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### Charles Watson Mill, *In Time of War*, 1914

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#### Script Source: Transcription

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In Time of War.

## Characters.

Act 1.

Capt. Russell Squires -----	Lead
Col. Mars. -----	Aristocratic Old Man
Baron Guggenheim known in England as –	
Richard Bellairs -----	Heavy
Herbert Bruce ) -----	Character
) Pals	
Percy Bond ) -----	Comedy
Dennis O’ Flagherty -----	Responsible
Tabbs the village postman -----	Utility
Mother Bruce -----	Old Woman
Kitty (Princess Katherine Zurin a German spy--	Heavy
Diana – wife of Capt. Russell -----	Lead

Villager, soldiers, recruits etc.

1.

IN TIME OF WAR.

Drama in four acts

By C. Watson Mill.

ACT 1.

THE CALL TO ARMS.

SCENE.           A VILLAGE ON THE EAST COAST.

FULL STAGE VILLAGE SET. LOOKING OUT TO SEA. VILLAGE CROSS L.C.  
PUBLIC HOUSE R., HOUSE PIECE L.

DOCK OR QUAY ROW AT BACK.

ON HORIZON BACK CLOTH IS PAINTED LINE OF BATTLE SHIPS. THESE  
TO BE ILLUMINATED.

(ENTER HERBERT AND PERCY TO BEGIN. BOTH TRAMPS.

HERBERT IS A THICK SET MAN OF THE BULLDOG TYPE (BILL SIKES)  
ABOUT THIRTY-FIVE YEARS OF AGE. CLOTHES IN RAGS. MAKE UP AS  
THE POPULAR ILLUSTRATED AMERICAN TRAMP. A SALMON TIN IS  
HANGING ON HIS ARM, A LADIES OLD HAT ON HIS HEAD WITH  
RIBBONS TIED UNDER HIS CHIN.

PERCY IS TALL, UNSHAVEN. WEARS A VERY RAGGED PAIR OF  
TROUSERS, NICELY CREASED. A PAIR OF VERY OLD BROWN BOOTS  
WITH RED LACES. A FROCK COAT VERY TIGHT FITTING IS BUTTONED  
IN AT THE WAIST, WHICH CAUSES THE CUT UP THE BACK TO OPEN  
AND SHEW THREE PATCHES TO SHEW ON THE SEAT OF HIS PANTS.  
ONE RED, ONE BLUE, ONE WHITE.

HIS COLLAR WHICH IS NOT FASTENED AT THE BACK OF THE NECK, IS  
TIED TO AN OLD DICKY WITH A PIECE OF STRING. HE WEARS AN  
EYEGGLASS.)

2.

HERBERT. They're busy on the Quay – but we've struck something quiet here, Percy.

PERCY. YAS 'Erb, we have. There's soldiers marching down there. 'Erb –

HERBERT. (RUMINATING) Ten years in quod.

PERCY. Haven't I told you to say – Jael – 'Erb? It is so vulgar to use slang.

HERBERT. You don't say.

PERCY. Yas – I think so. 'Erb, you were about to remark - ?

HERBERT. That ten years in –

PERCY. Jaol –

HERBERT. Makes one think as how the world has gone mad when one comes out. I wants to see the Motor Cars – I wants to see a Flying Machine close – I do; My eye - things have changed.

PERCY. (FEELING HIS CHIN) I wish I had a shave. The girls 'Erb – the girls – (SWINGS HIS STICK ROUND) Bless 'em – are fascinated when I have a shave.

HERBERT. You spent the last penny we got on a shave, and now we can't 'ave a drink. 'Ang you and your shaves and your girls.

PERCY. Oh 'Erb, you have no regards for your appearance – and appearance is everything. Have you no fancy for the girls?

HERBERT. Girls. Not me. Drat 'em say I.

PERCY. Could you not be tempted?

HERBERT. (SMILES) Well – I dunno Percy boy. If a rich young widow was ter come along I don't say as how I wouldn't like ter hang me hat hup in the Hall – sit in her best easy chair – place me feet hup on the hormolu clock and spit upon the damask curtains.

PERCY. Expectorate 'Erb – expectorate. Haven't I told you spit is vulgar.

HERBERT. You don't say so?

PERCY. Yas – I think so.

HERBERT. 'Ow can you wait to expect – what you said, when yer mouth is full of tobacco juice?

3.

PERCY. 'Erb, I'll never learn you.

HERBERT. Be patient Percy boy.

PERCY. (LOOKS AT SIGN OF INN AND STARTS) 'Erb – look – we've missed it.

HERBERT. Missed wot?

PERCY. That sign (POINTS)

HERBERT. Not I; I've been sighing ever since I seed it fust.

PERCY. I coinside with you.

HERBERT. You go inside with me – well you can hif you like, but you spent your last penny on a shave: I'm going to treat myself to 'arf a pint of mild wif mine – so hif you're fond of beer – just watch me drink it.

PERCY. (XS. AND SITS ON STEPS OF CROSS. PUTS EYEGLASS IN EYE) I shall have my recompence when the girls turn up.

HERBERT. You can have wot pence you like except mine. (KNOCKS WITH STICK ON TABLE AND CALLS) Wot ho landlord – Menial – Bestir your lazy limbs – His Lordship calls.

(ENTER DENNIS O'FLAGHERTY – LANDLORD. HE IS AN IRISHMAN ABOUT THIRTY-FIVE YEARS OF AGE, WELL BUILT BUT SMALL. HEIGHT ABOUT FIVE FEET FIVE INCHES, GINGER HAIR.)

DENNIS. An' what's all the row about?

HERBERT. (LOOKING AT PERCY) Shall we stand this insolence?

PERCY. (SURVEYING DENNIS THROUGH EYEGLASS) No 'Erb.

DENNIS. Arah Begorra'. And who might you two swipes be talking to – eh? I'll lambast the pair of ye – ye ugly looking lob eared scallywags – ye grinning cross eyed, bottle nosed polluters of purity –

HERBERT. Oh Percy – Did you 'ear wot he called us?

PERCY. Yas – polluters of purity.

4.

HERBERT. Is that vulgar Percy?

PERCY. Yas – I think so.

HERBERT. You don't say so?

PERCY. Dot him one on the proboscis 'Erb.

HERBERT. Where does he keep it Percy?

PERCY. On his face.

HERBERT. What – on his blooming dial?

PERCY. You should say face – dial is vulgar.

HERBERT. You don't say so?

PERCY. Yes, I think so.

HERBERT. It shall be done. (TAKES SALMON TIN OFF HIS ARM AND GIVES IT TO PERCY.)  
Take care of my portmanteau Percy.

PERCY. (SMELLS IT – BUS.) Its contents have not yet evaporated 'Erb.

HERBERT. Don't you swear at me Percy.

DENNIS. (SQUARING UP) Come on: I'm waiting for you, ye bleary eyed galoote.

HERBERT. He called me a Galoote: Is that something vulgar Percy?

PERCY. Yas – I think so.

HERBERT. Then he's got to go through it!

(TAKES OFF HIS COAT – HE HAS NO SHIRT ON – TURNS AND FACES  
DENNIS WHO IS STILL SQUARING UP – HE SEIZES DENNIS' HAND AND  
SHAKES IT.)

Percy! It's me long lost brother – I've found him!

DENNIS. (WRENCHING HIS HAND FREE) Arrah – what's your game? Clear out.

HERBERT. Dennis O'Flagherty – don't forget yer pal!

5.

DENNIS. (LOOKS CLOSELY AT HIM, THEN RECOILS) Herbert Bruce!

HERBERT. That's me. (BOWS ELABORATELY)

DENNIS. Holy smoke – and where have you come from?

HERBERT. Chokee – Cull.

PERCY. Gaol – 'Erb. Chokee is vulgar.

HERBERT. Vulgar or not it means the goods. It means grub, a seat by the fire – and yer feet on the clock –

PERCY. And expectorating on the damask curtains – eh 'Erb?

HERBERT. You've guessed it Percy. Mr. Dennis O'Flagherty – allow me to hintroduce you to me pal – Percy Chumleigh – known to the "nuts" as His Lordship – to the Police as Slim Jim – and to the girls –

PERCY. Ah - the girls --- (BUS.)

HERBERT. As 'Andsome Adolphus. Percy, allow me to hintroduce you to me pal – Dennis O'Flagherty – late of the forty twoth and later still – jewel thief. Percy, we've served together, him and me in South Africa; we got low and into bad company. We went down – at least I did – Dennis here has prospered – and as I knows enough to send him to –

PERCY. Gaol, 'Erb.

HERBERT. Gaol Percy – we're going to –

PERCY. Expectorate –

HERBERT. On the blooming damask curtains.

DENNIS. Sure, it's living straight I am now.

HERBERT. No –

PERCY. No –

DENNIS. Yes.

HERBERT. Is it vulgar to live straight?

PERCY. Yas – I think so.

DENNIS. Have done now, I'm free from the old gang.



6.

HERBERT. Has the old gang broken up?

DENNIS. It has; and I tell ye straight I'm running straight – as I mean to, to the end. I thought your time wasn't up for ten years to come yet.

HERBERT. I got away – never mind how. I'm 'ere – and I'm glad I met you, as it means a lot to me.

DENNIS. You can have shelter for a time and a bit of money, but ye must clear off then – for I'm courting a girl.

PERCY. A girl! - Oh girls!

DENNIS. And I don't want the past to come between us. In the meantime you can have a drink.

PERCY. (FALLS ON HERBERT) Support me 'Erb – he said - drink.

HERBERT. (SMACKING HIS LIPS) Gargle.

PERCY. Quick – quick – or I faint.

(EXIT DENNIS INTO INN.)

(ENTER KITTY, A LADIES MAID, SHE IS NEATLY DRESSED AND VIVACIOUS, SHE IS GERMAN, WITH SLIGHT GERMAN ACCENT.)

HERBERT. (SEEING HER AS SHE ENTERS) Look Percy!

PERCY. Girls! I wish I had a shave.

(BUSINESS – BOWS – HERBERT IMITATES HIM. PERCY TAKES OFF HIS HAT BRIM, LEAVING CROWN ON HIS HEAD.)

KITTY. Oh! You do frighten me!

PERCY. 'Erb, this is Dennis O'Flagherty's mash for a dollar.

7.

HERBERT. I savvy.

PERCY. Shall we cut him out?

HERBERT. We shall.

PERCY. (BOWS TO KITTY) Be not afraid.

KITTY. I'm not: but I thought you were something from a field.

PERCY. (DRAWING HIMSELF UP) Field – field – what do you mean?

KITTY. Something you put there to frighten the crows.

PERCY. This comes, 'Erb, of not having a shave.

(RE-ENTER DENNIS WITH FOAMING MUGS OF BEER – HERBERT AND PERCY BOTH TURN SUDDENLY – AND BOTH SEIZE BEER – BOTH BLOW FROTH – AND BOTH DRINK SIMULTANEOUSLY.)

DENNIS. (SEES KITTY) Arrah Kitty me jewel, there you are! And its myself that's been dying to see you. (XS TO HER.)

KITTY. (WARDS HIM OFF) Ach, you not kiss me here. Please spare my blushes.

DENNIS. Tis yourself will never let me kiss ye.

KITTY. Some day my Dennis. But what did you want to see me about?

DENNIS. Richard Bellairs has been here, a looking for your missus.

KITTY. Oh indeed!

DENNIS. And what's more, he wouldn't go up to the house – he seemed afraid of something.

KITTY. He is afraid of ze Master. Richard Bellairs is ze gentleman Russell Squires had ze – what you call – row with.

DENNIS. AYE. And twas the grand fight I hear.

8.

PERCY. )

(HOLDING OUT MUGS) More.

HERBERT. )

DENNIS. Go inside and help yourselves.

HERBERT. Percy, is that vulgar?

PERCY. No, certainly not.

(THEY BOTH MAKE A RUSH FOR DOOR OF INN – THEY GET STUCK –  
THEY STRUGGLE AND EVENTUALLY FALL THROUGH – A CRASH BEING  
HEARD AFTER.)

KITTY. What dreadful men.

DENNIS. Take no notice Kitty dear.

(PERCY PUTS HIS HEAD THROUGH WINDOW WITH A VERY LARGE JUG  
OF BEER IN HIS HAND.)

PERCY. 'Erb's happy!

DENNIS. And what might he be doing?

PERCY. Lying with his head under the tap of the beer barrel. (DISAPPEARS.)

KITTY. Oh my Dennis! Your most beautiful beer. But what about Richard Bellairs?

DENNIS. The man your Master fought a jewel with.

KITTY. Duel – you mean.

DENNIS. Sure and that's what I said – a jewel my jewel – for it's a jewel of a time  
they'd be having anyway.

KITTY. Yes, a duel – and all through my mistress. Richard Bellairs, they do say, is in  
love with her.

DENNIS. I hope he won't come back here, or there'll be a beautiful row if Richard Bellairs and Russell Squires meet.

KITTY. Perhaps it was not Richard Bellairs at all. Parblue my Dennis, you were mistaken.

DENNIS. Me mistaken – sorra a bit – I knew him well, and the more betoken I recognised him because he was so much altered.

KITTY. Ach my Dennis! You always make what is called ze bull of ze Irish. I do not believe it was him at all.

DENNIS. Then sure it's after a liar you be calling me – only you're putting it more polite like.

(ENTER RICHARD BELLAIRS. HE IS A GERMAN – SLIGHT FAIR MOUSTACHE AND FAIR HAIR. HE SPEAKS WITH VERY SLIGHT GERMAN ACCENT.)

(KITTY GOES TO DOOR L. SO THAT BELLAIRS DOES NOT SEE HER.)

BELLAIRS. Ach, I thought I not mistaken was – you are Dennis O'Flagherty.

DENNIS. Yes me Lud – sure and that's my name.

BELLAIRS. Zen get into the house, and keep ze mouth of you closed.

DENNIS. Sure, Mr. Bellairs.

BELLAIRS. You know me?

DENNIS. I do that same. You are Mr. Richard Bellairs.

BELLAIRS. Zat will do. Ach – take this (GIVES HIM COIN) Close your eyes and forget that I am Richard Bellairs.

DENNIS. (TAKES COIN) Yes, Mr. Richard Bellairs.

BELLAIRS. Well, what for do you wait?

DENNIS. (WINKS) I've only closed one eye, sir.

10.

BELLAIRS.      Soh – soh - -I see! (GIVES ANOTHER COIN)

DENNIS.        That's done it sir. (XS R. TO INN) Sure I've closed my eyes. But I've not forgotten, and he didn't say anything about my mouth.

(EXIT INTO INN.)

KITTY XS DOWN TO BELLAIRS.)

BELLAIRS.      Well my good girl – what is it?

KITTY.         Ze eyes of mine are still open.

BELLAIRS.      (LAUGHS) Blackmail, Ach!

KITTY.         No sir, I was but thinking it must be very nice to have mine eyes closed.

BELLAIRS.      I should prefer your mouth shut. You are ze Maid to Mrs. Russell Squires, are you not?

KITTY.         (DEMURELY) Yes sir.

BELLAIRS.      (GIVES HER LETTER) Take this to your Mistress, and say I wait for an answer.

KITTY.         Yes, sir.

BELLAIRS.      And don't forget to close both your eyes and your mouth. (GIVES HER COIN.)

KITTY.         Thank you sir. I will give your message to my Mistress and I will not forget I am dumb. ((EXIT INTO HOUSE L.)

BELLAIRS.      A clever woman zat! She never forgets ze role she play. No-one could guess she is a Spy – Lady Catherine Zurin – in ze employ of ze German Government. Mrs. Squires – Di I used to call her – how well I remember my duel with her husband! They gave out zat his sword thrust killed me – and I fancy he was a trifle scared – but I did not die – I lived! Ach yes! I lived – to pay back old scores which I cannot forget.

11.

(ENTER DIANA SQUIRES FROM HOUSE L. SHE IS YOUNG – WELL-DRESSED. HE RAISES HIS HAT AND BOWS.)

Zis is indeed kind of you Di.

DIANA. Hush! You must not call me Di. Someone may hear you, and besides you should not have come here at all.

BELLAIRS. I would risk anything to be near you: but - did you not get my note?

DIANA. Yes: but do go away quickly: for if my husband sees you or learns you have been here, I dread to think of the consequences.

BELLAIRS. I had to come, Di – I had to see you again.

DIANA. Is your wound healed?

BELLAIRS. Almost – but it is still painful. Another inch would have meant my death. Is your husband still in ze service?

DIANA. Of course – he is on duty now.

BELLAIRS. At zis time? Why?

DIANA. Oh, I don't know. Special orders from the government.

BELLAIRS. Zey still trust him with the secret signal codes?

DIANA. Yes.

BELLAIRS. Will you come to my place tonight? I am staying with the Fairleys - you know they have rented the big house on ze coast over ze cliff. They have a bridge party on tonight.

DIANA. I cannot go although I have received an invitation. Russell has forbidden me to visit the Fairleys.

BELLAIRS. Ach! He was always jealous of your friends. Say you will come tonight, I have so much to tell you, and if you but consent I will have a carriage waiting for you on ze top road. Your husband need never know – he is not at home.

DIANA. No, he expected to be detained late through this special duty. By the way – those letters you have of mine – when will you return them to me as you promised?

12.

BELLAIRS. Ach! I had forgotten zem for ze moment. They are all ready for ze despatch and I will send zem to you: - or – better still – I will give them to you at ze Fairleys tonight. Promise me you will meet me there, and receive zem you shall.

DIANA. Intact?

BELLAIRS. Intact.

DIANA. Very well – I promise.

BELLAIRS. (KISSES HER HAND – SHE DRAWS IT AWAY) How can I thank you?

DIANA. By not doing so, and getting away from here as quickly as you can. Your presence is dangerous for us both.

BELLAIRS. (RAISES HIS HAT) I am at your commands. (EXIT R.U.E.)

(RE-ENTER DENNIS FROM INN.)

DENNIS. Arrah Begorra – but there's no filling some folk! I don't know where that thin chap puts all the beer.

(PERCY APPEARS AT DOOR OF INN.)

PERCY. Dennis O'Flagherty – that Barrel is empty. (SEES DIANA) Ah! A girl! (XS TO HER AND MAKES AN ELABORATE BOW.)

(DENNIS SLINGS HIM BACK TO R.)

(RE-ENTER KITTY FROM HOUSE.)

DENNIS. Behave yourself!

13.

KITTY. (HANDS DIANA A PACKET) If you please, Madame, a man has called and wants to see the Master. When I told him he was not at home he asked me to give him this.

DIANA. (LOOKS AT PACKET AND READS) On His Majesty's Service. I wonder if this will take him away tonight. All right Kitty – I will see to it.

KITTY. It must be near post time.

DIANA. Yes, for here comes Old Mother Bruce – poor old soul!

(ENTER MOTHER BRUCE FROM BELOW INN R. SHE IS A WHITE HAIRE  
D FRAIL OLD WOMAN, WHO WALKS BY THE AID OF A STICK. SHE COMES  
ON VERY SLOWLY THROUGH DIALOGUE.)

PERCY. Mother Bruce? Who is she?

DENNIS. She lost her only son in the South African War, but she won't believe he's dead. She comes to meet the post every day – she's sure he'll write to her. Tis very sad – poor old body.

(ENTER POSTMAN L.U.E. MOTHER BRUCE HAS BY THIS TIME HOB  
BLED UP STAGE AND STOPS HIM BY HOLDING OUT HER HAND  
TREMBLINGLY – POSTMAN LOOKS THROUGH LETTERS AND SHAKES  
HIS HEAD.)

POST. No, Mother Bruce – nothing for you today.

(SHE TURNS QUIETLY AWAY – BENDING DOWN LOWER AS SHE XS  
DOWN STAGE AGAIN.)

DIANA. Poor old soul! (XS TO HER) Mother – can I help you?

MOTHER. (SHAKES HER HEAD AND MUTTERS) Tomorrow.



14.

POST. Yes, better luck tomorrow, Mother.

(SHE XS DOWN STAGE AND EXITS R.U.E.)

(POSTMAN GIVES DENNIS A LETTER MARKED O.H.M.S.)

DENNIS. On His Majesty's Service. Whooree! It's coming out they are and no error.

POSTMAN. I've had a lot of 'em today. They say the Army's to Mobilise.

DENNIS. And all through this bit of a scrap between Servia and Austria Hungary.

PERCY. Ah yes! Austria is hungary – so am I many a time – but there isn't a war about it – any more than there will be at this crisis.

KITTY. Yes, nonsense is it not? (PERCY OGLES HER – SHE TURNS AWAY.)

PERCY. (FEELS HIS CHIN) I wish I had had a shave.

DIANA. We are always alarmists in England.

POSTMAN. I brought up the evening paper with me Ma'am. (GIVES PAPER TO DIANA WHO OPENS IT.)

DENNIS. The Evening papers come out early this weather.

DIANA. (WHO HAS READ FROM PAPER) It looks serious. Germany has delivered an Ultimatum to Russia and is attacking France. The first repulse of the Battle is at Liege, where the brave Belgians are driving the Germans back.

(RE-ENTER HERBERT FROM INN. HE IS VERY DRUNK.)

HERBERT. Percy (HIC) dear boy! Wot's that I hear? War – eh – where?

PERCY. Not here 'Erb – Abroad.

DENNIS. There's no scares here. No fear of us being attacked. 15.

15.

KITTY. (WHO HAS CROSSED UP STAGE) There seems to be something amiss up the road – Listen.

(MURMUR OF VOICES OFF – THEN CHEERING. DENNIS XS UP.)

DENNIS. It's Master Russell and Colonel Mars.

HERBERT. Colonel Mars Percy! My Old Colonel of the Third Battalion (HIC) Herb old lad – pull yourself together. (CLINGS TO PERCY – BUS.)

PERCY. Don't pull me from together 'Erb – and you shouldn't get drunk – it's vulgar.

HERBERT. You don't say so.

PERCY. Yes I do. Look at me.

HERBERT. You've had (HIC) as much as me.

PERCY. A gentleman always carries his liquor like a gentleman – eh – what – what!

HERBERT. You was never drunk Percy?

PERCY. Never.

HERBERT. Then Percy old sport – you don't know what pleasure is.

DENNIS. (WHO HAS OPENED AND READ HIS LETTER) By Jabers this is serious – I've got to report at Barracks in an hour's time.

(CHEERS HEARD OFF – ENTER FISHERMAN ETC.)

DENNIS. It's a troopship off the Bay. (LOOKING OFF AT BACK.)

KITTY. And the soldiers – look at them! (DENNIS SALUTES C., R.)

(ENTER COLONEL MARS L.U.E. IN FULL COLONEL'S UNIFORM – KARKI. HE ACKNOWLEDGES SALUTE WITH HIS CANE.)

16.

DIANA. Is it true, Colonel, that War has been declared?

MARS. Quite true, Mrs. Squires.

DIANA. And my husband?

MARS. Has the honour of being on the Secret Service Staff for Special Duty.

DIANA. Oh Colonel! Does that mean that we shall have to part?

MARS. Yes.

DIANA. Oh no no! We have only just been married – I could not bear to part so soon.

MARS. A soldier's wife, my dear, must be brave. Her duty lies in making things easier for her husband.

DIANA. Duty is a hard master – but I will try and be brave. Russell shall not see my agony.

MARS. There are thousands of noble wives and brave lion-hearted mothers in our British homes today – who face their duty with a smiling face – their hearts breaking for their absent husbands and sons – whom they have given up for King and Country. There are as great heroes at home as in the Battle field.

DIANA. Where is my husband?

MARS. He will be here soon.

(HERBERT WHO HAS COME FORWARD STANDS DRUNKENLY BEFORE THE COLONEL AND SALUTES. AS HE DOES SO, HE NEARLY FALLS ON MARS, WHO TURNS AND SEES HIM FOR THE FIRST TIME. PERCY PULLS HERBERT BACK WITH THE HANDLE OF HIS STICK.)

HERBERT. My old Colonel of the Third. Tugela River, sir.

MARS. You are drunk, sir.

HERBERT. (ATTEMPTING TO DRAW HIMSELF UP) Carry my (HIC) liquor like a gentleman, sir. Soldier sir.

MARS. A Soldier?

- HERBERT. Your own old Regiment, sir. (DRAWS HIMSELF UP) Fallen on hevil times – fond of the beer sir – but a soldier every time. Always was fond of fighting Sir – (OPENS HIS COAT, SHOWING A CROSS PINNED ON) Won that at Tugela Sir.
- MARS. The Victoria Cross! (LOOKS CLOSELY AT HIM) Gad – it’s Bruce! The man who saved my life. I’m sorry to see you like this; where have you been all this time?
- HERBERT. Quod.
- PERCY. Haven’t I told you, ‘Erb, that Quod is vulgar. Gaol, ‘Erb – Jail.
- HERBERT. I wants a chance, Sir, can I have it?
- MARS. I know your value of old – but can you be trusted now?
- HERBERT. (SOBERED UP) Try me: the Country wants men as can fight – and I’ve never been the underdog in a scrap yet. Try me sir?
- MARS. I will. (WRITES QUICKLY IN NOTE BOOK) Take this to my quarters at once. (GIVES IDEA THAT HE HAS CAUGHT A SMELL) You must have a bath and a shave.
- PERCY. Oh ‘Erb – a shave.
- MARS. My man will give you some clothes: report yourself to me later on.
- HERBERT. Thank you Sir. (SALUTES)
- PERCY. And wot about old Percy. (COMES FORWARD, VIEWS THE COLONEL WITH GLASS IN HIS EYE) ‘Erb and me is pals – we’ve drunk together – eaten of our salt together – stolen together – done time together –
- MARS. Be off!
- PERCY. (LINKS ARMS WITH HERBERT) Let me carry your portmanteau ‘Erb?
- HERBERT. (SOLEMNLY HANDS HIM SALMON TIN) Right’o, Percy boy.
- PERCY. Pals ‘Erb?
- HERBERT. (SHAKES HANDS) Pals every time Percy old sport. Come – we’re full of beer and business.

18.

(THEY EXIT ARM IN ARM L.U.E. WHISTLING OR SINGING "THE BRITISH GRENADIERS", VERY ERECT AND KEEPING STEP.)

(MARS STANDS ON THE STEPS OF CROSS AND SPEAKS TO CROWD.)

MARS. The time has come when Britain needs all the men she can get; our forces are mobilising and the Regulars must go abroad to the Front. We have our Territorials and our Yeomen for home defence – but we want more. Lord Kitchener has been made Secretary for War; he asks for one hundred thousand men – this force is needed to protect our homes – our women and our children. (CROWD CHEER.)

DIANA. Will it be so near? Shall we have to face War here – at home?

MARS. We may have to; but this time thank God we shall be prepared. This time we are not going to muddle through – this time we are organised – this time Britain will show the world what the boys of the Bull Dog Breed can do. It has been our wont to laugh at War, and to make light of the King's Uniform; but when trouble comes we are glad to rely on our soldiers and our sailors too. Let us remember in our time of peace, what we owe to them in our time of war.

DENNIS. Whoroo; that's true enough. (ALL CHEER EXCEPT KITTY. DENNIS LOOKS OFF L.U.E.) Arrah! Here comes Captain Russell Squires – God bless him!

MARS. Remember your promise Diana – and don't make the parting harder for him than needs be.

OMNES. Captain Russell Squires! (ALL CHEER.)

(ENTER RUSSELL SQUIRES L.U.E. (LEAD) HE WEARS FULL CAPTAIN'S (KARKI) UNIFORM, SWORD ETC. HE XS DOWN AND SALUTES MARS, WHO RETURNS IT – HE THEN XS TO DIANA – HE HAS ROLL OF PAPER IN HIS HAND.)

RUSSELL. Di dear; Colonel Mars has told you?

- DIANA. Yes.
- RUSSELL. The Secret Code Papers I gave you last night are safe.
- DIANA. Locked in the Safe. Here are the keys (GIVES THEM TO HIM) They have never left my possession.
- RUSSELL. That is good. (HE OPENS ROLL OF PAPER)
- DIANA. What have you got?
- RUSSELL. A Call to Arms. (READS) "A Call to Arms". "Your King and Country need you. An addition of one hundred thousand men to His Majesty's Regular Army is immediately necessary in the present grave National Emergency. Lord Kitchener is confident that this appeal will be at once responded to by all those who have the safety of our Empire at heart. Terms of Service – General Service for a period of three years or until the War is concluded; age of enlistment – between nineteen and thirty. How to Join – Full information can be obtained at any Post Office, or at any Military Depot. God Save The King. (ALL SALUTE.)
- DENNIS. And may I have the honour, Sir, of decorating my front door with that illigant bit of paper?
- RUSSELL. You may. (DENNIS TAKES PAPER AND STICKS IT ON THE INN DOOR. (THE BLUE ANCHOR.) RUSSELL ADDRESSES CROWD AGAIN.)
- RUSSELL. As an example to his subjects – King George has already given two of his sons – one to the Army, and one to the Navy.
- KITTY. Ach, zat is so easy a thing. These Royalty's of yours will not be placed in danger.
- RUSSELL. You have no right to make such an assertion: you may be sure they will do their duty wherever they are – and every man – be he Prince or Peasant – can do no less and no more at this juncture in the World's history. GOD SAVE THE KING. (ALL SALUTE AND CHEER.)
- MARS. (TO DENNIS) you will report yourself.
- DENNIS. Be Jabers Sir, I'll do that same and gladly, and if I can but get a swipe at one of them Germans: well – pity help him: that's all.
- MARS. (XS UP L.U.E.) I must return to Barracks, there is so much to be seen to yet, you will follow later, Russell?

20.

RUSSELL. Yes Sir (SALUTES, EXIT MARS L.U.E.)

(OMNES GRADUALLY GO OFF, SOME INTO INN, SOME OFF OTHER ENTRANCES AS ARRANGED. KITTY EXITS INTO INN.)

(RUSSELL TURNS TO DIANA.)

The time is very close now dear, when you must be very brave.

DIANA. I know, Russ, I know, and indeed I will try to be so.

RUSSELL. I thought I saw Richard Bellairs watching our men over there at the Docks – that's what delayed me. Has he been here, Di? Have you seen him again?

DIANA. Oh Russ dear, why do you talk like this? You have been away for two whole days – and you are leaving me again so soon: I should have thought we had little time to worry about strangers.

RUSSELL. Forgive me Di, but the Ghost of my old jealousy arose before me. Bellairs paid you too much attention in the old days, my wife.

DIANA. That was before we were married, Russ, before I knew even that you loved me.

RUSSELL. He turned up at Monte Carlo when we were on our wedding trip. I cannot forget he made love to you there, and openly insulted me.

DIANA. But you punished him. I was foolish enough to flirt with him years before – at least – before I met you: but that is all past now, so let us forget it – and him.

RUSSELL. So be it. I put all my trust in you, Di.

DIANA. I will not betray that trust; but Russ, I feel so strange and lonely, I see so little of you at any time now, and you are going away so soon – so soon. I want you to stay at home with me this one evening – could you not do so?

RUSSELL. I am sorry dear – but I cannot. There is so much to be done at Head Quarters; but whatever happens, I will see you again before I go.

- DIANA. Always the same; your very soul seems wrapped up in your work. It is always duty – duty – duty. Duty before even me – and Russ – I am so tired and lonely. Sometimes I wonder if you even care for me at all.
- RUSSELL. Never doubt that Di dear; but I could not be true to you were I false to my Country and my King. Remember Di, “I could not love thee dear so well, loved I not honour more.”
- DIANA. It may all cost you, more than you think – more than you are prepared to pay.
- RUSSELL. Those words are not like you Di; explain them.
- DIANA. I am tired of being lonely here – I am tired of all the old set – of everything but you. Stay with me tonight, Russ, save me from myself.
- RUSSELL. Di dear – don’t distress yourself and me like this; surely you are a bit hysterical.
- DIANA. (TURNS AWAY) I suppose I am if you say so. (TURNS TO HIM AGAIN) Russ, I need your love tonight, as I have never needed it before.
- RUSSELL. And you possess it – the whole love of my being. I am not a man given to demonstrative affection, Di – but you know me by now. (TAKES HER HAND.)
- DIANA. And yet you do not know me. Am I making an impossible request when I ask you to stay with me tonight – must you go?
- RUSSELL. (XS. TO R. AND BACK AGAIN) Diana, sit here – here on the Old Cross steps where we have sat so often watching the ships pass out of the Harbour and fade away into the mists of the sky line. (SHE SITS ON STEPS OF CROSS. HE STANDS BY HER) Here under the shadow of the dear old cross I am going to tell you more than I should. We are at War – The Horrors of War if Germany sets feet on British soil I dare not contemplate. If this War is not crushed while still in embryo – it will mean a War of the entire World. Every Port in Britain is at present infested by spies – every inch of our Island is known to the German forces. A terrible responsibility rests upon my shoulders at this present minute – one false step and our Country would face ruin. I dare not think of it: Di dear – I want your help tonight as much as you want my love. What were your plans for this evening?
- DIANA. I had an invitation to the Fairleys.



RUSSELL. You must not go: They are a German family Di, and to us and our secrets they are an open danger. These people are in league with the head of the German Secret Agency.

DIANA. Can that be true? (RISES) I begin to see – oh yes – I begin to see! Russ dear, you are right – my duty is here at home and I will not place an obstacle in your path of honour. Good bye for the present dear heart: you will find your wife is true – your honour safe.

RUSSELL. That's my own brave Di. I'll look back dear – before I leave for good. (KISSES HER) Au revoir. (HE EXITS UP STAGE L.U.E.)

DIANA. I must get those letters from Bellairs. If I go to the Fairleys I am trapped – he will compromise me to gain his own ends. What a fool I was to write those letters – but it all happened before I met Russell.

(RE-ENTER KITTY FROM R.U.E.)

KITTY. Mr. Bellairs pressed this note into my hand, and told me to keep my mouth shut – so. (BUS.)

DIANA. (TAKES NOTE AND READS IT) "I want you to forget the past – when I meet you at the Fairleys tonight I will return your letters." Oh those wretched letters – letters written in moments of madness. They are like the sword of Damocles – forever hanging over my head. I must get them back – but how? How – without Russ knowing. (TURNS TO KITTY) Could you find Mr. Bellairs and send him to me?

KITTY. I could Madame.

DIANA. And Kitty – you will keep your mouth closed?

KITTY. Yes Madame: I understand – so: (PUTS HER FINGER TO HER MOUTH – XS. UP STAGE TO R.U.E., SPEAKS ASIDE) Bellairs is clever – he will have the secret code tonight. (EXITS R.U.E.)

DIANA. Russ will never know I have met him again. It is the last time I shall ever deceive him.

23.

(RE-ENTER KITTY.)

KITTY. Monsieur Bellairs is here Madame.

DIANA. Leave me Kitty.

KITTY. Yes Madame. (EXIT INTO HOUSE.)

(RE-ENTER BELLAIRS R.U.E.)

DIANA. I sent for you because I cannot come to the Fairleys tonight: because I do not intend to leave my home. You once professed to love me.

BELLAIRS. I love you still. You are the only link that binds me to this country at such a time. It cut me up when you married Russell Squires Di; you used to care for me – you used to write me so.

DIANA. Those awful letters! You promised to return them – have you them now?

BELLAIRS. With me? Yes.

DIANA. (EAGERLY HOLDING OUT HER HAND) You will keep your promise and return them?

BELLAIRS. One moment Di. Though I love you – I do not love your husband. The wound I received from his sword still aches sometimes; but not so badly as the craving for revenge aches in my heart.

DIANA. You do not mean you would use those letters to his undoing? Or to make him unhappy?

BELLAIRS. Not if you choose to pay me for them.

DIANA. I – pay for them! In what way?

BELLAIRS. Ach! In a way so – so – easy. You give yourself to me, and you let me have the keys of your husband's safe: the safe where he keeps the Secret Code to be used by the Government in the Telegraphic Operations.

DIANA. And this is your price for a few foolish letters – written by a foolish schoolgirl – Oh! I might have guessed! And do you think I would do this thing?

24.

BELLAIRS. Better do that than have the Noble Captain Russell read these letters to me. He is so honourable and so upright: what do you think he would do?

DIANA. I will suffer all he may think or do – rather than betray him or his secrets. I thought you were a Nationalised British subject – I find you nothing but a German Spy.

BELLAIRS. (SEIZING HER WRIST) Be careful! Be careful! Do not speak such words so loud! It is dangerous.

DIANA. Let go my wrist! Do you think I will submit to this outrage?

BELLAIRS. You will be amenable to reason – or I will crush you. You – womanlike – forgot to date your letters. I have supplied that want, and they now bear dates after your marriage. If placed in your husband's hands – the Divorce Court will avenge me upon you both.

DIANA. You coward! You were afraid just now when I called you German Spy: I will reveal you for what you are to my friends here – they will save me, and punish me! Help! Help!

BELLAIRS. (PLACING HIS HAND OVER HER MOUTH) Be silent! I have men within call – I have but to blow a whistle and this Square will be surrounded: - Germany leaves nothing to chance. (SHE STRUGGLES – HE STILL HOLDS HER.)

(RE-ENTER PERCY AND HERBERT, WHISTLING OR SINGING "THE BRITISH GRENADIER." THEY ARE NOW CLEAN AND WHOLESOME THOUGH A BIT GROG BLOSSOMY ABOUT THE NOSE AND EYES ETC. PERCY IS CLEAN SHAVEN – HAS EYEGLASS IN HIS EYE AND CARRIES SMALL MILITARY CANE. BOTH ARE IN KARKI AS PRIVATE SOLDIERS.)

HERBERT. Percy boy – is that a little Matrimonial Tiff? Or is it a maiden in distress?

PERCY. It's a girl – oh girls! Shall we investigate 'Erb?

HERBERT. Us shall.

DIANA. Help! Help!

25.

(HERBERT AND PERCY CROSS QUICKLY DOWN, HERBERT THROWS BELLAIRS R. THEN KNOCKS HIM DOWN. AS HE RISES PERCY HITS HIM ON HIS SEAT WITH HIS SWITCH – BELLAIRS GIVES A YELL.)

PERCY. Can we help you Ma'am?

DIANA. Indeed you can. (BELLAIRS MAKES A MOVEMENT TO DIANA.)

PERCY. Watch him 'Erb.

HERBERT. Right'o Percy, I'll smash his snitch.

PERCY. Say probiscus 'Erb; snitch is vulgar.

HERBERT. You don't say so! (SEIZES BELLAIRS WHOSE BACK IS TO PERCY.)

PERCY. Yes, I think so! (HITS BELLAIRS AGAIN ON SEAT WITH SWITCH.) Attention! Smarten up! (TO DIANA) Are you hurt Madam?

DIANA. No, only frightened. This man has letters of mine in his possession – which he is holding over me as a threat to obtain my husband's secrets.

HERBERT. Sounds like Blackmail Percy boy – Is Blackmail vulgar?

PERCY. Yes, I think so!

HERBERT. Then we'll slosh him. Shall we search the gentleman?

PERCY. Slosh is vulgar – but by all means search him.

(BELLAIRS STRUGGLES – HERBERT FORCES HIM TO TABLE R. BY INN. PERCY GIVES HIM ANOTHER BLOW ON HIS SEAT WITH SWITCH - BELLAIRS YELLS AGAIN AND SUBSIDES SMARTLY OVER TABLE.)

DIANA. Gentlemen, these letters mean much to me – they were written in moments of madness – when years ago I first met this man.

HERBERT. Do you know where the letters are ma'am?

DIANA. In the inside pocket of his vest.

HERBERT. We'll get 'em Percy boy.

26.

PERCY. Yes, I think so. (THEY UNDO HIS COAT, AND RIP OPEN HIS VEST.)

BELLAIRS. Let me go – Damn you!

PERCY. Don't swear in the presence of a lady, it's vulgar. (HITS HIM WITH SWITCH.)

BELLAIRS. You hell hound: - Donner und Blitzen!

HERBERT. What's that he says, Percy old sport?

PERCY. It sounds awful! I believe he's a German!

HERBERT. A German! Jab his hat down his dam throat.

PERCY. Right'o 'Erb! But don't say jab – it's vulgar – say push and push hard.

(AS HE SPEAKS HE GETS CAP OFF BELLAIRS' HEAD AND STICKS IT INTO HIS MOUTH.)

I told you not to swear.

(RE-ENTER RUSSELL SQUIRES – HE STANDS AND LOOKS IN AMAZEMENT.)

HERBERT. That'll stop you from blowing that 'ere whistle.

RUSSELL. Hello! Hello! What's the trouble? Release that man.

PERCY. (SALUTES) In a minute Sir. (TO HERBERT) Got through yet 'Erb?

HERBERT. Yus, there they are! (FLINGS LETTERS TIED UP IN A BUNDLE ONTO STAGE.)

PERCY. (TO BELLAIRS) Now you can get up.

(BELLAIRS RISES FROM TABLE, TEARS CAP FROM HIS MOUTH AND ATTEMPTS TO WHISTLE.)

HERBERT. I'll take care of that. (TAKES WHISTLE FROM HIM.)

BELLAIRS. (TURNS AND FACES RUSSELL) Capt. Squires, take these letters and read them.

RUSSELL. (RECOGNISING HIM) Bellairs! - here! Diana, what does this mean?

DIANA. This man insulted me. I called for help and these gentlemen came to my aid.

HERBERT. That's true Percy boy?

PERCY. Yes, I think so.

BELLAIRS. Those letters were written by your wife to me. I came here at her request to meet her – alone.

RUSSELL. Is this true?

BELLAIRS. Ask her Maid – read those letters she has written to me.

RUSSELL. As the letters are not mine I refuse to touch them.

BELLAIRS. She offered me her love, as those letters prove. She offered to tell me the Secret Code which would reveal the Plans of the Government.

DIANA. It's a lie! A foul lie! He offered me those letters as the price of my dishonour – and yours.

RUSSELL. And you refused?

DIANA. Yes, I refused.

BELLAIRS. You were already dishonoured – and how did I know you (TO RUSSELL) had the Secret Code?

RUSSELL. Most people know I am in charge of the Wireless Station.

BELLAIRS. Why do you think I came here? Would I follow a woman without encouragement? These letters were written to me – they are mine. (DIANA GOES TO GET THEM, RUSSELL STOPS HER.) If you do not read them, I will publish them for all the world to see.

RUSSELL. (PICKS LETTERS UP. BUS.) They are in your handwriting, Di.

(SHE SINKS ON STEPS OF CROSS, WITH HER HEAD IN HER HANDS.)

DIANA. I have always been true to you Russell; I would give my life for you.

BELLAIRS. She first promised to come to the Fairleys – then she changed her mind and sent for me here.

RUSSELL. (TURNS ON HIM FIERCELY) Be silent! Oh! would that my sword thrust had killed you when we fought.

BELLAIRS. Revenge is sweet Captain Squires: you had your hour when you left me for dead on Monte Carlo sands. Now it is my turn that has come.

RUSSELL. (WHO HAS BEEN TURNING LETTERS OVER AND READING THEM) Oh! My God! The honour of my house – the honour of my name!

DIANA. Russell – they were written in moments of madness – years before I met you. Written as many a foolish girl writes when she becomes infatuated.

BELLAIRS. She lies! Look at the dates.

RUSSELL. And I must face my Country's foes with this knowledge seething in my brain. Diana, I believed in you as I believed in myself: I had placed you so high – as high as my own honour. Give me the keys of my Safe Diana, I can no longer trust you.

DIANA. No! No! Don't say that! Don't say you no longer trust me, Russell, believe in me! Put your trust still in me – it shall never be misplaced.

RUSSELL. Give me the keys!

DIANA. They are here.

(SHE GIVES THEM TO HIM. HE TAKES THEM (BUS) AND EXIT INTO HOUSE. DIANA SOBS ON STEPS OF CROSS. BELLAIRS GOES FORWARD TO HER – HERBERT CATCHES HIM BY SHOULDERS AND THROWS HIM UP STAGE R. INTO PERCY'S ARMS WHO CATCHES HIM.)

HERBERT. We hain't done with you yet – have we Percy boy?

PERCY. No, I think not.

HERBERT. Just look after him a moment.

(RE-ENTER DENNIS FROM INN – DRESSED, CAP ETC.)

DENNIS. I must be off to report myself. (SEES HERBERT AND PERCY) Jumping Moses! Holy Smoke! What a change.

PERCY. Yes, I think so! Had a shave and a wash, and the Government provided the habiliments.

HERBERT. Habiliments, Percy boy? What's them?

PERCY. (INDICATING UNIFORM) These.

HERBERT. Oh! Clobber!

PERCY. Don't say clobber – it's vulgar.

HERBERT. You don't say so!

PERCY. Yes, I think so!

DENNIS. (SEES DIANA) And what might be the matter with Mrs. Squires?

PERCY. This – ahem – devil – has been playing war.

DENNIS. Then inside the Blue Anchor with him – and we'll play war with him!

(BELLAIRS STRUGGLES. PERCY PRODUCES REVOLVER AND FORCES HIM INTO INN – HE EXITS AFTER HIM.)

And it's myself that must be away, or I'll be late – for it's near post time again.

HERBERT. How do you know that?

DENNIS. Because Old Mother Bruce never fails to come up here when the Postman's due.

HERBERT. (STARTLED) Mother Bruce! Who's she?



DENNIS. A Poor Old Soul who's all alone in the world. Her only son went away to the Last War in South Africa – and never came back. He was reported dead, but the old lady won't have it so, and expects a letter from him every post. (EXIT INTO INN.)

HERBERT. 'Erb, you've been a damned scoundrel! You ought to have written – you should ha been a comfort to your poor old mother. But you can make amends now, and thank 'Eaven – she didn't see ye an hour ago.

(RE-ENTER SIMULTANEOUSLY MOTHER BRUCE AND POSTMAN.  
BUSINESS EXACTLY AS BEFORE.)

POSTMAN. Sorry Mother – but there's nothing for you.

MOTHER. (BUS AS BEFORE) Tomorrow maybe.

POSTMAN. Aye, tomorrow maybe.

(EXIT POSTMAN L.I.E. MOTHER BRUCE TOTTERS DOWN BY CROSS.  
HERBERT TOUCHES HER.)

HERBERT. Mother! (SHE LOOKS UP AT HIM DAZED.) Mother, don't you know me?

MOTHER. Aye, I know you well! It's better than writing, 'Erb, I knew 'e'd come back. (HE TAKES HER IN HIS ARMS.)

HERBERT. I'm ordered off again Mother.

MOTHER. But you'll stay here a bit first, 'Erb?

HERBERT. As long as I can Mother, as long as I can.

MOTHER. 'Ow big and strong you've grown, 'Erb. Eh lad, but I've longed to see thee. My old eyes are nearly blind – but I knowed thee, 'Erb, I knowed thee. You've done your duty lad? Always to your Country and your King?

HERBERT. Well, I won't say as how I haven't slipped a bit in the past, but wif the help of 'Eaven and Lord Kitchener I'm a-goin' to make up for it now.

31.

MOTHER. Eh! But you always was a oner 'Erb, and you ain't growed no different.

HERBERT. (DISENGAGES HER AND TAKES HER TO CROSS TO DIANA) Mother, there's a lady here as needs your help.

MOTHER. Why it's Mistress Squires, and her man's goin' away!

DIANA. (SOBBING) Away to the Cruel War, and I may never see him again!

MOTHER. There there my bonnie lass! Whist – whist! The country needs brave women as well as brave men.

(SHE SITS ON STEPS OF CROSS .. AND TAKES DIANA'S HANDS IN HER LAP .. DIANA .. WHO IS LYING ON STAGE RESTS HER HEAD ON MOTHER'S LAP .. HER HANDS TIGHTLY CLASPED.)

(SOLDIERS ARE HEARD MARCHING OFF TO THE STRAINS OF "THE GIRL I LEFT BEHIND ME".)

(RE-ENTER RUSSELL FROM COTTAGE. HE HAS SEALED DOCUMENT IN HIS HAND. MEN IN KHAKI CROSS AT BACK OF STAGE.)

RUSSELL. (XS. DOWN TO DIANA, AND DUMPS BAG OF MONEY AT HER SIDE) Diana, that is all the money I have – you will want it probably. The Code and the Secret Service Orders I am taking with me. Good bye. You may never see me again.

(DIANA SOBS AUDIBLY AND MOANS.)

MOTHER. That's the tune my man went away to – my lad goin' away to that tune too.

(RUSSELL XS. SLOWLY UP STAGE C.)

32.

RUSSELL. I'll find a bullet soon, I can find death in duty, and thus leave her free. (FALLS INTO STEP AND EXITS BU.U.E.)

HERBERT. (XS. TO INN DOOR) Bring forth the prisoner Percy Boy.

(PERCY AND DENNIS THROW BELLAIRS OUT. BELLAIRS HAS A BLACK EYE AND A BLEEDING NOSE.)

( RE-ENTER COLONEL MARS R.U.E.)

DIANA. What can I do! What can I do!

MARS. Our brave soldiers want nurses – join the Red Cross Brigade.

DIANA. (LOOKS UP EAGERLY) Will they have me?

MARS. Aye, and glad to get you, for you I know are a skilled Nurse.

DIANA. Then I'll go.

MARS. (TO DENNIS) And where are you going?

DENNIS. To report myself Sir.

MARS. (SEES BELLAIRS) And this man?

DIANA. (WHO HAS RISEN) He is a German Spy!

(HERBERT AND PERCY SALUTE AND SPEAK TOGETHER)

May we duck him in the horsepond Sir?

MARS. Yes, and then kick him into the sea.

HERBERT. Shall we do it Percy Boy?

PERCY. Yas, I think so!

33.

(BUS. THEY DRAG BELLAIRS OFF.)

(ACT ..... DROP.)

34.

IN TIME OF WAR.

ACT II.

SCENE 1.

ROYAL QUARTERS NEAR THE FIGHTING LINE.

SCENE IN TWO, OR ONE AND A HALF. CLOTH. CUT CLOTH AND TWO WINGS.

CLOTH REPRESENTS LANDSCAPE OR GARDEN TERRACE.

CUT CLOTH REPRESENTS INTERIOR – AS DO BOTH WINGS. TABLE AND CHAIRS, DESK ETC.

(GERMAN SOLDIER ON SENTRY DUTY WALKS TO AND FRO AT BACK OF STAGE.)

(PRINCE SIEGFRIED ENTERS TO BEGIN. SENTRY SALUTES .. HE BARELY ACKNOWLEDGES .. XS. DOWN TO TABLE .. SPREADS OUT MAP. SENTRY WALKS OFF R.)

SENTRY. (OFF) Halt! Who passes?

VOICE OFF R. Friend.

SENTRY. (OFF) Give the countersign.

VOICE. (OFF) Fatherland Victorious.

SENTRY. (OFF) Pass friend, all's well.

(ENTER GERMAN SOLDIER OR OFFICER R. MUDSTAINED AND WOUNDED .. HE STAGGERS FORWARD, SALUTES .. KNEELS AND GIVES DESPATCHES TO PRINCE.)

PRINCE. From the Frontier. (SOLDIER RISES AND SALUTES. PRINCE READS) "Namur captured by our troops – we now hold the Key to France. Brussels taken without bloodshed – the French in full retreat on the Frontier." (LOOKS UP) God reading that. (SOLDIER STAGGERS.) You are fatigued – go. (SOLDIER XS. UP WITHOUT SALUTING.) Come here. (SOLDIER RETURNS.) Where are your manners, dog? (SOLDIER SALUTES AND SINKS DOWN. PRINCE TURNS TO SENTRY) Have him removed to Hospital – as soon as he is sufficiently recovered send him back to the firing line. (SENTRY SALUTES AND HELPS SOLDIER OFF.) I will show the World what the Mailed Fist really means! I will yet rule the World as I rule my men. Our Password – Fatherland Victorious – is a good one – Victory for us – Victory for Germany – our soldiers pressing on to Paris.

(SENTRY WHO HAS RETURNED XS. R. AND EXIT.)

SENTRY. (OFF) Halt – who passes?

KITTY. (OFF R.) Princess Katherine Zurin.

SENTRY. (OFF) The Countersign?

KITTY. (OFF) Fatherland Victorious. My papers are in order – admit me.

(ENTER KITTY, HANDSOMELY GOWNED. HAT, GLOVES, ETC. SHE MAKES A LOW OBEISANCE. SENTRY SALUTES AND EXITS.)

PRINCE. Has your work been successful?

KITTY. Yes Sir. Here are the plans of British coast defences for sixty miles.

(PRINCE TAKES THE PLANS AND LAYS THEM OUT ON TABLE.)

PRINCE. Has Baron Guggenheim carried out my orders?

- KITTY. Baron Guggenheim assumed the name of Richard Bellairs – as Richard Bellairs he is known in Britain.
- PRINCE. I am already acquainted with these facts. Baron Guggenheim is a trusted secret agent – I await his news. Do not again mention in my presence his assumed name. It is British and I hate all connected with that land. Soon we shall mow down her troops like hay – soon we shall invade her shores.
- KITTY. I am glad Sir that in some small measure I have helped. Here are my reports – (GIVES PAPERS) I took service as a maid of a Captain so my task of obtaining information was an easy one.
- PRINCE. Did either you or Baron Guggenheim obtain the Secret Wireless Code?
- KITTY. We have both failed in that up to the present. Bellairs – pardon Sir – Guggenheim – nearly lost his life in the attempt.
- PRINCE. It would have been a splendid death! Think, Princess – to die in the service of your Fatherland. Never were things more favourable for Germany – Britain is divided against herself – we will crush the United Kingdom – united no longer. Redmond and Carson's armies engaged in Civil War, will make our victory easy.
- KITTY. Redmond and Carson's armies have joined forces, Sir, to defend their mother country.
- PRINCE. Bah! The traitors! Germany as she stands now, fully armed and mobilised, could face and beat the world.
- KITTY. Within the shores of Britain we have friends – allies – who will work for God and for their Fatherland.
- PRINCE. All told there are two hundred thousand German subjects in the Country ready to help us. Britain has more to fear from within than without.
- KITTY. Baron Guggenheim has arranged for Bridges to be destroyed – ships to be sunk – supplies to be cut off. I too have helped in the work.
- PRINCE. That is good. You are both a credit to your Country.
- KITTY. I serve my Emperor.
- PRINCE. The sword has been forced into our hands. I hope that if at last my efforts to bring our adversaries to see things in their proper light and to maintain peace

do not succeed we shall with God's help wield the sword in such a way that we can sheath it with honour. You Emperor's words, which will live in history.

SENTRY. (OFF R.) Who passes?

BELLAIRS. (OFF R.) Baron Hans Guggenheim.

SENTRY. (OFF) The Countersign?

BELLAIRS. (OFF) Fatherland Victorious.

PRINCE.)

KITTY.) The Baron!

(SENTRY ENTERS AND SALUTES. )

(ENTER BELLAIRS AS BARON GUGGENHEIM. HE WEARS GERMAN OFFICER'S UNIFORM AND HAS HIS FACE AND NOSE PLASTERED. HE LOOKS GENERALLY THE WORSE FOR WEAR.)

BELLAIRS. (SALUTES) I am here, Sir, at your command.

PRINCE. You look as though you had had a rough time. Your nose is somewhat the worse for wear.

BELLAIRS. (CARESSING HIS NOSE) Yes Sir: I got smashed – somewhat battered – to say nothing of being somewhat wet from my ducking in the horsepond. Ugh! Phew! English – stink! But it matters not – so long as all I endured was in the Service of the Fatherland.

PRINCE. Did you get the Secret Code – the Wireless Code?

BELLAIRS. Up to now, Sir, no. But give me a little more time and I shall succeed.

PRINCE. With that Code in our possession, we should have an easy task.

BELLAIRS. It shall be in your hands within three days.

PRINCE. With it, we should have known Kitchener's movements – this silent Man of Mystery with nerves of Iron – who works in secret.



38.

BELLAIRS. I have the key how to obtain it. I lay before you Sir (GIVES PAPERS) the entire strength of the Allied forces. The strength of the British Navy, with plans of several of Her Battleships.

PRINCE. Mines are being laid to clear the seas of these pests. If we had the Secret Code we should know where these Battle Ships lay.

BELLAIRS. The man in charge of the Wireless Station is one Captain Russell Squires. When I capture him, I'll get the Secret Code.

PRINCE. We will break the power of Britain. We have four million now in the field, with five million more to draw upon; a month – or two at most – will see us conquer these Allied Forces.

(EXIT L.I.E. WITH MAPS AND DESPATCHES.)

KITTY. What a feather in your cap if you could obtain this Secret Code.

BELLAIRS. And I will. Captain Russell Squires has been drafted into the Field. I have special information – and – as I take command of my old Regiment, I will see that he falls into my hands. I have a long score to settle with him – there is no time for delay. The bursting of the War Cloud will shake the World.

KITTY. It will Baron.

BELLAIRS. Call me Hans, you used to, in the old days.

KITTY. Yes, and I have also called you Bellairs.

BELLAIRS. Oh! Forget that. That was in Britain – bah! I hate everything connected with England.

KITTY. Ah, my Hans, judging by your face – you have unpleasant recollections – eh? But you are a good actor Hans – you pretend not to recognise me – you say to me – to keep my mouth closed – so. (BUS.)

BELLAIRS. My Katherine, I endeavour always to play my part to the best of my ability.

KITTY. Were you playing a part when you made love to Mistress Diana – eh? You profess to love me, and I see you make love to her. I was jealous, and I long to make her suffer.

BELLAIRS. I but played my part.

KITTY. You played it too well for my taste. There was that in your eyes that spoke of desire. I wonder sometimes if you are to be trusted, Hans.

BELLAIRS. Surely Katherine – you do not doubt me! You know I love you. (GOES TO HER .. SHE XS.)

KITTY. (COQUETTISHLY) Ah my Hans! You must prove to me that you really love me and me alone. (LOOKS AT HIM AND LAUGHS) Oh Hans! Your recent adventures do make you look funny – yes really – I think you look handsomer than ever.

BELLAIRS. (ASTONISHED) What! With my face all covered with plaster?

KITTY. THAT’S it! The more your face is covered the handsomer you are. (LAUGHS AND EXITS.)

BELLAIRS. (ANGRILY) Confound her! Ach! It does not do to quarrel with her – she is a dangerous woman and wields a great power – a born adventuress, an ideal spy. She was right in her suspicions, I did, and do – still love Diana Squires. I hate her husband who won her love from me – but Katherine must never guess – never. But she shall yet learn that it is dangerous to laugh at me – more dangerous than she dreams of.

(RE-ENTER PRINCE.)

PRINCE. (GIVES HIM PAPERS) Here are your orders to rejoin your Regiment immediately.

BELLAIRS. Thank you Sir.

(BOOM OF A DISTANT GUN IS HEARD.)

PRINCE. What is that?

BELLAIRS. (AT OPENING .. LOOKING OFF) The soldiers are forming up, it looks like an attack.

40.

PRINCE. But this place is at least ten miles from the firing line. (BOOM OF GUN.) Thst must be our men.

BELLAIRS. I cannot tell as yet Sir. (BOOM OF GUN NEARER.)

PRINCE. (IN AGITATION) They told me this place was safe!

BELLAIRS. They were wrong Sir – someone has lied!

PRINCE. They shall pay for it! (THREE SEPARATE BOOMS OF GUNS.) I'll have the traitor shot down who said this place was secure.

BELLAIRS. Shells are bursting to the North! (BOOM OF GUNS NEAR.)

PRINCE. (HASTILY PACKING UP PAPERS) Get me news! Get me news!

(RE-ENTER KITTY.)

KITTY. A Rider from the North has fallen off his horse in the Courtyard below.

PRINCE. Never mind that! What was his message?

KITTY. The British are making a flank movement to this place – they are entrenched barely three miles away. (A SHELL IS HEARD RICOCHETTING THROUGH THE AIR.)

PRINCE. (IN TERROR) A shell! (NOISE OF SHELL BURSTING.)

KITTY. They mean to hem us in! (BUGLE BLOWN OFF.)

PRINCE. That is an order to advance.

BELLAIRS. Yes Sir.

PRINCE. Bid our men sound the retreat! Remember I am here.

BELLAIRS. It shall be so.

(PRINCE EXITS HURRIEDLY.)

41.

(SOUND OF GUNS HEARD. BLACKOUT.)

(NOTE: THE LAST SCENE IS EVENING. LAMPS ARE LIGHTED. AT THE SECOND SOUND OF GUNS THESE ARE PUT OUT, AND THE END OF SCENE IS PLAYED IN A VERY FAINT LIGHT.)

(CHANGE OF SCENE.)

-----% % % %-----% % % %-----% % % %-----

ACT II.

SCENE II.. THE CHATEAU HOSPITAL.

OAK CHAMBER OR ARMOURY HALL. DOUBLE DOORS R. IN FLAT.  
WINDOW DOWN R. DOOR UP STAGE L.Z.E. INTERIOR CLOTH AT BACK  
WITH PILLARS LOOKING OUT ONTO BALCONY.

BACK CLOTH WOOD OR LANDSCAPE, WITH VERY BRIGHT SUNSHINE  
EFFECTS.

LIGHTS FULL UP. DOWN L. ARE DESK AND CHAIRS AND IF POSSIBLE A  
PIANO .. SMALL BEDS R. AND L. A CHAIR BY EACH BED.

UP STAGE L. IS A FILTER CONTAINING WATER. A SMALL TABLE R.U.E.

A BRITISH SOLDIER IS ON SENTRY GO AT BACK OF BALCONY.)

(HERBERT IS DISCOVERED LYING IN BED R. OF STAGE. ONE ARM IS IN  
A SLING, THE OTHER IS BOUND UP (HIS HAND ONLY.

AS THE SCENE OPENS TWO SOLDIERS OF THE RED CROSS CARRY A  
WOUNDED SOLDIER ON A STRETCHER. THEY TAKE HIM OFF THROUGH  
DOUBLE DOORS R.

ALICE MUNROE A RED CROSS NURSE IS DISCOVERED SITTING ON  
CHAIR BY HERBERT'S BED R. (IN UNIFORM.)

SOLDIERS OFF SING "IT'S A LONG WAY TO TIPPERARY" ETC. ALICE  
JOINS IN, VERY LIVELY.)

HERBERT. (WHEN VOICES DIE AWAY) That's fine, Nurse! Straight – your voice do do a  
bloke a bit of good!

ALICE. Are you in much pain now?

HERBERT. Not much. When you sings it eases the pain away:- do you know Sister Alice,  
you've been a big 'elp to me.

ALICE. Have I? I am glad to hear it.

43.

HERBERT. I do wish as 'ow you would sing it to me again. The song you sang to the blokes in the other ward, and they encored you for it.

ALICE. I cannot attend to my duties if I sing to you all the time.

HERBERT. Ain't it one of your duties to tend our wounds – and another to keep us cheerful?

ALICE. Yes – well: Are we downhearted?

HERBERT. No! not likely! When you's about. There be two things a soldier loves, -

ALICE. (COQUETTISHLY) And they are --?

HERBERT. (VERY MATTER OF FACT) A smoke and a song.

ALICE. And nothing more?

HERBERT. Aye, there be one thing he loves even better than these.

ALICE. I thought so. (SIGHS) And what is that Private Bruce?

HERBERT. Don't you know Sister Alice? Can't you guess?

ALICE. I think so - but I'd like you to tell me?

HERBERT. Well – it's – it's –

ALICE. Yes --? It's – it's - ?

HERBERT. A gargle. (NOTE – SCENE TO BE WORKED UP.)

ALICE. Oh! Is it.

HERBERT. Sure, but you're not singing.

ALICE. (PETULANTLY) Oh! you do worry me!

HERBERT. And you does make me 'appy when yer sings. Come on now, be a pal!

(SHE SMILES AT HIM .. GOES TO PIANO AND SINGS. AS SHE FINISHES SONG .. ENTER PERCY, WHO HOBBLER ON WITH THE AID OF TWO STICKS .. HE XS TO BED L.)

44.

HERBERT. Thank yer Nurse Alice, I feels easier now.

ALICE. (XS. TO HIM AND RAISES HIM UP) Lean up a bit – (ARRANGES HIS PILLOW)  
That's better.

PERCY. (SEES THEM) Girls! Oh 'Erb!

HERBERT. Hello Percy boy!

PERCY. Play the game 'Erb! Girls is my privilege.

HERBERT. Been wounded 'ave you Percy boy?

PERCY. No, marching and carrying despatches. (SITS ON BED AND CARESSES FEET)  
Oh! My poor tootsies.

HERBERT. Trotter cases bad Percy?

PERCY. Cut to bits – so's my feet: they're just raw flesh.

HERBERT. Good old plates of meat. They do suffer on this sun baked earth, and no  
bloomin' horror.

PERCY. I've been up on duty at the Wireless Station. While we can keep that we're in  
communication with the main line. (XS. TO R. AND PUTS EYEGLASS IN EYE)  
What's the matter with your hands 'Erb?

HERBERT. Got shot. A shell burst and my gun stock splintered in my 'ands. (PUTS ARM NOT IN  
SLING ROUND ALICE'S NECK.)

PERCY. You seem to be doing very well with what's left you, 'Erb. (HOLDS HIS FEET OFF THE  
FLOOR.) Oh! My poor feet! (GROANS.)

ALICE. I must go to his aid.

HERBERT. If my 'ands were stronger I'd hold you 'ere.

ALICE. (LAUGHS AND XS. TO PERCY) You soldiers are deceivers ever. (TO PERCY) Have you  
any special orders?

PERCY. Yes! Doctor says as how I am to have my boots removed and lie with my feet up.

HERBERT. Remember Percy boy, my 'ands is bandaged – and I can't hold my nose.

(BUS. PERCY HOLDS OUT ONE FOOT .. ALICE UNLACES BOOT AND PULLS IT OFF .. PERCY GIVES ONE LONG HOWL AND FALLS BACK ON BED .. SHOWING A STOCKING WITH HARDLY ANY FOOT IN IT, TOES STICKING RIGHT OUT .. ALICE MAKES A MOUE AND TURNS AWAY., THEN MAKES A VALIANT EFFORT AND TAKES OTHER BOOT OFF .. SHOWING HOLES EVEN WORSE THAN THE OTHER FOOT. SHE SITS ON FLOOR AND FANS THE AIR WITH HER APRON.)

PERCY. What's the matter?

ALICE. Nothing – but it's very warm.

HERBERT. Warm! I should say so. It's 'ot – 'orrid 'ot! I say Percy – it's no joke - it ain't fair on the Nurses and the flies.

ALICE. Nurses have to put up with a lot at times, so don't mind me.

PERCY. Your nasturshams are unjust 'Erb! Thank Goodness my arms is all right. (CATCHES ALICE ROUND WAIST AND PULLS HER DOWN TO SIT ON BED.)

ALICE. Now behave yourself!

HERBERT. If my hands were well Percy, I'd dot you on the boko.

PERCY. 'Erb old sport, say nose or proboscis. Boko is vulgar.

HERBERT. And so is your behaviour. Come off it or I'll kick ye.

PERCY. If I could stand on my feet – I'd retaliate by smashing your blooming jaw.

ALICE. (LAUGHS) Well, of all the friends I've ever met, you two are the queerest.

HERBERT. He'd no right to come pokin' his nose in 'ere.

ALICE. It was his feet he poked – through his socks (LAUGHS.)

HERBERT. How you, a puffic lady, can sit there with them feet over your very nose – is more than I can make out. Come off it I say!

PERCY. (TO ALICE) How vulgar he is! You surely will not go near him again.

ALICE. Oh! I don't know. He was very nice till you came in.

HERBERT. There! Can't ye see she doesn't want yer – get off it into another Ward. If my 'ands were well, I'd bloomin' soon throw you out.

PERCY. And if I could stand on my feet – I'd bloomin' soon ask you to try.



46.

ALICE. (LAUGHS) Your temperature has gone up, I shall have to give you both something to lower it.

PERCY. You take off my socks Sister, the doctor said as how you had to.

(SHE MAKES A WRY FACE .. THEN PULLS SOCKS OFF AND THROWS THEM UNDER BED .. QUICKLY.)

ALICE. How's that Private?

PERCY. Ripping! (PULLS HER DOWN ONTO BED AGAIN.)

HERBERT. Rotten! I'll smash his ugly mug!

PERCY. (CUDDLING ALICE) Say cup and saucer 'Erb – Mug is vulgar.

(HERBERT WAVES BANDAGED HAND IN AIR WILDLY – HITS HIS OWN ARM AND COLLAPSES.)

He's a woman hater – he always was! As for me – I always loved the girls! Oh, Girls!

HERBERT. Yus, with six sweethearts in every town – he loves and leaves every girl he meets.

(HE JUMPS FRANTICALLY OUT OF BED .. PERCY SPRINGS TO HIS FEET .. HE ADVANCES TO HERBERT .. HOLDING EACH FOOT VERY HIGH .. HERBERT HITS HIM WITH BANDAGED HAND, AND SHOUTS AND JUMPS WITH THE PAIN. PERCY FALLS BACK ON THE BED WITH HIS FEET IN THE AIR, STRUGGLES UP AND HOLDS THEM.)

(HERBERT WEARS VERY BRIGHT PYJAMAS.)

PERCY. Oh, my poor feet.

HERBERT. Oh, me 'and! Me 'and!

ALICE. And serve you both right, Private Bruce, get back into bed.

HERBERT. Righto Nurse! (SALUTES AND GETS BACK INTO BED – SHE COVERS HIM UP.) Stay by me and hold my 'and! It's awful painful.

ALICE. No I won't! This has got to stop. As for you (TO PERCY) How can I attend to your feet if you are not quiet. I forbid you both to touch me again – I'll have no wrangling in this Ward.

HERBERT. Now, Sister Alice, you're cross.

PERCY. And all through you!

HERBERT. You're a lie – a ty-

PERCY. And you're another! (NURSES ONE FOOT IN HIS HAND.)

ALICE. If you don't behave, I'll send for the Head Nurse, Sister Diana.

PERCY. I wish he had my feet! Curse him!

HERBERT. I wish he had my 'ands! Damn him!

ALICE. Silence! I'll leave the Ward if you are not better tempered.

HERBERT. I'll be as good as gold if you'll honly take him and his bloomin' plates of meat away. They poison me! I'd sooner face a hundred thousand Germans.

ALICE. Silence I say!

PERCY. Did you ever hear such vulgar language – to compare my dainty feet to Germans! I'll have his blood! And he's not only vulgar, he is also ungrammatical. I've tried to learn him, but failed. (SIGHS) It's a great pity, for with eddication he might have made a decent citizen – as it is – well, it's a pity. He's nothing but an ugly looking, lob eared, scallywagging, grinning, cross eyed, bottle nosed polluter of purity.

HERBERT. Mother of Moses! Did ye hear that?

(JUMPS OUT OF BED .. BUSINESS AS BEFORE .. ALICE COMES BETWEEN THEM. PERCY FALLS BACK ON BED .. HOLDING ONE FOOT .. BOTH HE AND HERBERT SIT ON THEIR RESPECTIVE BEDS ARGUING WITH EACH OTHER STRONGLY ACROSS THE STAGE .. ALICE TRIES TO QUIETEN THEM BUT CANNOT .. SHE THEN XS. R. OF STAGE .. OPENS DOUBLE DOORS.)

ALICE. Sister Diana, will you come this way? (XS. C.)

(ENTER DIANA SQUIRES DOORS R. IN UNIFORM.

48.

AS SHE ENTERS BOTH HERBERT AND PERCY BECOME VERY QUIET .. BOTH SALUTE.)

DIANA. What is the trouble?

ALICE. I cannot persuade these gentlemen to be quiet.

DIANA. I think I recognise them both. (BOTH SALUTE AS SHE LOOKS AT THEM AND SMILES)  
You were friends when I saw you last. (TO ALICE) What is the cause of their quarrel?

ALICE. I don't like to tell you.

DIANA. Do not be afraid – speak, what was the cause of their quarrel?

ALICE. I am afraid I am.

DIANA. You! In what way?

ALICE. Well, one can't hug me, and the other can't stand up to make love to me.

DIANA. I am surprised, Sister Alice, to hear of such frivolity. (TO PERCY) I'll move you to my Ward.

PERCY. Beg pardon Ma'am, but I'd rather stay here. I wants her to bind my feet.

HERBERT. The girl is young, too young to die yet.

PERCY. (THROWS PILLOW AT HIM) Shut up – blighted blitherer.

DIANA. Come, let your quarrel end, Britain needs friends – not foes. (BOTH SALUTE.)

PERCY. I'll go into the next Ward, Sister Diana. (GETS OFF BED .. ALICE HANDS HIM STICKS,  
HE HOBBLER OFF AS THOUGH HE WERE TREADING ON TIN TACKS.)

HERBERT. (SINGS AS HE WATCHES HIM) It's a long long way to Tipperary – 'Ows your poor feet  
Percy boy? (LAUGHS DERISIVELY.)

DIANA. (XS TO HERBERT'S BED) I am surprised at you Private Bruce. (TO ALICE) Sister Alice –  
go into the next Ward and see to his feet directly.

ALICE. Yes Sister. (RUNS TO DOOR R. AFTER PERCY .. AND HELPS HIM OUT ..TURNS AND  
LOOKS AT HERBERT) That will show him if a gargle is the very best thing on earth.

(HERBERT GROANS .. AND FALLS BACK ONTO HIS BED .. DIANA TUCKS HIM  
IN.)

DIANA. I cannot understand you – who acted with such conspicuous bravery – being so mean as to scoff at his poor feet, and to quarrel with your best friend.

HERBERT. He called me an ugly looking, lob eared, scallywagging, grinning, cross eyed, bottle nosed polluter of purity. Sister Diana, what did he mean?

DIANA. I'm afraid that is beyond my intellect.

HERBERT. I can't let it go unpunished! I'll 'ave to biff him for it.

DIANA. I am sure he will be sorry when he is well, he will tell you so, and you will be friends again.

HERBERT. But 'e is with my girl.

DIANA. When his feet are bandaged, she will be back here.

HERBERT. Thank ye Sister Diana. You're one of the best, you are.

(ENTER COLONEL MARS .. HERBERT SALUTES.)

MARS. (CHEERILY) Well, and how are all the patients going on?

DIANA. Fairly well, but a peculiar disease has broken out in some of the Wards, we cannot account for it at all.

MARS. Oh! What is the nature of the disease?

DIANA. Mostly fever, Colonel; but in the case of Corporal Masters, it was sudden death. We buried the poor chap yesterday.

MARS. What nurses have you here?

DIANA. There are only three of us left, Sister Alice, myself and my Maid Kitty. You remember her – she left me in England and then returned here to offer herself as a nurse, to be near me she said. The other sisters have all been taken ill mysteriously. It has been a terrible time for us, but it has had one consolation for me; I have had no time to brood over my own trouble.

MARS. Have you and Russell not patched up your quarrel yet?

DIANA. No ,and I fear we never shall; he believes the worst. Those letters – with their forged dates – made things look so black against me. The worst of my suffering is that he comes here sometimes on duty to get reports, and we have to meet as strangers. Oh! It is dreadful! Dreadful!

- MARS. I know he suffers – several times he has placed himself before his comrades, deliberately courting death. He is a brave man, your husband, and you must be brave too – all will come right in the end.
- DIANA. If I could only think so. That treacherous German Spy was the cause of it all.
- MARS. Would that we had detained him as a prisoner of War. If he lives to escape his ducking in the sea, he may be working some fresh mischief.
- DIANA. He can work no more than he has already done as far as my domestic happiness s concerned, it is ruined for ever.
- MARS. Don't believe it Diana. Russell will yet be convinced of his mistake; he will yet acknowledge you as a good and pure woman.
- DIANA. If I could only think so. But he is implacable. Oh! Colonel Mars, everything seems to go wrong with me. The Wards I look after are not successful – my patients die, my nurses are ill. There is something strange behind it all.
- MARS. It shall be investigated at once – I'll talk the matter over with Russell when he arrives. (LOOKS ROUND) This Old Chateau, given by our friends, makes an ideal Hospital.

(RE-ENTER NURSE ALICE.)

- ALICE. Another case in there, Sister Diana. Sergeant Price is, I believe – dying.
- DIANA. Dying! It cannot be! He was convalescent – and almost well enough to rejoin his comrades an hour ago.
- ALICE. He is dying now Sister.
- DIANA. What can it mean! I'll see to him. (EXIT HURRIEDLY.)
- MARS. It is difficult to say how a wounded soldier will do – even when he seems on the mend. (TO HERBERT) How are you going along Bruce?
- HERBERT. I 'ate to be shut up here Sir; why my 'ands almost well agin – and I wants to be back in the firing line.
- MARS. And you shall be soon! We can do with all the brave fearless men we can get. These German vermin want wiping out – nothing is sacred to them, not even women and children.

- HERBERT. I wish I could get at 'em again Sir – I'd give 'em socks! (MYSTERIOUSLY) Beg pardon sir, but can you smell anything?
- MARS. (SNIFFS THE AIR) No – I can't say –
- HERBERT. A bit further that way Sir: (MOTIONS COLONEL OVER TO BED L. BUS REEPEATED TILL COLONEL EVENTUALLY HOLDS HIS NOSE.) Got it sir? Niff it?
- MARS. What in Heaven's name !-
- HERBERT. That's the socks Sir! Percy's socks! If they was shot into the German lines – they'd kill a few – not 'alf. Beg pardon Sir, but 'ow's things going on?
- MARS. We are holding our own. The whole Army is behaving splendidly, as I knew they would – every mother's son of 'em a Soldier and a man.
- HERBERT. Whooroo! I say Sir, asking you pardon agin; but what's a lob eared, scallywagging, bottle nosed polluter of purity?
- MARS. A what -- ?
- HERBERT. (SLOWLY) A lob eared, scallywagging, bottle nosed polluter o' purity.
- MARS. I cannot recall hearing the sentence before, but it sounds extremely vulgar! (XS. UP STAGE.)
- HERBERT. Vulgar! And this from Percy. That puts the tin lid on it.
- MARS. Disease and death in the Hospital! Can there be foul play! I trust not – I trust not.

(ENTER RUSSELL SQUIRES IN UNIFORM. HE HAS WIRELESS MESSAGES IN HIS HANDS. HE SALUTES SENTRY AS HE PASSES AND MARS WHEN ON.)

- RUSSELL. Nothing is sacred from these German fiends – Louvain has been sacked – women and children shot. The Red Cross has been fired on, and many of the Ambulance Corps killed.
- MARS. Oh - The dogs! The dogs!
- RUSSELL. I have sent full reports through to Head-Quarters – a day of reckoning is near. Every available man in Britain is wanted to stay this tide of Butchery and wanton murder.
- MARS. Here in this very Hospital there seems to be some underhand work. The nurses – all but three –are laid up: most of the patients – especially those who are convalescent – have been smitten with fever.

52.

RUSSELL. I will investigate it at once.

(RE-ENTER DIANA .. SHE IS CRYING.)

DIANA. Sergeant Price is dead.

MARS. Dead!

RUSSELL. Who was attending to him?

DIANA. I was.

(EXIT MARS THROUGH DOUBLE DOORS .. LOOKING AT DIANA AND RUSSELL.)

RUSSELL. You reported yesterday that Sergeant Price would be able to leave Hospital today.  
(DOES NOT LOOK AT HER.)

DIANA. My report was true.

RUSSELL. Can you account for his death?

DIANA. No.

RUSSELL. What does the doctor say?

DIANA. He is at present making an examination – he has made no statement. (WITH PASSIONATE CHANGE OF MANNER) Oh Russell, must it always be like this? Hard and fast reports – nothing closer or dearer? I cannot bear it much longer. The news that you are courting death – the hopelessness of my position – the impossibility of proving my innocence since the man who accused me is among the ranks of our enemy.

RUSSELL. All that is dead. The proofs of your innocence! – have I not read the proofs of your guilt. It would be well for you not to recall the past – best for me to forget it.

DIANA. I can never forget my love for you. I can never forget the injustice I have suffered.

(ENTER KITTY THROUGH DOUBLE DOORS .. SHE WEARS NURSES DRESS .. RED CROSS ETC .. SHE IS LOOKING MOST DEMURE.)

Ah! Here is my Maid, she will speak the truth. (TO KITTY) Kitty – you will answer truthfully – any questions I ask you?

KITTY. Surely, Madame – yes.

DIANA. Did I ever meet Richard Bellairs – alone?

KITTY. Yes, Madame: many times. I knew of your intrigue with him.

RUSSELL. You knew of my wife's intrigue with Bellairs?

KITTY. Yes, Sir; I used to convey secret messages from one to the other. The last was on the day you parted.

DIANA. Kitty, you know what you say is not true! You are telling a lie – the worst kind of a lie, for it is half the truth.

RUSSELL. (TURNS AWAY) I should not have listened.

DIANA. Kitty, I thought you were my friend.

KITTY. You asked me to speak the truth.

RUSSELL. It is enough.

(RE-ENTER COLONEL MARS.)

MARS. The doctor has analysed the medicine last given to the dead man, and finds it was poisoned.

OMNES. Poisoned! !

(HERBERT SITS UP IN BED .. LOOKS AT HIS MEDICINE .. PICKS IT UP.)

HERBERT. Lum-mee!

RUSSELL. Who administered the medicine?

DIANA. I did.

RUSSELL. And it was poisoned! What does this mean?

DIANA. I do not know.



KITTY. I am afraid Madame knows more than she cares to tell. She was in league with a German Spy before she joined the Red Cross Brigade.

DIANA. It's a foul lie! A cruel lie!

RUSSELL. This is too horrible!

DIANA. Was not my cup of bitterness full enough.

RUSSELL. Whatever our domestic quarrel has been, I cannot – will not – believe this!

DIANA. Thank you for those words. They will be something to remember in the years to come.

MARS. I am afraid on enquiry, things will look very black against you, but I too believe you to be innocent. At the same time I must ask you to resign your charge of this Hospital until the mystery is cleared.

RUSSELL. You will be afforded safe escort back.

DIANA. So that I can await my trial: I understand. I will resign my charge here. Resign! I accept my dismissal. Noble women and Brave men have been stricken down whilst in my charge. It is a bitter blow that cruel fate has struck – but – be the issue what it may: - before you all I assert my innocence. I have never dishonoured my husband's name – and I have been loyal to my trust and to my King.

MARS. (TO RUSSELL) you will prepare your report upon this, and send it through the War Office.

RUSSELL. Colonel – I could not! Must I be the one to send this report through?

MARS. I am sorry, Russell, but it is your duty.

RUSSELL. My duty. My duty to condemn my own wife.

MARS. You are in charge of the line of communication.

RUSSELL. I understand, though it should break my heart – my duty shall be done.

(DIANA HAS TAKEN OFF NURSES CHATELAINE ETC. .. LAYS ALL ON TABLE .. LOOKS AT RUSSELL .. EXITS, FOLLOWED BY MARS, WHO OPENS DOOR FOR HER R.)

KITTY. It has often been said, Sir, during this War, "that there is more danger within, than without".

RUSSELL. I know. It is also said that women are more dangerous than men.

KITTY. (FORGETTING HERSELF FOR THE MOMENT) Ach yes! That is true, if they are enemies. (SPEAKS WITH GERMAN ACCENT.)

RUSSELL. (TURNS ON HER QUICKLY) I understood you were French!

KITTY. Ah yes M'sieu: I am so proud to belong to ze brave French nation.

RUSSELL. And yet, you spoke just now with a German accent!

KITTY. Ah, M'sieu! - you would not suspect me -- ?

RUSSELL. I would suspect my own shadow if it took the shape or form of a German.

KITTY. (BLAZING WITH SECRET WRATH LETS THE GERMAN ACCENT OUT AGAIN) M'sieu Russell blames and suspects me because I speak the truth of his wife and Richard Bellairs. Ach! Is it not so?

RUSSELL. (ASIDE) The German accent again! If after all – both she and Bellairs have lied: - Diana innocent! – I'll watch and wait. (EXIT THROUGH C. OPENING.)

KITTY. (XS. UP TO WINDOW) Ach! How I hate these British! How I laugh in my sleeve as I exterminate them one by one. But I must be careful – for Captain Russell suspects: I must silence him – as I have silenced his virtuous wife. He was right: women are more dangerous than men. (EXIT.)

(RE-ENTER ALICE .. SUPPORTING PERCY, WHO WALKS WITH HIS FEET VERY HIGH .. BOTH FEET ARE NOW IN BANDAGES .. HE WALKS WITH STICK.)

HERBERT. (SITTING UP IN BED) Hello Percy boy! Hows yer pore feet? I 'opes as 'ow they're acking bad.

PERCY. I am pleased to say 'Erb, they are none the worse for your asking. I say, ain't Nurse Alice tender in her treatment.

HERBERT. (GRUNTS) You wait my bonny boy – and I'll give you something presently to say your prayers for.

(PERCY WHO IS BY NOW SITTING ON BED L. FLIRTS WITH ALICE.)

HERBERT. (ANNOYED) Nurse! (CALLS) Nurse. (SHE TAKES NO NOTICE .. BUSINESS .. HE SHOUTS) Nurse!

ALICE. (LOOKS ROUND AT HIM .. SPEAKS QUITE QUIETLY) Were you speaking?

HERBERT. Was I a speaking? No, I was just a whispering like a bloomin' British Destroyer – what's a blastin' –

PERCY. Don't swear 'Erb – it's vulgar.

HERBERT. Vulgar your eye – you shut up! Like a bloomin' British Destroyer, what's a blastin' a damned German Gunboat on one of its own Blastin' Mines. What's the matter with that?

PERCY. Nothing 'Erb – it's absolutely top hole.

HERBERT. Well then – you come off it and shut your mouth afore I makes yer! Nurse, my 'ands want bandaging.

PERCY. Don't go Nurse – it's only an excuse.

ALICE. (RISES) Oh – but I must – it's my duty.

(SHE XS. PERCY RISES TO STOP HER .. SHE STUMBLES OVER HIS FEET .. HE YELLS AND FALLS BACK ON BED .. NURSING FOOT. ALICE DOES NOT NOTICE HIM BUT XS. TO HERBERT WHO DRAWS HER TO HIM .. SHE STARTS TO UNDO BANDAGES .. HE FLIRTS WITH HER.)

HERBERT. Quite comfortable Percy boy – thank you.

PERCY. I didn't speak.

HERBERT. No, well I was just a tellin' of yer, in case you felt anxious about me. (HAND IS NOW FREE OF BANDAGES .. HE WAVES IT IN THE AIR.) Look – look old sport, I can use my fingers – (TICKLES ALICE UNDER HER CHIN) I won't 'ave it tied up again Nurse – (IN GREAT EXCITEMENT) try the other one! (SHE UNDOES SLING CAREFULLY – HE SLOWLY STRAIGHTENS ARM OUT AND PUTS IT ROUND HER WAIST.)

ALICE. Oh do be careful! Or you'll crack it!

HERBERT. Not likely! See that Percy boy – I can use that too.

PERCY. I can see you! It's disgusting.

57.

HERBERT. There's some talk of me being invalided 'ome! But no bloomin' fear: I'm a going to get Colonel Mars to put me back into the firing line. (TICKLES ALICE AGAIN UNDER CHIN.)

PERCY. There's going to be trouble if you don't stop tickling that girl under the chin.

HERBERT. You shut yer bloomin' chivy chase! (THROWS PILLOW AT HIM.)

(THE WHIRR OF AN AEROPLANE IS HEARD .. KITTY IS SEEN THROUGH WINDOW GIVING SIGNALS UP TO THE AIR .. RUSSELL PASSES SECOND WINDOW .. KITTY ENTERS HURRIEDLY DOORS R.)

KITTY. I will see to these brave fellows, Nurse Alice, you are wanted in the next Ward.

(TWO SOLDIERS ENTER WITH WOUNDED MAN ON STRETCHER WHO IS MUTTERING AND RAVING .. HIS HEAD IS BANDAGED UP.)

See, a new patient has arrived.

ALICE. (RISES OFF BED .. XS UP TO R.) Poor chap! (SOLDIERS CARRY HIM OFF ON STRETCHER.) I WILL GO TO HIM IMMEDIATELY. (EXITS QUICKLY AFTER SOLDIERS.)

KITTY. (XS. DOWN TO HERBERT'S BED) Your medicine! You must take it. (PICKS UP BOTTLE.)

Herbert. Medicine! No fear! I'm not havin' any.

PERCY. (OGLING KITTY) Nurse Kitty, I could do a drink.

HERBERT. And so could I! A quart of good old mild and bitter would go down like soothing syrup.

KITTY. (XS. TO FILTER AND LIFTS LID) I can only give you water, but I am so proud to attend to you both.

(RE-ENTER RUSSELL .. HE STANDS AND WATCHES HER UNSEEN BY HER .. )

and it is so good, and clean, and cool

58.

(SHE TAKES PHIAL FROM HER BREAST AND DELIBERATELY POURS CONTENTS INTO FILTER. NOTE – THIS MUST BE DONE SLOWLY AND WITH PURPOSE .. SO THAT THE AUDIENCE WILL SEE AND UNDERSTAND.)

See, good, pure water.

HERBERT. I wish it was beer.

PERCY. Nah! You can't carry your beer like a gentleman.

KITTY. (ASIDE) This will mean two more of my country's enemy out of the way. (POURS WATER OUT INTO TWO GLASSES .. SPEAKING ALL THE WHILE) i have signalled the Air Ship, and when I have done my work I leave this Chateau Hospital to the mercy of a falling Bomb.

(SHE IS CARRYING GLASSES DOWN STAGE ON A TRAY .. RUSSELL COMES FORWARD.)

RUSSELL. Stop!

KITTY. Oh M'sieu! You startle me!

RUSSELL. Before you give that water to those men, I want you to drink some yourself.

KITTY. I! Oh M'sieu, but certainly – (PRETENDS TO SLIP, TRAY AND GLASSES FALL.)

RUSSELL. That was very smart.

(SHE MAKES A BOLT FOR C. OPENING , SENTRY STOPS HER WITH HIS BAYONET. SHE FALLS BACK.)

You cannot pass, all Exits are guarded.

KITTY. Oh M'sieu! I am frightened – I do no harm!

RUSSELL. (XS. TO FILTER .. POURS OUT GLASS .. AND TAKES IT TO HER.) Very well – then you will drink that.

KITTY. But – I am not thirsty.

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RUSSELL. All the same you will drink. An hour ago that filter was examined, its contents were then pure. No one but you has been near it since! - now drink.

KITTY. I will not!

(SHE TRIES TO TURN TAP OF FILTER SO THAT WATER SHALL RUN OUT ..  
RUSSELL CATCHES HER WRIST.)

RUSSELL. On no you don't!

KITTY. (VERY GUTTURAL) Ach! Damn you!

(RE-ENTER COLONEL MARS.)

MARS. What is all this? What does it mean?

RUSSELL. That I have caught – red-handed – the poisoner of our wounded soldiers – this woman is a German Spy. In her breast is the empty phial which held the poison put into that filter!

(RE-ENTER DIANA.)

MARS. Then your wife is innocent.

RUSSELL. Of such a foul crime – yes, thank God!

MARS. Sister Diana, I ask your pardon for my suspicions and my cruelty. (TAKES UP APRON, CAP ETC. FROM TABLE AND HANDS THEM TO HER.) Will you honour me by taking up your old position again?

DIANA. Willingly – gladly: (LOOKS AT KITTY) when I have paid my debts.

KITTY. (TO MARS) Wht do you intend to do?

MARS. Hold you as prisoner of war. We British do not shoot women.

DIANA. No, but a British woman should be allowed to repay her wrongs. Give her into my hands.

60.

KITTY. (ASIDE) They must not detain me here, I gave the signal, and at any moment the bomb may be thrown that will wreck this old Chateau. I must escape! (TURNS TO DIANA) Ach! I do not fear you! Meet me in the open and I will fight you there!

DIANA. No, you shall fight me here!

RUSSELL. Diana, you shall not degrade yourself. (XS. DOWN TO HER.)

DIANA. (THROWS HIM OFF) There is no degradation in punishing a traitor. I will show her what a British woman can do in her own defence.

HERBERT.)

PERCY.) (BOTH SIT UP AND SHOUT IN ECSTASY) Hurrah! Give her beans Sister Diana – go for her! Etc. etc.

(KITTY XS. UP .. DIANA GETS HORSEWHIP.)

DIANA. I am going to thrash her within an inch of her life.

(KITTY PULLS OUT REVOLVER AND FIRES AT DIANA .. RUSSELL RUSHES FORWARD AND CATCHES HER HAND .. KNOCKS IT UP .. WRESTS REVOLVER FROM HER.)

RUSSELL. Treachery again.

KITTY. Ach! Damn you all!

(RUNS TO WINDOW .. WHIRR OF AEROPLANE HEARD NEARER .. BOMB FALLS, SHATTERING THE WINDOW ..KITTY FALLS AMONGST THE DEBRIS.)

RUSSELL. A German Bomb thrown on the Red Cross – lays low a German Spy.

ACT.

CURTAIN.

61.

IN TIME OF WAR.

ACT III.

SCENE I. THE SHATTERED FORT.

FRONT CLOTH. SOLDIERS DISCOVERED ASLEEP. EARLY MORNING. STAGE  
FLOODED AMBER LIME.

(HERBERT IS LEANING ON HIS GUN LOOKING OFF R.)

(VOICES ARE HEARD SINGING LOW.)

VOICES. "In the evening by the moonlight, you can hear those niggers singing etc."

HERBERT. Cut off! I wonder 'ow long it 'll be before 'elp comes. (SUDDENLY BRINGS HIS RIFLE  
DOWN) Halt! Who goes there?

RUSSELL. (OFF) A friend.

HERBERT. Countersign?

RUSSELL. (OFF) England is watching.

HERBERT. Pass friend – all's well.

(ENTER RUSSELL SQUIRES. HE XS. AND WAKES UP SOLDIER WHO IS ASLEEP  
ON GROUND.)

CORPORAL. (MUTTERS) That's right – pepper 'em lads! Give 'em 'ell!

RUSSELL. 'Tention! (SOLDIER SPRINGS TO HIS FEET AND SALUTES.)

CORPORAL. (RUBBING HIS EYES) Yes Sir.

RUSSELL. Take that to Colonel Mars. (GIVES DESPATCH.)

CORPORAL. Yes Sir. (TAKES PAPER .. SALUTES AND EXITS.)

RUSSELL. (TO HERBERT) Men still cheerful?



HERBERT. Aye Sir, can't you 'ear 'em a singing out there.

RUSSELL. And the women?

HERBERT. Quite safe Sir.

RUSSELL. Thank Heaven for that. You look glum. Worried?

HERBERT. A bit Sir. You see my girl's out there, and that devil Percy's a makin' hup to 'er.

RUSSELL. If she loves you, you needn't fear.

HERBERT. That's just it Sir: I dunno whether she does or not.

RUSSELL. Then you can hardly call her your girl. Who is she?

HERBERT. Nurse Alice Sir. She sings just like an angel.

RUSSELL. Everything was safely removed from the Chateau Hospital?

HERBERT. Yes, thank Heaven; all we had to leave was the dead. (TURNS SUDDENLY) Sir, you're a heddicated chap – can you tell me what a lob eared, scallywagging, grinning, cross eyed, bottle nosed polluter of purity is?

RUSSELL. Well, lob eared is generally applied to a rabbit, a Scallywag is a wastrel, cross eyed means a squint – bottle nosed is generally applied to a drunkard, polluter of purity depends – I should describe it as something that reeks in the nostrils – bad drains you know – or things of that sort.

HERBERT. Thank you Sir. So I am a “squinting, drunken wastrel rabbit with a breath like a bad drain” am I?

RUSSELL. Are you?

HERBERT. That's what my Pal Percy called me! You wait Sir, I'll “drunken, squintin' rabbit” him!

(ENTER COLONEL MARS. RUSSELL SALUTES, MARS SALUTES.)

RUSSELL. I was wanting to see you, Sir: I have received a wireless message from our Commander.

MARS. The Wireless Station is still intact?

RUSSELL. Yes Sir. We were asked to hold this position until the Main Force can come up.

MARS. We'll do it. (TAKES DESPATCH FROM RUSSELL.) This is serious.

RUSSELL. I know.

MARS. That Telegraph Station is the only means of communication with the Main line and the Allied force. It is danger – deadly danger – should we be attacked from the North. So long as we can keep in touch with the Main Body the German advance can be checked.

RUSSELL. How is the Garrison here?

MARS. The Men are splendid. Poor chaps! Tired out. We have provisions and water for twenty four hours yet.

(RE-ENTER CORPORAL .. WHO WAKES UP MEN AS THEY RISE .. THEY FALL INTO LINE AND HE MARCHES THEM OFF.)

(PERCY ENTERS .. HE SALUTES OFFICERS .. XS. TO HERBERT AND PRESENTS ARMS.)

HERBERT. Your turn 'ere now. I'm off to Alice. You wait my bonnie boy – I'll give you a callin' me a "squintin' wastrel drunken rabbit, wif a breath like a bloomin' drainpipe"!

PERCY. Gone mad haven't you 'Erb? Stark staring mad! I always thought you would.

HERBERT. You wait till we've finished the Germans: I'm going to 'ave a lovely fight wif you.  
(EXIT.)

PERCY. And to think of the Pals we've been – and now! All through a woman – (LEANS ON GUN AND LOOKS OFF R.)

RUSSELL. (TO MARS) If he worst comes to the worst – what about the women, Sir?

MARS. That is a question I have asked myself often. Being sisters of the Red Cross we can only hope their calling will protect them.

RUSSELL. Little mercy can be hoped for from vermin who drop bombs on Hospitals – shoot peaceable citizens – fire villages – and shelter behind women.

MARS. If all the men who could hold a gun would join our Forces – we would soon wipe out these pests.

RUSSELL. The Army wants more men, so that we can hold these cowards in check until the Russian Steam Roller sweeps up to Berlin. The War Lord has given orders to his

generals to walk over French's contemptible little army. He will find amongst that little army who will teach the world a lesson how men can fight and die.

MARS. When I was a younger man than I am now, there was a popular song "A Little British Army goes a damned long way".

RUSSELL. There's another one today sir: the one our Tommies marched to: "It's a long long way to Tipperary", but we'll get there all the same.

MARS. Aye, we'll get there sure enough; but we want more men – what we've got are the right stuff, god bless 'em: but we want more – and more – and yet more!

PERCY. (LOWERING HIS GUN) Halt – who goes there? (PAUSE.) – Halt – or I fire!

JEAN. (SPEAKS OFF) A friend and Ally.

PERCY. It's one of the French Chasseurs sir: at least he wears their uniform. He carries a white flag!

MARS. Let him advance.

PERCY. Pass friend.

(ENTER JEAN DUPREZ .. A FRENCH CHASSEUR IN UNIFORM .. HE IS COVERED WITH DUST ..A HANDKERCHIEF IS TIED ROUND HIS HEAD, STAINED WITH BLOOD. HE CARRIES A DESPATCH. HE FALLS C. EXHAUSTED.)

RUSSELL. One of the Chasseur Guard who were fighting to the South of us. (GIVES HIM A DRINK FROM HIS WATER BOTTLE.)

(RE-ENTER CORPORAL.)

MARS. (TO CORPORAL) Send a Nurse here quickly.

(CORPORAL SALUTES AND EXITS. JEAN POINTS FEEBLY TO HIS BOOT.)

RUSSELL. He is pointing to his boot.

MARS. A despatch.

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(RE-ENTER CORPORAL .. FOLLOWED BY DIANA .. SHE WEARS FULL NURSES RIG AGAIN.)

There is a poor fellow here who needs your aid.

DIANA. (WHO IS KNEELING BY JEAN) He has been shot through the wrist.

RUSSELL. Will you undo his boot? (SHE UNDOES LACES AND TAKES OUT PAPER WHICH SHE GIVES TO MARS.)

MARS. (READS) No help can be expected from the South. Colonel DuPont has retired to the West with the remnant of his men. The outlook is bad – very bad – the next attack will come from the North.

(DIANA HAS WASHED AND BOUND JEAN'S WRIST.)

JEAN. I speak English, I waiter at the Ritz Hotel. I rejoin my colours under Colonel DuPont. We held our ground for – (TO DIANA WHO IS TRYING TO TAKE HANDKERCHIEF FROM HIS HEAD) – Oh – never mind my head Nurse – not much further to go! Thanks for easing the pain, but I must tell my story. We lay entrenched and were gaining the day: the Uhlans came on and fired their guns in the air as a token of surrender. We in a body marched out to accept their capitulation, and as we marched they opened fire on us. Then the German Red Cross wagons came along, we thought to collect their wounded. They were filled with Uhlans covering machine guns, the treacherous dogs! Colonel DuPont gave me the despatch for you and I've got through. Beware the treacherous Uhlans! Vive l'Entente Cordiale – vive la France! (FALLS BACK INTO DIANA'S ARMS.)

MARS. This makes the situation more perilous.

(RE-ENTER CORPORAL OR SERGEANT WITH MEN WHOM HE FILES UP IN FULL MARCHING KIT.)

MARS. The others are entrenched below.

(RE-ENTER HERBERT FOLLOWED BY ALICE .. PERCY LOOKS ACROSS AT THEM .. MARS WRITES IN HIS POCKET BOOK RAPIDLY.)

Capt. Russell Squires, you will take charge of the Wireless Station and get this message through in Cypher Secret Code. Take this message from Colonel DuPont – it gives the enemies' strength and position: get that through to the Chief of Staff, so that it will reach General French. I do not command you to this work – it will probably mean your death. I ask you – will you go?

RUSSELL. Yes Sir.

MARS. There will be no bands to play – no honours: Men, I can promise nothing – we are hemmed in. If Captain Squires can keep the line of communication open, we may get through: if not – it means a fight to the finish. (POINTS OUT TO UNION JACK) The Old Flag floating there lads, and while there is a man alive we'll keep it flying still. (TO RUSSELL) Will you take your place in the Telegraph Station?

RUSSELL. I will.

MARS. Should the Uhlans get you, destroy these despatches and keep the Secret of the Code.

RUSSELL. I will – with my life. God Save the King.

MARS. I want two men – one to watch from the Hill and warn Captain Squires, the other to get through to the Main Army.

(ALL THE MEN VOLUNTEER.)

HERBERT. Let me go!

PERCY. And me!

HERBERT. I'm no good Sir – never was no good as a bloomin' civvy – been in jail and am a wastrel: even my pal called me a squint eyed boozy stinking rabbit – but I'm a tough soldier Sir, and I'll guard the Station and warn the Captain Sir.

MARS. You are a brave man Bruce: it goes against my grain for you've suffered a lot already.

HERBERT. I don't like to remind you Sir, but you said once – in that little affair at Tugela –

MARS. When you saved my life – yes?

HERBERT. You said if hever I asked a favour you'd grant it: I axes that favour now – let me go?

MARS. (HOLDING OUT HIS HAND) you shall! And God grant you will come safe through.

ALICE. (XS. TO HERBERT) Get through Herb?

HERBERT. What? Yer means as 'ow yer wants me to get through? Straight?

ALICE. Straight Herb: for my sake.

HERBERT. (LOOKS AT HER FLABBERGASTED) Lor' love a bloomin' Duck! An' ye really care? You're not pulling my leg? You want me back?

ALICE. If you don't come back I shall break my heart.

HERBERT. That's done it! That's put the bloomin' roof on. I'm a comin' back my girl: there hain't going to be any more broken hearts in my family. (KISSES HER.)

PERCY. Let me carry the despatches Sir?

MARS. Why?

PERCY. I've been a wastrel too Sir, and I just want to show I can do a bit of good too. I've carried 'em before and got through all right. You see, Sir, I'm a bit crossed in love – an' – an' – there'll be no one to worry if I never come back. (LOOKS AT HERBERT AND ALICE.)

MARS. Well! You shall go – and God speed you all. Men, it means a ast stand for King and Country – and it's up to you to make it good. Dismiss and prepare. Corporal – take the watch.

(CORPORAL SALUTES AND STANDS R. WITH RIFLE.)

PERCY. (XS. TO HERBERT) Will you shake 'Erb? (HOLDS OUT HAND.)

HERBERT. (LOOKS AT HAND) Arter what you called me?

PERCY. I didn't mean it: I only mashed her to find out if you loved her.

HERBERT. That's all serene now, but what abart the smelly rabbit?

PERCY. I never meant you were a smelly rabbit.

HERBERT. What in thunder did you mean then?

PERCY. Why! That you're the best fellow in the whole world – and I wouldn't take yer little song bird from you for a pension, and the Victoria Cross thrown in. (THEY SHAKE.)

HERBERT. Good old Percy boy! Alice ain't no bloomin' widow, so it's farewell to ormolu clock and the espectoration on the drawing room carpet. But I'm just goin' to tuck this 'ere little Nightingale under my wing – (PUTS HER ARM IN HIS) and bid 'er goodbye when there's nobody lookin'. See!

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PERCY. Bless you my children – bless you.

(EXIT ALICE AND HERBERT ARM IN ARM. PERCY LOOKS AFTER THEM A MOMENT .. SIGHS .. THEN DRAWS HIMSELF UP.)

That's over, he'll never know how much I really cared for her.

(EXITS, FOLLOWED BY REST OF SOLDIERS.)

DIANA. (WHO HAS BEEN ATTENDING TO AND WATCHING JEAN) Poor fellow, he has done his duty and served his country - he will never speak again.

(MARS AND RUSSELL SALUTE.)

RUSSELL. One of the legion destroyed by German treachery – what a reckoning – some day.

MARS. I will see to him – prepare yourself quickly Captain, there is no time to lose.

RUSSELL. You may depend on me Sir.

(SALUTES. EXIT MARS. RUSSELL IS FOLLOWING – DIANA STOPS HIM.)

DIANA. I want to thank you for proving my innocence here in the Hospital; you have proved me guiltless of one crime – can you not believe me innocent of – the other.

RUSSELL. Would that I could! I would give ten years of my life to prove you my true and loyal wife.

DIANA. Then your love for me is not dead?

RUSSELL. True love never dies.

DIANA. You are going out to the Telegraph Station, will you let me come too?

RUSSELL. No: you are safe here.

- DIANA. Don't you understand! It is not safety I want – it is to be with you.
- RUSSELL. Women are not allowed in the danger zone, you will retire with the others – East. I must go now. (XS. WP. SHE FOLLOWS HIM.)
- DIANA. (EARNESTLY) Russell, we may never meet again! Must we part – like this? Speak one kind word to me – don't break my heart.
- RUSSELL. (LOOKS AT HER) There are some things one cannot say – aloud: there are times when silence makes one's sufferings easier. I bid you Good Bye – I pray God to keep you safe.
- DIANA. God speed you and keep you safe: and – (PASSIONATELY) Oh God! Prove my innocence.
- RUSSELL. Amen – amen to that.

(RE-ENTER MARS.)

- DIANA. Colonel Mars, I appeal to you. A wife's place is by her husband's side.
- MARS. No woman is allowed in the danger zone.
- DIANA. (ASIDE) No woman allowed in the danger zone. No woman! (TO MARS) I understand. (XS. AND KISSES RUSSELL'S HAND) Whatever happens, remember I love you – have always loved you – will always love you. (EXIT L.)
- RUSSELL. Whatever danger I may face will be nothing to the agony of this parting. Colonel, I would give my life willingly if I could believe in her – so fair and yet so false. I pray God always that I may do my duty, and keep my honour safe. Good bye Colonel – and God grant the issue of this may be success.
- MARS. If the Guns and the Fort stand – the Men will do their duty. God speed you Captain.
- RUSSELL. Should I fall – you will see to – her?
- MARS. Yes.
- RUSSELL. Thank you Colonel. (EXIT R. PAST SENTRY AND SALUTES.)
- MARS. A man to be proud of. A few more like him, and we'd soon march triumphant into Berlin.

(RE-ENTER DIANA.)



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DIANA. Has he gone?

MARS. Yes.

DIANA. May I beg a suit of Karki?

MARS. What for?

DIANA. He said – and you repeated – no woman is allowed in the danger zone.

MARS. My God Diana! You don't dream of what you would have to face!

DIANA. What he must face – so can I. A wife's place is by her husband's side.

MARS. I cannot – will not allow it.

DIANA. You must! I stand a chance of being killed here?

MARS. Yes.

DIANA. Then let me stand the same chance there – by his side. It is the broken-hearted request of a deeply wronged woman who intends to prove her love. I read consent in your eyes (BUS .. SHE LOOKS AT HIM THEN SINKS ON HER KNEES AND KISSES HIS HANDS.) Thank you Colonel – thank you.

BLACK OUT.

-----% % % %-----% % % %-----% % % %-----

71.

ACT III. SCENE II.

THE WIRELESS TELEGRAPH STATION.

FULL SET. LOW RECESSED WINDOW AT BACK. CEILING SLANTING DOWN TO WINDOW. FLATS R. AND L. DOOR IS FLAT L.

SMALL PLATFORM UP STAGE L. WITH TWO DOORS LEADING OFF IT.

SWITCH BOARD OF WIRELESS APPARATUS R.

BENCH WITH COILS R. INDUCTION COILS AND WIRELESS INSTRUMENTS ON BENCH OR LARGE TABLE C.

THE CEILING IS MADE WITH TRAPS TO LET DOWN DEBRIS AND SAWDUST ETC. WHEN HIT BY BOMB.

WINDOW IS PRACTICABLE AND MADE TO SMASH WHEN HIT.

FLATS TO REPRESENT WALLS ARE ALSO MADE TO BREAK AWAY .. DOORS MADE TO BREAK IN.

SEEN THROUGH THE WINDOW IS A HILL WITH WIRE RECEIVERS.

THE WIRELESS COILS ARE GENUINE .. AND WHEN MESSAGES ARE TRANSMITTED THEY SPARK AND WORK TO THE TAPPING OF THE TRANSMITTER.

DOZENS OF ELECTRIC WIRES OF VARYING THICKNESSES RUN UP THROUGH CEILING.

ROUGH CHAIRS ETC. FOR OPERATOR.

LIGHTS FULL UP.

(ENTER RUSSELL SQUIRES FROM DOOR L.2.E. HE XS. C. AND EXAMINES APPARATUS WITHOUT SPEAKING. HE SMILES APPROVINGLY .. THEN XS. UP TO DOOR UP STAGE AND LOOKS OFF. LOOKS OFF SECOND DOOR .. THEN XS. DOWN AND FIXES HEAVY BAR ACROSS DOOR L.2.E.

72.

TAKES OFF HIS CAP AND HANGS IT UP, THEN TAKES A DRINK OUT OF HIS WATER BOTTLE. UNDOES HIS MARCHING KIT .. KNAPSACK ETC. AND PLACES THEM DOWN.

HE THEN SITS DOWN AND PLACES THE RECEIVERS OVER HIS EARS AND STARTS TO TAP OUT A MESSAGE.

THE DISTANT ZIP ZIP OF RIFLES IS HEARD. HW RISES AND LOOKS OUT OF WINDOW.)

RUSSELL. The Devils are undoubtedly making for this Station. I wonder how long it will be before they are on me. So long as I can keep in communication with the Main Army the little Garrison will be safe: thank God for that! Diana will be safe. It will take 24 hours to bring up reinforcements – and the Colonel said so long as this Station kept in touch with the Main Line, the little Garrison would be safe.

(KNOCK AT DOOR; HE XS. TO DOOR.)

Who's there?

HERBERT. (OFF) A friend.

RUSSELL. The countersign?

HERBERT. (OFF) England is watching.

(RUSSELL OPENS DOOR. ENTER HERBERT.)

RUSSELL. Hello!

HERBERT. The Uhlans are makin' for 'ere, Sir, and it looks as they was a getting' their guns trained on this Hut.

RUSSELL. Will you shelter here to defend it?

73.

HERBERT. I've made my report Sir as ordered, and I axes your pardon Captain, if I don't stay 'ere with you.

RUSSELL. You are wise, go back and join the Garrison.

HERBERT. Me! Not bloomin' likely Sir – axing your pardon agin. I'm going back into the woods to try and draw their fire off this 'ere Station. It'll give you a bit more time.

RUSSELL. It is madness – you are courting death.

HERBERT. Not I Sir! I'm a courtin' Alice – when I gets the bloomin' chance. Good Bye Captain. (XS. TO DOOR.)

RUSSELL. Come back!

HERBERT. I'm sorry to disobey Sir, but I'm in a hurry. Good luck! (EXITS.)

RUSSELL. (SHOUTS) Come back I say!

HERBERT. (FURTHER OFF) Good luck Sir! Good luck!

RUSSELL. (CLOSES DOOR AND BARS IT) A soldier is a soldier, there is no class distinction in bravery; I trust he'll pull through. He has something to live for too, there's a pair of bright eyes looking out for him at the little Garrison yonder.

(XS. BACK TO TABLE .. PUTS RECEIVERS INTO HIS EARS .. TAPS OUT A MESSAGE AND RECEIVES ONE.)

(THE ECHO OF RIFLES IS HEARD .. THEN LOUDER SHOTS.)

Poor Bruce is in the thick of it now – it's a thousand to one if he escapes.  
(TAPS OUT ANOTHER MESSAGE.)

THE WHIRR OF A SHELL IS HEARD .. IT DROPS ON THE ROOF .. A LOUD EXPLOSION IS HEARD .. A LARGE MASS OF CEILING FALLS IN .. RUSSELL LOOKS ROUND.)

74.

That was uncomfortably near!

(RIFLES ARE HEARD .. A SHELL HITS THE WALL .. ALMOST SHAKING THE BUILDING .. SOME PLASTER FALLS .. RUSSELL RISES TO HIS FEET.)

Will the building stand such shocks as that? (EXAMINES STEEL UPRIGHT)

Thank God! Good old Sheffield Steel – the framework will hold.

(HE SITS AT TABLE AGAIN – AS HE TAPS OUT A MESSAGE A SHOT RIPS A BIG SPLINTER OFF THE TABLE NEAR HIS HAND .. HE TAPS OUT A MESSAGE AND RECEIVES ONE.)

(A HEAVY VOLLEY OF RIFLE FIRE IS HEARD – HE XS. UP AND EMPTIES HIS REVOLVER AT THE ENEMY THROUGH WINDOW WHICH HE OPENS .. A SHOT HITS HIM ON THE RIGHT WRIST WHICH HE BINDS UP QUICKLY WITH HIS HANDKERCHIEF .. AFTER DROPPING REVOLVER. HE STAGGERS ACROSS TO TABLE AND TAPS OUT A MESSAGE WITH HIS LEFT HAND .. A TERRIFIC CRASH IS HEARD OFF L.U.E.

HE PUTS UP RECEIVERS AND XS. UP TO ROOM UP STEPS L.U.E. .. AND GOES OFF FOR A MOMENT RETURNING WITH UNION JACK.)

Part of the room has gone – the Flag Staff has fallen, but they shan't have this!

(HANGS UNION JACK ON NAIL BY WINDOW .. TAKES RECEIVERS .. TAPS AND SENDS A MESSAGE .. AND RECEIVES ONE.)

(GRADUALLY THE ROOM IS REDUCED TO A MASS OF RUINS .. A SHOT CATCHES HIM .. HE FALLS WITH HIS HEAD OVER APPARATUS.

FIRING CEASES .. UHLANS ARE SEEN AT WINDOW,)

75.

(THE DOOR IS BEATEN IN .. ENTER BELLAIRS AS GERMAN OFFICER ..  
FOLLOWED BY THREE OR FOUR UHLANS.)

BELLAIRS. Be careful! Search! There may be others in the rooms. Shoot down without mercy any British dog you may find – whether he be soldier or civilian.

(SOLDIERS EXIT UP STAGE AND UP STEPS L.U.E .. BELLAIRS XS. OVER  
TO RUSSELL.)

This dog here is wounded, or dead (LIFTS HI HEAD) The man I want! Russell Squires! (TO MEN WHO HAVE RETURNED FROM SEARCH) Bring some water – his own water bottle – there (SOLDIER HANDS IT TO HIM .. HE POURS SOME WATER OVER RUSSELL'S HEAD .. WHO OPENS HIS EYES.)

RUSSELL. My tongue is parched! – how thirsty I am! A Drink.

BELLAIRS. Pour that water away. (ONE OF THE SOLDIER EMPTIES BOTTLE THROUGH WINDOW.) (TO RUSSELL) Don't you recognise me?

RUSSELL. (LOOKS AT HIM) Bellairs – Bellairs the Spy!

BELLAIRS. Bellairs was an assumed name – I am Baron Guggenheim. I have not forgotten your sword thrust that nearly killed me at Monte Carlo. I have not forgotten many things, Capt. Russell Squires, and I am here to repay them all. I want you to fully realise that – to fully realise you are here in my power.

RUSSELL. Yes, I fully understand. You are one of a Brave Nation, who shoot down women, and trample to death little helpless children.

BELLAIRS. That is War, and it is War that has given you into my hands.

RUSSELL. So I see. Though I had hoped to meet a more honourable and generous foe.

BELLAIRS. You know what to expect?

RUSSELL. With you at the head of affairs – I can guess.

76.

BELLAIRS. I have been working for this meeting. I have followed the wake of the British Lines, so that I might take you alive.

RUSSELL. Well, you have only just succeeded – for I am very ill – nearly half dead.

BELLAIRS. So I see: but still strong enough to understand. Feel a bit sick, don't you – very sick?

RUSSELL. Weak – very weak – that is all.

BELLAIRS. It may interest you to know that your wife's maid Kitty is still alive and well. She reached our lines safely.

RUSSELL. Heaven only knows what harm and mischief she has done. Our Nation is too trustful – we should have done well to have kept Britain for the British.

BELLAIRS. You should have thought of that earlier; soon all Britain will be German land.

RUSSELL. Never! While one man lives who can hold a Gun.

BELLAIRS. God help them if they attempt it! (LAUGHS.)

(UHLAN SOLDIER OPENS THE DOOR. ENTER KITTY AS LADY KATHERINE.)

KITTY. The man told me you have got him, Hans.

BELLAIRS. Yah! He is here.

KITTY. Ach! That is good – very good. I am proud of you my Hans. Do not forget, he knows the Secret Cypher Code and we want it; the Wireless messages have proved useless without it. (SHE XS. TO RUSSELL) You thought the explosion had killed me, eh? I pretended to faint – and the Bombardment of the Hospital forced you all to leave it – so I escaped quite easily. I thought you would like to know this – I thought you would like to know I was responsible for many deaths in your beleaguered little Garrison, which we intend to wipe out of being tomorrow. But for your suspicion and your watching, I should have been able to place the guilt on your wife.

RUSSELL. What has she ever done to you to call for such treatment?

KITTY. Made love to my Hans here: I hated her for that - and I hated her because she was British. (TO HANS) But I am forgetting – Our men have got the dog who drew our fire in the wrong direction. They are waiting your orders what to do with him.

BELLAIRS. (XS. TO DOOR AND CALLS) Bring that dog here!

(UHLANS BRING ON HERBERT, WHO IS WOUNDED AND VERY WEAK.)

RUSSELL. Bruce! You should have gone back.

HERBERT. (WEAKLY SALUTES) Soldier sir – my duty Sir: don't worry but I'm about done.

BELLAIRS. Ach! Soh-soh! Another old friend – eh? I still retain memories of a horsepond. Oh! This is a great day for me! I can pay another little debt.

HERBERT. I'll have to wish you Good Bye Sir. I'm sorry about my little Nightingale, - but tell Percy it don't matter about the smelly rabbit that was like a drain. I know it's Pack drill and a short shift – but I'll be proud if you tell Alice I never flinched.

BELLAIRS. (TO MEN) Take him out and shoot him.

(MEN DRAG HERBERT OUT .. THROUGH LAST SPEECH RUSSELL HAS BEEN TAPPING OUT A MESSAGE .. WHEN HERBERT IS OFF .. BELLAIRS TURNS TO HIM AND PRESENTS REVOLVER.)

Come away from that instrument! What was the message you tapped?

RUSSELL. I have given your name, rank and regiment. I have told them you are shooting a wounded soldier in cold blood, instead of making him a prisoner of war. Listen – that is the answer.

BELLAIRS. Well! What is it?

RUSSELL. It is "God help you if you fall into our hands".



78.

BELLAIRS. (RUNS TO WINDOW) Stop! Do not shoot that man! Take him down to the Camp and keep him there a prisoner.

RUSSELL. Afraid of your skin – eh?

BELLAIRS. Now I mean to have that Secret Code: do you intend to give it up?

RUSSELL. You are asking the impossible.

BELLAIRS. We shall see.

RUSSELL. I am weak – but I intend to fight!

(BELLAIRS GIVES A MOTION AND SOLDIERS SEIZE RUSSELL .. HE STRUGGLES AND THROWS THEM OFF .. AND IS MAKING FOR BELLAIRS. BELLAIRS SHOOTS HIM .. HE FALLS.)

BELLAIRS. Pick him up! (SOLDIERS PICK RUSSELL UP.) He's not dead – I am too good a shot to kill him outright – he is wounded in the fleshy part of the shoulder. Now, bind his hand. I say Captain – feeling very sick – ain't you? Eh? Ach yes: I think you will be feeling very sick!

(RUSSELL IS NOW BOUND AND LEANING AGAINST TABLE C.)

KITTY. You did that well Hans! I am going out on the hill – let me know when you get the Code – and I with my own hands will send some information through the British Lines that will lead them into a trap. I'll come back when you get the Code. It is not a delicate woman's place to witness such suffering – so I will leave you. How do you put it? Zo long! (LAUGHS AND EXITS DOOR L.)

RUSSELL. Give me a drink – my throat is parched.

BELLAIRS. When I have the Code.

RUSSELL. That is impossible.

BELLAIRS. Men have been made to speak before this.

RUSSELL. So I have heard – but you will not make me speak!

79.

BELLAIRS. (LAUGHS AND DRAWS HIS DAGGER ACROSS THE SIDE OF RUSSELL'S THROAT. IT LEAVES A RED MARK) Shall I not? Ach! We shall see. Feeling a bit sick eh Captain? You know what to expect, eh? Why should you want to keep the Secret Code? You whose wife is false to you. Is it not nice for you to know she loves me – not you.

RUSSELL. Leave her name out of this!

BELLAIRS. Ach no! Pretty Diana – always Diana to me!

(RUSSELL MAKES AN ATTEMPT TO KICK BELLAIRS .. SOLDIERS SEIZE HIM.)

Tie his legs to that chair! (HE IS FORCED INTO CHAIR AND HIS LEGS TIED TO IT.) I will teach you not to play these little games ..

(HITS HIM TWICE ACROSS HEAD .. THEN XS. TO WINDOW AND PULLS DOWN UNION JACK .. AND SPITS ON IT.)

Ach! The accursed Flag – you too shall spit on that! (PUTS DAGGER TO HIS HEART) Now, this is going in by inches: feeling sick eh? Very sick now – eh? You will translate the Code for me now – eh? And you will spit on this?

RUSSELL. Go to Hell! I spit on you – you accursed German Spy!

BELLAIRS. (PRESSES DAGGER) Still stubborn – eh?

RUSSELL. I am doing my duty to my Country – my King – and my God.

BELLAIRS. We will soon alter all that pretty sentiment. (PRESSES DAGGER STILL CLOSER.)

(DIANA APPEARS AT WINDOW .. AND PRESENTS REVOLVER .. SHE IS IN FULL KARKI UNIFORM.)

DIANA. Put up that knife!

80.

BELLAIRS. (TURNS) Donner und Blitzen! Himmel! –

DIANA. Keep back I say! Or I fire.

BELLAIRS. How did you get here?

DIANA. Crawled along through the undergrowth.

BELLAIRS. (WHO HAS FALLEN BACK FROM RUSSELL) you are a fool – you are courting death. (TWO GERMAN SOLDIERS SEIZE DIANA FROM BEHIND.) Ach! I told you you were a fool. Bring him inside – I'll teach him a lesson. (THEY DRAG HER AWAY FROM THE WINDOW.)

RUSSELL. Who has been fool enough to try and get through here?

BELLAIRS. We shall know presently.

(DIANA IS DRAGGED THROUGH DOOR L. STRUGGLING .. HER HAT IS KNOCKED OFF .. AND HER HAIR FALLS OVER HER SHOULDERS.)

RUSSELL. (WHO HAS BEEN LOOKING AT HER) Diana!

DIANA. Yes, your wife. Oh Russell – Russell – what have they done to you?

RUSSELL. Diana! You should not have come here!

DIANA. I did it to try and save you.

RUSSELL. Oh God! Dear God! Was not my suffering great enough without this!

DIANA. I did it for you – and for Britain. (RUSSELL GROANS.)

BELLAIRS. (TO SOLDIERS) Disarm her. (THEY DO SO.) We must rob you of any chance to do us harm. This is a pleasant meeting, Di: - I used to call you Di – didn't I?

DIANA. Bellairs! You of all men - : you!

BELLAIRS. Yes: a renewal of old friendship – old relationship. (TO SOLDIERS) Men – see my orders are carried out, I am working for Germany: no one must approach that window. Whatever takes place here is a sealed book. Now men – to your posts and guard the remnants of this Station. See the receivers on that hill are not tampered with. I have the means within my grasp to obtain the Code – and I'll use it.

81.

(SOLDIERS SALUTE AND EXIT.)

RUSSELL. (TO BELLAIRS) Take care! – my God! – take care.

BELLAIRS. (LOOKS AT DIANA AND LAUGHS) Your wife and my mistress.

DIANA. You lie – lie – lie!! And you know it! Russell – I have placed you in worse danger – but I tried to prove my love to you – I came here to be near your side – to share your sufferings – to help you if I could.

BELLAIRS. And you have both fallen into my hands. You are still pretty, Diana, in spite of your adventures. (XS. TO HER) Come – let me taste the sweets of your lips as I did in the old days.

DIANA. Keep from me you beast! Though unarmed – I can scratch – and bite and kick.

BELLAIRS. Ach – your temper makes you more divine – you are splendid – splendid!

(CATCHES HER .. SHE STRUGGLES .. SHE RUNS UP STEPS TO ROOM L.U.E. .. HE FOLLOWS HER ..SHE HAS SEIZED A JUG WHEN OFF .. WHICH SHE THROWS AT HIM .. HE SEIZES HER AGAIN AND BRINGS HER DOWN STAGE.)

Why struggle (HOLDS HER TIGHT) I have but to call my men and have you bound. You are weak and your weakness makes you an easy prey.

DIANA. I am weak, but God will lend me strength to fight you.

BELLAIRS. It is useless struggling my Di – you used to be more tractable in the old days.

(SHE GIVES A FINAL STRUGGLE AND GETS AWAY FROM HIM .. RUNS UP TO WINDOW .. HE BRINGS HER BACK .. AS SHE IS BROUGHT BACK SHE SEES RUSSELL AND EXCLAIMS)

DIANA. Blood Russell! You are covered with blood! (GIVES A LOW MOAN AND FAINTS IN BELLAIRS' ARMS.)

BELLAIRS. Ah – that is better! More tractable now. (LAYS HER ON STEPS . XS. TO RUSSELL.) Now my valiant Captain – you shall see with your own eyes that which you believe your wife guilty of. It is her honour against that of the secret Code.

RUSSELL. Oh God! Oh! Dear God.

BELLAIRS. Feeling a bit sick – eh? Ach! I thought you would.

(DIANA RISES SUDDENLY .. SNATCHES DAGGER FROM BELLAIRS' SHEATH AND STABS HIM WITH IT .. HE STAGGERS AND HOLDS HIS SIDE .. THEN FALLS.)

DIANA. I am afraid – I am afraid! (THROWS DAGGER DOWN.) It's bloody – bloody! (SINKS ON KNEES AND COVERS FACE WITH HER HANDS.) I shammed that fainting fit – it was the only way - !

RUSSELL. Brave girl – brave girl!

DIANA. (UNDOING HIS CORDS) No, no, I am not brave. I thought I could be a Soldier, but I'm only a woman – a poor weak woman after all.

(CORDS ARE NOW UNDONE .. DIANA GETS AWAY FROM BELLAIRS AGAINST WALL L. RUSSELL RISES AND STAGGERS TO HIS FEET.)

RUSSELL. Is he dead?

DIANA. I can't touch him! I dare not look. I did it for you Russell – I did it for you.

RUSSELL. (KNEELS OVER BELLAIRS) No, he still lives – such vermin as he do not die easily. (TAKES REVOLVER AND PLACES IT ON TELEGRAPH TABLE .. TAKES ANOTHER REVOLVER AND GIVES IT TO DIANA.) If the worst comes we can die together.

DIANA. You don't think now that I loved him?

RUSSELL. No, I don't think that now.

83.

DIANA. You know now that I loved you first and best: next to you my Country and my King.

KITTY. (SPEAKS OFF) If there is a woman in the Hut with the Baron, I will see to it.

RUSSELL. Let her in, and back to the door. Hold her prisoner – she is a dangerous woman.

(DIANA OPENS DOOR .. RE-ENTER KITTY .. DIANA CLOSES DOOR AND HOLDS HER AT BAY WITH REVOLVER.)

KITTY. Trapped!

DIANA. If you move or cry out I'll shoot.

RUSSELL. Can you hold her so?

DIANA. Yes, and when I get tired I'll shoot!

RUSSELL. (WORKING TELEGRAPH) There's a little beleaguered Garrison below waiting for help. 24 hours the Colonel said --!

(TAP ..TAP.. TAP OF THE TELEGRAPH)

AS CURTAIN FALLS.

-----% % % %-----% % % %-----% % % %-----

84.

IN TIME OF WAR.

ACT IV.

SCENE I. THE RUINS OF ST. PETER'S.

SCENE REPRESENTS ALL THAT IS LEFT OF THE SACRED EDIFICE.

THE FOREGROUND IS BUILT OF BROKEN ALTAR AND SACRED IMAGES  
.. A BROKEN CROSS C.

(ENTER PERCY TO BEGIN. HE IS WOUNDED. HE HOBBOLES ON AND SITS  
ON BROKEN ALTAR.)

PERCY.           Sacked! The Holy edifice in ruins. I'll rest here a few hours, and then get on  
my way again. Hello! There's someone coming. (LIES DOWN UNSEEN.)

(ENTER KITTY AND BELLAIRS .. SHE IS SUPPORTING HIM.)

BELLAIRS.       My wound is very painful: I cannot go much further.

KITTY.           Did you get the Code?

BELLAIRS.       No, I failed. She pretended to faint and when my back was turned she  
stabbed me.

KITTY.           Then she could not have loved you as she said.

BELLAIRS.       Ach! You can never trust a woman.

KITTY.           That is a nice thing to say to me, when you owe me your life.

BELLAIRS.       I did not mean it for you – you know that. How did you get me away?

KITTY.           They refused to leave the wireless station until 24 hours had passed. I dared  
not move for fear they would kill me. That cursed Captain got all the  
information through to the Main Lines. I knew it was no use your Regiment  
staying there only to be wiped out – so I bargained with them: our lives for a

safe conduct for them through our lines to a town where the British had gone to.

BELLAIRS. And so - after all my work, they got away?

KITTY. It was their lives against ours. You see, you had told your men not to enter the Station until you sent for them. That kept the Britishers safe inside.

BELLAIRS. I am tired of all this, I'll get invalided home.

KITTY. You go on with me. Our men are about to sack the town: I have all the information – you must study it. (HANDS HIM DOCUMENT.) You are well enough to give orders. Don't let us be beaten. Remember I did all this for you because I loved you.

BELLAIRS. You never told me this before.

KITTY. A woman does not tell her love except in dire necessity. Could you not see why I worked with you in England? Could you not guess why I hated her?

BELLAIRS. Yes, I half guessed that.

(PUTS PACKET OF PAPERS INTO OVERCOAT POCKET. PERCY LEANS OVER AND STEALS PAPERS UNSEEN BY THEM.)

KITTY. There is danger even here Hans.

BELLAIRS. I like to hear you call me Hans.

KITTY. Prove your bravery to our Emperor. Let us get the better of this handful of British soldiers and our Kaiser will reward you, then you can marry me. Come my Hans – back to the Uhlan lines, and we will go over the Plans together. (EXIT .. SHE SUPPORTING HIM.)

PERCY. (WHISTLES) Percy boy, you're in luck! A Copy of the Plans – this should be worth something! Hello! Here's someone else coming! Lie low Percy boy – you may fall on more luck.

(ENTER COLONEL MARS .. AND ALICE .. FOLLOWED BY TWO RED CROSS MEN WITH STRETCHER.)



86.

MARS. There seems to be no one here. Men, go forward into town – you may be able to render help there. (EXIT MEN.)

PERCY. The Colonel and the little Nightingale!

(RISES QUICKLY .. COLONEL MARS PULLS OUT REVOLVER .. PRESENTS IT.)

Don't shoot Sir – British sir – beg pardon - Colonel.

MARS. Who are you?

PERCY. Private Percy Chumleigh of your Regiment Sir.

MARS. Bless me, so it is! You got through then?

PERCY. Yes, and wanted back again, and here I am.

MARS. Bravo! And how have you fared?

PERCY. Feet very bad Sir – very bad indeed! Can hardly put them to the ground.

MARS. Ah! That's bad – we must get Nurse Alice here to see to them.

PERCY. And not for the first time either – eh Nurse?

ALICE. No, I remember quite well, it was the day the water was poisoned.

PERCY. You don't insinuate --?

ALICE. Oh no – certainly not – but – one favour I would ask you?

PERCY. And what is that?

ALICE. Take off your boots and socks, and air your feet a bit before I attend to them – will you?

PERCY. Anything dear lady to oblige you.

ALICE. You will have to enter the Hospital again, I'll call the Ambulance men back.

PERCY. Not yet! I have a bit of work to do first.

MARS. You had better rest.

87.

PERCY. Not yet Sir, duty first – later I will rest. Beg Pardon Sir, but I got these – are they of any use? (GIVES PAPERS HE HAS TAKEN FROM BELLAIRS.)

MARS. (OPENS PAPERS AND READS) Plan of the enemies' movements! Thanks my lad – these are of the utmost importance. You shall be well rewarded.

BLACK OUT.

END OF SCENE I.

88.

ACT IV. SCENE II.

THE RUINS OF THE CITY.

FULL SET .. SHOWING MARKET SQUARE AND CITY IN RUINS .. THE SKELETONS OF HOUSES THAT HAVE BEEN DESTROYED BY SHELL FIRE LEFT STANDING. AMONGST THE RUINS ARE THE DEAD BODIES OF SOLDIERS AND CIVILIANS.

(ON THE STEPS OF A CROSS .. WITH HIS HEAD RESTING ON THE CROSS .. HERBERT IS DISCOVERED. BY HIS SIDE IS ALICE. )

HERBERT. Sing to me again Alice. (SHE SINGS SONG.) That's fine! I've got one of those German chaps imprisoned in one of the rooms of that house – that hasn't been blown to pieces.

ALICE. Who is it?

HERBERT. Somebody I'm going to make speak the truth – somebody I'm goin' to make clear a good woman's name.

ALICE. That sounds interesting. Tell me all about it?

HERBERT. Not now – I hear the tramp of soldiers.

(ENTER MARS WITH REGIMENT OF SOLDIERS.)

MARS. Civilians shot down! They have not stopped at women and children, but shot them down too. Private property and churches destroyed by these fiends – they are millions strong – but they want wiping out, and we can only do this with more men. If the people of Britain really saw this shambles of cold blooded murder and pillage – every mother's son who could hold a rifle would join the Service and help us. We were able to defeat them and drive them off – pray Heaven we may yet keep them at bay.

89.

(TROOPS FORM UP AND MARCH OFF WITH MARS.)

(ENTER RUSSELL AND DIANA. RUSSELL IS HALF DELIRIOUS AND RAVES A LITTLE .. HERBERT RISES AND SALUTES.)

HERBERT. I want to pay my respects to the bravest gentleman I have ever met.

RUSSELL. Who are you?

HERBERT. One who owes his life to you – and that's something I can repay, thank Heaven.

DIANA. How?

(HERBERT XS. TO HOUSE AND UNLOCKS DOOR, BELLAIRS STAGGERS OUT.)

HERBERT. This dog lied to you – I have a full confession from him – your wife is innocent.

BELLAIRS. I'm done! Let me go?

DIANA. Not until you confess the truth, not until you clear my name.

BELLAIRS. What truth?

DIANA. The forged dates on those letters.

BELLAIRS. Will you let me go if I speak the truth?

DIANA. Yes.

BELLAIRS. I altered the dates – which you can easily prove. I lied about your wife, she has never been false to you.

RUSSELL. Why did you do this?

90.

BELLAIRS. Because I hated you – because I loved her. I wanted to part you – I was jealous that you had won her.

RUSSELL. You – you loved her?

BELLAIRS. Yes, as I hated Kitty – whose real name is Princess Katerine Zurin.

(KITTY COMES UP FROM BEHIND RUINS AND SHOOTS BELLAIRS.)

KITTY. You dog! To think I wasted my love on such as you! (TURNS TO THE OTHERS)  
Keep back – you shall not touch me! I have one bullet left – which I have kept for myself. (SHOOTS HERSELF .. SHE FALLS.)

RUSSELL. Forgive me that I ever doubted you, my brave, noble-hearted wife.

DIANA. There is nothing to forgive – our trials have found our true hearts' love. When I have nursed you back to health, I shall be proud to see you serve your King and Country again under the folds of the dear old flag – IN TIME OF WAR.

CURTAIN.