

# ADDRESS UNKNOWN

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DRAMATISTS  
PLAY SERVICE  
INC.

ADDRESS UNKNOWN

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# **CHARACTERS**

MAX EISENSTEIN

MARTIN SCHULSE

## PROLOGUE

*In the first production of the play, the following was spoken in the blackout before the play proper started. Behind these words we heard snatches of light-hearted songs from America, cross-cut with screaming Nazi crowds, etc. Another option is to project the text and/or images.*

In 1932 Cole Porter and Jerome Kern were the toast of America. In Germany the Nazis became the largest party.

In January 1933 the Nazi leader, Adolf Hitler, became Chancellor, head of the German government.

On February 27<sup>th</sup> the German parliament, the Reichstag, burnt down. It was blamed on the Communists. The next day civil liberties were suspended.

On March 24<sup>th</sup> Hitler became virtual dictator.

April 1<sup>st</sup>: Jewish businesses were boycotted.

May 2<sup>nd</sup>: Unions were destroyed.

July 14<sup>th</sup>: all other parties were banned.

November 1933, Hitler's Nazi party received over 90% of the vote. Meanwhile affluent America was coming out of the great depression and danced to the Gold Digger's song "We're in the Money," which signaled where interests lay. This was also the year the Nazis erected their first concentration camps.

By 1945 ten million people had been interned and at least half of them killed.

# ADDRESS UNKNOWN

*As we face the stage we see a large table making do as a desk. It is a strange table—at one end it seems Bauhaus and at the other Biedermeier. At each side of the room is a side table, on each one a radio, a gramophone with records, drinks, files. On the desk, a typewriter and dictaphone.*

*On the Bauhaus side the chair is all steel and through the window a view of San Francisco; on the other side a German, heavy, Victorian antique chair and through the window a view of trees and the garden. Silver framed family photos on the German side of the desk, lightly framed photos of Martin Schulse, Elsa Schulse, and Griselle Eisenstein on the San Francisco side.*

*The gramophone on the San Francisco side is playing 1932's latest hit, Cole Porter or Kern or even the cynically witty "Life Is Just a Bowl of Cherries."\* The record sticks and the irritating repeated phrase brings Max rushing into the room, carrying a half-eaten hamburger and coffee. He sets the record right, sits at the table, and types happily to the rhythm of the music—perhaps he is even singing a line or two. He finishes the letter and then types the envelope, reading out loud as he types.*

MAX EISENSTEIN. Herrn Martin Schulse,  
Schloss Rantzenburg,  
Munich, Germany.

*Max chuckles at the importance of "Schloss Rantzenburg" and puts the letter in the envelope, but, just before he seals it, takes it out again to reread what he has typed.*

*As Max is first putting the letter in the envelope, Martin Schulse*

\* See Special Note on Songs and Recordings on copyright page.

*enters on the German side opening the same letter. He puts on a gramophone record which plays the same tune as we have heard in San Francisco. When Eisenstein rereads the letter, they are both reading at the same time. The room exists in two places at once, the two places overlap, but the two men sharing the space never look into each other's eyes; perhaps they talk in the other's direction, but they are on different continents.*

*Both men enjoy the music as they read.*

*Max is a little plump, he enjoys his food and drink, his clothes are casual except when he has just been doing business. From boyhood he has hero-worshipped Martin. Martin is very handsome and charming and knows it, he is wearing the sporting pretend-hunting clothes of the German country gentleman, but with a casual air to show that he is something of an artist. For the moment he relaxes in a luxurious dressing gown.*

(Reading.) The Schulse-Eisenstein Galleries,

San Francisco, California, USA.

November 12, 1932.

My Dear Martin:

Back in Germany! How I envy you! Although I have not seen it since my schooldays, the spell of Unter den Linden is still strong upon me—the breadth of intellectual freedom, the discussions, the music, the light-hearted comradeship.

And now the old Junker spirit, the Prussian arrogance and militarism are gone. You go to a democratic Germany, a land with a deep culture and the beginnings of a fine political freedom. It will be a good life. Your new address is impressive and I rejoice that the crossing was so pleasant for Elsa and the young sprouts.

*Martin laughs with pleasure.*

As for me, I am not so happy. Sunday morning finds me a lonely bachelor without aim. My Sunday home is now transported over the wide seas.

*He looks at the photo.*

The big old house on the hill—your welcome that said the day was not complete until we were together again! And our dear jolly Elsa, coming out beaming, grasping my hand and shouting “Max, Max!”

And hurrying indoors to open my favourite Schnapps. The fine boys, too, especially your handsome young Heinrich; he will be a grown man before I set eyes upon him again.

*Max looks at the remains of a sandwich lunch.*

And dinner—shall I evermore hope to eat as I have eaten? Now I go to a restaurant and over my lonely roast beef come visions of gebackner Schinken steaming in its Burgundy sauce, of Spatzle, ah! of Spatzle...

MARTIN. And Spargel!

MAX. And Spargel! No, I shall never again become reconciled to my American diet. And the wines, so carefully slipped ashore from the German boats, and the pledges we made as the glasses brimmed for the fourth and fifth and sixth times.

*Max blows his nose.*

Of course you are right to go. You have never become American despite your success here, and now that the business is so well established you must take your sturdy German boys back to the homeland to be educated. Elsa too has missed her family through the long years and they will be glad to see you as well. The impetuous young artist has now become the family benefactor, and that too will give you a quiet little triumph.

*Martin sings with pleasure.*

The business continues to go well.

*Martin takes accounting list from envelope and whistles.*

Mrs. Levine has bought the small Picasso at our price, for which I congratulate myself, and I have old Mrs. Fleshman playing with the notion of the hideous Madonna. No one ever bothers to tell her that any particular piece of hers is bad, because...

MARTIN and MAX. They are all so bad!

MAX. However, I lack your fine touch in selling to the old Jewish matrons. I can persuade them of the excellence of the investment, but you alone had the fine spiritual approach to a piece of art that unarmed them. Besides that they probably never entirely trust another Jew.

A delightful letter came yesterday from Griselle.

*Martin starts.*

She writes that she is about to make me proud of my little sister. She has the lead in a new play in Vienna and the notices are excellent—her discouraging years with the small companies are beginning to bear fruit. Poor child, it has not been easy for her, that she has never complained. She has a fine spirit, as well as beauty, and I hope the talent as well. She asked about you, Martin, in a very friendly way.

*Martin seems nervous, becoming emotional.*

There is no bitterness left there, for that passes quickly when one is young as she is.

A few years and there is only a memory of the hurt, and of course neither of you was to be blamed. Those things are like quick storms, for a moment you are drenched and blasted, and you are so wholly helpless before them. But the sun comes, and although you have neither quite forgotten, there remains only gentleness and no sorrow. You would not have had it otherwise, nor would I. I have not written Griselte that you are in Europe but perhaps I shall if you think it wise, for she does not make friends easily and I know she would be glad to feel that friends are not far away.

*Martin glances at the family photos to put the image of Griselte from his mind.*

Fourteen years since the war! Did you mark the date? What a long way we have travelled, as peoples, from that bitterness! Again, my dear Martin, let me embrace you in spirit, and with the most affectionate remembrances to Elsa and the boys, believe me,

Your ever most faithful,  
Max.

*Both men turn off the gramophones. Max gathers the remains of lunch and takes them out to the kitchen. Lights concentrate on Martin. Martin takes up his Dictaphone.*

MARTIN. Schloss Rantzenburg, Munich, Germany.

December 10, 1932.

To Mr. Max Eisenstein, Schulse-Eisenstein Galleries, San Francisco, California, USA.

*Max enters, eagerly opening this letter and mouthing it along with Martin.*

Max, Dear Old Fellow,

The cheque and accounts came through promptly, for which my thanks. You need not send me such details of the business. You know how I am in accord with your methods, and here at Munich I am in a rush of new activities. We are established, but what a turmoil! The house, as you know, I had long in mind. And I got it at an amazing bargain. Thirty rooms and about ten acres of Park; you would never believe it.

*Max is wide-eyed: "thirty rooms!"*

But then, you could not appreciate how poor is now this sad land of mine. The servant's quarters, stables, and outbuildings are most extensive, and would you believe it, we employ now ten servants for the same wages of our two in the San Francisco home.

*Martin does not quite appreciate how incongruous these sentiments are together.*

The tapestries and pieces we shipped make a rich show and some other fine furnishings I have been able to secure, so that we are much admired, I was almost to say envied. Four full services in the finest china I have bought and much crystal, as well as a full service of silver for which Elsa is in ecstasies.

And for Elsa—such a joke! You will, I know, laugh with me. I have purchased for her a huge bed. Such a size as never was before, twice the bigness of a double bed, and with great posters in carved wood. The sheets I must have made to order, for there are no sheets made that could fit it. And they are of linen, the finest linen sheets. Elsa laughs and laughs, and her old grossmutter stands shaking her head and grumbles, "Nein, Martin, nein. You have made it so and now you must take care or she will grow to match it." And Elsa says: (*Doing his funny imitation.*) "Ja, five more boys and I will fit it just nice and snug."

*Max joins him in this, it is their party piece.*

MAX. ...just nice and snug!

MARTIN. —And she will, Max.

*Both men laugh, but after a moment think of Griselle and go silent.*

For the boys there are three ponies (little Karl and Wolfgang are not

# ADDRESS UNKNOWN

by Kathrine Kressmann Taylor  
edited by Frank Dunlop

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In an era of austerity, recession, and rising nationalism, two friends are torn apart when the Nazi regime infiltrates their friendship and families to devastating effect. Based on the bestselling book, which was written as an anti-fascist call to arms and banned in 1930s Germany for dramatically exposing the threat of Nazism, ADDRESS UNKNOWN is a timely warning of how humanity can fail in the face of extreme ideology.

*"[Dunlop] has...harnessed the tragic deterioration of a once binding friendship and the cold, hard inevitability and ugly disruptive consequences of war."*  
—**Variety**

*"[A] canny adaptation of a top-notch short story, the kind of tale you're reading comfortably in bed when the denouement suddenly and unexpectedly makes your jaw drop—and then, putting your jaw back in action, you exclaim to yourself a deeply satisfied, 'Yes.' ...[ADDRESS UNKNOWN] unfold[s] with a dark, inexorable magnetism..."*

—**TheaterMania.com**

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