

Stageplay

By

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Inspired by the Life of Meister Eckhart

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ACT I

Scene 1

The actors at the beginning and end of all scenes "freeze" both their bodies and their intentions. Transitions that follow are done ritually and calmly as two "changing screens" move their positions from either side of the stage. The two screens, handled by two stage/acting personnel, provide a transitional stagecraft that allows stage personnel to set up scenes, and actors to reposition or change their costumes between scenes.

MUSIC CUE: S1 LOVE 0.23 (BEGINS 15 SECONDS BEFORE PLAY BEGINS)

NARRATOR

Scene 1. Someone is dreaming!

A green veil drapes center stage. Gustavo of Paris gives his wife Hilda a gift of cloth.

HILDA

(From behind the green veil.)

You bought it? I love this weave. It's so soft.

(Darkly, to Gustavo.)

What secrets are you holding from me?

GUSTAVO

We have some additional income.

HILDA

You are a dream!

MUSIC CUE: S1 EERIE 0.21 GUSTAVO

(Modestly, looking up and around intuiting that he is in a dream.)

Yes. . . I'm dreaming. . . "a torn dream."

HILDA

Husband! I feel your troubled thoughts.

GUSTAVO

I want to wash my hands, they feel soiled.

HILDA

Gustavo, what is it?

GUSTAVO

I'm charged to secure Meister Eckhart's sermons.

(CONTINUED)

HILDA

So, he is not censored?

GUSTAVO

No. That decision is Pope John's, and Pope John's alone.

HILDA

(She draws close to Gustavo, amorously.)
You continue to find yourself in high company. You must be high company yourself.

GUSTAVO

The Bishop from Cologne offered to pay me a fee.

HILDA

He offered to hire you?!

GUSTAVO

Yes, and Bishop Cervantes did not allow it. Strasbourg is providing the fee.

HILDA

Two bishops squabbling over my husband. What would your father say?

GUSTAVO

I know well what he would say: "A maker of books never gets involved in priestly disputes."

HILDA

(Proudly.)
Bishop Cervantes treasures, my Gustavo, just like I do.

MUSIC CUE: S1 LOVE 0.36

(She moves to Gustavo.)

GUSTAVO

(Adoringly.)
Hilda, I feel so close to you?

HILDA

Gustavo, I think one of God's angels is nesting in our home.

GUSTAVO

(Amorously)
Do you? . . . What more beautiful place to be?

HILDA

I love you, Husband.
(Pleasantly.)
And, why do you describe your dream as "torn?"

(CONTINUED)

MUSIC CUE: S1 LOVE 0.56 GUSTAVO

(Gustavo, pensively separates from his wife.)

I am to demand the surrender of the Meister's parchments held by the Beguine.

HILDA

Oh God! They love him so.

GUSTAVO

It's sad. I'll simply request them.

HILDA

Husband, be careful.

GUSTAVO

Yes.

HILDA

Come eat.

(The sit. Gustavo prays.)

GUSTAVO

Our Lord is sacrificed that we may live.

HILDA/GUSTAVO

Amen.

GUSTAVO

(Tipping forward, smelling the stew.)

Hilda. . . . Hilda this stew smells divine!

HILDA

I added the juice of grapes.

GUSTAVO

(Exclaiming.)

Grapes, you added grapes. Intoxicating. A worthy discovery!

HILDA

(Smiling--Pause.)

We'll make a tradition of it.

SOUND CUE: SOUND OF CHAMBER BELL intermittently persisting through the beginning of next scene

MUSIC CUE: S1 ECKHART 0.48 HILDA

Husband, is that a bell I hear ringing? Where is the sound coming from?

(CONTINUED)

GUSTAVO

(Lucidly recognizing that the dream is
being interrupted.)

Hilda . . . Hilda, I love you!

Transitional stage craft. Screens move.

Music: ECKHART 0.48

SCENE 2

NARRATOR

Scene 2, the Vatican. Aged Pope Gustavo slumbers on a recliner, his mouth open. A small table is at his side. It is the early hours, before the sun rises. Nurse Norma stands in the Pope's Office with a medication cup in hand.

MUSIC CUE: SOUND OF CHAMBER BELL

NURSE NORMA

Pope Gustavo? Sorry to wake you, Father. Are you free?

POPE GUSTAVO

(Sitting up.)

Norma! Norma, come in.

(He reaches for a glass a water on a
small side table. He sips,
reflectively.)

"Am I free?" . . . the same question that haunts me.
This is a "meaningful coincidence."

(Pleasantly.)

Come.

(Directing her to the table.)

There's room here. So these are the new medications.

NURSE NORMA

To be taken with a full glass of water, Father.

POPE GUSTAVO

(Holding the glass of water.)

May I make a toast?

NURSE NORMA

Permission granted, Your Holiness.

POPE GUSTAVO

To "meaningful coincidences," Norma. May we have many
in our time.

(He drinks thee pills.)

(CONTINUED)

MUSIC CUE: S2 EERIE 0.41

(She experiences goose bumps.)

OOH, sorry Father, I just got goose bumps.

(She looks behind herself.)

POPE GUSTAVO

Goose bumps are a favorable sign.

NURSE NORMA

My mother would say: "There's an angel with us."

POPE GUSTAVO

Ah! Just as I was thinking.

NURSE NORMA

(Experiencing another episode of goose bumps.)

OOH! Again! Sorry Father.

POPE GUSTAVO

We are haunted today, Norma.

NURSE NORMA

I know you have a very special day ahead. Please get more rest. It's still early.

POPE GUSTAVO

Yes, I think I will.

NURSE NORMA

With your permission, Father, I'll leave you, and your ghostly company.

(Gathering her cup.)

MUSIC CUE: S1 ECKHART 0.48

POPE GUSTAVO

Yes, Yes. There are many ghosts with me today.

Nurse Norma turns her back to the Pope, as if leaving, yet remains still/frozen with the intention of withdrawing.)

Thank you Norma. (Nurse Norma remaining still.) I am going to doze for a while longer. I've been having an interesting dream.

(Pope Gustavo freezes, with the intention of returning to his dream.)

Transitional stage craft.

SCENE 3

NARRATOR

Scene 3. The dreamer envisions himself in a medieval publishing facility, where the parchment transcripts are created and maintained. The book maker Gustavo of Paris stands at his writing station. Bishop Ignatius of Cologne, Inquisitor of the Pope, appears, ruggedly attired.

MUSIC: ECKHART 0.48

GUSTAVO

Bishop Ignatius!

IGNATIUS

Gustavo of Paris. How comforting to see you, just as I imagined.

GUSTAVO

I am always glad to be a comfort, Bishop, whether I'm imagined or not.

IGNATIUS

And your wife?

GUSTAVO

Hilda is with child.

IGNATIUS

Ah, to be born in Strasbourg. What fortune. May your child grow with this beautiful city.

GUSTAVO

Thank you, Bishop.

IGNATIUS

And the work?

GUSTAVO

Much as usual.

IGNATIUS

It seems to me that there is little that is "as usual" in Strasbourg.

GUSTAVO

True, Dear Bishop.

IGNATIUS

I imagine that creating a library to match that of Paris is a daunting task.

(CONTINUED)

GUSTAVO

A dream come true.

IGNATIUS

What have you there?

GUSTAVO

The ancient writings of our Pope Vigilius.

IGNATIUS

Wondrous! And what do you recall of his message?

GUSTAVO

His was the familiar saying: "We bear in mind what was promised about the Holy Church. The gates of hell will not prevail against it."

IGNATIUS

Yes, yes. I love his clarity. How times have changed, Gustavo.

GUSTAVO

Bishop?

IGNATIUS

You are young, and welcome novelty. The truth, however, remains "unalterable."

GUSTAVO

I will seal your word in my memory.

IGNATIUS

You have a remarkable capacity--a gift from your father.

GUSTAVO

You honor me.

MUSIC CUE: ARGUE 0.40

May I alert Bishop Cervantes of your arrival?

IGNATIUS

No need; No need; I know my way.

(Proceeding to Bishop Cervantes's station and freezes with the intention to convene with Bishop Cervantes.)

GUSTAVO

Thank you, Bishop.

(Gustavo steps behind a veil following the Bishop with the intention to eavesdrop, he freezes.)

Transitional stage craft. Screens move.

SCENE 4

NARRATOR

Scene 4. The dreamer dreams on. The visiting Bishop, stands facing Executor Bishop Cervantes. Gustavo, hides behind a veil, eavesdropping on the Bishops.

(THE ACTOR

MUSIC CONTINUES: ARGUE 0.40

IGNATIUS

God be with you, Bishop Cervantes.

CERVANTES

And also with you, Dear Brother.
(He stands, and they embrace.)
And your health?

IGNATIUS

I feel the strength of righteousness within me.

CERVANTES

Does such righteousness bring you here today?

IGNATIUS

It does.

CERVANTES

Make yourself comfortable, and we can speak of it.
(They sit.)
Tell me.

IGNATIUS

The devil works in the name of Christ.

CERVANTES

And you, as well as the Archbishop of Cologne, believe the devil is in possession of Meister Eckhart.

IGNATIUS

Yes, Eckhart is seduced by Sirens that have attached to your monastery.

CERVANTES

Brother, I do not consider this monastery my own. And, the Beguine fail to resemble Sirens! They are Eckhart's flock, as are many here.

IGNATIUS

They are indeed his flock! Eckhart is enmeshed in the Beguine insurgence. He not only encourages them, he leads them in their unorthodoxy.

(CONTINUED)

CERVANTES

First you suggest that he is seduced by the Beguine,
and then you maintain that he is their leader. So which
is it?

IGNATIUS

They are both true. Tolerate my lack of tact on this
matter. The Antichrist steals into the heart unnoticed.

CERVANTES

So, what was once understood as a blessed community is
now condemned as a heretical pack of whores.

(Looking toward the hiding Gustavo.)

Gustavo! I see you listening. There is a place for you
here.

GUSTAVO

(Stepping into the light and joining the
Bishops.)

Pardon me, Bishops, I did not want to impose on
priestly matters.

IGNATIUS

These matters will forever determine the course of
yours, and your children's lives.

CERVANTES

(Interrupting Bishop Ignatius's effort
to persuade Gustavo.)

Meister Eckhart is preparing to defend his teachings
before Pope John.

IGNATIUS

As Chief Inquisitor, I too am preparing for that
encounter.

MUSIC CUE: S4 EERIE 0.21

GUSTAVO

(Gustavo experiences anxiety and tries
to wake up by shaking. To Bishop
Ignatius and Cervantes.)

Bishops, I need to confess, I feel that I am dreaming.

CERVANTES

One thing at a time, Gustavo.

(To Ignatius.)

What do you need of us?

IGNATIUS

Your understanding. Can you find understanding for me?

(CONTINUED)

CERVANTES

I am aware you face hardships in this sad role you play. How can we help?

IGNATIUS

In the name of both Pope John, and the Archbishop of Cologne, I am requesting that the parchments of the Meister's sermons be secured. What is to be done with those records will follow Pope John's decision.

CERVANTES

Gustavo, this will be your task.

GUSTAVO

(Still feeling that he is dreaming.)
Bishops, is this "my" trial of faith?

IGNATIUS

(To Gustavo.)
Do you want your child to be raised in the true Church of God?

GUSTAVO

My child will be raised in the sanctity of Notre Dame de Strasbourg.

IGNATIUS

I and Bishop Cervantes are assigning you a task that will maintain that sanctity.

GUSTAVO

So, this "is" my trial.

IGNATIUS

You transcribe Eckhart's sermons to parchment?

GUSTAVO

I do.

IGNATIUS

(Looking at Bishop Cervantes.)
And, the Beguine witches control the wax records of his sermons.

CERVANTES

The Beguine "scholar" Magdalene of Strasbourg presents the Meister's tablets. We transcribe them to parchment; then return them to her.

IGNATIUS

(To Gustavo.)
From this day, you will no longer require her mediation. You will secure tablets from Eckhart himself.

(CONTINUED)

GUSTAVO

(To Cervantes.)

If this could be coordinated with the Meister?

CERVANTES

I will gain his consent, Gustavo.

MUSIC CUE: S4 ECKHART 1.10

IGNATIUS

You are to request transcripts held by the Beguine!

GUSTAVO

I will request them, Bishop.

IGNATIUS

While engaged in this task, the Province of Cologne is prepared to extend you an additional fee of two marks.

CERVANTES

That will not be necessary, Bishop.

(He looks directly at Gustavo.)

Strasbourg will provide the two marks.

SOUND: CHAMBER BELL RINGING

I have never heard that bell before. Gustavo, are you familiar with this sound?

GUSTAVO

Yes, Bishop, I think the bell is for me.

*Transitional stagecraft.*SCENE 5

NARRATOR

Scene 5. The Vatican. Pope Gustavo slumbers on a recliner. His secretary awakes him.

*MUSIC CONTINUED: ECKHART 1.10**SOUND: CHAMBER BELL RINGING*

CARDINAL THOMAS

Good Morning, Father. Norma told me you spent much of the night here. Are you alright?

POPE GUSTAVO

(Sitting up)

Yes, yes, Cardinal Thomas, I rose early today. Thank you. How is our schedule?

(Pope Gustavo stands in front of empty frame grooming.)

(CONTINUED)

CARDINAL THOMAS

We have 3 hours before your service.

POPE GUSTAVO

And how is St Peter's Square?

CARDINAL THOMAS

It's already crowding.

POPE GUSTAVO

And the Archbishop?

CARDINAL THOMAS

He is here. I asked him to wait in the reception room.

POPE GUSTAVO

Let's not have the Archbishop wait.

CARDINAL THOMAS

I'll have him come in.

(Speaking calmly into his cellular
watch.)

Have the Archbishop come in.

Walking toward the exit/entrance.

SOUND: CHAMBER BELL RINGING

Enter Archbishop Jose.

CARDINAL THOMAS

Your Holiness, Archbishop Jose, Head of the Order of
Catholic Contemplatives.

(cont'd)

Welcome, Dear Brother!

ARCHBISHOP JOSE

Thank you Your Holiness. And thank you Cardinal Thomas.
It always feels like it's a first time when you
announce me.

CARDINAL THOMAS

It always is, Archbishop.

POPE GUSTAVO

Let's sit.

All sit

MUSIC: 1

(In prayer.)

We are joined together in this day of our Lord to
absolve our beloved brother Meister Eckhart. In God's

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

POPE GUSTAVO (cont'd)

Fullness we greet the Spirit of the Meister, of Pope John XII, who condemned his teachings, and all spirits and angels associated with Meister Eckhart's ministry. Amen.

(Pause)

Archbishop?

ARCHBISHOP JOSE

I feel the presence of many spirits.

POPE GUSTAVO

I have noticed. So did my nurse. And your confession, Archbishop?

MUSIC: 1

ARCHBISHOP JOSE

I have wept many times. . . anticipating this moment. The lie is ending.

CARDINAL THOMAS

We have been lying?

ARCHBISHOP JOSE

Yes Cardinal, lies of omission. . . Had I declared with Eckhart: "I am one with God," as did Jesus, would I be here?

POPE GUSTAVO

So, Archbishop, like a Trojan warrior, you hid yourselves in a lie of omission.

ARCHBISHOP JOSE

I have.

POPE GUSTAVO

And your intent was to infiltrate the Pope's chamber.

ARCHBISHOP JOSE

That has been my intent since childhood.

POPE GUSTAVO

(To Cardinal Thomas.)

Did you want to say something, Cardinal?

CARDINAL THOMAS

It appears, Archbishop, that you have been successful.

(CONTINUED)

POPE GUSTAVO
Cardinal Thomas?

CARDINAL THOMAS
From my heart, I strike my foot to the ground.

ARCHBISHOP JOSE
And what is the heart alerting us to?

MUSIC: 1

CARDINAL THOMAS
It alerts us to "this."
(There is an extended moment of
silence.)

ARCHBISHOP JOSE
Contemplatives understand "this" to be the silent
truth.

CARDINAL THOMAS
We are Catholics on the verge of refuting a Pope.

ARCHBISHOP JOSE
And your concern?

CARDINAL THOMAS
It is not "concern" that I point to, Archbishop, but
"consequence."

POPE GUSTAVO
We have discussed consequences many times.

CARDINAL THOMAS
It would be my negligence to not mention it again.

POPE GUSTAVO
And your confession, Cardinal.

CARDINAL THOMAS
I see images of those poised to strike at the Church. I
am roused to forestall them.

ARCHBISHOP JOSE
So, you would elect to stall.

CARDINAL THOMAS
I would. There is a saying, Archbishop: "If you are
going to outwit the devil, you do not give him advance
notice." Somehow, we disclosed the intent to absolve
Eckhart 6 months too early. You can see the tensions
that have been created.

(CONTINUED)

ARCHBISHOP JOSE

And do you sin with these embattled imaginings?

CARDINAL THOMAS

My sin would be to neglect the Church. That is why I do not dismiss my imaginings.

ARCHBISHOP JOSE

So, you imagine adversaries ready to fracture the Catholic Church.

CARDINAL THOMAS

I do.

ARCHBISHOP JOSE

You also question whether treachery will occur from within the Church.

CARDINAL THOMAS

I have questioned that many times in my office.

POPE GUSTAVO

Let's not stray from today's task. We are joined to refute Pope John's condemnations, and absolve Eckhart.

ARCHBISHOP JOSE

"This," Cardinal, "this" is the hour.

CARDINAL THOMAS

And is the hour in which we refute Pope John, the same hour in which the Church that was, is no more?

ARCHBISHOP JOSE

A valid question--another question comes to mind: Is this the hour in which the faithful recognize that Meister Eckhart championed the Church of God?

CARDINAL THOMAS

And, not our Pope John, you mean.

ARCHBISHOP JOSE

Yes. That is what I mean. Pope John condoned the execution of Marguerite Porete in Paris.

CARDINAL THOMAS

I am aware, Archbishop, that you know Marguerite was executed before Pope John's papacy.

ARCHBISHOP JOSE

His continued persecution of Beguines speaks loudly enough. Pope John discouraged awakening in Christ.

CARDINAL THOMAS

As most popes have. . . It is an interesting spell that entrances you. What will such realizations do for the faithful?

ARCHBISHOP JOSE

It will do what it did for me.

CARDINAL THOMAS

You have become a celebrity.

ARCHBISHOP JOSE

I have remained a Roman Catholic. That is what it has done for me, and that is what it will do for the faithful.

POPE GUSTAVO

So Archbishop, you would not be Catholic today, if not for Meister Eckhart?

ARCHBISHOP JOSE

His prayers and the prayers of Marguerite move us even now.

CARDINAL THOMAS

You present a compelling argument.

ARCHBISHOP JOSE

They are here with us now.

(Becoming tearful.)

I continue to weep.

(Smiling.)

He loved the Beguines. He loved Marguerite.

CARDINAL THOMAS

Your tears, Archbishop, anticipate tears to come.

ARCHBISHOP JOSE

They are tears for a Church I love.

CARDINAL THOMAS

I cry with you, Archbishop.

MUSIC: 1

POPE GUSTAVO

(Pause.)

We are at the crossroads. The tide has turned, and our trial of faith has come.

(There is a moment of silence.)

Are we ready to affirm this decree?

(CONTINUED)

CARDINAL THOMAS

(Standing.)

I stand with you, Holy Father.

ARCHBISHOP JOSE

(Standing.)

And I.

POPE GUSTAVO

Thank you.

(He rises from his seat, and becomes light headed. Bishop Thomas yells then moves forward and assists him to sit back down.)

CARDINAL THOMAS

(Into his cellular watch.)

Norma! Have Norma come in!

SOUND: CHAMBER BELL RINGING

(Nurse Norma enters and proceeds to the Pope's side.)

He became unsteady.

NURSE NORMA

How are you, Father?

POPE GUSTAVO

I'm lightheaded.

NURSE NORMA

It is very likely the new medication. I'll call your doctor. Can you lie down for a spell?

POPE GUSTAVO

Yes, let me lie down for a while.

(He rises and proceeds to exit, assisted by Nurse Norma.)

CARDINAL THOMAS

May I assist?

POPE GUSTAVO

I'm in good hands.

CARDINAL THOMAS

We'll be here.

All actors freeze.

Music Transitional stagecraft.

SCENE 6

NARRATOR

Scene 6. The slumbering Pope conjures the Medieval quarters of the Beguine Leader Magdalene of Strasbourg.

MAGDALENE

Good to see you, Herr Gustavo. Your visit, however, has me alarmed.

GUSTAVO

(With note in hand.)

Dear Lady, I am afraid there is a serious concern that prompts my visit.

MAGDALENE

(Gustavo provides an official parchment note.)

So you hand me a parchment note.

(*Magdalene reads the note and returns it.*)

I imagine this is for the official record.

GUSTAVO

As you see, I have been instructed to serve as liaison for Meister Eckhart and the library.

MAGDALENE

So this means I am no longer to provide you his waxed tablets?

GUSTAVO

Yes Ma'am, it does.

MAGDALENE

I see.

GUSTAVO

I am also here to secure any of the Meister's parchments records.

MAGDALENE

I imagine you are aware of the intentions behind this?

GUSTAVO

I am.

MAGDALENE

Please, then, inform me.

(CONTINUED)

GUSTAVO

The sermons are to be secured in our archives.

MAGDALENE

And for what reason?

GUSTAVO

That was not discussed with me.

MAGDALENE

Allow me to help. They will be secured because they are to be destroyed.

GUSTAVO

I am aware of that possibility, and I have thought deeply about this.

MAGDALENE

So it appears, Herr Gustavo, that we live in the same world.

GUSTAVO

I believe the fate of the records lies in the blessed sight of Pope John and no other.

MUSIC:

MAGDALENE

The blind need the help of those with sight, Gustavo.

GUSTAVO

Yes, Madam.

MAGDALENE

It is my prayer you see the Light in this matter.

GUSTAVO

I will remain vigilant for that Light.

MAGDALENE

Given your task, there will be little need for vigilance; the Light shines through Eckhart.

GUSTAVO

As it does through you, Madam.

The light shines upon a desk with the records.
And the records?

MAGDALENE

(Looks at the table with wax tablets.)
You see them there.

(CONTINUED)

MUSIC: 1

GUSTAVO

And is that all?

MAGDALENE

The rest lie in Eckhart.

(She turns away so as not to look
Gustavo in the face.)

GUSTAVO

Madam, I am tempted to ask a question that has been on
my mind.

MAGDALENE

(With her back to Gustavo.)

It is about dreaming, is it not?

GUSTAVO

Yes, Ma'am. It is.

MAGDALENE

I too have a question.

(She turns to face Gustavo.)

MUSIC CUE: S6 ECKHART 2.10

Are you coming or not?

(She turns slightly away from Gustavo
and looks over her shoulder, awaiting
Gustavo's response.)

GUSTAVO

Yes, I'm coming.

(Gustavo proceeds to follow
Magdalene. Gustavo and Magdalene
freeze.)

Transitional stage craft

SCENE 7

NARRATOR

Scene 7, The image of Meister Eckhart arises.

MUSIC CONTINUES: S6 ECKHART 2.10

ECKHART

*Eckhart, seated, conducts guided meditation with
Magdalene and Gustavo, who are also seated.*

(To the audience, Magdalene and
Gustavo.)

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

ECKHART (cont'd)

Listen! . . . Listen closely. . . . More closely.

Trusting. . . . Trusting we will not be harmed.

Daring. . . . Daring to "Not Know."

Including. . . . Including all that we are not.

Dispelling. Dispelling the ghost of the other. There is no other.

Forgiving. Forgiving Everything.

Nothing. Nothing next.

MAGDALENE

Free of my breath, it is breathing that breathes. . . .
Free of my sight, it is seeing that sees. . . . Free of
my mind, thoughts but come and go.

Holy Spirit, awaken. I am your dream "come true."

Sound Cue: A chime is heard.

GUSTAVO

(To Eckhart.)

Meister! Forgive my rudeness. This is my dream, is it not?

ECKHART

If you are dreaming, then to whom are you speaking?
(The three congregated stir, then begin
to laugh.)

GUSTAVO

. . . . The joke is very funny. . . . (laughing) But, I
somehow can't remember it. . . .
(The group laugh together. Internally,
the actors may laugh at reality or
having an audience.)

MAGDALENE

He's a ripe apple, Meister.
(Eckhart amused. Magdalene embarrassed.
She acknowledges her impulsive remark.
To Gustavo.)

My apologies, Herr Gustavo.

GUSTAVO

No offense taken. I simply beg not to be devoured, on
my first visit.

(CONTINUED)

ECKHART

(Amused.)

Herr Gustavo, you are a generous spirit. Now that you practice wordless prayer, what confessions would you share?

GUSTAVO

I confess, Meister, I feel that I am dreaming.

ECKHART

Then, with whom are you speaking?

GUSTAVO

. . . . You're going to make me laugh again and I don't want to be rude. You have a great sense of humor.

ECKHART

(Eckhart raises his arm.)

Look at "yourself."

(An extended pause. Magdalene suddenly laughs. To Magdalene.)

So, Magdalene, how did you know the apple was ripe?

MAGDALENE

I took the time to notice, Meister.

ECKHART

Only wisdom can identify wisdom.

MAGDALENE

Yes, Meister.

ECKHART

What are you to do with this wisdom?

MAGDALENE

Perhaps I will, finally, learn to keep it to myself.

(Gustavo chuckles as he leans his head affectionately toward her.)

GUSTAVO

(To Eckhart.)

Meister, I am dreaming; am I not?

MUSIC CUE: S7 LOVE 1.20

ECKHART

If you are dreaming, then I've just asked the question.

(He becomes still.)

GUSTAVO

You have defeated my mind. You are Meister Eckhart.

(CONTINUED)

ECKHART

Who are you?

GUSTAVO

If I just questioned myself. . . . Then, Hilda is my
dream as well?

MAGDALENE

Speak with her.

(She becomes still.)

GUSTAVO

(Standing)

Yes, I will. You'll excuse me.

*(He turns and freezes.)**Transitional stage craft*SCENE 8*MUSIC continued: s7 love 1.21*

NARRATOR

The dreamer and the dreamt are finding common ground.
And, yet attachments assert dominion. The dreamer
dreams of love.*The stage set has a single table . Atop is a
pitcher and goblet. There are two chairs. Hilda,
is at home, sewing. Her intent will be to
understand her husband. Gustavo is standing facing
her with an intention to disclose his insight and
declare his affection.*

HILDA

And did you pray without thoughts?

GUSTAVO

Yes.

HILDA

You can pray without thoughts?

GUSTAVO

I can.

HILDA

And what is it like?

GUSTAVO

Like visiting a forbidden world.

(CONTINUED)

HILDA

A "forbidden" world. Are you happy there?

GUSTAVO

(He pours some beer, as if witnessing a wonder, and sits.)

I'm tempted to be silent, however, I would never want to offend you.

HILDA

Then, you never will, Dear Husband. . . .
(Reflecting on a different subject.)

I imagine, if the Church went back to Rome, we would all need to learn Latin, like you and Meister Eckhart.

GUSTAVO

Meister rarely speaks in Latin.

HILDA

I love him. We should make him the next Pope.

GUSTAVO

That would be a new day.

HILDA

Is there trouble?

GUSTAVO

I am in a trial of faith, Beloved.

HILDA

You have become embroiled in this dream.

GUSTAVO

Yes, I am embroiled in this dream.

HILDA

Why did you come home?

GUSTAVO

To be with you.

HILDA

I love you, husband.
(She rises and embraces Gustavo from behind.)

GUSTAVO

God is blessed, yet terrible.

MUSIC CUE: S8 LOVE 0.56 PLUS ECKHART 0.48

(CONTINUED)

HILDA

What is it that you are not saying?

GUSTAVO

I am dreaming. . . . And yet

HILDA

It is all real.

GUSTAVO

Hilda, how is it that you say that?

HILDA

(Confused.)

What did I say?

GUSTAVO

You said what I was thinking.

HILDA

Gustavo, you're frightening me.

GUSTAVO

(Embracing her.)

Never mind, my love. Never mind.

Sound Cue: Chamber bell rings from the other dimension.

HILDA

Is that bell for you, Husband?

GUSTAVO

Yes, it is.

(Gustavo stands and begins to move away.)

HILDA

Come back to my arms.

(Hilda freezes.)

Transitional stage craft.

SCENE 9

NARRATOR

Pope Gustavo's away-room. Important matters must be addressed.

Sound Cue: Chamber bell

MUSIC CONTINUES: S8 LOVE 0.56 PLUS ECKHART 0.48

(CONTINUED)

CARDINAL THOMAS

Father, Commander Vilma has insisted on seeing you immediately.

POPE GUSTAVO

How is our schedule, Cardinal?

CARDINAL THOMAS

We have time, Father. Are you better?

POPE GUSTAVO

Yes.

CARDINAL THOMAS

(Announcing the Commander.)

Your Holiness, Commander Vilma La Torre.

POPE GUSTAVO

Vilma.

COMMANDER VILMA

Your Holiness. How are you today?

POPE GUSTAVO

Today, Vilma, I am grateful for your presence.
(She warmly drops her head.)

COMMANDER VILMA

I will be as brief as possible, Father.

POPE GUSTAVO

Let's take the time we need, Commander.

COMMANDER VILMA

From your terrace you will see additional stations and guards in St. Peter's Square. We anticipate protesting.

POPE GUSTAVO

Will the protesters be safe?

COMMANDER VILMA

There are priests among them. . . . I have reserved a protest area by the news stations, so protesters will feel visible and heard. However, they are free to station themselves wherever they please.

POPE GUSTAVO

Thank you for your wisdom, Commander.

COMMANDER VILMA

A hostile email transmitted the coordinates of the terrace.

(CONTINUED)

POPE GUSTAVO

Why do you consider the email hostile?

COMMANDER VILMA

It references you as "Anti-Pope Gustavo."

CARDINAL THOMAS

Does that suggest the terrace may be attacked by
drones?

COMMANDER VILMA

(Looks at Cardinal Thomas.)

That is one possibility. It may be simply taunting.

(To Pope Gustavo.)

And, we are responding to both possibilities, Father.

POPE GUSTAVO

I see. What else do you think I need to know, Vilma?

COMMANDER VILMA

Electronic communications in the Vatican have increased
five fold from last week.

MUSIC CUE: ARGUE

POPE GUSTAVO

That should not be surprising.

(Looking at Cardinal Thomas.)

I am expected to refute a pope and revoke his decree.

COMMANDER VILMA

All security personnel are appropriately oriented,
Father.

POPE GUSTAVO

I am deeply grateful. Is there anything else, Vilma?

COMMANDER VILMA

I believe that is all that is necessary to report,
Father. May I stand with you on the terrace?

MUSIC CUE: S 9 ARGUE 1.10

CARDINAL THOMAS

You may stand at my side, Commander.

COMMANDER VILMA

Thank you, Cardinal; thank you, Pope Gustavo.

POPE GUSTAVO

Bless you, Vilma.

(CONTINUED)

COMMANDER VILMA

(To Cardinal Thomas.)

I will return for the service.

CARDINAL THOMAS

I'll see the Commander out.

(He and the Commander freeze.)

POPE GUSTAVO

Thank you, Cardinal. I will join you within the hour.

*The Pope reclines and freezes, with the intention
to reenter his dream.*

Transitional stage craft.

SCENE 10

NARRATOR

Deep within the archives of the dreaming Pope's
imaginings, candles illuminate the treasures of the
Church.

GUSTAVO

Bishop Ignatius, an extra candle?

IGNATIUS

You transcribe Eckhart's sermon to parchment?

GUSTAVO

Yes.

IGNATIUS

I see. . . .

(Dismissing Gustavo.)

I have enough light to see clearly.

GUSTAVO

Very well, Bishop.

IGNATIUS

Thank you.

GUSTAVO

Yes, Bishop.

IGNATIUS

Herr Gustavo, I worry for you and your family. Evil is
a beast that hunts for the stray.

GUSTAVO

I understand, Bishop. I am near, if you should need me.
(Returning to his station, overseeing
Bishop Ignatius. Bishop Ignatius looks

(CONTINUED)

at a parchment of Eckhart's sermon and weeps loudly. Ignatius rises from his station with the parchment in his hands.)

GUSTAVO

(Approaching the Bishop.)

Bishop! Bishop, may I return the parchment to the archives?

IGNATIUS

No need, Gustavo. I will keep the parchment.

GUSTAVO

May I anticipate it's return?

IGNATIUS

(With some indignation.)

These heresies, Herr Gustavo, place you and your family at risk of eternal damnation.

GUSTAVO

I understand your concern, Bishop.

IGNATIUS

You are deceived, Gustavo. We are engaged in a battle with a spirit that would destroy civilization. This is the truth.

GUSTAVO

I do not dispute your conviction.

IGNATIUS

"May we be free of God?" Would Christ speak those words!?

GUSTAVO

I believe it reads: "May we be free of "the idea" of God."

IGNATIUS

So, you, like the Beguine, memorize his writing?

GUSTAVO

I recall them, after transcribing them to parchment.
(Eckhart enters the stage and approaches the two. Ignatius is unaware of Eckhart's approach.)

IGNATIUS

Be very careful, Gustavo of Paris, you are a man with a family.

(CONTINUED)

GUSTAVO

(Turning attention to Eckhart, who heard
the remark.)

Meister Eckhart!

ECKHART

Gustavo of Paris.

(To Ignatius)

And, Bishop Ignatius.

(They face one another with heads
slightly dropped.)

IGNATIUS

Meister Eckhart.

GUSTAVO

We were discussing your sermon.

ECKHART

(To Gustavo.)

Being One in God, I assume.

GUSTAVO

We were discussing its return.

ECKHART

Have you gathered from it what you need, Bishop?

IGNATIUS

(Looking to Gustavo.)

I will have it back to the security of the archives
shortly. . . . I take leave of you.

GUSTAVO

(Gustavo bows slightly.)

Thank you again, Bishop.

IGNATIUS

Hold my counsel in mind.

GUSTAVO

I will. Thank you, Bishop.

Bishop Ignatius exits.

ECKHART

(Referring to Ignatius's remark to him.)

Courage, Gustavo

MUSIC CUE: S10 ECKHART 1.45

(CONTINUED)

GUSTAVO

Is my family to be threatened by the "Church of God?"

ECKHART

Is that really possible?

GUSTAVO

. . . . You are suggesting, Meister, that I am menaced by a Bishop who is outside the Church?

ECKHART

I am saying that there are witless asses who profess the knowledge of God, yet know Him not.

GUSTAVO

Marguerite Porete was burned alive for her confessions of love.

ECKHART

Such things, Herr Gustavo, do not occur in the hands of the wise.

GUSTAVO

And, this is my dream?

MUSIC CUE: S11 ARGUE 1.10 ECKHART Yes.

. . . . Meister, you are the image of Christ, are you not?

ECKHART

Are you willing to decide?

GUSTAVO

Yes, I will decide.

ECKHART

Then, put on your robe.
(Eckhart hands Gustavo a judge's robe.
they freeze.)

Transitional stage craft.

SCENE 11

NARRATOR

Scene 11. Who is the judge, when the judge is everywhere, everyone and everything?

Gustavo, dressed in a judges cloak, presides center stage. Ignatius and Gustavo stand front stage and speak in unison.

(CONTINUED)

IGNATIUS AND ECKHART

By the heart we believe and by the mouth we confess the One Church, not of heretics, but the Holy Church, outside of which we believe that no one is saved. We, the faithful, avow that the gates of hell will not prevail against you. In the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. Amen.

(Ignatius and Eckhart sit.)

GUSTAVO

We may begin with the prosecution.

IGNATIUS

(Standing.)

We have shown, clearly, that Meister Eckhart betrays the faithful by leading them to believe that they are equivalent to Christ. "See God in all things!," he states, "and this will be the sign of your birth, a sign that God has given birth in 'you' as his only begotten son." "This," this is outrageous heresy. It "fouls" the parchment on which it is written.

(He sits.)

ECKHART

(He rises.)

Ignorance accuses me of heresy; wisdom does not. God in mankind threatens my Inquisitor. He denies the pervasive presence of God. Why? He fears a world populated by Christ.

(Toward Ignatius.)

God is all in all. This is the wisdom that eludes my "priestly" inquisitor.

(He sits.)

IGNATIUS

(He rises.)

Eckhart tells the faithful that heresy is an impossibility. And I quote: "Anyone who blasphemes God praises God." So, blasphemy is praise in "this" twisted mind. "Even in evil," he preaches, "God's glory shines forth equally." So, though he sins in our face, he is still equivalent to Christ. I give you, "The Virtuous" Meister Eckhart.

(Bishop Ignatius sits. Eckhart rises and steps forward.)

ECKHART

In stillness, anyone, anyone can realize God, because God is every Life. This fills my accuser with jealousy, for in his delusion he owns God. He "portions out" God. Arrogance disguised as Godliness. My Inquisitor claims wisdom, yet his intent to hoard God exposes him.

(CONTINUED)

(He sits.)

IGNATIUS

(He rises.)

Everything and everyone is God in Eckhart's deluded mind. And, allow me to remind you, there is a very serious consequence for assuming you are equal to Christ. Do we dare trust a priest that suggests that there is no hell, no cosmic punishment for sinfulness. Better to burn at the stake, and renounce such heresy, than fall into hellfire for eternity. Is this not true compassion? I ask you, decide!

MUSIC CUE: S12 MARGUERITE 1.10

GUSTAVO

I feel sorry for you Bishop. Yours is the sad face of this dream.

IGNATIUS

If that is your judgment, then, I feel sorry for you. Our Pope will find Eckhart to be impious and ungodly--the same hellish condition that you are in.

All characters freeze.

Transitional stage craft.

SCENE 12

The stage set has two stakes with pyres. Marguerite and Gustavo are tied to the stakes by a neck collar. Marguerite, wears a half-mask revealing half her face. She has long red hair crossing over her face.

NARRATOR

Desirous of life, and haunted by death, the dreamer defiantly turns on fear.

GUSTAVO

Marguerite! I have been afraid!

MARGUERITE

Have you come to be with me?

GUSTAVO

Yes. . . . I am with you, at last. I've been afraid. We are together, you and I.

MUSIC CUE S13 ECKHART 2.00

(CONTINUED)

MARGUERITE

Marguerite's pyre is ignited using spotlight. She writhes and quivers before collapsing. She then uprights her body, then steps toward Gustavo, who is still and attentive.

Your soul is dreaming.

GUSTAVO

Yes, Love is dreaming.

Using a spot light, Gustavo's pyre is ignited. Marguerite kneels on one leg, one arm covering her head. Gustavo, then, recognizes the form of Hilda. He calls out.

Hilda?

As the pyre burns Gustavo, then, calls upward, to himself, in the other dimension.

Wake up! . . . Wake up!

Gustavo freezes.

Transitional stage craft.

SCENE 13

NARRATOR

Scene 13. Dreams end with wakefulness. Yet, wakefulness ends with dreams. And, who is it that dreams and wakes? Who is it that is here?

Pope Gustavo, accompanied by Nurse Norma, are frozen. Their intention is to rejoin the Cardinal and Archbishop. Cardinal Thomas and Archbishop Jose await the Pope in stillness.

ARCHBISHOP JOSE

Your Holiness, did you rest sufficiently?

POPE GUSTAVO

Centuries, Archbishop, centuries.

CARDINAL THOMAS

You are joyous.

POPE GUSTAVO

(As if checking which reality he is in.)
Cardinal Thomas?

CARDINAL THOMAS

(Aware that Pope Gustavo was asking for a confirmation.)

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CARDINAL THOMAS (cont'd)

Yes, Pope Gustavo, I am Cardinal Thomas.

POPE GUSTAVO

I "am" joyous, Cardinal. . . . What is our schedule?

CARDINAL THOMAS

We have 20 minutes before your service from the terrace begins. We can witness your decree after the sermon.

POPE GUSTAVO

There is no need to delay. The timing is perfect.

ARCHBISHOP JOSE

You must have had a wonderful nap, Father.

CARDINAL THOMAS

Or, was it a "wonderful dream?"

MUSIC CUE: Eckhart

POPE GUSTAVO

Yes, Cardinal, I had a wondrous dream.

NURSE NORMA

Do I hear singing?

CARDINAL THOMAS

There are angels in the room. . . We are gathering.

NURSE NORMA

(Lights indicate the presence of angels.
Nurse Norma shivers with goosebumps.)

OOH!

ARCHBISHOP JOSE

You welcomed angels, and they came, Holy Father.

CARDINAL THOMAS

I believe there are more than angels witnessing these moments. Listen.

(All become silent, listening for
spirits and sounds in the audience.)

NURSE NORMA

. . . . I feel like I'm in a dream that sings.

POPE GUSTAVO

"A dream that sings."

(To Archbishop Jose.)

So Archbishop, do you sing?

(CONTINUED)

ARCHBISHOP JOSE

I do, Father, like a wolf in the night.

POPE GUSTAVO

We'll need singers to sing new songs.

ARCHBISHOP JOSE

I'm ready.

POPE GUSTAVO

You are not easily swayed by authority.

ARCHBISHOP JOSE

I wish that for all of us.

POPE GUSTAVO

(To Cardinal Thomas.)

This may be, Cardinal Thomas, the era of Meister Eckhart.

CARDINAL THOMAS

Sanctified in the errors of our Pope John XII.

POPE GUSTAVO

Cardinal, we have matured.

(Pope Gustavo looks in Cardinal Thomas's eyes, then they embrace each other.)

CARDINAL THOMAS

I imagine it is time--time to witness your decree.

POPE GUSTAVO

Yes, thank you Cardinal. Where is my pen? Ah!

(Pope Gustavo moves to his desk, picks up his pen, and signs the document.)

Witnesses!

(Pope Gustavo steps back as Archbishop Cervantes and Cardinal Thomas witness the decree.)

Thank you, Cardinal. . . . Thank you, Archbishop.

(The group stands still, as if waiting for an event that does not come.)

CARDINAL THOMAS

Would a libation not be appropriate?

POPE GUSTAVO

Not only appropriate, mandatory.

CARDINAL THOMAS

Allow me.

(He pulls up a tray with four silver goblets with wine already poured.)

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CARDINAL THOMAS (cont'd)

You are joining us, Norma?

NURSE NORMA

I wouldn't miss this moment for the world.

(Cardinal Thomas distributes goblets.)

POPE GUSTAVO

(To Cardinal Thomas.)

Would you propose a toast?

CARDINAL THOMAS

I'll pass.

ARCHBISHOP JOSE

May I?

POPE GUSTAVO

Please.

ARCHBISHOP JOSE

To the moment!

POPE GUSTAVO/ARCHBISHOP JOSE/BISHOP THOMAS/NURSE NORMA

(In unison.)

To the moment.

(They drink.)

ARCHBISHOP JOSE

Considering "the moment," was my toast sufficient?

BISHOP THOMAS

Perhaps, Archbishop, you should have made your toast singing!

ARCHBISHOP JOSE

Is it still an option?!

(They are all amused.)

NURSE NORMA

I usually feel awkward when priests celebrate. But, not today.

ARCHBISHOP JOSE

That sounds like a confession.

CARDINAL THOMAS

Yes, Archbishop, I believe we have a confession.

(To Nurse Norma.)

Anything else?

(CONTINUED)

NURSE NORMA

(Humorously.)

Ah, such irreverence. Are the angels still here?

MUSIC CUE: S14 ECKHART 2.10

ARCHBISHOP JOSE

Nothing like a new day.

(The committee joyously carries on, then freezes.)

*Transitional stage craft.*SCENE 14*All participants including Commander Vilma, Nurse Norma, Cardinal Thomas, Archbishop Jose are still Pope Gustavo is at his podium.**MUSIC CONTINUES S14 ECKHART 2.10.*

NARRATOR

Every night has a day, and every day a night. Endlessly, the energies dance, forming trials, as well as triumphs.

POPE GUSTAVO

"I and my Father are one," confessed Jesus. Our Christ was not disclosing to his apostles an exclusive relationship, but was calling them to awaken to God's nearness. 1200 years later, the enlightened Dominican Priest, Meister Eckhart, boldly preached that we are of the nature of God, regardless of sinfulness. "Even in evil," preached Meister Eckhart, "God's glory shines forth in equal fashion." Provocative words spoken in troubled times.

Meister Eckhart boldly stated that in life everlasting, we shall all be transformed totally into God, not just similar. Sinners transformed to God. The French Inquisition and our Pope John XII alleged that such teachings mislead common people.

Catholics, today, are not misled by knowing that God is our nature, as well as our circumstance. Wisdom has known this throughout eternity. We are not misled by knowing that we are inherently one with the Father. No, we are not orphans, adopted by God, but his offspring, as is all creation.

(Pope Gustavo gestures to Archbishop Jose to stand at his side. The Archbishop moves to his side.)

The Contemplative Order of Catholic priests has embraced the teachings of Meister Eckhart. The

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

POPE GUSTAVO (cont'd)

Contemplatives have asked that Meister Eckhart be absolved of impiety, that we may all openly seek God through his teachings. Thus, we also speak, today, of a legal matter. We have reviewed the articles of evidence, which the Inquisition of his day alleged were misguided, if not heretical. We have concluded that there is no misguidedness or heresy in these articles. Consequently, the condemnations, as well as the warning expressed by Pope John XII to refrain from defending these articles, is herewith revoked.

MUSIC CUE: S15 MARGUERITE 1.30

Contemplative Christians are sanctioned this day to investigate and embrace the teachings of "His Most Enlightened Meister Eckhart." . . . A door has opened today, and new directions beckon you. . . . May God be with you.

(He gestures the sign of the cross.)

THE CONGREGATED

And also with you.

Fade to black.

The End.