

LEAH

I don't think it's crazy. I think... there isn't a word yet for what it is. We might have to invent it.

JUDITH

You are good with words. You will find one. You will live, and you will find many words. Many words for what has happened.

LEAH

(to us as JUDITH exits)

And that was my charge, my mission, yes? To find words.

Many words.

Angry words, sad words, resigned words.

I had so many that I threw away. The wrong words, it seemed to me. I didn't think anybody was using the right words. I did not see Judith again for a long time; her officer, I must imagine, kept her quite busy.

(NELLY enters.)

LEAH (Continued)

My officer chose me as well. As far as rank was concerned, I hit the jackpot.

START HERE —>

NELL

Your name, Jewess?

LEAH

Here is my number, Commandant.

(she shows her arm)

NELL

Impudence? To me?

LEAH

I thought this was my name now.

NELL

Interesting. You do not seem suicidal. You do not seem to be a rebel. You do not seem to be an idiot. Nevertheless, when I ask you a direct question, you should answer me directly.

(he strikes her.)

LEAH

Leah, Commandant.

NELL

Hauptsturmfuehrer Nell. You will address me that way in future.

LEAH

Perhaps not much longer, then—Hauptsturmfuehrer Nell.

NELL

Your meaning, Jewess?

LEAH

My future—all of our futures—seem limited.

NELL

All of you prisoners, you mean.

LEAH

Of course, Hauptsturmfuehrer Nell. Your future—1000 years, yes?

NELL

Interesting. I am starting to understand you, I think.

LEAH

Perhaps the doomed have little to lose.

NELL

No—it's different than that. I've seen the ones who've given up, the walking dead. You look at your situation differently than most. Some are hopeful, some are scared. Some have faith, some have lost theirs. But you—I'm not sure I have the words, exactly.

NELL (continued)

(beat)

As if you see your situation as...ridiculous. Without meaning.

LEAH

Absurd?

NELL

(mildly threatening)
Absurd...

LEAH

(correcting)
Absurd, Hauptsturmfuhrer Nell.

NELL

Yes. Like my older sister. Not so much the physical appearance, but the attitude. You are perhaps familiar, Jewess, with the Dadaists?

LEAH

A little bit...Hauptsturmfuhrer Nell. Tristan Tzara and others—a response to the earlier Great War.

NELL

Precisely. Artistic types who felt that a world war was the ultimate...absurdity. So absurd that the only sane response was insanity. My sister explained this to me with great passion. This attitude...it sets you apart. Perhaps it is an attitude I share.

LEAH

You are a commandant. You can't have risen to your level with that attitude.
(beat)
Hauptsturmfuhrer Nell.

NELL

Ah, a bit of girlish naivete after all. Refreshing.

(sizes her up a bit, then:)

You have duties now? Chores, no doubt? You seem perfectly healthy.

LEAH

Yes, Hauptsturmfuhrer Nell. I have duties to perform.

NELL

Your duties, going forward, will be directly to and for me. You understand?

LEAH

I...I believe so, Hauptsturmfuhrer Nell.

NELL

Yes...if you don't fully understand, you will very soon. All of our encounters must be brief and private. I must not remove my uniform or cause it to wrinkle in any way. There will be no place to lie down comfortably. Those conditions limit our options. You understand this part, Jewess?

END HERE —>

LEAH

Yes, Hauptsturmfuhrer Nell, but...

NELL

“But...?”

LEAH

I am...inexperienced. I might hurt you.

NELL

If you do, the penalty is death.

(Lights out on NELL. LEAH addresses us.)

LEAH

Of course, I told Judith. Looking at it now, it's rather like those movie scenes with teenage girls talking breathlessly to each other about the coolest boy in school who just asked her out...

(JUDITH enters, as she and LEAH both face front.)

LEAH (continued)

Oh my gosh, Judith! He just looked at me with those piercing eyes he has, you know?

JUDITH

Oh, I love his eyes!

LEAH

And then—

JUDITH

He asked you?

LEAH

He asked me to go to the prom!

(they both scream with girlish delight.)