

# MUTTI & VATI #1

## (The Argument)

Berlin, Nazi Germany, 1938.  
The Lehmann’s Apartment.

*NOTE: Young Anne Lehmann used German terms of endearment for her parents. She called her mother Mutti (pronounced: “MOO-tee”); and her father Vati (pronounced “VAH-tee”).*

Vati & Mutti (Mr. & Mrs. Lehmann) are a Jewish married couple living in pre-World War II Nazi Germany. Life for Jews has become increasingly harsh. Many laws have been passed that discriminate against Jews. Vati is no longer permitted to work in banking. Mutti can only shop at stores owned by Jews. Their daughter, Anne, is kicked out of her public school. Jews are barred from public places like restaurants, theaters, and even park benches. Vati has been increasingly anxious for his family and has been desperately trying to get them all out of Germany. The Lehmann’s also have a college-aged son, Gunter, who is living on a student visa in England. Despite all of Vati & Gunter’s efforts, the Nazis refuse to let the Lehmann’s leave Germany.

VATI is a proud veteran of World War I, having lost his arm (he wears a prosthetic arm) fighting for his beloved Germany. Here, Vati has just received a written reply from the German Army refusing to help he and his family leave Nazi Germany. Vati feels betrayed. Vati is an intelligent, private, serious man. Lately, an internal anger and embitterment has surfaced – feeling forgotten by his beloved Germany.

MUTTI is very warm, expressive, compassionate, intelligent, and loving. She is well aware of the impending danger presented by the Nazi regime but chooses to hold to her optimism that things will improve.

Before he lost his arm in battle, VATI was a fine violinist. Here, having reached the breaking point, he has bitterly told Mutti to give his violin away.

MUTTI

Vati, you mustn't give up your violin or your music. Why... it would be like...like you were giving up all hope.

VATI

Hope? Don't be silly, Marta – there's no more hope.

MUTTI

Of course, there is. We'll write to Gunter. I'm sure he can find...

VATI (*cutting her off*)

Stop it, Marta! The Nazis aren't going to let us leave the country! They're going to kill us!

MUTTI

Kill us?! Stop talking nonsense, Vati! This is 1938 Germany – not the Dark Ages!

VATI

But don't you see? It's so simple! We don't exist!

...Jews never served in the German Army! I didn't sacrifice my arm for the Fatherland! I don't work anymore! Our daughter doesn't go to school! You can't go shopping! I can't sit on a public bench!

...We're disappearing, Marta! Disappearing! The war is coming and when it does – the curtain will finally close around us. Then, they'll just do whatever they want – simply drag us out of our beds in the middle of the night! What's to stop them, huh?! What is to stop them?!

MUTTI

No – stop it, Vati! I won't listen to this! Good people will come to their senses! You'll see!

...Now...now go to bed, Vati. You've had a long and disappointing day. Tomorrow you'll wake up and everything will be better. You'll see.

VATI

Yes...tomorrow everything will be fine.

...Maybe I'll wake up from this nightmare.

*(Vati exits) (Mutti turns out toward the audience)*

MUTTI (*a letter to her son*) (*not writing – just spoken*)

Dear Gunter: Everyday it becomes harder and harder to hold onto the belief that good people will come to their senses; but we must hold onto that belief.

**END OF SIDE.**