

Colonel: ...Where we shall probe him. Yes, we shall pump him dry...

Grüber: ...Although there's nothing that can't wait...

Colonel: ...Of any money that he may have.

Grüber: **(Slightly disappointed.)** Yes... yes... of course.

(Blackout.)

ACT ONE SCENE THREE FANNY'S BEDROOM

(Later the same day. Lights up in Fanny's Bedroom. There is a large bed with an iron bedframe, a bedside table, a window and a single door / entrance. Fanny is in the bed with her ear trumpet. Unseen by the audience, the British airmen are hidden under / behind the bed.)

Fanny: Edith! Edith! Oooh, I am so ill!

(Fanny realises no-one is listening and leans over and picks up her knitting from the side table. She starts knitting furiously, muttering. René and Edith enter. Edith carries a bowl of soup.)

Fanny: Edith, Edith, I am so ill and old...

René: Shut up and knit you old bat.

Edith: Do not call my Mamma an old bat!

René: She *is* an old bat.

Edith: That is not the point.

Fanny: What are you saying? I cannot hear.

René: Be quiet will you, we are awaiting an urgent message from London.

(The bed nobs light up. Sound FX: Buzzing in time with the flashing!)

Fanny: Oh the knobs! The flashing knobs!

(This frightens Fanny who screams and jumps at the noise and her knitting is thrown to the floor.)

Fanny: Oh my knitting, my stitching!

(Fanny leans over the bed to retrieve the knitting and lets out a fart. Sound FX: Fart sound. She retrieves the knitting and holds it up in horror.)

Fanny: I've dropped one.

René: Oh dear me, yes you have.

Edith: Get the radio, René.

René: I cannot lift the bed with my back. You lift it.

Edith: I cannot lift the bed!

René: Where are those airmen when you need them?

(The airmen pop up from under / behind the bed wearing night dresses.)

Airmen: Hello!

René: Right you two, lift the bed up.

Carstairs: What?

René: Lift the bed up.

Fairfax: What's he saying?

Carstairs: No idea old boy.

René: Lift the bed up.

(René does it with actions showing them how to do it.)

Carstairs: Ah, morning exercises.

(The airmen both do some exercises.)

Fairfax: Up down, up down.

René: What are you doing you silly people? Lift the bed up!

(The airmen finally realise what René wants and lift up the bed. Fanny falls out with a thud.)

Edith: Be careful with Mamma. She is a weak and ill old lady.

(Fanny pops up and clobbers Carstairs with her ear trumpet and collapses back down again.)

- René:** A weak and ill old lady when it suits her.
- (René takes the radio from under the bed and switches it on. Sound FX: Static and whistling.)**
- Radio:** (In a French accent) Nighthawk, Nighthawk, London calling. Are you receiving me? Over.
- René:** (To radio.) Yes, yes Nighthawk receiving London loud and not very clear. Over.
- Fanny:** Help me. Help me!
- René:** (To Fanny.) Shut up!
- Radio:** I beg your pardon? Over.
- René:** (To radio.) Not you, sorry. I was talking to the mother-in-law. Over.
- Radio:** Ah, right! Now please listen. Abandon the hot air balloon escape, I repeat abandon the hot air balloon escape. The airmen will be picked up at the airstrip north of the town tomorrow. Do you understand? Over.
- René:** (To radio.) Yes. Received and understood. Over.
- Radio:** Good luck Nighthawk.
- René:** (To radio.) What with the escape or the mother-in-law?
- Radio:** Both. Over and out.
- (René puts the radio back under the bed and the airmen drop the bed.)**
- Fanny:** Help me back into bed.
- Edith:** We will Mamma, we will.
- (Edith and the airmen help her back into bed.)**
- Fanny:** What is going on?
- Edith:** Mamma, we are carrying out important work.
- Fanny:** I can't hear you. I can't hear him. I can't hear anything!
- (René, fed up with Fanny's shouting, looks around for the ear trumpet. Mimi enters just as René stands up with the ear trumpet.)**
- René:** I have the horn, I have the horn.

- Mimi:** Oh René!
- (Mimi hugs René. He pushes her off with a worried glance to Edith, and hands the trumpet to Fanny.)**
- René:** Get off. Get off. What do you want Mimi?
- Mimi:** Michelle of the Resistance is here to receive the message from London.
- René:** Oh, show her in.
- (Michelle enters with Crabtree.)**
- Michelle:** Have you the message?
- René:** Yes I have the message. The hot air balloon escape is abandoned.
- Crabtree:** Oh, that is a sham. I have managed to get my hands on many pairs of knockers, bug and smell. I have had my hands full, I can tell you.
- René:** Knockers?
- Crabtree:** Knockers. Knockers made of sulk.
- Michelle:** Why is the escape abandoned?
- René:** I am not privy to such information. I merely risk my life each day to pass on messages. All I know is that London told us to take the airmen to the airstrip north of the town tomorrow, which is very dangerous I might say.
- Michelle:** No, no, we will cunningly disguise them. What do we do once they are there?
- René:** I do not know. That is why it is all so dangerous.
- Carstairs:** I think I heard the word dangerous in there somewhere. **(To Crabtree.)** What's dangerous?
- Crabtree:** **(To the airmen in a British accent.)** There's been a change of plan. The hot air balloon is off!
- Fairfax:** Oh that's a shame. I've never been in a hot air balloon.
- Crabtree:** **(To the airmen in a British accent.)** You are being taken to the airstrip, but you will have to wait a bit longer.
- Carstairs:** Oh no. We really need to be going. If we stay much longer we may be caught by the Gestapo, and we don't want that.
- Fairfax:** No, we don't. We've known brave men who have shot themselves before that.

- René:** (To Crabtree.) What are they going on about now?
- Crabtree:** They are seeing that they know brave men who have shat themselves.
- René:** Well I can't argue with that.
- Michelle:** René, hide them for another day. I will then return and disguise them and we will slip away.
- René:** Good.
- Crabtree:** Well, I think it is time for us to pish off.
- René:** Just what I was thinking.
- (Blackout.)

ACT ONE SCENE FOUR HERR FLICK'S DUNGEON

(That evening. The Gestapo HQ. There is a desk and chair and a further chair in front, an assortment of torture equipment on the walls and a single entrance / door. Flick and Helga are seated at the desk playing cards. Helga's cards are down, but Flick is still holding his cards. On the desk between them is a Gestapo pen and pencil set. There is also a telephone.)

- Flick:** How dare you try to bluff a senior Gestapo officer with a pair of tens? I have won. **(He puts his cards face down on the table.)**
- Helga:** Am I allowed to see your hand, Herr Flick?
- Flick:** No. You have lost. I get your Gestapo pen and pencil set. **(He grabs the set and slides it to his side of the desk.)**
- Helga:** You have cleaned me out Herr Flick. If we play another round I will have nothing left to give you.
- Flick:** Indeed.
- Helga:** And I must admit it was not the activity I was expecting when you told me I should play my cards right.
- Flick:** I needed the distraction. The British airmen, who are still hiding in Nouvien, are preying on my mind. If they are not caught soon I will be forced to send my Tracker badge back to the Hitler Youth.