

SCENE 1 - NUCLEAR BUNKER

A small nuclear bunker. Concrete walls and floor. The room is sparsely furnished.

SIX MEN in non-specific military uniform stand littered about the room.

The men shuffle their feet, check their watches and scratch their heads. They avoid each other's gaze and do not speak.

ONE grabs a chair, unfolds it and sits down.

Number TWO grabs a chair folds it out and takes a seat, as does THREE and FOUR.

FIVE limps over to the chairs, dragging one pigeon foot across the floor as he moves. He grabs a chair and struggles to set it out with his one working and one twisted arm, but eventually gets it up and sits down.

SIX looks at everyone seated for a moment. He slowly approaches FOUR and motions him to move.

FOUR gets up and SIX takes his seat.

FOUR goes to the side of the room to grab another chair but sees that they are all gone. He walks round the bunker looking for another seat, but they are all occupied.

FOUR tries to stand causally in several spots around the bunker but cannot find anywhere to perch comfortably.

There is a long, pregnant pause. Then TWO breaks the silence.

TWO: Is there a television in here?

FIVE: No.

SIX: There are books.

A pause.

FIVE: We should have brought a television.

SIX: We wouldn't be able to watch anything.

FOUR: Not even in the evenings?

SIX: It won't pick up any channels.

FOUR: Because we're underground?

SIX: No, because nothing is being broadcast.

FOUR: Oh, yeah.

A pause.

SIX: There are books if you wish to read.

ONE, TWO and FOUR, get up and search the bunker's storage space.

ONE: There is n, n, nothing here.

SIX: There must be.

ONE: I can't find any.

SIX: Well, I was told there'd be books.

ONE opens a storage box.

ONE: Wait, I've f, f, found something.

ONE removes four books from the box.

FOUR: Is that it?

TWO looks about and shrugs.

ONE: It looks like this is e, e, everything.

SIX: That's all the books we've got?

ONE: That's all the books there are.

THREE: That's not many.

ONE: That's f, f, four.

THREE: Four's not many.

SIX: We have four whole books?

TWO holds up a small thin book.

TWO: That's if this counts as a book?

THREE: Three books and a pamphlet?

ONE: That's more than a pamphlet.

THREE: But it's not a book is it?

FOUR: What makes something a book?

THREE: Having more than about twenty pages.

ONE takes the book off of TWO.

ONE: This has more than twenty p, p, pages.

THREE: But not much more.

ONE: One more or one hundred more is still more than t, t, twenty.

THREE: I said about twenty pages.

ONE: How many is 'About twenty p, p, pages'?

THREE: I don't know. About thirty?

ONE: Thirty is about twenty?

THREE: Yeah, I reckon.

ONE: And thirty-one?

THREE: That's about twenty too.

ONE: So when does thirty stop being about t, t, twenty?

THREE: About thirty-seven?

ONE: ABOUT thirty-seven?

THREE: Exactly thirty-seven.

ONE: So is thirty-seven about thirty?

TWO: I'd say thirty-seven is more like forty.

ONE: About forty? So there is no about thirty?

FOUR: How many pages has it got?

ONE looks on the back page of the small book.

ONE: (*disappointed*) Thirty-four.

THREE: I told you, it's a pamphlet.

SIX: That's not a book or a pamphlet actually. That is the user manual for our new abode.

THREE: (*sarcastically*) Great, skip to the back I want to know how this one ends.

TWO: What are the other titles?

ONE: Mein Kampf. Something written in a language I can't read and Mein Kampf.

TWO: And the other book?

THREE: The other book's a pamphlet.

SIX: The other book's a manual.

TWO: No, you said Mein Kampf twice.

ONE: There are two c, c, copies.

THREE: Seriously?

TWO: That's volumes one and two, right?

ONE: No. That's volume t, t, two, twice.

FOUR: What do they think we'd need two copies for?

THREE: I guess they don't trust us to share.

FOUR: What's the other book?

ONE: I told you, the other one's t, t, the same.

FOUR: No, the other, other one.

ONE: No, the other ones a p, p, pamphlet.

SIX: It's a manual. That you'll all have to read.

FOUR: No, what was the other, other, other one?

ONE: I don't know, it's in a different language.

FOUR: What language is it in?

ONE: Not ours.

FOUR: Why do we need that?

ONE: No idea.

FOUR: Maybe there's something in the pamphlet about it?

SIX: It's a manual.

THREE: And what does it say?

ONE flicks through the pages of the manual.

ONE: N, n, nothing.

ONE throws the book down.

SIX: Right. Let's do a team building exercise.

THREE: Why?

SIX: It'll help us to get to know each other.

THREE: Why would we want to do that?

SIX: It'll pass the time.

SIX places a chair in the middle of the room and sits down.

SIX: Everyone make a semi circle.

There is a collective sigh from the other men as they move the remaining four chairs into a semi-circle.

SIX: Right. Now everyone sit down.

There is a quick rush for seats. FOUR is left standing.

SIX: Looks like you're first.

FOUR: What do I have to do?

SIX: You have to make two statements about yourself. But one of them has to be true and the other a lie.

FOUR: (*wary*) Okay?

SIX: And we have to guess which one is which. You understand?

FOUR: Yes.

THREE: That one's the lie.

SIX: Shush. We are going to do this, and we're going to do it properly. (to *FOUR*) Go ahead.

A long pause. FOUR does not know what to say.

SIX: When you're ready.

A pause.

THREE: Are we going to wait here forever?

SIX: If needs be.

FOUR: I don't know what to say.

ONE: J, j, just say a f, f, fact about you.

FOUR: Which one?

THREE: Don't ask us. We're not supposed to know.

ONE: Just pick anything.

FOUR struggles to think.

FOUR: I don't know what to say.

FIVE: Say anything.

FOUR: Like what?

THREE: Anything.

FOUR: (*panicking*) I can't think.

ONE: It doesn't matter what you say.

FOUR: Can someone else go first?

SIX: No. You are first.

FOUR: What shall I say?

TWO blows.

TWO: ANYTHING!! SAY ANYTHING!!

Everyone is taken back by TWO's outburst.

FOUR: Can someone give me an example?

There is a collective sigh.

ONE: We just need one f, f, fact about you.

FOUR: Like what?

ONE: I don't know. Something b, b, banal.

FIVE: Have you had your appendix out?

FOUR: Yes.

SIX: Good. Do that one. Now, you need a lie too.

FOUR: Like what?

THREE: Like we're not finding this tedious.

ONE: Have you ever been abroad?

FOUR: No.

SIX: Fine. That'll do.

ONE: Now you have to say; I have had my a, a, appendix out and something like, I have a house in R, Rome.

FOUR: I don't have a house in Rome.

THREE: We know. That's the lie.

FOUR: Oh yes. Okay.

SIX: So say it.

FOUR: I have had my appendix out and I have a house in Rome.

THREE: At last.

SIX: Right. Now which one was true and which was a lie.

THREE: Are you serious? Are we still going to play this?

SIX: Yes, it's important to do this right.

THREE: But we all know the answer.

SIX: Good. Someone say it.

THREE: He's never been abroad.

SIX: (to *FOUR*) Is that right?

THREE: Yes. That's right. We all know that's right.

SIX: I want him to say it.

THREE: But do we have to wait another half hour for it?

FIVE: You got some where better to be?

THREE: Yeah. In a coma.

SIX: Is it right then?

FOUR: Yes. That's right.

A collective sigh of relief.

THREE: Great. Game's over.

SIX: No, the game's not over yet. Everyone has to have a go.

THREE: I don't think I could cope with another round of that.

SIX: But it's your turn.

THREE: My turn, really?

THREE sighs and swaps places with FOUR.

SIX: One truth. One lie.

THREE: I'm not the one who doesn't know how to play.

ONE: M, m, make it quick then.

THREE: One truth. One lie. Here we go. I love being here and I hate being here.

SIX: You can't have that.

THREE: Why not? Only one's true?

FIVE: But it's the same thing.

THREE: Then that should make the answer easier.

SIX: I don't think we need the answer on this one.

THREE: What happened to playing properly?

SIX: I think that went out the window a while ago.

ONE: I think we've all had e, e, enough of this f, f, for one day.

THREE: Good.

Everyone gets up and stretches their legs.

FIVE: So what are we doing now?

THREE: Anything else.

A long pause. TWO looks about the room.

TWO: Did anyone bring a deck of cards?

ONE: No.

SIX: No.

FIVE: Nope.

THREE: No one brought cards.

TWO: Shame.

ONE: Yeah.

FIVE: Shame. Cards would have been a good idea.

TWO: Yeah. Would have helped pass the time.

FOUR: I can't play cards.

THREE: None of us can play cards without a deck of cards.

FOUR: Yeah, but even if we had some I still couldn't play cards. I never learnt how too.

TWO: What do you mean you can't play cards?

FOUR: Never had the time before.

TWO: But "cards" isn't a game.

FOUR: I know, some people take it very seriously.

TWO: No, it isn't A game. A single game.

FOUR: What do you mean?

TWO: A deck of cards isn't A game.

FOUR: (*confused*) I see people playing all the time?

TWO: I mean it isn't THE game. It's like a tool.

FOUR: A tool?

TWO: Like a cricket bat.

FOUR: Cards are like cricket bats?

TWO: Well, you don't play cricket with them.

FOUR: Cards are like cricket bats that you don't play cricket with?

TWO: Yeah, it's a tool.

FOUR: A tool for what?

TWO: Well, you know. . . For playing games.

FOUR: What games?

TWO: Well, not cricket.

FOUR: Asides from not cricket?

TWO: Well, the best thing about cards is that there are hundreds of different games, depending on how good you are and how many people you're playing with.

FOUR: So it's not just not cricket?

TWO: (*confused*) No? No, there are lots of games. There are a load of really easy ones, based on pairing up matching cards. And then there are more complicated and competitive games. In which you need collections of cards arranged by suit or rank. They're called hands. And you can use these to win money.

ONE: And fall out with your friends.

THREE: You don't need cards to fall out with friends.

ONE: Well, we don't have a d, d, deck of cards anyway

TWO: Shame.