

CALIGARI

from *The Cabinet of Dr Caligari* (dir. Wiene 1920)

by Amanda Dalton

music by Olly Fox

Franzis

- a young man in his early 20s

Allan

- his 19 year old friend, head-in-the-clouds, impressionable.

Jane

- a lovely young woman, 20. From a rather wealthy home.

Cesar

- a somnambulist,

Jakob Straat

- a man on the edge, returned from the War. Rough.

Dr Olfens

- Jane's father, the local doctor. Early 50s.

Frau Beckmann

- Jane's elderly maternal grandmother. Once wealthy, she has lost family in the War.

Town Clerk

- an irritable bureaucrat.

Police Inspector

- a big fish in a small pond. Likes the power.

All Townspeople/ other voices played by members of the cast

*Caligari is a silent character – but right at the end of the piece “the Director” speaks.

doubling:

Allan/Clerk/Policeman

Jakob Straat / Clerk

Dr Olfens / Clerk / Policeman

Town Clerk / Man-in-a-hurry / Director*

(S) after a character name denotes that they are “in” the story at this point.

The action takes place in 1919, in a small German town – as imagined / conjured / re-created by Franzis. This might be a kind of afterlife, or an asylum, or dream.

Franzis, Frau Beckmann and Jakob Straat have the capacity to be both observers / narrators and participants in the unfolding story. (S) indicates that they are “in” the story; otherwise imagine them observing it, as kind of omniscient observers. All other characters are inside the story. Franzis is a kind of puppet-master but as he increasingly becomes a character in his own tale, he begins to lose his authorial control.

RECORDING DRAFT

ACT ONE

scene one

In an unnamed place

Franzis Perhaps it begins here, 1919,
among the bare trees of a garden at dusk.
Or in the cold sweat of a broken room.
Or at the guerning mouths of our Fathers,
story-spilling from the abyss behind their teeth?

Perhaps a tortured artist paints himself
against a window of mist.
And no-one can be sure if those dead eyes
are bad art or just the way things are.

Or it begins in the music-halls
and clattering cafes of Berlin,
or in the pockets of the Freikorps,
or through a gap between duckboards
at Verdun, where we were scarecrows
walking on corpses, marching asleep.

Yes, perhaps it begins asleep.

Listen.

We listen

There are spirits everywhere.

Frau Beckmann arrives

Frau Beckmann They are all around us.

Franzis Frau Beckmann.

Jakob Straat arrives, he is angry and damaged from the start.

Jakob Straat Taken everything.

Franzis And Jakob Straat.

Frau Beckmann Took my husband and my son away.

Jakob Straat You still have a home.

Franzis Home.

Frau Beckmann Holstenwall.

Franzis Holstenwall. The town where I was born.

Jakob Straat Town of shadows

Frau Beckmann Always meine heimat.
Houses clustered on the steep hill.

Franzis Yes!

Frau Beckmann Little alleyways.

Jakob Straat Rat runs, black as shame.

Franzis Rooftops pointed, close-packed,
rising to/ a

Frau Beckmann Look! Herr Straat! He is showing us –
Holstenwall!

It's like a children's picture book!

Franzis a church, its steeples lean

Jakob Straat It's crooked.

Frau Beckmann Is it real?

Jakob Straat Nothing's real

Franzis Two bare trees
and here –

Jakob Straat Looks nothing like – it's a picture - he's showing you
something crazy/ he's

Franzis a railing, sloping, on the rise.

Frau Beckmann But, the railing. Yes, I know this railing.
This is Holstenwall.

Jakob Straat He's paint on his hands.
He's made this.

Franzis Sssh – This is where it begins.
Listen.

Frau Beckmann Do as he asks.

Out of the silence, the sounds of a travelling fair arriving

Franzis 1919. The travelling fair is coming to Holstenwall.

beat

Jakob Straat is afraid

Jakob Straat What is this? Get out of my head.

Franzis Come with me.
Frau Beckmann ?

Frau Beckmann I am too old for the hustle and bustle.

Jakob Straat Lost in the crowd.
Always a crowd. Can't stand a crowd.

Frau Beckmann Crazy tents. I lose my balance.

Franzis Take my arm.

Jakob Straat Nothing is real. This is a made-up world.

See, a paper sky.
It rips. It can all be torn apart.

Through the sounds of the fair, the closer noise of thick paper tearing.

scene two

We are in Holstenwall.

Music, crowds, the fair is arriving.

Townspeople All Come to the Fair!
The Holstenwall Fair!

Voice 1. Marvels!
Voice 2. Miracles!
Voice 3. Wonder at the sideshows!
1. Waxworks,
2. freak show.
3. Whirligigs.
4. Peep show.

1. Who's that?
2. A scoundrel
3. a nobleman
4. a bogeyman

1. a master
2. a mountebank.
3. a government official
4. it's a fat old man,
1. it's just a –

silence

Franzis Here he comes.
 Dr Caligari.
 First only a top hat as he climbs the crooked steps
 Then a hand; he shuffles into empty white space,
 the town is his backcloth, its leaning flag
 his counterweight.
 Later we will see how his hands are gloved,
 the three daubed stripes
 that are the spaces between fingers,
 like the sharps and flats of organ keys.
 For now, he approaches, his face set grim,
 wild eyes behind his spectacles,
 hair struggling from his hat,
 and underneath his arm a book
 draped in the cloak folds.
 See how he leans on his stick, how he totters.
 But he's much too close, an unsteady load
 that might just topple as it catches the air.

scene three

The sounds of the fair have gone. Anxious.

Frau Beckmann Where is Herr Franzis?

Jakob Straat Why would I care?

Frau Beckmann He is perhaps following the tottering man.

Tapping, knocking. Jakob Straat is testing the walls – they are thin wood.

Stop it! What are you doing?

Jakob Straat These walls – might as well be made of air.
 I could put my fist through.

Frau Beckmann No!

Jakob Straat Don't touch me.

Frau Beckmann You are a rude man.

she's out of breath

Frau Beckmann This is a slope. I am not good at slopes.

Franzis Then wait here. Listen.

Frau Beckmann Herr Franzis! Don't come up behind me. My fading heart.

Jakob Straat What are you / (trying to do)

Franzis I have been here all along.
This is my story.
I'm always here.

A distant voice, Allan reading.

Jakob Straat What's that?
What the hell is that?

Franzis It's my friend.
He likes to read aloud.
It helps him to remember.

Allan's attic room. Allan is reading Nietzsche. Trying to memorize it. He continues in the background under the dialogue.

Allan *Are we not wandering at loss through an infinite nothingness?
Do we not feel the breath of empty space?*

Frau Beckmann It's Young Herr Allan! In his cock-eyed attic room. Always head in a book. Or in a cloud. I think he holds his book in both hands to steady himself on the steep slopes of this zig-zag world.

Jakob Straat That's a crazy room. His window's -
like a bent kite, twisted on / (its frame)

Frau Beckmann No, this shape is, I believe,
a rhomboid.

Allan *Has it not become colder? Are we not faced by the oncoming
night and yet more night?*

Jakob Straat All right. A 'rhomboid'. So why does the light come in like/

Frau Beckmann a star. The light is a painted star.
But the chair is substantial. He leans on it.

Jakob Straat Everything collapses.

Allan reaches the end of his reading

Franzis He's speaking of the soul.

Jakob Straat The damaged soul.
The chairback's too high

Frau Beckmann It is a ladder-back

Jakob Straat So he might climb out of this hell.

Franzis Ssh. He goes to the window.

Frau Beckmann How loose his bow tie is, his flopping parted hair.
she calls him
Allan!

Jakob Straat English fop!

Frau Beckmann He is a good German boy.

Jakob Straat He didn't fight. He wasn't there.

Frau Beckmann He has a weak heart – and the soul of a poet. He was too delicate to go to war.

Jakob Straat And I am too delicate to return from it.

Frau Beckmann Look at the pointed roofs and chimneys!

Jakob Straat They're dismal. Grey. Flat.

Frau Beckmann Paper –

Jakob Straat thin chimneys

Frau Beckmann Cut out

Jakob Straat with a sharp knife.

Frau Beckmann Look. What has he seen?

Franzis He has seen the fair from his window. He's fetching his coat.
He's leaving.

Jakob Straat Maybe I'll follow him.

Franzis He's coming to find me.

Allan is close by

Allan Come on Franzis. Let's go to the fair.

Franzis He tugs my arm. He wants to go to the fair.

scene four

Franzis takes us to a back street

Franzis But first, this back street:
in a labyrinth of corridors,
each alleyway and doorway

Frau Beckmann is a gap, a break in the line,

Jakob Straat (*under his breath, under Franzis*)

He has a paintbrush in his pocket.

Franzis where light spills out.

Jakob Straat This is not real. This is no street I've ever walked.
And you / (have a paintbrush in your pocket)

Frau Beckmann Be quiet, Herr Straat! I'm trying to listen.

Franzis And here He comes,
Caligari
in his black cape,
tiny steps.
Quick quick quick. Stop.
Quick. Stop.
Tiny steps. Searching for something.
Quick as a fat black spider.
Searching for flies.
And here's a man to ask,
a man in a hurry.
He gives his card.

Man in a hurry I shouldn't go there if I were you.

Franzis He's undeterred.

Man in a hurry The Town Clerk is in a bad mood today.

Frau Beckmann The Town Clerk is always in a bad mood.

Franzis He shows the-man-in-a-hurry another card.
His name, it's

Man in a hurry Doctor Caligari.

Franzis Caligari

Jakob Straat This means nothing to me.

Franzis It will.

Man in a hurry I wouldn't advise – I wouldn't necessarily -
Oh if you must - come come come come come
but hurry.

scene five

In the town clerk's office. Busy Busy. Papers, scribing, rubber stamping. Rhythmic. Unreal.

(The Town Clerk speaks the lines indicated. All others by the junior clerks).

Franzis Into the Town Clerk's Office –

Frau Beckmann Such tall stools for the clerks!

Jakob Straat What's the use of their adding up – a barrow of money
wouldn't buy a scrap of bread.

Clerk 1 5 over e

Clerk 2 Is that an S or an 8 or a scribble?

Clerk 1 Dear Sir.

Clerk 2 5 over e?

Town Clerk Refused.

Clerk 1. Dear Sir.

Town Clerk Grant that.

Clerk 1. Is that a blot or a sign?
It doesn't balance

Clerk 2 5 over e

Town Clerk Wait.

Clerk 1 It's just a line

Clerk 2 No, it isn't a division

Clerk 1 Not a sum?

Clerk 2 It's a sign.

Clerk 1 Who's that?

Town Clerk Grant it.

1. Divide it

2. Times it

Town Clerk WAIT.

Refused.

Grant that.

1. 5 over e?

Town Clerk I told you to wait.

the bustle stops.
silence

Franzis The Town Clerk swivels on his high stool.

Clerks (*a choral whisper?*) Ridiculously high.

Franzis Shuffles the next sheaf of papers

Clerks shuffle shuffle shuffle ssshhhh

Franzis As Dr Caligari waits.

Clerk 2 The Town Clerk makes him wait.

Franzis He calculates another sum

Clerk 1 5 over e?

Franzis And Caligari turns his angry face away.

Clerks (*choral*) Hunched demon in the corner of the crazed room -

Franzis - the gloved hand,
the three daubed stripes
that are the spaces between fingers,
like the sharps and flats of organ keys.

Clerks (*choral*) Discordant – he’s a dischord.

beat

Franzis But look. The clerk is getting down. From his perch.

Clerks He’s still very tall.

Franzis He towers.
And then:

beat

Franzis He wants to apply for a permit.
He wants to show his exhibit at the fair.

Silence. The sound of Caligari’s cane drawing a shape on the floor.

Clerks (*muttering all over each other*)
He’s drawing a shape on the floor.
What sort of exhibit is it?

Franzis A somnambulist.
He wishes to show a somnambulist at the fair.

beat

*Then the **Town Clerk** begins to laugh. Abruptly stops. Leaves.*

Franzis (*hushed*) The Town Clerk laughs. He’s leaving.
Gesticulates to a junior to deal with Caligari!

Dr Caligari - shuffles(?) - to the rear desk.
His extraordinary gait.
“Somnambulist”.
Do we laugh?
Do we catch our breath in fear?

Sound from The Clerks ...inhalation? exhalation?

Interlude: Frau Beckmann

Frau Beckmann I lost my husband to the influenza,
and my son, killed at the hands
of the mutinous sailors of Kiel.
His own men.
We were at war with ourselves.
As my daughter lay sick in bed,
the streets outside her window filled with
the din of marching, demonstration, riot.
We ate turnip the day she died – food for cattle.
I slit a hole in the mattress and sewed inside
my wedding rings, four necklaces,
my mother's mother-of-pearl.
I believe in patience, God,
a proper order to all things.
I believe in my country.
But it is a year now since the war is "over"
and I am not reassured.

scene six

The Fair is in full swing

Townspeople:

Voice 1. There's a merry go round
Voice 2 And another
Voice 4 A dwarf

(Frau Beckmann) There's a dwarf in a conical hat.
Look on top of the organ
He's wearing a shirt
A dwarf in a conical hat!

(Frau Beckmann) Put a coin in his cup
Put a coin in his cup
Put a coin in the monkey's cup
(in a shirt!)
There's a dwarf in a conical hat.

Franzis Everyone comes to the fair!

Jakob Straat Chaos.
Anarchie!

Allan (*calling*) Franzis! There's a carousel!
Come and ride!

Frau Beckmann It is a simple cut-out, a card umbrella spinning on a stick.

Jakob Straat Is it not a 'rhomboid' then?

Frau Beckmann You are such an ill-educated, rude man.
But wait, who is that?

Franzis Caligari.

Allan Who's that stranger, Franzis? He looks like a showman.
Come on! Let's follow him.

Franzis Through crowds, perambulators, twisted banners,
to a street of tents.
And from the largest tent of all
he steps out.
Spectacles pushed up to his brow.

Jakob Straat Comedian.

Franzis Or devil?

Frau Beckmann He has a bell – looks like my bell -

Franzis He carries an awkward roll of canvas on a frame.

He begins to ring the bell, wildly.

Frau Beckmann Sounds like my bell!

All Townspeople: Step up. Step up. See the amazing Cesar! Cesar the
Somnambulist!

Franzis The crowd pushes forward, pressed against his makeshift stage.
And he unrolls the canvas, to reveal a painting
of a thin man, tormented creature – spare as a shadow -

All Townspeople: Cesar, the somnambulist! Come and see the amazing Cesar!

Franzis Holds his stick to it.

Jakob Straat *(as if reading from the scroll – he's unamazed)*
The amazing Cesar.

Caligari beats the canvas with his stick.

Franzis The Amazing Cesar.
Light blinks, a slow blink. Closes its eyes.

Interlude: Jakob Straat

Jakob Straat Monkey turns the handle through the night,
its barrel spits out broken tunes for broken men.
“Deutschland, Deutschland Uber Alles”
(he makes the sound of explosion/battle)
Blinded by the gas,
for weeks my eyes in rags,
like the shadows had finally swallowed me.
Then, the unbandaged world.
I thought of the horse that disappeared in mud,
wondered if it went down with open eyes.
Back home, out in the fields,
we bury Mausers for the Revolution.
But you can't eat rifles, boys!
And sure as shame the bailiffs come,
and monkey turns the handle
til the world spins round.
What it would give to get off itself.
Faster, monkey, faster.
Shall we dance?

*A disturbed, distorted tune from the barrel organ. Jakob Straat hums along.
Dances alone.*

ACT TWO

scene one

The same night

Franzis . That night, in another attic room,
only the moon, its light blinks another blink.

The heads of two men, three.
Is it Die Rote Garde, come in the dark?
No.
These men lean across a bed,
its pale sheets and pillows
adrift as they are.
Whose room is this?

Frau Beckmann Listen.
They are muttering.

Franzis They are weighed down with/

Frau Beckmann Who is this who sleeps?

Franzis No-one sleeps.
Not sleep.

Frau Beckmann That is the Police Inspector!

Franzis They are policemen.

Frau Beckmann Then why -?/

Franzis They turn to the window. Oh so heavy, so slow.
And the victim/

Frau Beckmann ‘And the victim’ - no! What are you showing me? It’s an
attack?

Franzis So tired. So slow.

Frau Beckmann *(almost a whisper)*
A murder?

Franzis Such a small face in the bed, pinched chin.

Frau Beckmann It’s the Town Clerk!

Franzis Yes. The Town Clerk is murdered.

Frau Beckmann Dead! He’s dead!
Murdered in his sleep!
The Town Clerk is dead!

scene two

Next day at the fair.

Allan and Franzis laughing, in the story.

Frau Beckmann You and Young Herr Allan laughing – how can / you laugh?

Franzis We know nothing of the crime.

Allan Franzis – look!

Franzis We don’t hear of it until later.
For now –

Allan Look!

Jakob Straat
(*as though reading*) “Step up! Step up! Cesar who has slept for 23 years is about to wake. Don’t miss this”.

Frau Beckmann Not a fluent reader. Let me –

Jakob Straat Don’t touch me.
I don’t want the reek of your wealth on my skin. “Oh, money’s so worthless, they’re feeding their stoves with it.”
Not you.

Frau Beckmann What are you/ -?

Jakob Straat It was you, wasn’t it.

Frau Beckmann Herr Franzis, will you / (speak to Jakob Straat)

Jakob Straat Turned my sister from your big door when all she wanted was a cup of milk/

Frau Beckmann I –/

Jakob Straat and a few moments to speak with the doctor. She offered to clean your festering palace of a / house

Frau Beckmann I will not listen to this. Du rüpel! Who do you think/ (you are?)

Jakob Straat and your husband/

Frau Beckmann My husband is no longer alive.

Jakob Straat Seventeen. Half starved. My little sister. Bombed out making shells. How funny’s that.

Franzis Stop.

Frau Beckmann Many died.

Jakob Straat You’re still alive.

Franzis Stop!

they do.

Franzis Listen.

Allan A somnambulist!

Jakob Straat What is a “somnambulist”?

Franzis A sleepwalker. One who is entranced, perhaps, hypnotized.

Allan He’s going to wake – for the first time!

Franzis (S) I don’t want to see it, Allan.

Allan Of course you do. Hurry.

Franzis(S) Allan, no. Let’s go to the carousels -

Allan Come on!

Franzis (S) - see the monkey -

Frau Beckmann Herr Straat - the crowd is going inside the tent. Please tell them to let me through. I need to ask about / (my bell).

Allan The Cabinet of Dr Caligari!

Caligari rings a bell
Franzis is a little disturbed as he narrates.

Franzis The light is muffled.
Caligari on the curtained platform
waves his arms, rings his bell.

Frau Beckmann My bell. The curtain is lifting – what is this?
A standing coffin?

Franzis The cabinet.

Allan Is he inside?

Franzis (S) So hot in here, Allan. Shall we leave, come back another/ -?

Allan Of course not! This is extraordinary.

Jakob Straat That cabinet is a crazy cabinet. Not even cut straight!

Frau Beckmann I need to retrieve my bell.

Jakob Straat “My bell. My bell”! How would it be your bell?
And I am not your servant.

Frau Beckmann. I would never have given you the honour of serving in my house. You are a peasant man.

Franzis Caligari opens the doors -

All Townspeople Wake up Cesar.
Wake up!

The doors creak open. A collective gasp. Silence.

Franzis He stands asleep.
A black-clad wraith,
The head too large, the limbs
impossibly long,
impossibly thin.

Frau Beckmann A will o' the wisp.

Franzis How white the face -
And see the darkened mouth,
thick triangles of paint beneath his tight closed eyes.

Allan He's a puppet!

Franzis (S) No.

Jakob Straat We're all puppets.

Allan He must be hypnotized.

Jakob Straat You're all hypnotized!

All Townspeople Sssshhhhh!

Frau Beckmann Jakob Straat!
You cannot leave. Herr Franzis is showing us a story.

He's leaving -
Come back!

Allan Listen!

Franzis Caligari speaks: *Wake up Cesar!*
It is I calling you, Caligari, your master I command you!
Awaken for a brief while from your dark night!

At first only the quiver of a muscle in his hollow cheek,
a nostril flares a little, lips part as he stirs - or fades.
These might be the spasms of a dying thing.
But then his eyes. A shiver through the lids,
his shuttered eyes -

Allan It's like he's trapped inside

Townspeople

Voice 1. his eyes

Voice 2 seine augen

Allan in a dream

Frau Beckmann So hot in here.
And like a night vision.
Let the creature sleep.

Townspeople

Voice 1. fighting sleep.

Allan He's fighting to open his eyes

Franzis He's a bare tree struck by lightning
He's a hairline crack in the wall of the world
He's a haunting

Frau Beckmann He's my torment – he's what's left behind.

Franzis No will of his own but

Townspeople

Voice 1 His eyes.

Voice 2 Er öffnet die augen!

Franzis He's fighting to open his eyes!

a collective gasp
His open eyes!

scene three

Cesar (sung)

What stares is not I,
is mirrors in a ransacked house.
Behind, attic-black, peeled walls,
carcass on a bare floor. Raven
or jackdaw?

What sleeps is not I.
Was taken from my quiet place,
locked in a room of coats,
too heavy to run, slack jaw,
thick tongue.

I was stolen from myself,
was sweated from my skin –
poor thing .
Someone made a different dream
of me: this effigy,
impossibly thin, sewn in.

What stares is not I,
is mirrors in an empty house.
Broken bird on a bare floor.
Cracked wall, stares black.
Raven. Jackdaw.

scene four

Townspeople

Voice 1

He moves!

Voice 2

Caligari is making the creature move!

Voice 3

He's awake

Voice 4

He's a cripple

Frau Beckmann

Little more than a shadow

Allan

Look, his limbs are so stiff –

Frau Beckmann

This thing is broken

Franzis

This 'thing' is Cesar. Cesar.
Caligari gestures with his stick and he approaches, arms raised,
convulsed, then, the stick again, and he is still, arms at his
sides, a mannequin.
His master grins his twisted grin and speaks.

Frau Beckmann What does he say?

Allan Franzis, I want him to tell my fortune.

Franzis(S) No.

(to Frau Beckmann) He says that the somnambulist knows all secrets.

Allan What shall I ask?

Frau Beckmann Does he know that Dr Caligari has stolen my bell?

Franzis (to Allan) Ask nothing. Come away.

Frau Beckmann He is inviting us to ask the somnambulist to look into our future.

Franzis (S) Allan!

Townspeople

Voice 1 He's going to the stage

Voice 3 He's going up.

Voice 2 It's Master Allan

Voice 4 Head in the clouds

Voice 2 He's going to speak to the wraith.

Voice 1 Sssshhhh

beat

Allan asks his question to the stage, clear.

Allan How long have I to live?

pause

Cesar (a sung note?)
The time is short.
You will die before dawn!

*The crowd gasps.
Silence.*

scene five

A street

Allan I wish I had not asked. Why did I ask? Die before dawn. Too frail to fight in the war. Too young to die.

Frau Beckmann You have frightened the boy. You should never have let him lead you in there. "Somnambulist"! Huh!

Franzis Frau Beckmann, I tried. It seems I had no choice. It gives me a heavy heart but this is the story.

Franzis (S) Forget it, Allan my friend! Caligari is a charlatan, a mountebank!

Allan I am haunted by the eyes of the somnambulist. They showed me my own soul.

Frau Beckmann Tsssch! I want to hear no more. Peasant Straat was right to leave.
I will leave. I am too old.

Franzis Jakob Straat has not left. He will be coming back. But for now, look at this.

As he speaks he unfurls a paper scroll, hammers it to a wall.

Frau Beckmann What is this scroll? What have you written here?

Franzis The lamplighter crosses the street.
A poster on the wall, illuminated.

Allan “MORD in Holstenwall. Belohnung Tausend Marks”

Franzis MURDER in Holstenwall. 1,000 Marks Reward.”

Frau Beckmann The Town Clerk.

Franzis Yes.

Allan No!

Franzis But who is this coming down the street to bring a warm glow to our hearts?

Frau Beckmann It is my beloved granddaughter, Jane.

Franzis (S) Allan – look who is here!

As she approaches, Jane is repeating, quietly, under them

Jane He loves me. He loves me too. He loves me. He loves me too.

Allan Jane!

Franzis Allan takes her hand,

Frau Beckmann No! I will not have my darling in this.

Franzis and so do I, because

Franzis+Allan (S) we both love her.

Jane Allan. Franzis. Why did you not take me to the fair today?

Frau Beckmann I am going home to my bed. I don't want to hear another word of this story tonight. And you keep my Jane out of this unpleasant tale!

Allan Please let's not speak of the fair.

Franzis Frau Beckmann! I cannot! I cannot keep her from - Please come back –

Jane Let's hold each other's hands,
let's talk at once,
let's laugh.
Let's move along the street
into another street
(a flight of steps)
And step into the light
because we are light
We're young
and we are beautiful

Allan Maybe we shall go
to the fair tomorrow.

Franzis (S) Would you like that, Jane?

Jane The carousels,

Allan Yes

Jane and the barrel organ with the little monkey

Franzis (S) Yes

Jane and the midgets, and the man who can balance the wheel of a cart on his chin,

Allan/Franzis (S) Yes

Jane And is there a goat with two heads?

at once
Franzis(S) There may possibly be

Allan Yes, I'm sure

Jane And a creature who walks in his sleep, and tells the future –

beat

My father said/

Allan No –

Franzis (S) Tomorrow, our dear heart, sweet Jane – we may go to the fair.

beat

quiet, as she moves away

Jane (He loves me. He loves me too.
He loves me. He loves me too).

She fades away under Franzis

Franzis Off a different street
Caligari is at his caravan.
It tilts a little
and the world tilts with it.

Jane is leaving

Allan Goodnight sweet Jane.

Jane Goodnight.

Franzis (S) Goodnight.

Allan, I know that we both love her.
But we must let her choose.

Allan And no matter how she chooses, we will be friends.

As they walk on.

Allan I'm committing it to memory: *Are we not wandering at a loss
through an infinite nothingness?
Do we not feel the breath of empty space?*

Franzis(S) Can you not take happier words to your heart?

Allan "Happier"? What room is there for happy words in this world,
my dear Franzis?
Besides, I am condemned/(to die)

Franzis(S) No. They were only/
Allan Yes. Despite the beauty of Jane, it is his voice I will hear as I lay down my head to rest; and his eyes that will stare out the moon through my window.
And he was so impossibly thin; a creature from the darkest place -

Franzis(S) Allan.

Allan I am home.
Goodnight, my friend.
Tomorrow we may go with Jane to the fair!

He leaves. Franzis calls after him.

Franzis(S) Allan!

*pause
music.*

scene six

Night. Music.

Franzis Imagine: a black screen that is night.
Thin ray of white that is the moon.
It lights the ladder-back chair in Allan's room.
He sleeps.
But!
A dark shape. A shadow, it grows enormous on the wall.
Head, shoulders – Allan wakes. He stares aghast.
Who reaches out? Whose hands? Whose desperate hands?
The shadow! An arm is raised. It flickers.
A knife!
Allan flails,
he clutches his throat.
His shadow flares. Are his wrists held tight?
They are Held down. Pushed back.
Locked in a murderous shadow dance.
An arm raises, plunges the knife.

A scream. Feet running.

Townspeople *(one woman at first, then a gathering crowd)*

Voice 3 Herr Franzis! Herr Franzis. Allan is dead.

Voice 2 Der junge Meister Allan

Voice 1 .2 .3 Dead in his bed.

All Murdered.

Voice 3 Your friend is dead!

Franzis Der junger Meister Allan.
My friend is dead.

ACT THREE

Scene one

An unnamed place.
Franzis weeping. Frau Beckmann comforts him.

Frau Beckmann Don't weep so. Why are you weeping? You're making this story. You have only yourself to blame.
And in any case, nothing is real -

she tears paper

There. Your cut-out windows,
paper sky.
This black paint is still wet.
And now I have it on my hands, like a guilty stain, and
underneath my nails.

Franzis It is darker now.

Frau Beckmann What is darker?

Franzis Allan is dead. From now on, everything is darker.

Frau Beckmann It was not so very bright before.

beat

So, who did this terrible thing?

beat

You don't know? What kind of tale is this? You must know how it ends!

Franzis I don't.

Frau Beckmann What about/

Franzis Wait.
The prophecy of the somnambulist!

We must go to the police inspector.

“The prophesy of the somnambulist”!

Scene two

At the police station

Frau Beckmann The policemen will not be interested in the predictions of a fairground fortune teller. They will say you are raving. They will lock you away!

I cannot climb these high steps.
Into the mouth of Hades.

Franzis The police station is a little gloomy. Perhaps this is why the officers are dozing at their desks.

Policeman 1 Wait there, please sir.
(Think I'd nodded off there)
papers on the floor and –

Policeman 2 we only have these triangles of light.
How can we help you?
just complete this

Policeman 1 quarter past two – At night?

Policeman 2 Better climb down, oah,
uniform, chin strap

Policeman 1 proceeding in an orderly
take your time.

Policeman 1 When I apprehended
buttoned to the neck
now we don't want another riot
nip it in the bud.

Policeman 1 That's my catch phrase
steady on there sir

Policeman 2 better close round this

Policeman 1 take a big breath

Policeman 2 Stamp it, stack it
file marked D it

Policeman 1 murder?
Policeman 2 slightly hysterical man.

Frau Beckmann Franzis. Herr Franzis!
(He is acting out the frenzied murder of his friend).

Policeman 1 Wait there, please. I'll fetch the inspector.

Frau Beckmann There is something frightful in our midst.

Policeman 1 Big shiny buttons. Inspector. Make way.

Police Inspector Big shiny buttons, dark cape, high hat.
What's this? what's this? what's this?

Frau Beckmann Petty beaurucrats in uniform.

Police Inspector There is a procedure.

Frau Beckmann I doubt they could solve a children's picture puzzle.

Police Inspector Excuse me, sir, you cannot take the law –

Policeman1
Policeman 2 Look at the young man's nostrils, flared like a startled horse,
the whites of his eyes.

Frau Beckmann Herr Franzis, wait!

Police Inspector We have systems.
Fetch a doctor. This man's had a shock.

Franzis (S) No! I will not rest until I've solved these horrible crimes.

Frau Beckmann I must rest. I am going to take rest.

Franzis Because the seal of the world is broken
and all its boundaries overrun,
walls shiver and the dead walk through them.

I must find Jane.

Who will come with me?

Silence

Scene three

the garden of Jane's house

Jane It might be the effect of the slanting path
but I fear that you, dear Franzis, are contorted
by the spirits that torment your sleep.

Franzis (S) Jane!

Jane You creep like so along the garden wall,
I'll take your arm, you'll take my silent
piano hands in yours.
My roughened fingers
hardly play a note these days,
instead they hem and patch or darn
to make potato money.
Beautiful hands that shame me.

Franzis (S) Jane!

Jane Your hand is moist.
You swoon. You shiver, weep.
You speak but I can hardly hear
a word you're saying.

Franzis (S) Allan – stabbed as he slept in his bed!

beat

Jane Although I skew and twist

Franzis Although she skews and twists
like paper burns in air,

Jane my grief

Franzis her grief

Franzis and Jane will come as aftershock;

Jane things do these days;
I am slowed down,
a little muffled.

Franzis (S)

Sweet.

Franzis

I follow her indoors.
to the curtained sitting room,
such opulence,
swirling scallops on the wall,
a curving sofa,
table with its vase of three strange blooms.

Jane

Three days ago I cut fresh flowers
but father could not stand to see their petals fall.

Franzis (S)

Doctor. Doctor.

Dr Olfens

Jane. Something is wrong.

Jane

It's Allan.

Dr Olfens

What? What's wrong, dear boy?

Franzis (S)

Doctor.

Under Jane's speech, at a distance, muffled – Franzis tells Dr Olfens what has happened – he responds. We don't hear the words.

Jane

Although I know you couldn't save
my brother from the shellbursts,
nor your brother from the drowning gas,
nor steady mother's stuttering heart,
still we call for you, father,
Doctor. Doctor.
And you listen well.

Dr Olfens

This is terrible indeed.
Your suspicion of the somnambulist seems justified; I shall ask
the police for permission to examine him.

Scene four

night again

Franzis narrates but is uneasy.

Franzis

Night again, when the shadows lay darkest,
who leans into the flanks of groaning houses,
flits, a bat in a cave, clinging here and here,
and darts into an open mouth in the wall.
Is it me? Caligari? Cesar?
No. It's you – Jakob Straat. I said you'd be back.

Jakob Straat (S) Money in her mattress
Mean as mud
And she prattles like a tommy gun
in my scarred slope of a face.
I'll have her jewels, then, shall I?
Slash her mattress with a 1-2
thrust and slice of the knife.

Frau Beckmann (S) Help! Murder!...Help me!

Franzis And from every split in the walls,
from every pool of black,
every contorted house –

All Townspeople Stop him!
Murder!
He has a knife!
It's Jakob Straat!
The war sent him mad.
Hold him. Hold him.
Take the blade.
Be careful!
Take the knife!

*He is overpowered.
On the ground. Bitter. Chanting/ raving.*

Jakob Straat (S) Slam of a fat door in a thin face,
poor waste. Cup of milk, spilt
on a factory floor, young thing,
Live forever will you, gold phlegm,
powder skin, Miststück. Lügherin.

he may repeat this under them

Townspeople Take him away.
Take him to the police inspector.
Bring the weapon.
Hold him!

Jakob Straat is taken away

scene five

*An unnamed place
Frau Beckmann is being administered soup by Franzis.*

Frau Beckmann How could you do this to me. I might have died.

Franzis Drink your soup.

Frau Beckmann Water and dry bones.

Franzis There's more to tell.

Frau Beckmann I cannot bear the story.

Franzis Whilst Jakob Straat was creeping into your bedroom with a knife, I was with your son-in-law, walking to the caravan of Dr Caligari.

Frau Beckmann You are obsessed with this creeping man.

Franzis We walked in silence. My bitter, feverish mind pictured the somnambulist's box lying flat like a coffin. Pictured him sitting up in it, drinking soup, maybe.

Frau Beckmann Something a little more wholesome. Mashed potato. With a little salt.
How could he eat if he is asleep?

Franzis Dr Caligari lifts him, feeds him like a baby. The eyes of the somnambulist are closed.

Frau Beckmann He thinks he dreams of eating mashed potato.

Franzis Then we arrive – Dr Olfens and I. We knock the door of the caravan.

the door is knocked

Frau Beckmann Another of your cardboard pieces – this caravan is ridiculous.

Franzis Sssh. Drink your soup.

Frau Beckmann Hhm.

Franzis Dr Caligari pushes the somnambulist back into his box. He closes the lid. He comes to the door. He is angry. He steps outside and bars the door. "Nein" he shouts. "You shall not enter my home. Nein!" But Dr Olfens -

Frau Beckmann My dear son-in-law. How I miss my darling daughter. And Jane is safe indoors? I don't want her in this picture book of yours.

Franzis Dr Olfens has official papers from the police inspector. We go in – he has to let us in.

Dr Olfens Please open the box, Dr Caligari. I need to examine the somnambulist.

Franzis He doesn't want to do it, but he has to.

Dr Olfens Thank you. Mmmm.

Franzis He listens to his heart.
He does have a beating heart.

the beating heart – we are listening through the stethoscope / and we are inside Cesar's chest (his box and his heart)

Cesar In no man's land I cannot breathe
I cannot die.
Mud in the mouth, mud in the eyes.
My thick tongue traces ruins,
burnt out, dry,
I am occupied.
Mud in the mouth, mud in the eyes.

Franzis But then a noise outside

All Townspeople *(a bill poster)*
Extra! Extra! Late news! Holstenwall Murders: Mystery Solved! Criminal attempts another murder! Caught in his third attempt!

He's caught! The police inspector's locked him in a cell!

Franzis Caligari cackles to himself, raises his hat in mock ceremony.

Frau Beckmann So he is caught, the murderer. And you almost allowed him to kill me. This is the end of the story, mm?

beat

Herr Franzis?

Franzis You are safe, Frau Beckmann. Get some sleep.

Frau Beckmann Where are you going?

Franzis I have some things to do, some business to attend.

Frau Beckmann You're looking shifty.

Franzis Sleep. Sleep.
I will find you in the morning. We will finish my story then, when there is perhaps a little natural light in the sky.

Jakob Straat (S) All right. I swear to the devil,
I swear to the Weimar Republic, I swear to the Treaty of
Versailles, I swear to the empty hollow in my stomach, I swear
to going to war for old fat men and coming back to this
trench, this blood-in-the-lungs wasteland coughed up in a night
terror, / this

Police Inspector Slow down there, criminal. My junior is struggling to get all
this written down – (or is it written up?)

Policeman 1. Er. It's "written down" I'd say, sir. Later on, when I put it on
file I'll "write it up". I think

Jakob Straat (S) I had nothing to do with the murders.

Scene Three

Franzis Frau Beckmann sleeps.
The streets of this Holstenwall are empty,
the travelling sideshows are dark,
even the barrel organ unattended,
monkey in its master's tent
trickles worthless coins from a hat.
But lovely Jane walks out in her zig-zag dress.
And there are the railings, and there
is Caligari's sideshow.
And there is Dr Caligari; he beckons her with the tip of his
cane.

Jane Is my father here? The doctor?

Franzis "Oh yes." He lies. He bows, he preens, he feigns humility.
His terrifying smile.
And she follows onto the stage. Brave Jane. Fear in her lips, her
haunted eyes.
No Jane!
The cabinet is there. He opens it.

Jane The somnambulist asleep on his feet.
A black-clad wraith,
Why do you show me this?
His head too large, limbs
impossibly long,
impossibly thin.

Franzis A will o' the wisp.

Jane How white his face -
And the darkened mouth,
paint beneath his tight closed eyes.
He's a puppet!

Franzis No.

(Jakob Straat We're all puppets).

Jane He must be hypnotized.

(Jakob Straat You're all hypnotized!)

Franzis Sssshhhhh!

Dr Olfens What is Jakob Straat talking about?

Franzis (S) Nothing. The ravings of a damaged mind.

Franzis The somnambulist cocks his head a little. Is he trying to hear?
And then, quite suddenly –

Jane He's opened his eyes! Is he awake, Doctor Caligari?

Franzis His unshuttered eyes.

Jane As though he's trapped inside his eyes.

she moans/whimpers with terror and flees

scene four

Franzis Frau Beckmann snores a little, grinds her gums
Dr Olfens reads into the night and lovely Jane has gone to rest
in the arabesques of her elegant room.
At last she sleeps, a restless sleep
as Jakob Straat turns in his cell.
Only Franzis searches the crooked dark like a criminal.
I, Franzis, a shadow tearing the seam of night.
Looking for Caligari,
and for Cesar.

And finding them, asleep in their caravan. Caligari hunched in
a chair, the somnambulist in his open box, eyes closed.
Wait a while. Stay vigilant, Herr Franzis. Keep your guard.

scene five

Cesar I am the blind who leads the blind.
A broken bird, one wing held high along the wall
I am a hide-behind, one hand
a sail to steer my graceful course,
the other by my side, behind my back,
it holds a blade.

Franzis Cesar sleeps. I watch him sleep.
And yet –
He slides along the canvas walls
of empty streets.
It is Cesar
finding a lighted stairway,
stepping inside, delicate as
a broken ballerina.

Still I keep guard, watch him sleep,
still in his box.

Who is it then who watches Jane,
unbars her window,
crosses the vast empty floor of her room,
careful as a cat,
flares in shadow, giant across the wall?
Whose long blade -

beat.

Franzis - stops in the air, whose shoulders are in spasm,
as he looks on such beauty –

Cesar Am I I? Am I I? Am I
stuttering?
Am I threaded to you,
or is my arm unstitching?
jackdaw, lieblich.

Are you tugging me into myself
or is this unravelling
a deeper dream
of angel, perfect
angel skin.

Franzis - he can't kill. He drops the knife.
His fingers reach out and –
touch her hair.

Cesar Breaking the ice of my eyes

Franzis How love can pull a thread, cut a string.
But she wakes, lieblich -

Jane screams

They struggle violently. He is silent, she fights "no!" "please" "don't hurt me"

Dr Olfens No!
Help me! The murderer – he has my daughter!
He has taken Jane!

ACT FIVE

scene one

Townspeople 1. Follow him.

2. He's carrying her out of the window.

3. He's on the roof.

1. The chimneys are impossibly thin.

Frau Beckmann (S) No! No! My Jane. My Jane! The somnambulist has stolen my
Jane!

Dr Olfens You can't follow – fetch the police inspector!

Frau Beckmann (S) The rooftops will not bear his weight. They are insubstantial.
Where is Herr Franzis? He made this happen! He made this!

Townspeople

1. Tall chimneys black against the bright night sky.

3. There must be a moon.

4. Follow him.

2. Over the bridge.

1. Catch him! Catch him!

2. He's lurching

3. He'll topple over the edge

1. He's weak.

4, So very weak

3. He's from the fair.

1. He's been asleep for 23 long years!

4. His lifetime! Never been awake!

2. Where's Caligari?

1. Never mind, we must save Jane.
We must save beautiful Jane!

scene two

Franzis Inside the caravan, Caligari and Cesar sleep. There am I, Herr Franzis, watching them sleep, watching them for hours. But shouting, I hear shouting from the hill –

Townspeople

1. Tall chimneys black against the bright night sky.
3. There must be a moon.
4. Follow him.
2. Over the bridge.
1. Catch him! Catch him!
2. He's lurching
1. He's weak.
4. So very weak
3. He's from the fair.
1. He's been asleep for over 20 years!
4. His lifetime! Never been awake!
2. Where's Caligari?
1. Never mind, we must save Jane.
We must save beautiful Jane!

Alone with Jane – for a moment.

Cesar I am coming towards myself
pricking the thumb of myself
and hurting
looking down at these arms,
that are my arms, holding beauty,
breaking the ice of my eyes,
two deep pools, flooding,
fish are breathing in me, aching.
I'm outrunning the shadow of me,
but I can't carry any body.

pause.

The townspeople are at a distance. We stay with Cesar.

Townspeople

1. He's dropped her!
4. Go to her!
3. Jane!
1. He's dropped her on the path.
2. The spot was marked!
4. She's breathing.
3. She lives!

2. Stay with her.
1. Follow him!

Cesar I am flailing, falling, weeping willow,
making a cut-out branch of myself
against the sky.
I tear, I split in the moon-cold air.

Townspeople

1. He's fallen
3 Over the edge
2 There's a drop
4 He's rolled away
1 Down there
2 A ravine
4 Be careful!
3 We can't reach him
1 Let him die
2 The police inspector will come
1 Let him die down there.

Franzis Beneath the dizzy edge of the track,
the grimace of trees;

Beneath the burn-out,
the white-out.

silence

scene three

Jane's room

Franzis Jane. Lying in her father's arms. Not dead but

Dr Olfens Lost to the world.

Franzis (S) No! What has happened?

Frau Beckmann You know what!

Franzis (S) No.
I have been watching Cesar sleep.

Frau Beckmann Fool!

Frau Beckmann(S) He did this! He stole her from her bed!

Dr Olfens She stirs.

Franzis (S) Jane. No.

Dr Olfens You're safe, my darling daughter.
Here, take a sip of this. It will revive you.

Franzis (S) Where is Jakob Straat?

Dr Olfens He is in a dark cell.

Franzis (S) Who took you?

Frau Beckmann (S) Don't trouble her!

Jane It was the somnambulist. It was Cesar.

Franzis (S) But I watched him sleeping.

Frau Beckmann You have lost control of your story, you stupid boy.

Frau Beckmann (S) You have mud on your boots; get out of this house, and leave my grandchild. You are not worthy of her.

Jane It was Cesar who took me.

Dr Olfens This is some trickery.

Jane It was Cesar.

scene four

In deep undergrowth, away from the path

Cesar Beneath the white of the track,
and the black of the paper rock,
I have fallen into something green:
bracken, vetch, the morning dew
I die, wider awake than I have ever been.

ACT SIX

scene one

The police station

Franzis Jakob Straat in chains
Franzis (S) You have him locked in chains.

Police Inspector As my men assured you

Franzis A peephole to his cell.

Police Inspector In chains in a cell. Note how the dark vertical lines on the walls also extend along the floor, to the spot where the prisoner is chained, thereby adding to the atmosphere of oppression in the cell. This is quite deliberate.

Frau Beckmann Move over, Herr Franzis. I want to see the suffering rat.

Franzis He is a sad sight, Frau Beckmann.

Frau Beckmann You put him here.
And until he attacked me, some thought you had killed your friend, Allan.

Franzis No!

Frau Beckmann Rivals in love for my dead granddaughter Jane.

Franzis No!

Frau Beckmann Of whom neither of you were ever worthy.

Jakob Straat!

Franzis He can't hear you.

Police Inspector Would you like a better look at the criminal, sir?

Franzis (S) I don't wish to speak with him. Just assure me. He has not left his cell?

Frau Beckmann Jakob Straat! Rüpel!

Franzis He will neither see nor hear you.

Frau Beckmann A shame. I should like to taunt him.
I believe these painted shapes on the floor of his cell might be trapezoids and you have painted such thick black lines up the walls, Herr Franzis. No wonder Criminal Straat looks so miserable in there.
And you look hardly better yourself.

Police Inspector I assure you, sir, he has not left his cell.

Franzis They assure me, he has not left his cell.

scene two

Franzis Again, again, around and through
the streets of Holstenwall,
where the monkey turns the handle still,
the crowd moves, the same crowd, in circles,
and the whirligig makes mockery of it all,

Frau Beckmann Paper umbrella twirling on a stick

Franzis to Caligari's caravan.

Frau Beckmann The police men are following, spying through the window.

Franzis Yes. They come with me. Watch this.

Police Inspector It appears that the somnambulist is indeed recumbent in said
box.
Stand either side of the door.

Policemen Either side of the door

Police Inspector Whilst I knock.

He knocks the door. As he does so

Policemen Rat-a-tat-tat. Rat-a-tat.

Frau Beckmann Here is Dr Caligari. Such a dreadful frown.

Franzis The Inspector pushes him back inside and we follow.

Frau Beckmann He won't like that.

Franzis He doesn't. But he's defeated.

Frau Beckmann Can you see my bell in there?

(he ignores her)

Franzis The lid of Cesar's box is closed.

Police Inspector Lift it outside, men. Lift the box.

Policemen 1-2-3-lift.

Policeman 1 Light as a feather, sir.
Policeman 2 He's only thin.
Policeman 1. I'm strong as a bear.

Policemen *(make a lid-opening creaking sound)*

Frau Beckmann They are opening the lid.
He is inside!
How can this be?
How can he be inside – he stole my Jane, he fell from the path.

Look at you all, gathered around the cabinet.
Agh! No!

Franzis (S) It's a puppet! It isn't Cesar!

Frau Beckmann A fake! A dummy!
It's a dummy of the somnambulist!

Police Inspector Stand back, please. Men –
examine the evidence.

Policeman 1 It's a large doll, sir.
Made to look like the somnambulist.

Policeman 2 It's a dummy – stuffed with straw and paper.
Dressed in a thin man's clothes.

Policemen Very thin.

Frau Beckmann But wait! While you fools are staring,
there goes Caligari!
He's running away, he's escaped!

Franzis (S) Hurry! He's escaping!

Police Inspector Follow him!

police whistles?

Police and Frau B Over the bridge
through the silhouettes of trees
That's where Cesar left Jane
The spot he fell
Stop! Stop!
He's disappeared
Herr Franzis close behind
Caligari!
He's far too old to run
So am I!

Franzis The path climbs
and then we're back into lamp-lit streets
and try as he might he can't be lost in shadow.
I'm gaining on him, close, I hear him snuff
and strain, then he's through a gate in a wall,
and he's gone. There's a sign, an arrow.
It says – It says *IRRENANSTADLT* -
LUNATIC ASYLUM.

music

scene three

Frau Beckmann So, now the story can end. Dr Caligari is an inmate in the
asylum.

Franzis No. The doctors tell me there is no patient of that name.

Frau Beckmann This is a small twist to the tale – he has another name.

Franzis No.

Doctor 1 Perhaps you would like to talk to the Director?

Doctor 2 Only he is permitted to disclose this information.

Frau Beckmann Yes. Do talk to him. He will solve the mystery. Remove your
hat before you go in.

Franzis goes into the room

Franzis A room in chaos.
Books piled high, a hanging skeleton,
bent head of a man at a desk,
crouched at his work.

Frau Beckmann The crookedest of all rooms, Herr Franzis. This is your craziest
brushstroke! Such waves and twists – they stir my bile.
There is the ladder-back chair from poor young Allan's room!

Franzis This man is the Director. the Director of the asylum.
He lifts his head to see me, and his eyes meet mine.

It is Doctor Caligari.

scene four

Doctor 1 Help me, he's fainting.

Doctor 2 What's happened?

Doctor 1 He seems to be in shock.

Frau Beckmann I too am in shock. The Director. This is shocking.

From his cell

Jakob Straat I am not in shock. Why are you fools surprised? Because he is a Director? Has Authority not proved itself insane, over and over? Power-crazed, mad?

Frau Beckmann You're a sick man, Jakob Straat.
Where are the police brigade?

Jakob Straat Here. At the police station. Back on their high stools at their low desks, dozing and scribbling, dozing and scribbling reports to read out to each other.

Herr Franzis! Search his room when he's sleeping.

Frau Beckmann This is not your story to tell.

Jakob Straat This story put me in chains – I have rights in this story.

Franzis Here. A book, and his diary.
I find them in his room this night.

Jakob Straat Good man.

Frau Beckmann Let me see them.

Franzis Ssh.

footsteps

The doctors see me as I leave.

Jakob Straat Fool!

Franzis But they offer to help. And we find more. Here:

he reads. As he reads, Frau Beckmann reads with him, then also Jakob Straat.

The Cabinet of Dr Caligari

In 1093, a mystic by the name of Caligari used to travel around the country with a curiosity – a somnambulist whom he carried in a rough wooden cabinet fashioned like a coffin. At this time, town after town existed in a state of terror, caused by a series of murders, all committed in the same way, for Dr Caligari had subjected the somnambulist to his will, compelling him to commit these terrible crimes.

Case Studies and Notes

March 12th 1919. At last! I have been given the rare case of a somnambulist. He is being brought to the Asylum today. Now I shall be able to prove whether one in this trance state can be compelled to do things of which he remembers nothing, and which would abhor him if awake.....Can he made to commit murder?

Doctor 1 This was always his special study.

Doctor 2 I recall his agitation when the somnambulist arrived.

Franzis (S) Yes. It makes complete sense.

Doctor 1 You look pale, Herr Franzis.

Franzis (S) There's more. Here.
"Temptation. I must know.
I must become Caligari."

The air is filled with distorted, disturbed voices

Frau Beckmann He's chasing words in the air! Dr Caligari, I can see him, he's chasing words!
"I must become Caligari"!

Voices YOU MUST BECOME CALIGARI
DU MUSST CALIGARI WERDEN
DU MUSST
CALIGARI
DU MUSST CALIGARI WERDEN

A man arrives – the sounds fade.

Townsperson Herr Franzis. We thought you would want to know – the sleepwalker has been found, in the ravine. He's dead.

Franzis (S) Bring him here.

Doctor 1 Is this wise?
Franzis (S) He belongs here. Bring him to Doctor Caligari.

scene five

From the fields to the Asylum, carrying Cesar on a stretcher. All talking at once.

Dr Olfens and Townspeople Be careful.
1. Why be careful, he'd dead isn't he.
2. Show some respect!
1. Respect?
2. Mind.
Dr Olfens I know how to carry a stretcher.
3. Did you see him at the fair?
4. He looks the same
3. Maybe he was always dead!
1. You fool! He's the murderer.
Dr Olfens He stole our beautiful Jane.

the townspeople continue under the following:

Frau Beckmann I'm going to join them.
Franzis Go.
Frau Beckmann Is Criminal Straat still in his cell? I don't want to see him on the street.
Jakob Straat Go see the dead freak, you obscene old woman.
(he rattles his chains)
You're safe for now.
All Townspeople This is the asylum.
1. Why are we bringing the somnambulist here?
3. I don't like it here.
1. They're all mad!
Franzis(S) Wait.
Thank you. Please leave now.
AllTownspeople What's happening?
3. Never mind.
1. It smells strange in here.
Dr Olfens I will leave this to you and the hospital doctors.

they are leaving

Frau Beckmann(S) I am not leaving.

Doctor 1 Please knock, Herr Franzis.

Doctor 2 The Director becomes most annoyed if one enters without knocking.

Franzis opens the door. A gasp from the doctors.

Franzis (S) I have nothing to fear.

Frau Beckmann Inside his office the Director has his back to us.
His walls are such intricate designs! A decahedron!
And a pyramid!
And on a table there, among the papers piled –
is this my bell?
But now he turns.
He is indeed Dr Caligari
with white paint above his brows
and an artificial blackness to his eyes...
(Is this your handiwork, Herr Franzis?)

Franzis (S) Bring the body.

Herr Director! Drop your pose! You are Caligari!

music

Frau Beckmann Dr Caligari walks a little like a chicken.
I wonder if his shoes are pinching him?
Aah. Franzis pulls back the cloth to show the face of Cesar
and

Franzis He flails, he falls on the body, he weeps, he stands,
he casts his eyes to the skies, he throws his head back hard, a
baying wolf, a drowning man clawing water,
breaks the surface with his useless arms.
Cesar! Cesar! Cesar!

Then

silence

Little more than a blink or two before

Caligari attacks the doctors, A struggle.

**Doctors/
Frau Beckmann** AAAGH!

He's strangling me!
Get him off!
The madman.
Straitjacket – get the jacket.

Franzis (S) Take him to a cell. I'll follow.

Frau Beckmann With one of your arms in the air.

Franzis I am the blind who follows the blind.
A broken bird, one wing held high along the wall
one hand
a sail to steer my graceful course.

scene six

Caligari's cell

A chilling sound – a distortion of a cell door closing and locking.

silence

Frau Beckmann Herr Franzis? Are you not telling the end of your story?
This is a beautiful cell you have made for the crazy Director –
for Dr Caligari.

These shapes are like amoeba – or is it amoebas? And look at
the high windows!

beat

You have given him a cell that is like a crazy cathedral!

Jakob Straat Which is more than could be said for my cell.
Do I ever get out of here?

Frau Beckmann Over my dead body.

Jakob Straat I'd think nothing of walking over your dead body.

Frau Beckmann Animal.

Jakob Straat In this lost country you're all walking over dead bodies.

Frau Beckmann Herr Franzis?

she whispers, a loud whisper

He is washing his hands, and putting away his cardboard and his canvas and his glue.

Franzis A town cannot rebuild itself.

Frau Beckmann You have not finished your story – look the insane Director, he is still writhing in his cell.

Franzis And he writhes to this day.
This is the end of my story.
The crazy Director who believes himself to be Dr Caligari – he will never leave that cell.

Jakob Straat That's quite a good story. I can believe it.

(he's suddenly angry, rattling his chains)

Now will you let me out of here.

Frau Beckmann It's a terrible story. Horror and ugliness. And how can one believe that such an important citizen would turn out to have lost his senses?

Jakob Straat laughs a bitter laugh

Jakob Straat How indeed.

Franzis This is the end.
The End.

Music. This might be the end.

Epilogue

In an unnamed place. Hammering - a wooden stake holding a plaque is being knocked into the ground.

(The Town Clerk who speaks is the "new" town clerk – but sounds remarkably like the "old" town clerk).

New Town Clerk What is this? Stop hammering. What is this?

All Townspeople It's a plaque
It's a sign

Frau Beckmann(S) Who are you?

New Town Clerk I am the new Town Clerk.

Townspeople We are securing it.
A Holstenwall memorial

New Town Clerk On whose authority?

Townspeople Herr Franzis.

New Town Clerk Does Herr Franzis have a licence?
I do not think so.

Townspeople Does he need to have a licence?

New Town Clerk It's a plaque!
It's a sign!
It's a memorial!
Of course he needs a licence!

Townspeople We agree.
We didn't make it.
It's an eyesore
Affrontery.
Black blot.

Frau Beckmann(S) Hand painted.
Rather badly, I agree.

Townspeople Look! Here he comes.
It's Franzis.

Frau Beckmann(S) With my Jane.

Franzis enters with Jane

Franzis (S) Be careful, it's still a little wet.
Look Jane.

Jane (reading) "Here Stood the Cabinet of Doctor Caligari. Peace to his
victims."

Frau Beckmann(S) My darling Jane, this plaque that Franzis has made, he does not
have a licence for it, and the New Town Clerk is not pleased.

Franzis(S) What's the matter?

Frau Beckmann(S) But look – there is not a problem. A strong man can pull the
stake from the ground. And we can tear up the plaque. It is only
card.

Franzis(S) Don't do that!

She has begun – tearing card.

New Town Clerk I must order you to stop that please, Frau Beckmann.
You do not have the authority to destroy that sign.

Frau Beckmann(S) But this is crazy – you just said/

Franzis(S) Please just leave, all of you. This story is over. It is finished.

New Town Clerk Do you have the paperwork to confirm that?

Franzis(S) What? Don't touch me!

Frau Beckmann Come away Jane.

Jane I don't mind him grandmother – but he keeps asking me to marry him. And I hardly know him.

from his cell, chains rattling

Jakob Straat Franzis! Herr Franzis! Let me out – You need help! You're in danger! They won't let your story end the way you want it – they'll make out you're mad! They'll never let you get away with that tale! Believe me. I know.

New Town Clerk Stand back, everyone. I need to speak with the Director.

Townspeople Who is the Director?
Who is this man crossing the square?
So smart, and smiling so kindly
at everyone he sees.

Jane Who is the important man, grandmother?

Frau Beckmann(S) I think it is the Director of the Lunatic Asylum.

Townspeople *(collective intake of breath)*

Frau Beckmann (S) And so it is.

Townspeople *(and again)*

New Town Clerk Here he comes. The Director.
First, a shock of white hair.,
and then such kindly eyes behind his spectacles,
and underneath his arm a book
draped in the folds of his cloak.
The town is his backcloth.

Townspeople It's Caligari!
No!
Looks like him.
But he was locked up
Raving
Painted face
Crazy eyes.

Frau Beckmann That was just a story.
A story made up by poor Franzis.

Jakob Straat I'm telling you! Run!

Franzis(S) Jane. Come with me. Please. Listen – listen to my story..

He is desperate. She speaks under him.

Jane We Queens – we may never follow our hearts.

Franzis Perhaps it begins here. 1919,
in the square of a small town at dusk.
Or in the cold sweat of a broken room.
Or at the guerning mouths of our / fathers

New Town Clerk And here he is.
The Director.
In his fine cloak, smiling.
He is helping us to rebuild
a safe and ordered town.

Franzis(S) No!

Jane Grandmother, you have black on your hands.

Frau Beckmann (S) I have been helping your father to do a little painting –
preparing a room that might be needed.

Dr Olfens arrives.

Dr Olfens The cell is ready.
Franzis. Please come with us.

Franzis (S) No! That man! That man is Caligari! Why is he not locked
away?

Dr Olfens Come, come come. Be calm.

Jakob Straat Run, Franzis! Just run!

Townspeople That was just a story.
Just a tale.
Good morning Herr Director
Guten Tag
Good Day.

Franzis (S) He is Caligari! Caligari! He was the Director but he went crazy. He is mad – not me! He's mad!

a struggle

**Doctors/
Frau Beckmann (S)** AAAGH!
Herr Franzis.
Restrain him.
He's strangling me!
Franzis is crazy.
Get him off!
Get him off!
The madman.
Franzis is insane!

Franzis (S) He is Caligari!

Doctors Straitjacket – get the jacket.

Dr Olfens Take him to the cell. It is ready for him. I'll follow.

Jakob Straat You fool!

*Chains rattle. Franzis is dragged away yelling.
Silence.*

The Director At last, I understand his madness. He believes that I am the mystic, Dr Caligari. Now I think I can see a way to cure him.

New Town Clerk The End.
This is official.
The end.

