sophie's death, several White Rose leaflets were smuggled into England. The English government printed millions of copies, and when English pilots flew their nightly missions over Germany, they scattered the words of the White Rose across the German landscape.

NARRATOR 13

Within eight months of Sophie's death, the other members of the White Rose were caught and executed. But it wasn't long before Hitler met his defeat. The Germans surrendered on May 7, 1945.

NARRATOR 12

After the fall of the Nazis, the White Rose was recognized for its courage in the face of tyranny. At the site of the Scholls' arrest, a plaque was laid to honor their sacrifice. And the street where Sophie and Hans lived was given a new name. *Freiheit*. Freedom.

NARRATOR 13

Today, long after their deaths, Sophie and Hans Scholl live on. Their legacy of truth and honor shines brightly in the hearts of people everywhere who struggle to be free.

*Curtain.*

--The End--

