

The Antichrist  
(A screenplay about Nietzsche)  
by  
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FADE IN:

INT. BEDROOM--NIGHT

LUDWIG, NIETZSCHE'S FATHER, lies insane and dying in bed. He is attended by a DOCTOR, who puts his stethoscope on Ludwig's chest and removes it. The Doctor looks at MOTHER and shakes his head.

LUDWIG

The demons won't stop talking Do  
you hear their voices?

NIETZSCHE'S MOTHER

Please, Ludwig, there are no demons  
talking to you. I'm here.

DOCTOR

He won't last the night.

LUDWIG

I hear the voices of demons!

INT. HALL OUTSIDE THE BEDROOM

CLOSE--FOUR YEARS OLD NIETZSCHE

THE FOUR YEARS OLD NIETZSCHE crouches in the hallway.

LUDWIG

(off-screen; CRYING OUT from the bedroom)  
Devil, eat my shit and wipe your  
mouth with my piss!

ANOTHER ANGLE

NIETZSCHE'S TWO MAIDEN AUNTS. One of them cups her hands over the little Nietzsche's ears.

AUNT

Oh!

WIDER

Little Nietzsche, HIS OLDER SISTER, who is still just a girl, his two maiden aunts, and PATERNAL GRANDMOTHER hover in the hallway around the door of the bedroom, where Nietzsche's Father tosses and turns.

INT. BEDROOM

Ludwig suddenly sits up in bed.

LUDWIG

Get thee behind me, Satan!

He falls back and dies.

NIETZSCHE'S MOTHER, THE DOCTOR, AND THE DEAD LUDWIG

The Doctor checks Ludwig's pulse and then closes Ludwig's eyes.

DOCTOR

He has moved on, Frau Nietzsche.

Nietzsche's Mother WEEPS.

WIDER

She goes into the hallway and leads little Nietzsche in by the hand. His other female relations file in after them. Nietzsche's Mother clasping his hand brings him to Ludwig's bedside.

NIETZSCHE'S MOTHER

Say good-bye to your Father, Friedrich.

CLOSE--LITTLE NIEZSCHE

LITTLE NIETZSCHE

Bye—bye, Father.

CUT TO:

INT. MORGUE—LATER

CLOSE--THE HANDS OF THE CORONER AS HE REMOVES NIETZSCHE'S  
FATHER'S BRAIN FROM HIS CRANIUM

DOCTOR (Vo)

The insanity was due to a softening of the brain--

CUT TO:

INT. PARLOR--DAY

ANGLE ON THE DOCTOR

DOCTOR (cont'd)

—There's no reason to believe that  
it is hereditary or that your  
children will inherit it.

ANOTHER ANGLE

The little Nietzsche, Nietzsche's Mother, and paternal Grandmother are seated on a sofa.  
Nietzsche's still youthful sister and two maiden aunts are gathered around it.

NIETZSCHE'S MOTHER

It comforts me to know that, Herr  
Doctor. I wouldn't want anything  
like that to happen to my poor little  
Friedrich.

She musses his hair.

CLOSE

Little Nietzsche looks up at his Mother.

CUT TO:

CREDIT SEQUENCE:

### THE ANTICHRIST

WAGNER'S PRELUDE FROM TRISTAN AND ISOLDE PLAYS OVER THE  
CREDITS

INT. PARLOR—DAY

NIETZSCHE, STILL A BOY, BUT OLDER

He PLAYS SCHUBERT'S ERL-KING ON THE PIANO.

INT. STUDY--DAY

THE ERL-KING PLAYS ON THE SOUNDTRACK.

ANGLE ON THE YOUNG NIETZSCHE

THE YOUNG NIETZSCHE reads. a book with VOLTAIRE on the cover.

ANOTHER ANGLE

One of Nietzsche's aunts comes into the study without knocking. She catches Nietzsche  
reading Voltaire. She snatches the book from his hands.

OTHER AUNT

Why are you reading such atheistic  
smut? Young man, I urge you to find  
more suitable reading material.

CUT TO:

INT. PARLOR--A FEW YEARS LATER

THE ADOLESCENT NIETZSCHE PLAYS THE ERL-KING ON THE PIANO.

CUT TO:

INT. PARLOR--DAY

GROUP SHOT

Nietzsche's Mother, his ADOLESCENT SISTER, ELISABETH, his two aunts, and his  
paternal GRANDMOTHER are dressed to go to church.

NIETZSCHE'S MOTHER

Friedrich, it is time to go to church.

ANGLE ON THE ADOLESCENT NIETZSCHE

He wears a straw hat and is dressed in a "dandified" manner.

ADOLESCENT NIETZSCHE

I think I'll go for a walk instead.

ANOTHER ANGLE

OTHER AUNT

Reading that Voltaire has poisoned  
his mind.

NIETZSCHE'S MOTHER

Friedrich, you know. you'll burn in  
hell if you read that sinful rubbish.  
Voltaire was. an unrepentant  
atheist.

ADOLESCENT NIETZSCHE

I'm an atheist, too. I'm going for  
a walk now.

The women GASP. He leaves the parlor and goes out the front door.

CUT TO:

ANGLE ON THE ADOLESCENT NIETZSCHE

walking in the park.

EXT. STREET IN BONN—EVENING

ANGLE ON A HORSE-DRAWN COACH

in the street. The COACH DRIVER huddles inside.

ANOTHER ANGLE ON NIETZSCHE

NIETZSCHE is a young man of twenty-four.

NIETZSCHE

Coachman, may you, please, take me  
to the University of Bonn?

NEW ANGLE

The coachmen is. obviously a rogue.

COACHMAN

With pleasure, young man.

Nietzsche steps up into the coach and takes his seat. The coachman CRACKS A WHIP  
on the horse's back.

COACHMAN

Giddyup!

EXT. A STREET--EVENING

MOVING

The coachman wildly drives the coach through the street.

INT. COACH

ANGLE ON NIETZSCHE

He is tossed from side to side as the coach careens through the street.

EXT. AN ALLEY

The coach pulls up to a residence. The coachman turns to Nietzsche with a mischievous  
grin.

COACHMAN

I believe you'll find what you're  
looking for in here, young man'.

ANOTHER ANGLE

NIETZSCHE

What is this place?

COACHMAN

Let me show you in, young man.  
I'll introduce you.

Nietzsche steps out of the coach. He hands the coachman some money. The coachman bows. Nietzsche and he walk up to the front door. The coachman RAPS THE KNOCKER ON THE DOOR A COUPLE OF TIMES. The door opens. The MADAME leans her head out the door.

MADAME

Hello, what is it?

COACHMAN

This young man is a student at the  
university. I told him you'd show  
him a bit of **your** hospitality.

MADAME

Come in young man.

The coachman doffs his hat and goes back to the coach. Nietzsche enters the brothel.

INT. BROTHEL

THE PROSTITUTES lounge around the salon on sofas. Some entertain their MALE CLIENTS. Some converse. There is a piano.

MADAME

Welcome.

Nietzsche goes to the piano and PLAYS A SINGLE, MELANCHOLY NOTE. A YOUNG PROSTITUTE accosts Nietzsche. She is pretty.

PROSTITUTE

What's your name?

NIETZSCHE

Um. . . F-Friedrich.

PROSTITUTE

Let's go upstairs, Friedrich.  
They ascend the staircase.

INT. A BEDROOM IN THE BROTHEL

THE DOOR OPENS. Nietzsche and the prostitute enter. There is a bed. A lamp burns on the table. The prostitute snuffs it out.

PROSTITUTE

Come to bed, Friedrich.

The two fall down in bed together.

INT. BROTHEL--EVENING

STUDENTS AND PROSTITUTES TALK AND LAUGH. SOME STUDENTS SING, "GAUDEAMUS IGITUR, IUVENES DUM SUMUS." OTHERS SHOUT, "DEUTSCHLAND, DEUTSCHLAND, UBER ALLES!" The students and prostitutes LAUGH AND CLINK THEIR BEER GLASSES TOGETHER.

ANGLE ON NIETZSCHE

sitting alone silently. He is not drinking and is alienated from the whole scene.

ANOTHER ANGLE

LIZA, a waif of a prostitute, approaches Nietzsche. She holds out her hand to him.

LIZA

I'm Liza.

He takes her hand.

NIETZSCHE

Friedrich.

LIZA

Let's go, Friedrich.

She leads him up the staircase.

INT. OPERA HOUSE--NIGHT

WIDE

The opera stage. It is the finale of Wagner's Tristan and-



Isolde. Isolde SINGS THE LIEBESTOD FROM TRISTAN AND ISOLDE.  
 She kills herself with a dagger and falls dead on the stage.  
 The curtain falls.

THE AUDIENCE APPLAUDS.

ANGLE ON NIETZSCHE

He has risen to his feet and APPLAUDS ENTHUSIASTICALLY.

INT. LECTURE HALL AT THE UNIVERSITY OF BASEL, SWITZERLAND-- DAY

Nietzsche lectures at a lectern before his STUDENTS.

NIETZSCHE

What great philosopher has been married?  
 Heraclitus, Plato, Descartes,  
 Spinoza, Leibniz, Kant, Schopenhauer  
 — these were not.... A married  
 philosopher belongs in comedy... and  
 that exception... the sarcastic Socrates,  
 it seems, married ironically  
 just to demonstrate this proposition.

The students LAUGH.

NIETZSCHE

You are dismissed.

The students get up to leave and file out the door.

INT. SALON, WAGNER'S HOUSE--DAY

Nietzsche and WAGNER are sitting down in a couple of armchairs. They drink tea.

NIETZSCHE

Master, I am enamoured of your Tristan  
and Isolde. I hear the music in  
 my head. It is absolutely astonishing.

WAGNER

I appreciate your praise, Friedrich.

NIETZSCHE

Master, you are one who has suffered  
 deeply— that is your distinction above  
 other musicians. I admire you

NIETZSCHE (cont'd)  
 wherever you put yourself into music.  
 I interpret your music as an expression  
 of a Dionysian power of the soul.

WAGNER  
 You understand my music better than  
 my other disciples, Friedrich.

NIETZSCHE  
 I welcome your compliment, Master.

WAGNER  
 Classics is an interesting field.  
 As a youth, Greek and Latin were  
 among my favorite subjects. What  
 is your specialty?

NIETZSCHE  
 My specialties are Greek lyric poetry  
 and the pre—Socratic philosophers  
 and like you I am devoted to the works  
 of Schopenhauer.

WAGNER  
 What do you think of Schopenhauer's  
 essay on suicide?

NIETZSCHE  
 I agree with him that a man has no  
 more unassailable right than the  
 right to his own person and, though  
 it is not a crime, it is a mistake.

WAGNER  
 And he goes on to say that there is  
 nothing against it in either the Old  
 or New Testaments.

NIETZSCHE  
 Yes, Master.

WAGNER  
 Are you an atheist like Schopenhauer?

NIETZSCHE  
 Yes, I as, Master.

WAGNER

Good. I am, too.

Wagner gestures toward the piano.

WAGNER

Do you play, Friedrich?

NIETZSCHE

(hesitating)

Yes.

WAGNER

Play something.

Nietzsche gets up and goes to the piano. He sits down and  
PLAYS THE LIEBESTOD FROM TRISTAN AND ISOLDE.

CLOSE—WAGNER

He tilts his head back and closes his eyes. He is entranced by his own music.

CUT TO:

A TITLE CARD READS:

1870

THE FRANCO-PRUSSIAN WAR

EXT. TRENCH IN THE BATTLEFIELD--DAY

WIDE

Smoke fills the air. BULLETS WHIZ overhead. GERMAN SOLDIERS  
FIRE THEIR WEAPONS. CANNON FIRE. BOMBS EXPLODE. SOLDIERS  
YELL at each other to be heard over the NOISE.

ANOTHER ANGLE

Nietzsche and OTHER MEDICAL ORDERLIES evacuate THE WOUNDED on  
stretchers.

NEW ANGLE

Nietzsche and ANOTHER ORDERLY carry a SOLDIER on a stretcher. Nietzsche  
begins to have difficulty carrying the stretcher.

NIETZSCHE

Please, let's put this man down for

NIETZSCHE (cont'd)  
 a moment. I'm too weak to carry him.  
 Just let me catch my breath, and I'll  
 be fine.

They put the soldier in the stretcher down.

Nietzsche WHEEZES. The orderly feels his forehead.

ORDERLY  
 Christ, you're burning up.

INT. HOSPITAL TENT—DAY

Nietzsche sits on a cot while an ARMY DOCTOR examines him. He looks down  
 Nietzsche's throat with a tongue depressor.

DOCTOR  
 Diphtheria. And you're suffering  
 from dysentery. Young man, I'm  
 going to have to declare you no  
 longer fit for duty-- and recommend  
 a medical discharge.

INT. STUDY--DAY

Nietzsche sits in an armchair and reads a book that says "EMERSON" on the cover.

NIETZSCHE  
 (VO; reading)  
 "To believe your own thought, to believe  
 that what is true for you in  
 your private heart is true for all  
 men—— that is genius."  
 (aloud)  
 Ah, I have found a kindred spirit  
 in Emerson.

OVERBECK appears in the door.

OVERBECK  
 Yes, Friedrich?

NIETZSCHE  
 I've been reading the American, Emerson.  
 Sublime.

Nietzsche puts the book down.

NIETZSCHE

Franz, I have a question regarding  
your field, church history.

OVERBECK

Go on.

NIETZSCHE

What do you make of First Corinthians,  
where St. Paul enumerates a  
list of eyewitnesses to Jesus' resurrection?

OVERBECK

The eyewitnesses St. Paul mentions  
are meant to be a guarantee of his  
preaching, not of the resurrection.  
St. Paul knows nothing about the  
empty tomb or the resurrection appearances.

NIETZSCHE

Such were the beginnings of Christianity.  
What are all these churches now  
if they are not the tombs  
and sepulchers of god?

Overbeck LAUGHS.

OVERBECK

You are funny, Friedrich.

NIETZSCHE

Indeed, Christianity has been the  
greatest misfortune of mankind so  
far.

INT. WAGNER'S SALON--DAY

TWO SHOT

Nietzsche sits in an armchair, and WAGNER is on the sofa.

NIETZSCHE

I think Schopenhauer went too far  
in his hatred of women, though I  
don't hate women. But I agree with him that they're incapable of  
abstract thought.

ANGLE ON COSIMA WAGNER

COSIMA WAGNER enters the salon. She is elegant and beautiful and is dressed as befits her stature.

ANOTHER ANGLE

Nietzsche rises. Cosima sits on the sofa with Wagner. Nietzsche sits back down.

WAGNER

Cosima, Friedrich and I were just discussing Schopenhauer's essay on women.

COSIMA

Schopenhauer was a terrible man for what he said about women.

NIETZSCHE

I agree, Frau Wagner. Schopenhauer was wrong that men are more beautiful than women. I think women are more beautiful than men.

COSIMA

You're charming, Friedrich. I'm sure you know my husband is a big fan of Schopenhauer.

WAGNER

Friedrich and I have that in common.

COSIMA

You need a girlfriend, Friedrich. She'd teach you more about women than Schopenhauer.

Nietzsche looks embarrassed.

WAGNER

I don't think that's what Friedrich wants right now.

INT. BEDROOM--NIGHT

ANGLE ON NIETZSCHE

in bed. He tosses and turns.

## INT. NIETZSCHE'S BEDROOM—EVENING

Nietzsche is at his desk. He has some papers before him and struggles to write.

NIETZSCHE(VO)

Where races are mixed, there is the  
source of great cultures.

He is seized by a migraine. He holds his head in his hands.  
He reaches under the bed and pulls out a pail. He dry heaves  
phlegm into the pail. Consumed with pain, he crawls into bed.  
There is a KNOCK ON HIS DOOR.

OVERBECK

(from behind the door)

May I come in, Friedrich?

NIETZSCHE

Yes, Franz.

Overbeck opens the door.

OVERBECK

You must go to the doctor. Tomorrow  
I'll tell your students your classes  
are cancelled.

NIETZSCHE

Thanks, Franz.

## INT. DOCTOR'S OFFICE—DAY

Nietzsche sits on an examining table. The DOCTOR is standing and feels Nietzsche's forehead.

NIETZSCHE

I've been plagued with migraines and  
insomnia, Doctor. My migraines get  
so severe I can't sleep.

DOCTOR

I'm going to prescribe opiates for  
your migraines and choral hydrate  
for your insomnia.

He writes out a prescription.

DOCTOR

Take this prescription to the pharmacist today. Have it filled immediately.

NIETZSCHE

You have been very kind, Herr Doctor.

INT. PHARMACIST'S—DAY

The PHARMACIST PLUNKS two small bottles down on the counter. He points to one.

PHARMACIST

These opiates are for your migraines.

He points to the other.

PHARMACIST

And this is the chloral hydrate for your insomnia.

NIETZSCHE

Thank you, sir.

INT. NIETZSCHE'S OFFICE AT THE UNIVERSITY--DAY

ANGLE ON BOOK

on Nietzsche's desk with the title, PSYCHOLOGICAL OBSERVATIONS BY PAUL REE.

ANOTHER ANGLE

PAUL REE sits at the desk opposite Nietzsche.

REE

I appreciated your cordial letter to me, Professor Nietzsche.

NIETZSCHE

I liked your book, Psychological Observations, Herr Ree. We seem to be interested in the same problems—particularly, the origins of morality.

REE

I was inspired by Darwin's Origin of Species. Ever since I read it, I became interested in the origins of things.



NIETZSCHE

I also believe man evolved from the apes, but Darwin neglected the evolution of the spirit, even though Hegel discussed this evolution of the spirit.

REE

I admire both Hegel and Darwin.

NIETZSCHE

I also admire Lamarck. I believe in the heredity of acquired characteristics.

REE

So do I. I'd be interested in reading your work on the origins of morality.

NIETZSCHE

So you shall, Herr Ree.

INT. WAGNER'S SALON--DAY

Nietzsche and Richard and Cosima Wagner are seated. Wagner and Cosima share the sofa. Wagner flips through the pages of The Birth of Tragedy.

WAGNER

I have finished your book, The Birth of Tragedy. There's a lot about me in it. You interpret my music as an expression of a Dionysian power of the soul.

NIETZSCHE

Master Wagner, that is because Dionysus is the symbol of that drunken frenzy which threatens to destroy all forms and codes.

COSIMA

And do you really think music is a woman?

Nietzsche blushes. He looks toward Wagner. Wagner nods his head in approval. Nietzsche GULPS.

NIETZSCHE

Yes-- but I mean that in a good way.

COSIMA

Of course, you do, Friedrich.

WAGNER

And the Apollinian is the symbol of reason and restrains the Dionysian impulse?

NIETZSCHE

That is correct, Master Wagner.

WAGNER

Of all my disciples, you understand my music the best.

INT. NIETZSCHE'S BEDROOM—NIGHT

Nietzsche COUGHS AND VOMITS PHLEGM into a pail. He tries to sleep, but can't. He reaches for his opiates and chloral. He drinks them directly out of the bottles and sinks down into the bed. He is intoxicated with opium. He closes his eyes.

NIETZSCHE

There is truth in opium. A little poison now and then makes pleasant dreams.

INT. NIETZSCHE'S BEDROOM--MORNING  
ANGLE ON DOOR

There is a KNOCK on the door.

OVERBECK

(from behind the door)

Friedrich, may I come in?

ANOTHER ANGLE

Nietzsche lies in bed.

NIETZSCHE

Come in, Ftanz.

Overbeck enters.

OVERBECK

I heard you coughing last night.  
Are you all right?

NIETZSCHE

I'm better now, but I think I'm going to resign  
from my post at the University.  
I'm too ill to continue teaching there.

OVERBECK

You should do what you think is best,  
Friedrich.

INT. OFFICE IN THE CLASSICS DEPT. AT BASEL—DAY

THE CHAIRMAN of the dept. of classics at Basel sits at his desk. Nietzsche sits in a chair across from him.

NIETZSCHE

I regret I must offer my resignation  
from the dept. of classics here at  
Basel. Ill health is the reason.  
Ever since I served in the war, my  
health has been broken.

CHAIRMAN

I understand. You will be missed  
here at the University. We can promise  
you a small pension, which you  
will receive for the rest of your  
life.

NIETZSCHE

I'm sure it will be enough. I live  
very frugally.

INT. WAGNER'S SALON IN HIS HOUSE IN GERMANY—DAY

Cosima and Nietzsche are seated. Wagner is standing. He waves a newspaper.

WAGNER

Have you read the papers, Friedrich?

NIETZSCHE

I don't read magazines or newspapers,  
Master Wagner.

WAGNER

I moved from Switzerland to read

WAGNER (cont'd)  
about this goddamned Bismarck and  
his tolerance toward the kikes

CLOSE—NIETZSCHE

He winces at the word.

ANGLE ON COSIMA

COSIMA  
Try not to get too upset, dear, we  
know Bismarck is worthless.

ANOTHER ANGLE

WAGNER  
The kikes and the French are both worthless.  
Nietzsche looks uncomfortable.

WAGNER  
The Jewish race is the born enemy of pure humanity and  
everything that is noble in it. Kikes! Yids

CLOSE—NIETZSCHE

He is shocked.

ANGLE ON COSIMA

COSIMA  
Schopenhauer didn't like Jews or  
women. Didn't he, Friedrich?

ANOTHER ANGLE

NIETZSCHE  
Um...er...no, he didn't.

COSIMA  
Well, he was right about the Jews.

WAGNER  
The Germans, of course, are by nature  
the flower of humankind: to fulfill  
their great destiny they have only  
to restore their tainted racial

WAGNER (cont'd)  
 purity, or at all events to achieve  
 a real rebirth of racial feeling.  
 Wagner gives the Nazi salute.

WAGNER  
 Deutschland! Deutschland Uber alles!  
 Long live the Reich

REACTION—NIETZSCHE

He is visibly shaken.

CUT TO:

A TITLE CARD READS:

1882  
 BAYREUTH

CUT TO:

INT. THEATER AT BAYREUTH—NIGHT

ANGLE ON NIETZSCHE

He is in the audience. THE ORCHESTRA AND THE SINGERS PERFORM “THE  
 GOOD FRIDAY SPELL” FROM PARSIFAL.

WIDE-- THE STAGE OF THE THEATER

PARSIFAL baptizes KUNDRY while GURNEMANZ watches. The spear that pierced  
 Christ’s side is stuck in the ground nearby.

ANGLE ON WAGNER

He conducts the ORCHESTRA in the pit.

CLOSE—NIETZSCHE

Nietzsche is appalled as he watches Parsifal.

CUT TO:

INT. THEATER AT BAYREUTH--LATER

WIDE

THE ORCHESTRA AND THE SINGERS PERFORM THE FINALE OF PARSIFAL.

THE KNIGHTS are all gathered around. PARSIFAL heals AMFORTAS' wound with the spear. Parsifal holds up the grail, and its resplendent light radiates into the AUDIENCE.

ANGLE ON NIETZSCHE

He watches in horror.

WIDE

The audience rises to its feet and gives Wagner A STANDING OVATION.

ANGLE ON WAGNER

He bows before the audience from the orchestra pit.

ANOTHER ANGLE

Nietzsche stands slowly and APPLAUDS HALF-HEARTEDLY.

CUT TO:

INT. NIETZSCHE'S BEDROOM—NIGHT

He VOMITS phlegm into a pail.

INT. WAGNER'S SALON--DAY

Wagner is standing while Nietzsche sits on the couch.

WAGNER

I have triumphed at Bayreuth. They finally have recognized my genius. My Parsifal is a celebration of my conversion to Christianity.

NIETZSCHE

You are a Christian now?

WAGNER

Yes, I am. Friedrich, I have seen the light. What shall we Christians do now with this depraved and damned people of the Jews?

NIETZSCHE

I don't know what you mean, Master.

WAGNER

I will give my faithful advice: First,  
that one should set fire to their synagogues—

REACTION—NIETZSCHE

He is offended.

ANGLE ON WAGNER

WAGNER (cont'd)

Then that one should break down and  
destroy their houses... That one  
should drive them out of the country.

ANOTHER ANGLE

NIETZSCHE

Surely, you don't mean that, Master.

WAGNER

I do. The kikes are an inferior  
race.

NIETZSCHE

The Jews are beyond any doubt the  
strongest, toughest, and purest  
race that now lives in Europe.

WAGNER

That's crap Blood crossings  
have led to the nobler races being tainted  
by the ignoble. There is no virtue  
in, no hope for, any but a pure  
race of which the Germans could  
be the shining example if it would  
only rid itself of the kikes

NIETZSCHE

Will you stop saying that

WAGNER

What are you? A kike-lover?

NIETZSCHE

I think miscegenation is a good  
thing. To produce the strongest

NIETZSCHE (cont'd)  
possible European mixed race, the  
Jew is a useful and desirable an  
ingredient. Where races are mixed,  
there is the source of great cultures.

WAGNER  
More crap. I am a Christian now,  
and the kikes murdered my lord  
and savior, Jesus Christ.

NIETZSCHE  
When you triumphed at Bayreuth with  
Parsifal, you sold out to the Christians.

WAGNER  
Not sold—out. I received a revelation.  
I have seen the light. Parsifal  
is the expression of my love for Christ.

NIETZSCHE  
But you were an atheist like Schopenhauer.

WAGNER

ANGLE ON COSIMA

She appears in the doorway.

ANOTHER ANGLE

NIETZSCHE  
May I take my leave now, Master?

Wagner waves him on.

WAGNER  
Go.

COSIMA  
Leaving so soon, Friedrich?

NIETZSCHE  
I must get back to the book I'm writing.



COSIMA

Good-bye then, Friedrich.

NIETZSCHE

Good—bye, Cosima. Good-bye, Master.

Nietzsche bows his head.

COSIMA

I'll see you out.

Nietzsche and she leave.

CUT TO:

EXT. WAGNERS HOUSE--DAY

ANGLE ON NIETZSCHE

NIETZSCHE (VO)

I shall have nothing to do with anybody  
who has a share in the mendacious  
race swindle.

INT. NIETZSCHE'S ROOM IN A BOARDING HOUSE—DAY

ANGLE ON NIETZSCHE

at his desk. He is busy writing.

NIETZSCHE (VO)

Parsifal is a work of treachery, of  
vindictiveness, of a secret attempt  
to poison life itself—— a bad work.  
Richard Wagner was triumphant at  
with Parsifal at Bayreuth, but in  
truth he is a decaying and despairing  
decadent who suddenly sank down  
before the Christian cross. When  
Wagner moved to Germany, he condescended  
step by step to everything  
I despise—even to anti—Semitism.

Nietzsche is seized by another migraine. He takes his opiates, which are in a bottle nearby, and lays his head on his desk.

NIETZSCHE (aloud)

Wagner sickens me.

## INT. PARLOR IN THE BOARDING HOUSE--DAY

Nietzsche is sitting with his friend, Paul Ree. Nietzsche now wears spectacles.

NIETZSCHE

I try to be cheerful, Paul, but  
breaking off my relationship with  
Wagner has left an empty space in  
my heart.

REE

I know how to cheer you up, Fritz.  
I know a pretty and brilliant girl  
who lives not far from here. I'll  
introduce you. Forget about Wagner.  
That's in the past.

NIETZSCHE

You're right, Paul. I'd like to  
meet this female friend of yours.

## INT. A STUDY IN LOU SALOME'S HOUSE—DAY

LOU SALOME sits at a desk where there are papers with writing on them, a pen, and a few books. There is a little bell to ring for her servant. Nietzsche and Ree sit on chairs in her study. Nietzsche is enamored of her as he was of Cosima Wagner.

LOU

Paul gave me a copy of your first  
book, The Birth of Tragedy, Dr.  
Nietzsche. I liked it very much.  
You know, I'm also a writer.

NIETZSCHE

I'd like to read something you've  
written, Frau Salome

LOU

You shall. But, please, call me Lou.

NIETZSCHE

. . . Lou . . . .

LOU

Your conception of the Dionysian  
and the Apollinian and its relation  
to tragedy is powerful stuff-- how

LOU (corit'd)

Dionysus represents the drunken frenzy that destroys all the rules of civilization and Apollo, who represents reason, which restrains the Dionysian — and these two impulses influenced the birth and death of tragedy. This made compelling reading.

NIETZSCHE

Such praise for my first book. I'm glad I have some intelligent readers who understand my book and me.

LOU

Paul tells me that you and he have investigated the origins of morality.

NIETZSCHE

I want to write a book on the subject, as our friend, Paul, has done.

LOU

Let me know when you're finished. I want to read it.

NIETZSCHE

I know you won't misunderstand me as others have done.

EXT. PARK—DAY

It is a sunny day. Nietzsche and Ree sit on a bench in the park.

NIETZSCHE

What a lovely day it is. It is good for me to be outdoors because my body craves sunshine. It does wonders for my health.

REE

How did you like Lou?

NIETZSCHE

I liked her a lot. She's certainly attractive, and I'd like to be her teacher. I could show her so much. She would be a brilliant pupil.

REE

(chuckling)

You'd think you're still at the University,  
Fritz.

NIETZSCHE

She could be the most intelligent  
student I ever had.

REE

Lou is very independent-minded.  
I'm not sure she'd cooperate.

NIETZSCHE

Those are precisely the reasons  
why I want to be her teacher.

EXT. THE LAWN OUTSIDE OF LOU'S HOUSE—DAY

Just as before, it is a sunny day. Ree, Lou, and Nietzsche sit under a tree on a table cloth spread over the lawn.

REE

(humorously)

Fritz wants to be your teacher, Lou.  
He says you'd be the smartest student  
he ever had.

LOU

And you'd be the smartest teacher I  
ever had, Fritz.

REE

I'm sure Fritz agrees.

NIETZSCHE

I can show you so much about psychology.  
It would be useful for your writing.

LOU

I know little about psychology.

NIETZSCHE

I'll teach you.

INT. SALON OF LOU'S HOUSE—DAY

Lou is standing and SINGS NIETZSCHE'S PRAYER TO LIFE, while Nietzsche  
ACCOMPANIES HER ON THE PIANO. Ree sits in a chair

and listens. When they finish, he stands up and CLAPS.

REE

Brava, Lou. Bravo, Fritz.

LOU

Thank you, Paul.

NIETZSCHE

You sang my song beautifully, Lou.  
I think you may understand me.

LOU

I don't know, Fritz. All that self—  
knowledge of yours makes you hard to  
understand.

NIETZSCHE

I realize that myself.

(turning to Lou)

Lou, I'd like you meet my sister,  
Elisabeth, in Tautenberg. My sister  
has prepared a little nest for me  
there. You may come, too, Paul, if  
you like.

REE

Thanks, Fritz. I think I will.

EXT. THE LAWN OUTSIDE THE HOUSE IN THE TAUTENBERG—DAY

Lou, Ree, Nietzsche, and Nietzsche's SISTER, ELISABETH, sit at a table and drink tea.

ELISABETH

(coldly, to Lou)

My brother tells me you're also a  
writer.

LOU

I want to write my own books someday.

NIETZSCHE

Lou is my pupil, and I'm her teacher,  
Elisabeth.

ELISABETH

What do you mean by that?

NIETZSCHE

There's a certain erotic element in the pedagogical relationship. For example, there's Socrates.

LOU

I like the idea of the "erotic element."  
Elisabeth stares at her coldly.

LOU (continuing)

In Plato's Symposium, Alcibiades, who was the handsomest young man in all of Greece, climbed into bed with Socrates, and Socrates never touched him. Socrates was an "erotic."

NIETZSCHE

Didn't I tell you she was a good pupil, Elisabeth?

ELISABETH

I'm sure I don't know what you mean by this "erotic element." What's erotic is not proper for a young lady like you to talk about, Frau Salome.

NIETZSCHE

(laughing)

Lou is very precocious, which is why she makes such a good student.

ELISABETH

(sarcastically)

Precocious.

Lou, Ree, and Nietzsche look at each other uncomfortably. Lou rises from her chair.

LOU

I think I'll go for a walk. Paul, Fritz, would you like to come with me?

NIETZSCHE

The sunshine would be good for me.  
Nietzsche gets up from his chair.

NIETZSCHE

(to Elisabeth)

I'm going take a walk with Lou.

Ree gets up from his chair.

REE

I'll go with you. Will you excuse me, Frau Forster?

Elisabeth barely looks up from her tea.

ELISABETH

Uh-huh.

NIETZSCHE

(to Ree and Lou)

Let's go.

(to Elisabeth)

I will see you later, Elisabeth.

Elisabeth nods. Lou, Ree, and Nietzsche leave.

EXT. LAWN OUTSIDE THE HOUSE--DAY

MOVING

Nietzsche, Lou, and Ree are walking.

NIETZSCHE

Lou, I must apologize for my sister's conduct.

LOU

She's jealous, Fritz, because she loves you.

NIETZSCHE

Sometimes I wonder. My Mother and my sister can both be such canaille.

LOU

Canaille?

REE

It's French for rabble.

LOU

How can you say that, Fritz?

NIETZSCHE

You don't know them so well as I.

INT. PARLOR IN THE HOUSE--EVENING

Nietzsche, Lou, and Ree are sitting down.

LOU

Schopenhauer was wrong when he said women were incapable of abstract thought.

NIETZSCHE

He would be wrong in your case, Lou. I think he meant women like my sister.

They LAUGH.

REE

You're not a suffragette are you, Lou?

LOU

If you mean that women should have the right to vote, then I suppose I am.

NIETZSCHE

Voting is for the herd-- for the voting cattle. The state is ruled by military despots and expects conformity. One must resist the state.

REE

You sound like an anarchist, Fritz.

NIETZSCHE

I am not an anarchist, a socialist, or a revolutionary. I am a non-conformist. That is how I resist the state. Emerson says that, "Whoso would be a man must be a non-conformist."

LOU

You've read the American, Emerson?

NIETZSCHE

I have, and I recognized a lot of myself in him.



REE

Actually, Fritz, you may have more  
in common with anarchists and socialists  
than you think.

CUT TO:

INT. THE HALL OUTSIDE THE PARLOR

CLOSE- -ELIABETH

She hides just outside the entrance to the parlor. She listens to their CONVERSATION.  
She is visibly jealous.

INT. NIETZSCHE'S SISTER'S ROOM—DAY

Nietzsche and Elisabeth sitting down.

NIETZSCHE

I'm in love with Lou. I want to  
marry her.

ELISABETH

You will do no such thing. I  
won't have you marrying that  
kike.

NIETZSCHE

You know how I hate that word. I  
won't allow you to use it in my  
presence. Besides, Lou is not Jewish.

ELISABETH

She looks like a little Jewess to  
me. And I know that your friend,  
Ree, is a yid.

NIETZSCHE

He is Jewish if that's what you  
mean. Stop calling my friends  
those dreadful names. You know  
how I hate those words. I despise  
anti-Semitism, and I admire the Jews.  
The Jews beyond any doubt are the  
strongest, toughest, and purest race  
that now lives in Europe. The Aryan  
influence has corrupted all the world.

ELISABETH (gasping)

How can you say such a thing?

NIETZSCHE

I'm just being honest, dear sister.

EXT. LAWN OUTSIDE THE HOUSE--DAY

Lou and Elisabeth sit on lawn chairs around a small table.

ELISABETH

My brother is quite taken with you,  
Frau Salome.

LOU

He likes me. Of that, I'm sure.

ELISABETH

I won't allow you to marry my brother.

LOU

What do you mean "allow me"? I'll  
marry him if I choose.

ELISABETH

That kike, Ree, has turned you and my  
brother into "kike—lovers."

LOU

Don't call our friend, Paul, a kike,  
you crazy bitch!

ELISABETH (shocked)

Oh! Stop talking so dirty!

LOU

(laughing)

With Paul I even talk much dirtier.

ELISABETH

You should wash your mouth out with  
soap!

LOU

The hell I will!

ELISABETH

Such profanities are unbecoming from  
a young lady like yourself.

LOU

I'll say whatever I want!

ELISABETH

Shut-up!

LOU

You shut-ups!

Lou leaves. Elisabeth SHUTS THE DOOR behind her.

EXT. THE LAWN OUTSIDE THE HOUSE—DAY

Nietzsche and Lou are sitting at a table.

NIETZSCHE

(wryly)

My sister tells me you called her a  
bitch and told her to go to hell.

LOU

She called Paul a kike.

NIETZSCHE

You're right about my sister. She is  
what you said, and I think to hell  
with her.

He LAUGHS.

NIETZSCHE(cont' d)

I sometimes find it hard to believe  
my sister and I are related.

INT. NIETZSCHE'S ROOM--EVENING

NIETZSCHE

I want to be your teacher, Lou.

LOU

I don't want any teachers, Fritz. I'm  
an independent woman and a writer. I have my own ideas  
I want to express.

NIETZSCHE

But I can show you so much about  
psychology. I'm a born psychologist.

LOU

Paul has written about psychology,  
yet he doesn't try to cram it down  
my throat.

NIETZSCHE

I taught at the University of Basel for a decade. I'm an educator by profession, and I'd like to educate you.

LOU

I'm already educated, Fritz. I don't need you to be my educator.

NIETZSCHE

I'd like to teach you about Schopenhauer and Emerson.

LOU

I'm not interested in Emerson or Schopenhauer. Schopenhauer hated women.

NIETZSCHE

Please, Lou.

LOU

No.

INT. THE PARLOR IN LOU'S HOUSE—DAY

Nietzsche, Ree, and Lou are sitting in the parlor. Ree stands up.

REE

I propose that the three of us go to Leipzig for another holiday.

NIETZSCHE

But without my sister this time.

LOU

As long as your sister is not coming, that could be fun.

NIETZSCHE

You certainly don't get along with my sister, Lou.

LOU

I don't.

NIETZSCHE

That's all right. I don't get along

NIETZSCHE (cont'd)  
with her either.

REE  
Then it will be just the three of us.

EXT. A LAWN UNDER A TREE AT THE HOTEL IN LEIPZIG--DAY

Nietzsche and Lou sit on a picnic table cloth.

NIETZSCHE  
Lou, I want to show you so much more  
as your teacher.

LOU  
You've already shown me a lot. Fritz.

NIETZSCHE  
But I can show you more.

LOU  
I'm a grown woman, Fritz. I've had  
all the lessons I'm going to have.

NIETZSCHE  
You're still so young.

LOU  
Fritz, I'm twenty—one years old.  
I'm through with teachers. I want to  
learn about life on my own and not have  
you teach me about it.

NIETZSCHE  
I'm a genius, Lou. I know more than  
any of your teachers ever knew.

LOU  
You're being conceited again, Fritz.  
That is one of the flaws in your character,  
which is another reason I don't  
want you to be my teacher.

NIETZSCHE  
I'm very clever, and I write such  
good books.

LOU  
See what I mean. You're conceited.

REACTION-- NIETZSCHE

He looks hurt.

INT. NIETZSCHE'S ROOM—DAY

OVER THE SHOULDER SHOT

Nietzsche looks out the window at Ree and Lou walking hand in hand outside the house.

ANGLE ON NIETZSCHE

He is jealous.

INT. LOU'S ROOM--EVENING

NIETZSCHE

You love Paul. Don't you?

LOU

Of course, I love Paul. We're good friends.

NIETZSCHE

I saw you holding hands with him.

LOU

Fritz, we held hands because we're friends.

NIETZSCHE

Ree can't teach you anything. Lou. My On the Genealogy of Morals is better than his book on the origins of morality.

LOU

You're being conceited again, Fritz.

NIETZSCHE

But my book is better than his. I can teach you all I know about the origins of morality.

LOU

I told you, Fritz, I'm too old for teachers now. What I want to discover about life I can do on my own. Life is a journey, and I want to find my direction by myself.

NIETZSCHE

I love you, Lou. Please, let me be  
your educator.

LOU

I love you, too, Fritz, but I'm  
through with educators.

NIETZSCHE

I guess this is good-night then.  
Good-night, Lou.

LOU

Good-night, Fritz.

Nietzsche leaves and CLOSES THE DOOR behind him.

INT. THE PARLOR IN ELISABWETH'S HOUSE—DAY

Elisabeth is standing. Nietzsche sits despondent in a chair.

ELISABETH

Good riddance to that little kike,  
I say.

NIETZSCHE

Elisabeth, I've told you over and  
over again that Lou is not Jewish.

ELISABETH

Well, she looked Jewish, and her  
friend, Ree, was a kike.

NIETZSCHE

Please, Elisabeth, don't use that  
word. You know how it offends me.

ELISABETH

I'll call a kike a kike if I want to.

NIETZSCHE

Oh, shut-up, you anti-Semitic  
goose!

ELISABETH

How dare you!

NIETZSCHE

I can hardly believe we're related  
sometimes.