

## ACT ONE   SCENE ONE   RENÉ'S CAFÉ

**(Sound FX: 'Allo 'Allo theme music. Lights up on the café which is open for business. The café has a main door to the Town Square (with a bell that rings on entry), a door / exit leading to the back room / kitchen and a staircase leading upstairs. There is a bar area and a number of tables and chairs. René is polishing glasses behind the bar. On a table at the back of the room are four French peasants, two male and two 'female' (they are actually the British Airmen in disguise). The 'females' have their backs to the audience. René addresses the audience.)**

**René:** Ah, I was wondering when you might show up again at the Cafe Artois. I bid you welcome, of course, I don't know if you've eaten already but the pate is particularly good - the camembert however is 'orribly warm and runny but I've got a lot to get rid of, so it is of course the 'Dish of the Day'. So why is my cheese so warm? Well, it's because my pantry is also hiding the two escaped British Airmen who have not been able to get back to England. If you were party to our earlier adventures, you will remember that we ended the whole escapade with Edith and I as the proud owners of the masterpiece the "Fallen Madonna with the Big Boobies" by that master knocker painter Van Klomp. It is now stored in a safe place - sadly it is a *very* safe place because there were so many forgeries made of it no-one is really sure who has the real one anymore.

**(During this speech, Yvette has entered from the back room, and collected empty glasses from the peasant's table. Yvette approaches René at the bar.)**

**Yvette:** **(Seductively.)** Oh René, Madame Edith will be at the market for a little while yet, René, how about we pop in the pantry for a private party?

**René:** The café is open, Yvette. I have a business to run.

**Yvette:** Oh, my love, how long is it?

**René:** **(Puzzled.)** Perhaps less than it was, but the stresses of war do not make it easy.

**Yvette:** I mean how long is it since we last spent time alone together? I yearn to feel your powerful embrace once more.

**René:** Perhaps later, my sweet. When the café is closed, I might manage a hug on the rug in the snug.

**Yvette:** Then later, my Gallic hero. **(Yvette moves away and continues to tidy.)**

**René:** **(To audience.)** My wife Edith still does not suspect that I am having dalliances with my waitress Yvette... and my other waitress Mimi... there is much going on for a businessman such as myself.

**(Yvette blows René a kiss as she leaves through the back door.)**

**René:** Luckily, I am prepared to put in the overtime.

**(René makes to follow Yvette offstage but is interrupted by the two peasant 'females' pushing their chairs back and standing up in indignation. The two males then stand up and make suggestive actions, and the 'females' both slap the male peasants who leave through the main door.)**

**René:** What is going on here?

**(The two females turn to reveal they are in fact the British airmen, Fairfax and Carstairs in disguise.)**

**Fairfax:** I'm not sure what they were suggesting but I certainly haven't done anything like that since Harrow!

**Carstairs:** Didn't sound like cricket at all, old boy.

**René:** **(Unable to understand any of this.)** What are you two idiots doing out here? You're supposed to be hiding in the pantry! What if the Germans were to walk in?

**Fairfax:** What's he saying?

**Carstairs:** Haven't a clue old boy!

**(Michelle enters with Crabtree through the main door. René jumps at the ringing of the bell.)**

**Crabtree:** Good moaning.

**René:** Oh my god! I thought that we'd had it then!

**Fairfax:** Carstairs! It's those resistance chappies!

**Carstairs:** Thank heavens. I thought we'd be hiding in those cheeses forever.

**René:** What are you doing here Michelle? And why have you brought this foolish British agent who thinks he can speak French?

**Crabtree:** **(To René.)** Are we a loon? We need to tick with you.

**René:** I am as a loon as I can be. What do you want? I have a business to run.

**Michelle:** Listen very carefully, I will say this only once... **(To the airmen, in British accent.)** Hello, chaps. Sorry about the delay, but good news! We've got a plan to get you back to Blighty!

**René:** Don't just stand there talking English in the middle of wartime France. Go out the back to do your plotting. It's not like I can understand a word you are saying.

**(Michelle bundles the two airmen offstage through the back door, leaving René and Crabtree alone.)**

**Crabtree:** We have a plan to send away the airmen.

**René:** Oh, well I understand that much better. **(To audience.)** He has a plan to send away the airmen.

**Crabtree:** They will float back home in a hot air balloon.

**René:** A hot air balloon? Wherever did you get such a thing?

**Crabtree:** We made it ourselves. We have the basket already.

**René:** You have the basket - but what about the balloon?

**Crabtree:** We need some things first. We will be in a bit of a hurry.

**René:** I see. Well, flying the airmen out in a giant balloon floating over Nouvion shouldn't attract much attention.

**Crabtree:** I do not know what you mean.

**(Michelle enters again from the back room.)**

**Michelle:** **(To Crabtree.)** Have you explained the plan to René?

**René:** In his own inimitable way. Look, Michelle, I will help the Resistance where I can, unless of course it puts me in physical danger or costs me anything, but why do you insist on using this incompetent British agent?

**Michelle:** In my fight for the freedom of France, I will use any weapons that I can. Officer Crabtree has been a great help ever since he first arrived here in Nouvion.

**Crabtree:** **(Reminiscing about his arrival in France.)** Ah yes, I remember it well. It was a dark night, and there was no moon.

**René:** **(To audience.)** Dark night, no moon.

**Crabtree:** I jumped out of a British bomber, which was being chased by some German fighters. Now I am disguised as a policeman so I am able to move about with complete freedom.

**René:** Good. Feel completely free to leave and take this fanatical female with you.

- Michelle:** René, listen very carefully, I shall say this only once.
- René:** What now?
- Michelle:** We will be back here shortly with a list of items we will need for our hot air balloon. You will find these items for us.
- René:** And if I don't?
- Michelle:** When the English pilots escape in the balloon, we will use your cowardly corpse for ballast. Come, Crabtree, we must escape like phantoms into the night.
- Crabtree:** Forwool René. We will be bick looter.
- (Michelle and Crabtree exit through the main door.)**
- René:** **(To audience.)** And there goes my quiet life again. All I want is a little peace.
- (Mimi enters down the stairs. She poses flirtatiously on the bottom step.)**
- René:** And here she is. Still, whilst no-one else is around... come to me, Mimi!
- Mimi:** Oh, René!
- René:** **(He embraces her.)** Oh, Mimi. **(Stops.)** I thought you had gone into town with Edith?
- Mimi:** She sent me back early to make the soup. She is still taking tea with Monsieur Alphonse.
- René:** Monsieur Alphonse? She sits drinking tea with another man whilst I toil to keep this cafe open. How unfaithful of her. Now, where were we? Ah, Mimi!
- Mimi:** **(Embracing him again.)** René, when will I ever get over you?
- René:** Well, Thursday's are good for me...
- Mimi:** I cannot hear your heart.
- René:** That is because you are listening to my appendix.
- Mimi:** Will you see me later?
- René:** How about you meet me in the coal cellar after dinner.
- Mimi:** The coal cellar? But I get so dirty in there!
- René:** **(Suggestively.)** I know.

**Mimi:** Naughty boy. And now I will go and make the soup for the diners tonight. Have you a favourite?

**René:** Cockaleekie?

**(Mimi titters and exits up the stairs.)**

**René:** **(To audience.)** One dangerous job and two intimate meetings. Ah well, you have to take the rough with the smooth.

**(Edith enters through the front door with Monsieur Alphonse. Alphonse carries Edith's bag of grocery shopping,)**

**René:** Ah, my wife Edith. Things just got a lot rougher!

**Edith:** Monsieur Alphonse, you are so gallant. You really did not 'ave to walk me home.

**Alphonse:** Nonsense, Madame Edith. I would not rest until I was certain you had returned unharmed. The streets are not safe for a beautiful woman such as yourself to traverse unaccompanied.

**Edith:** You flatter me, Monsieur Alphonse. **(To René.)** René! Why do you never lavish me with such honeyed words?

**René:** I have been stung too often. And who are you, Monsieur, to make such overtures to my wife?

**Alphonse:** I, sir, am Monsieur Alphonse the Undertaker. Madame Edith and I were discussing local affairs, we were chatting about this and that, you know how it is.

**René:** This and that?

**Alphonse:** *Mostly* that. But it was getting late and I walked her home to ensure she arrived home un-ravaged... **(with pointed contempt)** as any dutiful husband would do.

**René:** I have made sure she has stayed un-ravaged for many years, I can assure you of that.

**Edith:** **(Sadly.)** It is true.

**Alphonse:** Until we meet again, Madame Edith.

**(Alphonse kisses Edith's hand and exits through the main door.)**

**René:** Well, I can only hope you have had a lovely afternoon whilst I've been trying to run a business! Since you left, I have had the airmen running loose and the

Resistance have threatened my life if I don't help with some new hare-brained scheme.

**Edith:** And have you taken lunch up to my mother?

**René:** I did not realise it was on my "to do" list. I had no idea she ate. I assumed she just lived out of spite. **(To audience.)** Edith's mother is bed-bound in the attic room. We are not the best of friends. Frankly, I have a better relationship with the Gestapo.

**Edith:** You lazy, feckless fool! My mother cries out for sustenance and you cannot even fetch her the simplest of meals. Come upstairs with me. Even now we are due to receive a message from British Intelligence so we can check on mamma at the same time.

**René:** **(To audience.)** For reasons best known to themselves, the Resistance have built a wireless set into my mother-in-law's bed. Ah well, let us go and see how many other ways I can lay down my life in the name of France.

**(Edith and René exit up the stairs. Blackout.)**

## **ACT ONE   SCENE TWO   THE COLONEL'S HQ**

**(That same day. The Colonel's office. There is a desk with chair, and two further chairs in front. There is a single door / entrance. There is a military style map on one wall. The Colonel appears to be hard at work reading a report in a manila folder with mounting interest, and then drops the folder to reveal he is reading a copy of a risqué magazine; "Reichstag and Reichhens". There is a knock at the door and the Colonel hurriedly hides the magazine under his papers on his desk.)**

**Colonel:** Enter!

**(Captain Geering and Lieutenant Grüber enter.)**

**Colonel:** Ah, Captain Geering, Lieutenant Grüber, come in.

**Geering:** You sent for us Herr Colonel?

**Colonel:** General Von Klinkerhoffen has returned to Nouvien and I understand he is not in a good mood.

**Grüber:** Why is that Herr Colonel?

**Colonel:** Because Grüber, he has no doubt heard all about the loss of the painting of "the Fallen Madonna with the big Boobies"...

**Geering:** Yes, he wanted to get his hands on those boobies.